

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Monkwearmouth School**  
Sunderland

LEA area : Sunderland

Unique Reference Number : 108859  
Inspection Number: 184000

Headteacher : Mr J Farnie

Reporting inspector: Mr E J Wheatley  
10013

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708021

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Comprehensive
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	11 to 16
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Torver Crescent Seaburn Dene Sunderland SR6 8LQ
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Appropriate authority :	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr D Ambrose
Date of previous inspection :	November 1994

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr T Wheatley, RgI		Attainment and progress Curriculum and assessment Leadership and management Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Partnership with parents and the
Mrs P Willman, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	
Mrs P Caspari	English Drama Media studies	
Mr R Portsmouth	Mathematics	Learning resources
Dr B Blundell	Science	Staffing
Mr J Haslam	Design and technology Information and communication	
Mr B Downes	Modern foreign languages	Curriculum and assessment
Mr N Bertram	Special educational needs History Business studies	Key Stage 4
Mr A Paver	Sociology Geography	Teaching Support, guidance and pupils' welfare The efficiency of the school
Mrs W Burke	Art	
Mrs J Royle	Music	
Mr J I'anson	Physical education	
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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The attainment of pupils is above average compared with similar schools.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- The attitudes, behaviour and quality of personal development of pupils are very good.
- Leadership gives very clear direction for the work of the school and to raise standards.
- Teaching is good, overall, and in one lesson in six it is of very high quality.
- The school's support, guidance and welfare are good and the way in which the school promotes discipline and good behaviour is very good.
- The school has excellent links with the local community.
- The range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is very good.
- The provision for social development is very good.
- The ethos for learning is good and pupils enjoy their success.
- Financial planning is very good.
- The school gives very good value for money.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Attainment in chemistry at Key Stage 4, in painting as part of art and in modern foreign languages is below that seen nationally and in similar schools.
- II. Progress in modern foreign languages and chemistry is unsatisfactory.
- III. Teaching is unsatisfactory in a significant minority of lessons in modern foreign languages; it is unsatisfactory in some chemistry lessons and to a lesser extent in painting in art.
- IV. The provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory in some subjects and subject planning does not consistently provide opportunities for spiritual awareness.
- V. The school has no systematic procedures to monitor teaching and effectively share the good practice seen in most subjects.
- VI. The governors' monitoring and control of the budget are poor.
- VII. The school does not meet statutory requirements for risk assessments, annual checking of all electrical equipment, daily collective worship, appraisal of teachers and reporting on authorised and unauthorised absences in the annual governors' report to parents.

**The school has more strengths than weaknesses and the leadership has a positive effect in helping to raise standards. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be dealt with and the plan will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils in the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards are rising. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the provision for technology at Key Stage 4 is now appropriate. The learning needs of higher attaining pupils are mostly met. The quality of departmental and pastoral plans has improved considerably and include identification of priorities, costing timescales and named responsibilities. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved and is more challenging than at the last inspection. However, there has been insufficient development of a broad range of teaching styles, predominantly impeded by lack of procedures to identify and share the good teaching skills seen in the school. There are still no comprehensive established systems to monitor and review the school's work, but the senior management team has started reviewing the work of departments and are working effectively to develop monitoring and evaluation procedures and skills. Statutory requirements for daily collective worship are still not met. The school's capacity for improvement is good and the senior management team is already making a significant impact on establishing formal reviewing procedures so that the school can plan developments more effectively.

## Standards in subjects

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

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

Overall standards have been maintained over recent years, although in the end of Key Stage 3 national tests in 1999 results are lower than in 1998. At GCSE, standards have been rising in recent years and in 1999 the results were better than in 1998.

## Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	Biology, English, design and technology, physical education and curriculum support	Modern foreign languages
Years 10-11	Good	Biology, drama, English, physical education and photography within art	Chemistry, modern foreign languages and painting within art
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

Ninety-four per cent of teaching is satisfactory. Sixty-five per cent of teaching is good or better and seventeen per cent is very good or excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour is very good. Pupils respond very well to the positive discipline policy. They move around school in a patient and sensible fashion.
Attendance	Attendance is good and has been consistently maintained since the last inspection.
Ethos*	The ethos for learning is good and pupils take pride in their academic achievements.
Leadership and management	Leadership provides very good direction for development and improving standards. There is good development planning, although monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently well developed in order to share good practice.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, offering a good range of choices at Key Stage 4. The range of extra curricular activities is very good. The time available for history and geography at Key Stage 3 makes it difficult to ensure that these subjects are taught to sufficient depth, whereas the time for modern foreign languages is above the national average.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and this has a significant effect on pupils' good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision is good, overall. There are particular strengths in moral and social provision which are well promoted through personal and social education. Provision for spiritual development and multicultural awareness is generally unsatisfactory. There is no regular daily act of collective worship.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall; resources are good in all subjects, although there are too few books in the library. Accommodation is good and facilities for music and drama are excellent. The arrangements for the appraisal of teachers are unsatisfactory.
Value for money	The school gives very good value for money.

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

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>viii.The commitment of staff.</p> <p>ix.The good standards of work achieved by children.</p> <p>x.The school is approachable and deals effectively with problems.</p> <p>xi.The school encourages very good behaviour.</p>	<p>xii.The school's expectations for pupils' homework.</p>

Eighty-five parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector which took place before the inspection. They supported the work of the school and were generally pleased with the education their children received. Inspectors were in agreement with parents' views of the level of staff commitment, overall standards of work achieved and the quality of education provided. Inspectors also found that staff in the school were approachable in the case of problems and that the school encourages good behaviour. Inspectors supported parents' concerns about not knowing what the school's expectations for homework are; homework is provided regularly but the pattern is not clear. A few parents expressed concern at a very small amount of bullying which takes place. Inspectors found that the school has effective procedures to deal with bullying, a view that all pupils who were spoken to during the inspection week also agreed with.



## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The headteacher, staff and governing body must now:

- I. raise attainment in:
  - modern foreign languages, by using National Curriculum level descriptors to ensure that work is always at an appropriate level for pupils' ages and attainment (paragraphs: 9, 11, 14, 28, 155, 156, 158, 160);
  - chemistry, by raising expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, and increasing the pace of lessons (paragraphs: 9, 10, 13, 28, 94, 96, 98);
  - art in both key stages, by implementing a basic painting skills course in Key Stage 3 (paragraphs: 11, 14, 28, 101, 105).
- I. develop systematic procedures to monitor teaching so that good practice can be identified and the wide range of teaching styles seen in some lessons shared effectively among all staff (paragraphs: 30, 61, 67);
- II. improve the quality of reports to parents so that they consistently comment on the attainment and progress of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects and provide targets for improvement (paragraph: 57);
- III. ensure that governors meet their statutory obligations to:
  - approve the budget for the year 1999 to 2000;
  - meet regularly and frequently to monitor the budget and financial planning;
  - arrange annual risk assessments for the whole school site (paragraphs: 55, 67, 73, 74);
- I. meet statutory requirements for:
  - the annual safety checking of all electrical equipment,
  - collective worship,
  - reporting on rates of authorised and unauthorised absences in the annual governors' report to parents;
  - the appraisal of teachers (paragraphs: 44, 62, 63, 67).

The school must also:

- i. review the time allocated at Key Stage 3 for geography, history and modern foreign languages (paragraphs: 37, 139, 145, 161);
- ii. provide more planned opportunities in the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness of spiritual issues (paragraph: 44);
- iii. provide more planned opportunities for pupils to become aware of contributions from around the world to the subjects they study (paragraph: 47);
- iv. provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their personal study skills through:
  - encouraging discussion and debate in lessons;
  - using books as well as computers to search for information (paragraphs: 16, 30, 83, 88, 101, 102);
- i. increase the quantity and range of books in the library, in line with the school's plans (paragraphs: 16, 69);
- ii. ensure that parents have clear guidance about the school's homework policy (paragraph: 32).

## INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

1. Monkwearmouth School is on the outskirts of Sunderland in Seaburn. It stands in its own large grounds on the edge of a private residential area and close to open land. The school was opened as a comprehensive school in 1972, having formerly been a grammar school. Several extensions have been added to the building, the most recent having been completed in 1998 which considerably improved the school's facilities for music and drama.
2. The school is much larger than the average for schools of this type. There are 1457 pupils, who come from a wide range of family and social backgrounds. The great majority of pupils come from within three miles of the school. Attainment is broadly average on entry to the school. About one per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need, which is below average and eight per cent of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is also below average. 16.2 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Less than one per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, but this does not provide any learning difficulties for these pupils.
3. The school has extensive aims for its pupils. They focus on meeting the needs of individuals, acknowledging worth and achievement, encouraging self discipline, confidence and esteem. There is a particular emphasis on developing an ethos of "It's OK to be successful". The aims also include encouraging tolerance and sensitivity, promoting understanding of society and responsibility, developing knowledge of the social, cultural and physical world and developing imaginative, creative, lively minds. To do this, the school aims to create a happy, secure, welcoming atmosphere for pupils and visitors with a friendly, business-like environment based on partnership between homes, the school and community.
4. The governors have set GCSE targets of 50 per cent of pupils obtaining 5 or more A\*-C grades in 1999 and 49 per cent in 2000. They have also set end of Key Stage 3 targets for each subject to raise the proportions of pupils achieving levels five and six. Targets are based on teacher assessments, GCSE predictions and a range of other tests and information available to the school. The school's development plans for 1999-2000 cover curriculum development, policies and documentation, staffing and resources, assessment, special educational needs, and establishing monitoring and reviewing of school performance.

## 5. Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 3<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	138	135	273

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at National Curriculum Level 5 or above	Boys	86	84	76
	Girls	112	85	76
	Total	198	169	152
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	73(73)	62(65)	56(69)
	National	65(56)	60(60)	56(60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	39(33)	36(40)	26(27)
	National	35(23)	36(37)	27(29)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at National Curriculum Level 5 or above	Boys	74	87	69
	Girls	115	92	82
	Total	189	179	151
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	69(74)	66(67)	56(69)
	National	62(59)	64(63)	62(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	28(41)	41(38)	34(42)
	National	31(28)	37(37)	31(29)

## Attainment at Key Stage 4<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	146	126	272

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	54	135	144
	Girls	69	121	125
	Total	123	256	269
Percentage achieving Standard specified	School	45(53)	94(98)	99(99)
	National	44.6(43.3)	89.8(88.5)	95.2(94)

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

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

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)  
Missed through absence for the latest  
Complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.7
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.5
	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	35
Permanent	1

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	17
Satisfactory or better	94
Less than satisfactory	6

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

6. By the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of pupils is average and, by the end of Key Stage 4, it is broadly above average. The attainment of boys and girls is not significantly different. In the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), standards are similar to those at the last inspection. In the year after the last inspection, the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A\*-C GCSE grades fell, but has steadily risen over the last four years, in line with the national trend. The attainment of pupils entering the school was broadly average in 1997, 1998 and 1999. Over the long term there is some variation in attainment between year groups, a feature seen throughout the school. The school has a wide range of assessment information about its pupils which is not used consistently to produce targets for teaching groups and individual pupils, although there are plans for this to be developed.
7. In the 1998 end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels was above the national average in English and close to the average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, results were well above average; pupils' results were above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving level 6 or higher in English was well above the average of similar schools and in mathematics and science it was above average compared with similar schools. Broadly, although there have been fluctuations between year groups, standards have been maintained over the last three years. In end of Key Stage 3 teachers' assessments in other subjects, the majority of pupils obtained average or above average levels of attainment in 1998. Standards were better than in recent years and the 1999 end of Key Stage 3 teachers' assessments showed that this trend was continuing. The exception to this is modern foreign languages where levels of attainment have fallen.
8. In the 1998 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A\*-C grades was broadly average. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A\*-G grades was above average and the proportion of pupils obtaining one or more A\*-G grades was average. The average points scored by each pupil was close to the national average and above average compared with similar schools. Girls performed better than boys, but not significantly different from the national difference. Over the three years 1996 to 1998, the average points scored by pupils have risen in line with the national trend. The 1999 GCSE results were an improvement on the 1998 results.
9. Results vary between subjects. Results in English and mathematics were broadly average in 1998 but in the sciences were below average. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C rose in English and science (double award) in 1999 and were maintained in mathematics. Standards have varied slightly in physics and biology but have fallen markedly in chemistry, largely because expectations were not high enough. Elsewhere, the proportion of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades in the 1998 GCSE examinations was broadly average and above average in English literature and music, but well below average in chemistry, French and German. Standards rose in 1999 in business studies, information technology, history, sociology, drama and media studies. Fluctuations have arisen because the school encourages and guides pupils to choose the subjects they wish to study to GCSE, based on personal or future interests.
10. Inspection evidence shows that, by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is above average in English and mathematics and average in science. In English, pupils write and speak fluently and listening skills are generally very good. The highest attaining pupils appreciate the poetry of Wordsworth and describe characters accurately. Lower attaining pupils speak with clarity and, although they write understandable short stories, grammar and punctuation are sometimes inaccurate. In mathematics, higher attaining pupils solve quadratic equations and use formulae and lower attaining pupils work out the areas of plane shapes competently. Standards are good because, generally, expectations are high and teachers' explanations are clear. In science, pupils show appropriate skills in investigative science and have a sound knowledge and understanding of physical and biological processes. Attainment in chemistry is often below average due to lack of sufficiently high expectations. Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, although in mathematics there are

occasionally too few opportunities for pupils to find out for themselves and advance their progress further. In science, progress is satisfactory, overall, although in chemistry it is unsatisfactory. Where progress is good in English, mathematics and science, pupils' positive attitudes, high expectations set by teachers and the small size of some teaching groups are significant factors. The increasing use of assessment information is helping teachers to set demanding work, more closely aligned to the needs of classes. Higher attaining pupils in particular benefit from being taught in classes grouped by prior attainment and make good progress.

11. In other subjects, by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is broadly average, although, in information technology, design and technology and drama, attainment exceeds expectations. In art, attainment is above average, overall, and pupils have a good understanding of the skills involved in sculpture and graphics, but it is below average in painting. Pupils use tools skilfully with a wide range of materials in design and technology. In information technology they have good word processing skills, use spreadsheets and databases competently. They reinforce these skills in other subjects and develop sophisticated research skills, using CD-ROM and internet. Teachers' own good subject expertise and experience and high expectations play an important part in pupils' attainment. Attainment matches expectations in history, music, physical education and religious education. Attainment is below average in modern foreign languages and geography, and to a lesser extent in chemistry and in art when painting is the focus. In modern foreign languages, low expectations have led to underattainment and in art, pupils' lack of painting skills is the factor.
12. Overall, at Key Stage 3 progress is good. It is good in information technology, art, design and technology, drama, physical education and religious education. Progress is good, overall, in geography, especially in Years 7 and 8 where lessons contain clear learning objectives and the careful teaching of mapwork skills. Progress is satisfactory in history and music. In history, pupils make sound progress in using historical evidence competently, for example, to describe the changes in attitudes of soldiers in the First World War. In religious education, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of other religions and their associated values and beliefs. Progress is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages
13. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is broadly above average and mainly reflects the rising standards indicated by the 1999 GCSE results. In English, pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils listen well and speak articulately. They have a broad vocabulary and spell competently. Written work is neat and usually accurate. Attainment in mathematics is also above average, overall. The highest attaining pupils solve simultaneous equations competently and produce accurate exponential graphs. Lower attaining pupils calculate plane areas competently, using angles. Work is often challenging and pupils perform well where teachers have high expectations. In science, attainment is average, overall, but in physics and biology topics, on thermistors or leaf structures, for example, higher attaining pupils reach a high level of understanding. However, in chemistry, pupils often are not sufficiently challenged and perform at levels below those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics; the high expectations and work tailored closely to the examination syllabus play a large part in their success. In science, progress is satisfactory, overall, and in the case of higher attaining pupils in biology and physics it is often good. In chemistry, progress is unsatisfactory.
14. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is generally above average in information technology, drama, music, business studies and sociology. Pupils have a wide range of information technology skills which they use very well. They use desk top publishing skilfully, research using databases and the internet and use control and modelling programmes effectively. Some lower attaining pupils perform well in information technology, often better than they do in other subjects because of the very positive attitudes and opportunity to work at their own pace. In drama, pupils keep comprehensive performance diaries, analysing their own work. In music, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and use this well in their composition work. Pupils starting business studies and sociology in Key Stage 4 take on the new vocabulary and ideas readily. They develop a good understanding of industry and marketing. They evaluate information thoroughly and apply it to work on attitudes of people in different situations. Attainment is in line with national averages in art, design and technology, geography, history, physical education and religious education. In art, higher attaining pupils know how to produce imaginative sculpture and well framed photographs, although their painting skills are below average. In design and technology, pupils' practical skills are particularly good in electronics. Pupils develop sound research skills in history, using evidence competently in examining how the American West

developed. In physical education, pupils develop competent physical skills, for example in playing badminton. In religious education, pupils understand the significant features of world religions and some pupils understand the correct vocabulary associated with the rites of these religions. Attainment is below average in modern foreign languages, chemistry and painting as a part of art. In French, German and in chemistry, low standards are mostly attributable to low expectations; in painting they are attributable to unsatisfactory teaching of basic painting skills earlier in the school.

15. Progress is good overall. It is good in information technology, design and technology, geography, music, physical education, business studies and sociology. Good progress is helped by teachers' subject expertise, the challenge they present to pupils and pupils' own very good attitudes to work which are the positive outcome of the school's drive to make pupils proud of their successes. In art, progress is satisfactory, overall, and in sculpture and photography experienced, knowledgeable teaching has a positive impact on pupils' standards. In drama, history and religious education progress is satisfactory and in modern languages, although there is still some unsatisfactory progress, careful use of examination material by some teachers means that overall progress is satisfactory.
16. Standards of literacy are average, overall. Pupils acquire useful working vocabularies of technical terms. They read competently, are encouraged to bring books to read and they often choose horror stories or science fiction. They read books readily for information and research, although there are presently limited numbers of books in the library as stocks are replaced; most frequently they use computer software as source material. Pupils read accurately and fluently, often expressively and with understanding. They skim and scan texts competently, draw inferences, deduce, reason and cite evidence, especially in literary criticism, when given the opportunity. Writing skills are generally satisfactory. By the end of Year 9, most pupils can write their thoughts clearly and accurately. Drafting to improve writing and presentation is used effectively and pupils can produce a higher than average standard of written conversation, punctuate their work accurately and use paragraphing well. They take good notes and write in a range of styles for a variety of audiences. There was a good example in geography in the form of a poetry exhibition as pupils expressed their views in verse on subjects such as tourism and the havoc it causes to the countryside. The quality and presentation of writing are good in English, drama, physical education, religious education, business studies and sociology and satisfactory in art, information technology and design and technology. It is unsatisfactory in modern languages at both key stages. Presentation is very good in physical education.
17. Pupils speak confidently and their speaking skills improve well as they move through the school. They are encouraged to talk in English, drama, media studies and most other subjects. However, there are gaps and in mathematics, for example, discussion is not frequently used and there is insufficient organised debate, illustrated by the inability of some pupils' to organise their thoughts sufficiently before speaking. This is particularly noticeable in modern languages at Key Stage 3. At best, pupils discuss ideas such as the meaning of lines of poetry or the morality of hunting; they enjoy asking and answering questions and using language as a learning tool in group work. The general standard of listening is good and, except for art, its quality through the various subjects is the same as for speaking. In art, girls listen better than boys and so are more successful in understanding and carrying out instructions.
18. Pupils' numeracy skills are good throughout the school. Their use of calculators is generally efficient and there is no over reliance on a calculator as a tool to carry out all calculations. Mental skills are reinforced in mathematics lessons and their use occurs in many subjects. Good data handling skills are evident in humanities and science subjects and, in the GCSE physical education and health related fitness course, pupils tabulated the results of various tests and estimated work areas in other aspects of this subject. A variety of skills are used and developed through science; for example, graph work and a range of algebraic skills, including changing the subject of a formula and solving equations. In technology subjects, pupils use measurements of weight, time and temperature in a number of situations effectively; they draw and measure angles as required in graphics and when drawing designs. Spreadsheets are used effectively in information technology. Stage layout and the associated spatial awareness where measurements are required are used in drama. There is no whole school policy on the use of numerical skills across the curriculum.
19. Information technology skills develop well through the wide range of opportunities provided for pupils to use

computers and practise skills in most other subjects, which makes a significant contribution to their progress. In art, pupils create images using a scanner and digital camera. In mathematics, they use logo and spreadsheets effectively. Teachers bring a wide range of computer technology skills to mathematics, science, business studies, art lessons and some other subjects, which contributes to pupils' acquisition of subject knowledge and skills. Computers are not made sufficient use of in English. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers during the lunchtime and there is an after school study club where pupils can develop their computer skills and have access to the internet. Training has been provided for staff so that they can use applications effectively and gain access to the school network. Pupils' use of information technology is well recorded, although there are no means to assess their attainment of the skills they use in lessons other than discrete information technology lessons.

20. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is generally good and is a result of targets carefully matched to the targets in pupils' individual education plans. Where pupils are withdrawn for specific support work they often make very good progress.

## 20. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

21. Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and their response to the opportunities for personal development are very good. Relationships with each other and with their teachers are consistently good. These aspects of pupils' response have improved since the last inspection and make a very significant contribution to the standards they attain and the good progress they make during their time in school. The majority of the 1,070 parents who completed the questionnaire prior to the inspection, feel that the school promotes positive values and attitudes and achieves a good standard of behaviour. Inspection evidence confirms this view.
22. Pupils demonstrate interest, commitment and enthusiasm for their work, maintaining concentration and persevering; they enjoy the challenge of learning. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson continuing the study of "Of Mice and Men", pupils made thoughtful and sensible replies to questions and showed a good understanding of the text. They undertake their work with determination and confidence, listening attentively and making effective use of their skills. In a Year 9 design and technology lesson, for example, when making a fabric container they showed a good level of knowledge and were confident and keen to join in discussions. Pupils work effectively together in pairs and groups to find solutions to problems. They show initiative in organising and planning their work and their ability to work independently increases as they progress through the school. However, personal study skills are not always fully developed because of a shortage of non-fiction texts in the library for research. Pupils take pride in their work. This was exemplified in a Year 10 art lesson on sculpture where pupils showed obvious pleasure in their creations. In the very small number of lessons where pupils' attitudes dropped below the usual high standards, this was related to unsatisfactory behaviour by a few pupils which disrupted the lesson, or to the lack of challenge presented by the assigned tasks.
23. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is generally very good and this makes a significant contribution to the way in which the school operates as a happy and orderly community which recognises the rights and responsibilities of all pupils and staff. Behaviour in house assemblies is excellent. Pupils are well motivated by the school's very good systems of positive discipline and try hard to earn the merit certificates which they accept with obvious pride. Pupils are tolerant and good humoured when moving about the school and cope sensibly with the congestion in the corridors and on the stairs. The majority show a good level of self-discipline and express disapproval at the occasional poor behaviour of their classmates. Pupils treat property and equipment with care. This is particularly evident when they are using the new resources in the drama and music department. No incidents of bullying were observed during the inspection and, although pupils comment that it does happen, they consider it to be a relatively minor problem. Thirty-five pupils were excluded for unacceptable behaviour for a fixed period during the last academic year and one was excluded permanently.
24. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils work together constructively and listen to each other's points of view. The school's practice of sitting pupils in mixed gender pairs from Year 7 successfully encourages a good level of mutual respect between boys and girls. This mutual respect is also evident between pupils and their teachers and this makes a very positive contribution to the development of pupils' confidence to ask and answer questions. All pupils work happily and effectively together in a wide range of extra-



curricular and fund raising activities, valuing each other's contributions and encouragement and working with a common sense of purpose.

25. The quality of pupils' personal development throughout the school is very good. They respond very well to an ethos that encourages and enables them to take responsibility for themselves within a supportive and caring environment. They are courteous and helpful to visitors and generally treat each other and staff with respect. Pupils' response to the programme of personal and social education is very good and the impact of this provision is evident in the growing self-confidence and maturity they acquire as they progress through the school. The work of the school and house councils provides pupils with many opportunities to show initiative, take responsibility and make a difference to school life. They are very inventive in their ideas for fund raising and there is a certain amount of inter-house rivalry. The very successful talent show produced by Roker House recently raised the sum of £1,000 and provided much amusement for all those who attended. One of the aims of the school council is "to help create a better school environment" and this is taken seriously by all concerned. Apart from the fund-raising activities, practical day-to-day issues are discussed and the views are passed on to the senior management of the school for consideration and appropriate action. Pupils visit and work with local charities and contribute to community activities, for example, helping with the entertainment of the elderly at Christmas time. The majority of pupils are proud of their school and anxious that they represent it well both in the community and to visitors. All these activities broaden pupils' understanding of their own and other people's lives, resulting in high levels of personal confidence and maturity.

### **Attendance**

26. Attendance for the year 1998/99 was 92.7 per cent which is above the national average, consistent over the last three years and is good. This good level of attendance has been maintained since the last inspection and has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Most parents take their responsibility to inform the school of reasons for absence seriously and, as a consequence, there is very little unauthorised absence. The majority of pupils are punctual to school and to lessons during the day. 87 per cent of the 1,070 parents who responded to the parental questionnaire prior to the inspection comment that their children like coming to school. This was confirmed by the pupils during the inspection.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

#### **26. Teaching**

27. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. It is now a strength of the school. The amount of teaching which is of very high quality has doubled to one lesson in six and the amount of teaching which is unsatisfactory has halved to about one in fourteen; the rest is predominantly good. The best teaching is found most consistently at both key stages in English, biology, design and technology, curriculum support and physical education, along with photography within art at Key Stage 4.
28. The best teaching is characterised by well planned, challenging work, with clearly expressed learning objectives which are often shared with pupils. Particular skills are taught carefully, so that pupils can use them effectively, for example, in investigations in science or in problem solving in design and technology. In English, debate is used as an effective means to develop pupils' speaking skills and to widen their use and understanding of a wide vocabulary. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in modern foreign languages, seen at both key stages, is because an unsatisfactory proportion of teaching does not challenge pupils to attain higher standards. Although teaching in science is mostly good, in chemistry at Key Stage 4 some teaching lacks challenge and the pace of lessons is too slow. There is also a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in art, related to painting, where basic skills are not taught and in Year 11 pupils do not achieve expected standards.
29. Teachers are well qualified; their knowledge of their subject is mostly good and is always at least satisfactory; it has a significant impact on attainment in English and art and contributes to the improved challenge of work seen since the last inspection. Teachers' expertise in information technology is generally good. Expectations of pupils and the challenge of learning are high at Key Stage 4 and good in half of subjects at Key Stage 3; these

combined with skilful planning of lessons, and the careful preparation of materials presented ensure that pupils are engaged in their learning. The pace of lessons is good and teachers often show enthusiasm for the subjects they teach, which helps promote pupils' own interest. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils promotes a purposeful and positive learning atmosphere. The good class management and, particularly, the good behaviour of pupils are a positive outcome of the challenging work of most teaching and the ethos of encouraging pupils to take pleasure in success. Although there is occasional misbehaviour when teaching is unsatisfactory, even in these lessons pupils usually behave well.

30. Within the context of the overall pattern of good teaching, there is a narrow range of teaching styles which has changed little since the last inspection. Particularly at Key Stage 4, pupils habitually work in silence in many lessons. In mathematics, for example, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to find out or investigate for themselves, and, in geography, field work and visits off the premises are under-used to extend pupils' skills.
31. Day to day assessment is generally good. Pupils work is marked regularly and in the best instances there is valuable feedback to pupils to assist their progress. However, teachers' comments on pupils' written work do not always clearly indicate what pupils need to do to improve their work.
32. Homework is set regularly and in most subjects it makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning. However, the pattern of homework is not clear and some parents expressed concern at not being sufficiently well informed about the school's expectations for homework.
33. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and, often, very good, particularly when pupils are withdrawn from lessons for support. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' individual education plans and pitch work at the appropriate levels, providing challenging tasks which motivate pupils and lead to very good levels of behaviour and concentration. Practice is good in English and at least satisfactory in most other subjects. However, in modern foreign languages work is not sufficiently challenging and in physical education there is no clearly thought through approach to teaching pupils with special educational needs.

33. **The curriculum and assessment**

34. The curriculum is well planned and organised, overall. It is broad and generally well balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. At Key Stage 3, information technology is taught as a discrete subject and all other subjects have well planned opportunities for pupils to further develop their information technology skills, although these are not fully implemented in English. Pupils entering the school study one foreign language, either French or German and those who display particular strengths in languages are taught both foreign languages from Year 8 onwards. At Key Stage 4, pupils follow a core of English, mathematics, science, modern languages, technology, physical education and religious education. Apart from GCSE courses in the core subjects, pupils can also choose from a wide range of courses from geography, history, art, music, information technology, drama, business studies, sociology and media studies. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully reviewed the Key Stage 4 curriculum to provide a broad and balanced experience for pupils and an appropriate technology course for all pupils.
35. The strength of the school's choice system at Key Stage 4 is that pupils are encouraged to make a mature choice to suit their particular needs or interests. For example, in science, pupils can choose to follow biology, chemistry and physics to meet their interests or chosen career paths and, consequently, separate sciences are not seen as a choice just for the highest attaining pupils. This is a good example of the school encouraging pupils to become responsible for their own learning and to make their own decisions.
36. At Key Stage 3, much of the teaching is done in mixed ability sets. Classes are grouped by attainment for mathematics and science in Year 7 and, by Year 9, English and modern foreign languages are also taught in ability groups. Combined with generous staffing so that some teaching groups can be kept small, this arrangement is effective in most subjects. At Key Stage 4, pupils are taught in group based attainment in English, mathematics, science and modern languages. Other subjects are organised in mixed ability groups.
37. The time available, overall, is appropriate to deliver most subjects of the curriculum. However, at Key Stage 3

the time allocated for geography and history means that some topics are not dealt with to the depth they deserve, while modern foreign languages have above the average time normally seen in schools. In art, timetabling of separate one hour lessons provides difficulties in arranging trips out of school to take advantage of the local environment as a resource for the subject.

38. The school provides an extensive and effective personal and social education course for all pupils which includes citizenship and careers education, sex and drugs awareness education and opportunities for pupils to review their own work and set themselves targets for improvement.
39. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good. The school provides a wide range of international trips, for example, to France and Holland and Germany and the history department has organised a subject focused trip to Berlin. There is a wide range of school productions, including musicals and talent shows. There is a variety of musical activities which involve public performances, including an orchestra, choir, wind band, recorder and strings groups and dance club, all of which are well supported by pupils. A junior theatre group and Christian youth group meet regularly. The school organises a wide range of sports activities, including hockey, football, netball, swimming, rugby, cross-country running and gym club. There is a high level of participation and inter-house competitions encourage pupils to be involved. The school also provides a comprehensive range of extra classes to help pupils prepare for GCSE examinations. A large number of staff give up considerable time to organise and support the very wide range of activities provided.
40. The quality of assessment is satisfactory, overall. Procedures to assess pupils' work are good. The school collects a wide range of assessment information and uses its own common system to assess pupils' attainment and progress. The quality of recording assessments varies and, although most teachers have detailed records, it is not always possible to track the progress that pupils make and to identify the National Curriculum levels they start at or reach.
41. The use of assessment data is satisfactory, overall, with some departments making good use of the information to plan teaching. For example, in mathematics the information is used effectively and, to a lesser extent, this is so in science. Teachers are planning work more closely matched to the learning needs of different classes. However, in English, the use of assessment information is at an early stage of development; teachers use their own assessments and knowledge of pupils well to plan work but make less use of end of key stage test results and other formal assessments. The senior management team has a clear view of how the information can be used to provide targets for pupils to help them make better progress, for classes to help plan teaching and for year groups to help long term planning. Senior staff provide considerable support for individual subjects through the line management structure, but there is not yet a systematic way in which all subjects make effective use of the information. GCSE examination and end of Key Stage 3 assessment results are available to all departments but the school has not yet developed sufficiently accurate ways to compare the achievements of pupils in each subject.
42. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are generally well met and pupils follow the same curriculum as other pupils in the school. However, in physical education, the curriculum is not sufficiently well planned to meet the needs of some pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum support staff keep very comprehensive individual records and track pupils' experience, progress and attainment well. They use this information effectively to review pupils' individual targets. The requirements for assessing the progress and learning needs of pupils with special educational needs are fully met. Annual review procedures are carried out thoroughly, targets are set and shared with all subjects. Teaching staff are involved effectively in setting targets where required.
42. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
43. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. The quality of this provision has been maintained since the last inspection and, as a result of the comprehensive personal and social education programme, the provision for moral and social development has improved.
44. The school's provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory, largely because opportunities for spiritual development are limited and largely unplanned. The school has recognised this situation and is in the process of

taking steps to identify and positively promote spiritual development through the curriculum. There are some good examples of the promotion of spirituality within religious education and there are elements within drama, English, music, history and art, but these opportunities are not always consistently, nor fully exploited. There is no daily collective worship. Assemblies are organised predominantly by house and the focus of these is primarily on moral and social education. In this respect they are good. However, they do not contribute in any significant measure to the development of spiritual awareness. The extra-curricular 'Jesus and Me Club' and visitors to the school, for example, a representative of Sunderland Youth for Christ, provide pupils with opportunities to explore aspects of spirituality.

45. The provision for the moral development of pupils is good. The positive discipline policy is based firmly on an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of all within the school community. The personal and social education programme has a good emphasis on individual morality and social responsibility. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. This was exemplified by the swift reaction of a large number of pupils trying to resolve a relatively minor incident that occurred during the inspection. There is a strong level of disapproval for the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils who are perceived to let the school down. Moral issues are covered well in assemblies. Within departments, in religious education for example, consideration is given to choices and responsibility and in history, English and drama good opportunities are provided for the exploration of moral issues. Physical education lessons encourage the development of good sporting behaviour, teamwork, leadership and fair play. The teachers are excellent role models for the pupils and provide consistent moral guidance.
46. There is very good provision for social development. The comprehensive personal and social education programme is very effective in promoting social development within a strong moral framework. Pupils acquire a very good range of social and life skills as they progress through the school and they use these to very good effect in the fund raising and extra-curricular activities that many of them take part in. Pupils' awareness of citizenship and of social responsibility is successfully promoted through the house and school council structures and addressed in specific modules in the personal and social education programme. They learn to present and argue their viewpoint and can see the effects of their success on the life of the school. There are many and varied opportunities for pupils to participate in visits and to represent the school in local and national competitions. By the simple strategy of sitting boys and girls next to each other in classes from Year 7, the school helps the pupils develop a natural respect for and understanding of each other which encourages effective co-operation in lessons. This has a positive influence on the standards of behaviour in the school and has a beneficial effect on pupils' attainment and progress.
47. The range and quality of cultural experiences created for the pupils are good. However, planning to develop their awareness of multi-cultural issues is currently unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this weakness and there are plans to extend the promotion of this aspect through the curriculum. There are some opportunities in art, for example, where the theme of Asian culture is being studied and in religious education where pupils study different cultures through their religion. The range of extra-curricular activities is very strong and there are many departmental activities, such as those within music, drama and physical education. The school participates in exchange visits with schools in France and Germany and visitors come into school in support of aspects of the curriculum. For example, the band of the Royal Air Force played for Year 7 and Years 10 and 11 benefited from a visit by a group of musicians who helped with a composition project.
47. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
48. Procedures for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils are good, as they were at the last inspection. The school has sound procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development. The school keeps extensive records of pupils' assessments and progress and is in the process of converting this to computer records, which is being held up until a decision about which assessment management system to use is made. Target setting is well developed and operates effectively through the personal and social education programme. Pupils use their annual reports to identify areas for improvement and, with their form tutors, produce individual targets. The effectiveness of this is limited in some instances because reports are not always clear about what pupils know, understand and can do and what they need to do to improve.

49. The school has well established, very good procedures to promote and encourage pupils' good behaviour. Rules are clear and are applied uniformly across the whole school. Induction for all new staff is effectively organised by the newly qualified teacher mentor. Expectations of good behaviour, positive attitudes to work and respect for each other and school staff are effective because teachers respect pupils themselves and the headteacher and senior staff, teachers and support staff throughout the school set good examples for care and concern for all in this large school.
50. The pastoral system plays an important part in maintaining the ethos of very good behaviour. The heads of house are effectively involved in policy making. For example, they are producing an anti-bullying policy which will formalise the existing good procedures and ensure consistency of approach across the whole school.
51. The school has an effective personal and social education (PSE) programme which is delivered mainly by form tutors, addresses issues of, for example, health and careers work and provides the framework in which pupils are helped to identify their targets for personal and academic improvement. Resources are provided for all teachers and, on occasions, lessons are taught by two teachers at a time where particular expertise is required or activities require the presence of more than one teacher. The co-ordinator monitors the teaching of the course to ensure consistency of approach and this is generally successful. The PSE programme is valued by the school and considerable effort has been put into the course's design and continual review to ensure that it is successful. Great value is placed on the relationship between form tutors and pupils and it is one of the key factors in promoting the good ethos for learning in the school.
52. The careers education provided by the school is good and is developing well. The school is developing its work to gain recognition for the Investor in Careers award and locally featured as a school with a successful careers education programme. There are good links with local colleges and businesses and there is an effective work experience programme. The proportions of pupils entering further education is above the local average and the proportion of those entering work training is broadly average. The proportion of pupils entering employment is below the local average. The school keeps close track of past pupils' examination successes.
53. The school's house system is used effectively to promote personal development and responsibility. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of sports and to engage in competition. Personal development is promoted through encouraging responsibility and loyalty to the house system. The merit system and certificates of achievement with pupils' photographs support this and encourage pupils to take pride in their achievements.
54. Procedures to monitor and promote good attendance are good. The monitoring of attendance is very good and done regularly to help in tracking absence and in providing targets for classes. The school has impressed on parents the importance of regular attendance and expects letters to explain absences. The heads of house contact homes in the event of absence and good knowledge of pupils' families and personal situations means that absence is dealt with effectively and sensitively.
55. Procedures for monitoring child protection procedures are effective and teachers are aware of the course of action they need to follow. However, there are no established procedures to carry out risk assessments and there has been no recent check on the safety of electrical equipment.
55. **Partnership with parents and the community**
56. The school has a good relationship with the majority of parents and works well to involve them in the education of their children. This view is confirmed by the analysis of the parental questionnaire completed prior to the inspection and the comments expressed at the meeting held for parents. The quality of this relationship has been maintained since the last inspection. The school has an excellent partnership with the community, contributing to the cultural life as well as providing extensive sporting and leisure facilities.
57. The quality of the information provided for parents about the school is good, overall. The prospectus is an informative document which gives parents a good overview of the practical aspects of the school. New parents also receive a well-presented handbook which includes a section specifically aimed at their children, with useful

tips on how to settle into their new school. Curriculum information is also provided for parents of years 8 and 9 pupils. Year 9 parents are given good information about the choices that need to be made for the next year. The governors' annual report for parents is a useful record of the school year. Every term, parents receive a professional and interesting newsletter – the Monkwearmouth News – which keeps them informed of activities in the school and celebrates the achievements of the pupils. As well as the annual progress reports, parents also receive an interim report which simply grades each subject for attainment and effort. There are some inconsistencies between the interim grades and the final report grades which are not always explained in the text. The text in the final report is variable; comments are often general and many do not clearly identify targets for future improvement. Science reports are often not subject specific in commenting on attainment and progress in the subject. Parents have one opportunity during the year for formal consultation but comments from parents indicate that staff are always available by appointment to discuss any concerns parents may have about their children's progress.

58. Parental involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory. Many support their children with their homework. However, many are unsure of the school's expectations with regard to the regularity and amount of homework. The school does not provide parents with a homework timetable, although pupils do have homework diaries. This lack of information limits parental responsibility for ensuring that homework is undertaken and completed on time. The parent teacher association is very active and well supported. As well as organising a variety of social and fund raising events, volunteers help with the catering for parents' evenings and for the drama and musical productions. The funds raised are used to provide extra resources through the school. This practical support of parents is valued by the pupils and staff and makes a good contribution to the quantity and range of resources available and in enhancing the learning environment.
59. The school has excellent, mutually beneficial links with the local community. Positive steps are taken to address community concerns and the majority of pupils are good ambassadors of the school. There are extensive links with other schools through sporting leagues and fixtures and there are well established liaison procedures with feeder primary schools. Pupils develop an awareness of the needs of others by fund raising and by working with charitable organisations in the community. During the inspection, for example, a cheque was presented to representatives from the local riding for the disabled organisation by pupils of Cleadon House. There are many other examples of local and national charities benefiting from the pupils' enthusiastic and successful fund raising activities. The community wing provides facilities for a large and very active youth club which is open to all young people in the community. The sports, drama and music facilities are used extensively out of school hours. The school's music and drama productions are well reviewed in the local press and make a good contribution to the cultural life of the community. Local business and industry support the school well in the provision of placements for work experience. These extensive links with the community enrich pupils' experience of life.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **59. Leadership and management**

60. The management and leadership of the school are good. In particular, the headteacher and senior management team provide very clear direction for the school to raise standards. Most heads of department provide similarly clear direction for improvements in standards. The governing body provides positive support for the school in raising standards, for example, by establishing procedures to inform themselves of developments within subjects so that they can make more informed decisions.
61. Overall, the school has a sound framework to monitor teaching and support curriculum development. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Support for curriculum development is good and staff are encouraged to take part in professional development. While the framework to monitor teaching is sound, procedures are not systematic, and has not, for example, identified problems in modern foreign languages, chemistry and art. However, plans to establish systematic procedures of monitoring teaching, sharing good practice and providing targets for teaching to improve are advanced. The senior management team has made a significant impact on raising awareness of the importance of monitoring teaching and reviewing the school's work. This is having a positive effect in helping the school to plan developments to raise standards.

62. Implementation of policies, aims and values is good, overall. The school aims to make learning an enjoyable experience and the aim that pupils should take pleasure in succeeding has been successful. Statutory requirements for risk assessments, the annual checking of electrical equipment, daily collective worship, the appraisal of teachers are not met. The governors' annual report to parents does not provide details of pupils' authorised and unauthorised absences.
63. Development planning is good, overall, and there is a high level of involvement by the headteacher, senior management, heads of department and teachers in the planning process. Planning procedures are good and provide an effective framework for the school to continue raising standards. The short and medium school development plan is good, although long term plans are more vague. Plans include clear targets, methods of implementation, success criteria, identified responsible staff and costing. Although the school has effective financial monitoring systems, the governing body does not carry out its financial monitoring responsibilities effectively.
64. The ethos for learning is generally good. Teaching is good and there is a positive environment in which pupils are encouraged to work and to take pride in their success. Under-attainment in a few subjects detracts from the overall good ethos.
64. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**
65. The match of number, qualifications and experience of teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, religious education, personal and social education and careers education is good. There are no unqualified teachers. The pupil : teacher ratio is broadly average as is the average class size. One quarter of the teachers have been at the school for over twenty years, giving a great deal of experience to the teaching staff. Because the numbers of pupils have increased over the years, it has also been possible to appoint an appropriate number of new teachers.
66. The match of number, qualifications and experience of support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum is good. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. A good range of technicians provide effective support across the school including the science, information technology, design and technology and art departments. Competent administrative staff and a wide range of other support staff assist the day-to-day smooth running of the school. Whilst the school has designated first aiders, there is no overall qualified person in charge of first aid.
67. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are unsatisfactory. Whilst appropriate arrangements are in place for the in-service training of staff and the induction of staff who are new to the school, there is currently no programme of staff appraisal and there has not been for the last two years. This is coupled with a lack of systematic monitoring of teaching throughout the school. In-service training is good in the art and religious education departments and satisfactory in other subject areas.
68. The accommodation is good and allows for the teaching of the full National Curriculum and religious education. The situation is similar to that reported in the last inspection with the exception of the addition of the excellent facilities for music and drama. The new block has been well designed and this has generated an increased interest in these subjects. The accommodation for English, geography and religious studies is very good. The school has identified the science laboratories as in need of refurbishment. They are adequate for the purpose at this time, but the standard of cleanliness and organisation in some of the laboratories is unsatisfactory. All subjects are taught in specialist accommodation and the displays in the classrooms are of a high quality and relevant. The caretaker and cleaning staff ensure that the school provides a clean and welcoming environment. The extensive playing fields are well maintained.
69. The learning resources available in the school are adequate to support learning and teaching. The ratio of pupils to computers available for use within the school is 9 to 1. This is a good provision and they are centrally housed. Departments plan a programme of renewal or replacement of textbooks. There is, however, a shortage of books in the library. This lack of books hinders the development of the capacity for personal study

and individual research. Resources in the departments are adequate, although some classes do not have textbooks issued as they have to be shared. This does not make revision for examinations easy and some classes have to make copious notes to support their learning. The fiction library is housed in the English department and its use is actively promoted within the department.

70. The music department is well resourced with a good number of electronic instruments in a specialist area. The resources to support drama are also good and the specialist areas are well equipped. In religious education, there is a range of artefacts to support the teaching of four major religions with a wide range of quality worksheets. Mathematics is also well supported by a range of commercially produced worksheets that supplement the course used. In chemistry, there is inadequate basic provision of pipettes, filters and burettes. In geography, insufficient use is made of field trips and visits, and in art, the local resources that are available outside the school, such as galleries, museums and artistic venues in the locality are not used.
71. The learning resource centre is a growing asset of the school. It is well-managed and available for use during school time and after school. It contains a computer suite that can be used by all departments for information technology applications in each subject area but there are insufficient computers at present to enable each member of a class to work independently. There is a good development plan which sets clear aims and criteria for the future.
71. **The efficiency of the school**
72. The Local Education Authority devolves more of its budget to schools than most authorities nationally. However, the amount allocated for each pupil is less than in three quarters of schools nationally in each of the last two years. Although the amount per pupil spent on teachers' salaries is less than in half of the schools nationally, because of the low budget, the proportion of the budget so spent is unusually high; the amount spent on supply cover, too, is high, partly due to maternity leave and long-term absence, so that the sums available for spending under other headings are low.
73. The head teacher's financial planning under these circumstances is very good and school administration is secure. It is closely related to the school's development plan and all available resources, human and material, are sharply focused to achieve good attainment and progress. Although the school has overspent on its annual budget over the last two years, prudent savings carried forward from previous years and careful financial planning has ensured that the school has used funds at its disposal effectively.
74. The governors' monitoring of financial planning and of the budget is poor. The finance committee's meetings have been irregular and infrequent. The last meeting was held in March 1999; the most recent was inquorate. To secure attendance, finance meetings have been called to take place before full meetings of the governing body so that members can move immediately afterwards into the full governors' termly meeting. Reports have been tabled at meetings rather than circulated well in advance so that decisions are taken without full consideration being given to the reports' contents and without the free and open flow of financial information. The budget allocations for the financial year 1999-2000 have not yet been approved by the full governing body and there is no indication in the minutes that the governors have received the closing statement for the 1998-1999 budget. The governors do not ensure that statutory obligations are carried out or that financial business is conducted according to best practice recommended by the Department for Education and Employment. There has been no audit of official school funds for three years.
75. The attainment on entry is average in an area of average socio-economic circumstances. Pupils make good progress and there is good attainment in comparison with schools of a similar type. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are very good; teaching is good. These standards are attained at very low cost per pupil. The school, therefore, provides very good value for money.



## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

#### **75. English**

76. In the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in English in 1998, pupils' performance at Level 5 and above was broadly in line with the national average and above the average for similar schools. Performance at Level 6 was slightly below the national average. From 1996 until 1998 results in these tests steadily improved, with the girls regularly outperforming the boys. Over the three years, the average standard of the boys was close to the national average for boys of their age group. During the same time the average standard of the girls exceeded the national average for girls of their age group. In the 1998 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades was in line with national average. In 1996 the GCSE results in English were below the national average for comprehensive schools but since that year pupils have significantly surpassed the national average and the proportion of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades in 1999 was higher than in 1998. In English literature the proportion of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades was above average in 1998, and results in 1999 were similar. During every one of the past four years school candidates for GCSE English literature have attained a higher than average proportion of A\*-C grades. As is generally the case, girls outperform the boys in both English subjects but the gap between them is narrowing. In media studies, there has been a steady improvement over the past four years, although the number of examination candidates has markedly decreased. The 1999 GCSE results were an improvement on the results of 1998. Girls outperform the boys, but here, too, the latter have raised their standard in recent years.
77. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is above the national average overall and an indication of the challenging teaching. The great majority work at Level 5 or above, with a significant number reaching Level 6 or 7. Most pupils speak well with a sound range of vocabulary. Higher attaining boys and girls speak fluently and expressively, although sometimes indistinctly. They use a wide vocabulary as was apparent in an impromptu discussion on the topic of "escape" when they used words such as "escapologist". They listen well. The best write coherently and achieve an excellent standard of accuracy, layout and invention. Creative writing is encouraged and a considerable number of pupils show aptitude for this. Punctuation was amusingly used to convey a victorious mood in one boy's essay about football. Others, who were occupied in making ten points to explain a given mysterious event, displayed impressive ingenuity. Reading aloud is good and often shows feeling. It is the English department's policy to base the subject on literature and, by the end of Year 9, both boys and girls can evaluate what they read in poetry and in prose. They have become familiar with technical terms such as parts of speech, simple poetic terminology and figures of speech which they use correctly. Lower attaining pupils show quite mature understanding of character when writing about their homes, family and interests. Their exercise books contain good work on practical tasks such as writing letters for both formal and informal purposes.
78. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment in language and literature is above the national expectation. Higher attaining pupils speak, listen, write and read very well. They understand the value of careful drafting and, by this means, produce quite scholarly extended pieces to a high standard of accuracy and presentation, often making effective use of word processors. Throughout both key stages, pupils have detailed knowledge of the books studied in class and a Year 11 group studying Macbeth showed appreciation of the language, story, characters and background of the play. Another Year 11 group studying Frankenstein understood well the evolving relationship between Frankenstein and the monster. Throughout the key stage, thorough note-taking, accurate summaries, apt choice of quotation to illustrate commentaries and perceptive analysis of character are evident in many exercise books. Pupils of average attainment perform the same tasks but show less variety of expression and write more briefly. Otherwise good work is spoilt by poor spelling and grammatical errors. Lower attaining pupils can produce short pieces of neatly written, legible prose for various purposes and make sensible suggestions concerning such matters as Lady Macbeth's motivation. Media studies is a separate examination subject at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils can prepare film scripts for themselves to film, write radio scripts of various kinds or compare the lay-out, content and style of newspapers and magazines. They understand how the media are directed at particular sections of the general public. Most can invent details to

intensify or provoke dramatic effect. They understand the importance of the sound track and how cinematic devices can tell a tale.

79. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. This is seen in their improved performance in end of key stage National Curriculum tests and in their GCSE results. As soon as they enter the school, pupils are given tasks which require them to examine texts for evidence and to select words; a Year 7 group prepared detailed work on the first chapter of 'The Midnight Fox' by Betsy Byars. By Year 8, many have developed some feeling for poetry, as seen for example, in a group working on the imagery in *Snow on Snow* by Ted Hughes and in another group concentrating on war poetry. They make progress through practice in writing for various readers for different purposes and develop their research skills by close examination of texts while seeking evidence to support their argument. Higher attaining pupils are given extension work and extra lessons to enable them to progress at their own, faster pace. They are led to increase their enjoyment of the musical power of words and appreciate the effectiveness of pointful repetition, figures of speech and other such literary devices. The majority are developing their understanding of the construction underlying narrative and, particularly in creative writing, of the power of a well chosen word in an economically crafted story. There is very good progress in Year 10 where some higher attaining pupils show a wide range of capabilities. Their progress is helped by the relish with which they write fiction, amusing autobiography and essays on topics such as a review of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' by John Keats or an account of anti-semitism as it affects the treatment of Shylock in 'The Merchant of Venice'. Lower attaining pupils profit particularly from practice in reading and make progress in constructing their own mental pictures. Those receiving curriculum support make particularly good progress not only in word skills but in self-confidence. Main strengths contributing to the progress of the majority are the constructive relationships they have with their teachers, their generally good standards of oracy and literacy and their ability to collaborate in groups. Main weaknesses are few. For lower attaining pupils, indistinct speech sometimes impedes accuracy in spelling. Some higher attaining pupils choose unnecessarily complex answers to simple problems in creative writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages, as a result of carefully planned work, matched to individual learning plans and the good quality of support provided.
80. At both key stages, most pupils have good attitudes and show interest in their work. The majority take English literature as a GCSE subject. The number taking media studies has decreased but the percentage achieving A\*-C grades is now significantly higher than before. Most can sustain concentration well and many develop a capacity for personal study; their extended writing shows that they have read widely to enrich their pieces. Pupils work well together. For example, a Year 7 group collaborated effectively to produce a pamphlet on witches and a Year 11 group discussed the questions which might be in their examination. Pupils mostly behave well and are courteous both in and out of class. There is little damage to books or furniture in the English classrooms. Interpersonal relationships are generally good and pupils listen well, waiting quite patiently for attention when they require it. Respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is fostered by the teachers who emphasise fairness in human dealings as, for instance, arises in such stories as 'Of Mice and Men' by John Steinbeck. There is a willingness to take responsibility; pupils volunteer to read aloud; some Year 11 pupils help younger pupils with reading practice. In nearly all classes, initiative is shown by many who contribute their ideas in classroom discussion.
81. Teaching is good, overall, and about half is very good. A very small proportion of teaching is unsatisfactory. The teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of their subject and their main strength is their commitment to the education of their pupils. They are mostly skilful in creating and maintaining interest. They make their objectives clear to the pupils and use good quality handouts which have been imaginatively devised for their purpose. The best lessons are those to which pupils are eager to contribute either by offering ideas or by asking questions and in which the teacher's expectations are high. Among many others, one example of this was when a Year 10 group discovered that 'Porphyria's Lover' by Robert Browning was a much more interesting poem than they had expected. Another example occurred when a Year 9 group finished 'Badger on the Barge' by Janni Howker and pupils showed, in the subsequent discussion, a mature understanding of the interaction between old and young generations within the story. The least successful lessons are those in which the pupils are not well managed. Marking is usually conscientiously done and useful advice is given on how pupils may improve their work. Continuous assessment is well used to inform teaching and homework is regularly set.

82. The English department is very effectively managed and the staff work well as a team. Care is taken to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and of the examination boards. They responded very positively to the last inspection and have significantly raised the standards of literacy and oracy. There is now extension work for the most able and great care is taken to recognise and supply the individual educational needs of all pupils. Standardised tests are used to establish the potential of new entrants to the school but not all have their reading ages identified. Not much use is made of information technology in lessons. The department has its own English fiction library, created when the school library became a learning resource centre for reference and research.
83. Standards of literacy are average overall. Pupils have a good vocabulary extending over all subjects. They speak well, with increasing confidence and competence as they move through the school. In most subjects pupils listen competently, but in art girls listen better than boys, with a consequent positive effect on their levels of attainment. They read competently and skim and scan texts for information effectively. However, opportunities to use books for research are limited; pupils are more likely to use computers. Writing skills are satisfactory and the majority of pupils express their thoughts and understanding clearly and accurately. Pupils draft and redraft their work well and use this skill in science, for example. They use a wide range of writing styles well, poetry in geography, for example, and note-taking to support work in many subjects. Presentation of work is generally good, although in modern foreign languages it is often unsatisfactory.
83. **Mathematics**
84. The Key Stage 3 results for 1998 show that the percentages of pupils achieving above level 5 and above level 6 when compared to all schools was close to the national average. When compared to similar schools the results were very high. The 1999 figures compare favourably with these and show a slight rise. Over time, the results have been rising broadly in line with the national trend. The proportion of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades in the GCSE examinations in 1998 was above the national average and was above average when compared with all comprehensive schools. Results for 1999 were slightly below those of 1998. The results have risen over time at a rate similar to the national trend. There were slight differences between the attainment of boys and girls but they were no more than the national difference. There are no obvious reasons for these differences in the curriculum or the teaching of mathematics. For the number of pupils entered, the average points score compares favourably with other subjects in the school.
85. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly average. Higher attaining pupils achieve at a level that exceeds national expectations and they work on the higher level algebra skills, involving quadratic expressions and associated graphs, with confidence and they also use Pythagoras Theorem to solve right angled triangles. Lower attaining pupils know and use a variety of number relationships and solve simple linear equations. All attainment targets are covered, although coverage of work from attainment target 1 is less detailed. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is above average. Higher attaining pupils develop their algebraic skills to solve simultaneous and quadratic equations and draw the graphs associated with these functions with confidence. Lower attaining pupils develop their spatial awareness through exploring a variety of polygons and making calculations involving angles and area. The average pupils are sometimes challenged with topics from the higher-level syllabus and, when these are presented in a suitable way, grasp these topics with confidence. They can calculate and solve problems involving trigonometric ratios in right-angled triangles. Pupils' computer skills are reinforced and developed through a variety of programs and the use of spreadsheets to produce tables and associated graphs.
86. Progress is good, overall, but is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the setting arrangements that places them in a small group with a specialist mathematics teacher. This setting structure enables the use of differentiated course material and homework for different pupils. Pupils in Year 7 can use simple data handling skills to display information in a variety of different forms. By the end of Year 9 these have been developed so that they can calculate mean, median and mode; the higher attaining pupils can use this knowledge to calculate means from grouped frequency tables. Lower attaining pupils develop their number skills alongside this work so they can confidently use fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils' progress through Key Stage 4 is built upon their previous levels of ability

and attainment. The setting structure enables all pupils to undertake a GCSE course at a level that is suitably challenging for them. Higher attaining pupils progress in their number skills to working with irrational numbers and exponential functions. Average ability pupils develop their algebraic skills to solve simultaneous equations and lower attaining pupils can further analyse data and draw appropriate graphs and charts. Pupils with special educational needs continue to progress and have their targets set at new levels to work towards an examination in mathematics.

87. All pupils arrive at lessons ready and prepared to work. They settle quickly and are attentive to their teachers. They work at a good pace and ask clear, relevant questions to clarify their understanding. This contributes to their progress. They are confident in their ability to tackle the questions they are given and some pupils are secure in their relationships within the group to work out a solution on the board in front of a whole class. Pupils with special educational needs have a good attitude that has been developed through success and positive reinforcement.
88. Teaching is always competent and in just over half of lessons is good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have a good command of their subject and an enthusiasm for mathematics that is communicated to their pupils by the sound preparation of lessons. There is an air of mutual respect between teachers and pupils that encourages a good working relationship. Standards of discipline are firm but friendly. The most effective lessons have a very clear focus, continue at a brisk pace and stimulate thought by good questioning and the active participation of pupils. However, in some otherwise satisfactory lessons, there are sometimes too few opportunities for pupils to discuss their work or for debate to be used as a teaching method. There are insufficient textbooks for pupils to have their own copy, but pupils make good notes on their work and the published scheme contains suitable duplicated material that is used for homework. Homework is regularly set and comprises reinforcement exercises to support classroom work.
89. The department is well managed and the teachers are mutually supportive. This is having a positive impact on standards as there is an input of ideas from everyone teaching the subject. There is an effective scheme of work that is used to provide continuity throughout both key stages. This has assessment opportunities built into the scheme and the use of computers is part of the overall plan. This is a dynamic document, which is subject to review in the light of assessment results. There is a sound range of activities that are available outside normal school hours. These are open to all, but some are intended to provide more challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The department uses assessment well to chart progress and to maintain records of levels of achievement. The assessment of pupils' work is used to review the teaching of the department. There has also been some use analysis of results to set targets for the future.
90. Pupils' numeracy skills are good throughout the school. Pupils use calculators well, but are not dependent on them. Pupils handle different kinds of data competently in history, science and physical education and present it in a variety of ways. Pupils' mental arithmetic skills, graphical skills, measurement and the use of equations develop well through applications in science, drama, technology and graphics. Although there are many opportunities for pupils to develop numeracy skills, these are not planned as part of an overall school policy.
91. There has been a good response to the last inspection. There has been a change in the material used to teach the course and the increase in pace and rigour has resulted in a rise in standards. Assessment has developed and there is some internal monitoring of performance. This is a hardworking department with much strength. There is a range of expertise that is frequently shared; staff are not complacent but have a desire to improve.
91. **Science**
92. The 1998 end of Key Stage 3 national tests show that attainment in science is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils obtaining the higher levels 6 and 7 was close to the national average. Pupils' performance in the Key Stage 3 science tests was above average in comparison with schools that have pupils from similar backgrounds. The performance of boys was similar to that of girls in the three years from 1996 to 1998. Again, taking the three years from 1996 to 1998, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 was close to the national average. Attainment in the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 3 was the same as that in 1998 for pupils attaining level 5 but was not as good as in 1998 for those attaining the higher level 6. In the 1998 GCSE

examinations in double award science, biology, chemistry and physics the proportion of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades was below average. When the results at the end of Key Stage 4 are amalgamated for all pupils taking all science papers, overall results for grades A\*-C are only just below the national averages. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\* and A grades is below national averages. The major reason that results in the separate sciences at Key Stage 4 are below national averages is that the school has an appropriate non-selective entry policy. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 GCSE examinations was higher than in 1998 for double award science, physics and biology, but significantly lower for chemistry.

93. Inspection evidence shows that attainment is in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 3. This reflects pupils' performance in the 1999 national examinations. Within the range of science seen during the inspection, many pupils show satisfactory attainment in investigative science, life processes and living things and physical processes. Their attainment in materials and their properties is less good. By the end of the key stage, pupils in Key Stage 3 satisfactorily carry out investigations into conduction, convection and radiation. They discuss how energy from the sun transfers into fossil fuels and suitably carry out experiments to measure the extension of a rubber band as masses are added.
94. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is in line with national standards in double award science, biology and physics. It is below average in chemistry. Higher attaining pupils at the end of the key stage perform simple calculations on Ohm's law successfully, study properties of thermistors and are familiar with the detailed properties of leaf structures. Middle attainers observe, record and analyse scientific data appropriately in an experiment on photosynthesis. Lower attainers make up appropriate circuits to measure current and resistance. There is no coherent approach to building up key scientific vocabulary throughout the science department, although there are examples of outstanding practice in some individual classes, particularly in biology. Whilst there are strengths in some of the work which has been carried out in Key Stage 4 since the last inspection, attainment, particularly in chemistry, has shown no consistently improving pattern.
95. There is evidence to show that some improvements have been made in the science department since the last inspection in terms of greater laboratory provision and more consistency in homework. Further work remains to be done to address the issues of pupils having work which is sufficiently challenging, teachers in many classes posing questions which are suitably probing and raising levels of attainment in science, particularly in chemistry in Key Stage 4.
96. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. In Year 7, pupils appropriately find out from which surface balls bounce best. By Year 8, they carry out appropriate experiments to measure their own speed. In Year 9, they have moved on to an understanding of the concept of different forms of energy. In Year 10, pupils plan and carry out experiments on osmosis satisfactorily and by Year 11 their experimental skills have developed further, although they are still unsatisfactory in chemistry. Progress is steady within each year group, but is generally greater in biology than in physics and greater in physics than in chemistry. Factors aiding progress in the school include the attitudes of most of the pupils, the small size of some of the classes and the overall standard of teaching. Factors that are holding up greater progress are the lack of high expectations by teachers of some sets, including those for lower and middle attainers, the slow pace of some lessons in which pupils are given too much time to tackle work and pupils in some classes not having the necessary technical vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress. Pupils with higher prior attainment in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are generally making satisfactory progress although pupils could be stretched further with more challenging questions in the top sets in Key Stage 4, particularly in chemistry.
97. Pupils' response in lessons seen is good in both key stages. Pupils' attitudes to science are usually positive and they generally reflect the enthusiasm of the teacher. In some lessons where the pace is too slow and the work is too easy, pupils waste time and do not progress as well as they could. Relationships, overall, in the science department between pupils and with their teachers are good. Pupils treat scientific apparatus sensibly and follow most of the safety instructions, although occasionally some pupils do not wear eye protection when practical work is being carried out.
98. The overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages. The teaching in about one in four lessons is very

good and in about one in four is good. On occasions, it is excellent and in about one in ten lessons it is unsatisfactory. The best lessons had a very brisk purposeful pace, teachers thoroughly assessed what the pupils knew, understood and could do, set high expectations and metered out time in small portions so that pupils stayed on task. This department has some very good teachers. Such lessons had a rigorous way of teaching the topic so that the pupils were left in no doubt as to the method to follow. In the less satisfactory and unsatisfactory lessons there was a slow pace, with low expectations of what pupils were really capable of achieving and instructions were unclear. In all the lessons observed, teachers had at least satisfactory knowledge and understanding and planning was satisfactory, overall. There is a lack of consistency in teachers' approach to how their pupils should write up their experiments, with some accepting low-level work unnecessarily. Some teachers have put in a lot of work to help raise pupils' knowledge and understanding of key scientific terminology, but this practice is not spread consistently across the department. Marking of pupils' work was generally satisfactory with appropriate marks given for effort and attainment. However there were sometimes too few diagnostic comments and points to further stretch those pupils who had obtained full marks. Homework was usually appropriate to back up work carried out.

99. The school has satisfactory resources, overall. However, in chemistry, there is a lack of sufficient basic equipment for pupils to perform titrations accurately. Whilst many of the laboratories are bright, clean and stimulating, a minority are uncared for with dirty, blocked-up sinks and a general air of neglect. The use of resources to support the work in hand is satisfactory and supports learning. The scheme of work covers the requirements of the national curriculum; at Key Stage 4, there is a lack of cross-referencing between biology, chemistry and physics to ensure that topics are not unnecessarily repeated. Pupils are set in science according to their prior attainment from Year 7. Setting is having a positive effect on raising standards but there is a tendency for some sets to be treated as 'low ability' sets, rather than sets of pupils who, whilst currently low attainers, have the potential to succeed. The department runs a popular and worthwhile science club. The head of science is recently appointed and is most capable. He has not yet been given time to carry out any regular, formal monitoring of teaching, nor have there been any opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues' lessons, to help to spread the very good practice in the department.

## OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### 99. Art

100. In the end of Key Stage 3 teachers' assessments in 1998 pupils' attainment was broadly average and it has improved steadily over recent years. Over the 1996 to 1998 period GCSE results were below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C and A\*-G. The exception was in 1997 where results were above the national average for grades A\*-C and A\*-G. The 1999 results reflect the pattern established in previous years. Boys perform better than girls in sculpture, although, overall, girls perform significantly better than boys.
101. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above average, overall; it is above average in sculpture and graphics but below average in drawing and painting and the use of sketchbooks. The carousel arrangement allows pupils to develop discrete knowledge, skills and understanding in specific art areas, often to a high standard. However, the lack of a basic skills course in painting and drawing techniques and the poor development of study skills prohibit pupils from developing the confidence to explain their ideas visually or make connections between different areas of the subject.
102. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is average, overall. The majority of pupils develop above average knowledge, skills and understanding in photography, sculpture and to a lesser extent in graphics, although drawing and painting skills are below average. Study skills are weak in this key stage and critical studies are not informing pupils' sensitivity to painting practices. In Year 11, pupils take and process photographic images and design and make an innovative sculpture well. However, their reluctance to communicate their ideas on paper in sufficient detail and accuracy, leads to lower than expected examination results.
103. Progress in Key Stage 3 is good, overall. In practical activities, progress is good for the majority of pupils,

although for some, especially in the development of painting skills it is unsatisfactory. Progress in the development of knowledge and understanding about art and artists is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, overall. They are well supported in practical activities, although their literacy needs are not sufficiently taken into account, for example, in the size and positioning of key words in some art rooms. In Year 9, the majority of pupils make good progress in developing figurative sculpture. In Year 8, pupils progress well in printing a design, based on a North American Indian theme. The new drawing course in Year 7 ensures that pupils are making very good progress in gaining confidence in the use of drawing techniques. Progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall. Pupils make best progress when they have clear targets, are confident in their own skills and have a deep commitment to succeed. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' progress is good in photography, sculpture and for the majority of pupils taking graphics. In Year 10, progress in painting and drawing is unsatisfactory. In Year 11 progress in painting and drawing is satisfactory for the higher attaining pupils with middle and lower attainers making unsatisfactory progress. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make sound progress at both key stages.

104. Attitudes are good overall. Pupils behave well and concentrate on their work. Relationships are good and the art rooms are orderly workplaces. Pupils take pride in the quality of work they produce and concentrate well. In discussion they are keen to offer their ideas and talk about their work. Most work well independently, although in less challenging lessons pupils occasionally become distracted.
105. Teaching is good overall and rarely less than satisfactory. It is often very good, although one lesson was unsatisfactory. The teachers are well qualified and experienced and are well supported by a technician who renders valuable service for all disciplines. Most teachers know their pupils well and the majority have a commitment to higher standards. Teachers with a sensitivity to their pupils' needs and high expectations ensure better progress and produce higher standards than those who have a more limited vision of pupils' potential. In general, subject knowledge is very good, although knowledge of painting skills required in current art courses is not secure. Teachers know the pupils well, assess work regularly and give useful feedback to pupils to help them improve their work. The range of teaching methods used is sound, overall, although there is insufficient inclusion of opportunities for pupils to study for themselves or to write about their work.
106. The subject is well led and its documentation is carefully considered and related to whole school issues. The department has good accommodation and excellent facilities, particularly in photography. Resources are good, overall, and specially good for photography and sculpture, but there are too few books and materials for art and graphics.
107. The department has made good progress since the last inspection, including the implementation of information communication technology. Statutory requirements are met, although the Key Stage 3 curriculum currently lacks depth in knowledge and understanding of drawing and painting techniques and Key Stage 4 pupils get too few opportunities for enrichment, by visiting galleries or studying their own locality. Risk assessments have not been carried out for each art area.
107. **Business studies and sociology**
108. Both business studies and sociology are subjects that are taught only at Key Stage 4. They feature as options and they have a healthy take up.
109. Attainment in business studies in the GCSE examination in 1998 was above average and in 1999 the results showed a sharp rise over previous years. Over time, the results have varied, but have never fallen below the national average; in some years they have been well above. Although there are many more boys than girls studying the subject, there is no imbalance in the results obtained. Pupils have a firm knowledge and understanding of the elements of what makes business work, its financial structure and the environment in which business works. Virtually all pupils can identify management types and their effect on the workplace. Descriptive pieces and longer accounts seen in course work show sound levels of writing skills.
110. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment in sociology is above average, including those pupils with special educational needs. Over recent years, the GCSE results have normally been in line with or above

national averages. Although below the average proportion of A\*-C grades were obtained in 1998, national comparisons are difficult because the number of pupils entered was small. The 1999 results were better than those of 1998. More girls than boys choose sociology, but this does not adversely affect the results of either gender. The great majority of pupils understand the specific vocabulary needed for the subject and can apply it to their studies, such as 'socialisation' and its effects on attitudes and behaviour of people in differing circumstances. Most have good awareness of the different techniques needed to find out new information, such as the various formulae for questionnaires, and can apply them. Literacy, particularly in the course work shows sound command of grammar and the ability to balance pros and cons.

111. Progress through Key Stage 4 for both subjects is good. From no previous knowledge the majority of pupils progress to a familiarity with the structure of business in general. Higher attaining pupils can describe the success of a real business such as the establishment of a local restaurant. They can all identify what is needed for a business to flourish – the examination of the business environment, analysis of competition, and financial structure. The final course work at its best is illustrated with supportive material, both graphic and photographic, underpinned by cogent argument and detailed analysis. In sociology, good progress is shown in the variety of work tackled by individuals, showing confident use of research techniques, such as observation, interview and questionnaires. In the topics studied, for example, toys and games, and gender roles, pupils use well-designed hypotheses to guide their search for relevant information and guard against personal bias.
112. Pupils' attitudes in both subjects are good. All pupils are willing volunteers for these new subjects. They listen well to the teachers and each other with rapt attention, answering questions and putting forward their own views readily. In group or individual work concentration is high and, in role-play lessons, pupils work well together. Every pupil shows good levels of courtesy and respects views put forward by classmates and teacher alike. Course work in both courses shows a sound development of personal study skills. The nature of both subjects widens pupils' horizons beyond Sunderland. Pupils know the school's expected standards of behaviour and respect them, regarding the rules as both fair and fairly applied. Cultural development is limited, although the approach of sociology helps pupils to develop non-judgmental attitudes to other societies.
113. Teaching in both subjects is, overall, satisfactory, with a small proportion of good teaching. The fundamental basis in all lessons is good subject knowledge, conveyed with enthusiasm. Good planning ensures that the lessons are appropriate to the material – from the effective use of blackboard to illustrate the different kinds and uses of questionnaire, to the role play of involvement in the hectic world of running a business. Most lessons have sound question and answer sessions to ensure that pupils have learned and understood, whilst others are devoted to individual development of research skills, as in preparation for course work. There is always time available for pupils to air their own views, encouraged by an open approach to discussion. Where teaching is good, a brisk pace is accompanied by the use of humour and good relationships to move learning along. Over-reliance on reading texts sometimes slows learning but never makes the teaching less than satisfactory.
114. The Curriculum in both subjects is solidly based in the syllabus for GCSE examinations. Although the groups are unbalanced, with majorities consisting of girls in sociology and boys in business studies, there is no apparent reason for this since there is a free choice at the end of Year 9, and the staffing in both subjects is entirely male. Individual approaches by all staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and all gain expected success at the end of the courses, with some performing well, especially in business studies. Planning is seamless and assessment meticulous and are used to guide both immediate and future lessons.
115. Both departments are strongly led by staff who believe in the value of their subject to their students. The management of the subjects is satisfactory. The ethos in which the subjects are taught reflects the aims of the school to high standards and thus to high grades in examinations. There is a good spread of expertise and experience amongst staff. Accommodation is satisfactory and recent improvement in the business studies area gives scope for wider use of information technology than is current. Resources are sufficient and well managed, with the funds available being used effectively.



115. **Design and technology**

116. In the end of Key Stage 3, teachers' assessments in 1998 about half of the pupils obtained the expected levels and in 1999 results improved. Since 1997 there has been steady improvement in standards. In the 1998 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils obtaining A\* - C grades was below average. In food technology and textiles the results were better than in resistant materials. Overall, 1998 results were a slight improvement on those of 1997 and the results for 1999 showed continuing improvement in the subject.
117. By the end of Key Stage 3 inspection evidence shows that pupils' attainment exceeds expectations. The focus on developing skills has ensured a high standard in all areas of design and technology. Pupils have an understanding of designing and ways of presenting their work to communicate their ideas for designs by the end of Year 9. Standards of technical skills are good, overall. Pupils understand the working characteristics of a range of materials and how to use tools safely and accurately. The quality of finished products demonstrates an attention to detail, accuracy and precision. When making a mechanical toy, using cams and levers, pupils fit their design to very specific needs, select suitable materials and use construction processes confidently and with some accuracy. In textiles, pupils' demonstrate some excellent technical skills, contributing to high quality products, as seen, for example, in a project on making cotton place mats. In food technology they learn how to make cakes, bake biscuits and evaluate the nutritional content of different types of soup. Pupils are able to make decisions about suitable ingredients and have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy balanced diet. They are developing their knowledge of the use of tools and materials when making storage boxes and constructing bridges.
118. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment exceeds national expectations. Current work with resistant materials, graphics, textiles and food technology is of a high standard and pupils pay particular attention to accuracy and quality of finish. Pupils make informed choices based on their high levels of understanding of construction techniques to produce detailed designs. The highest attaining pupils produce detailed designs and plans showing that considerable thought has been given to form, function and style. Work is accurate, planned to a rigorous specification and is invariably well presented .
119. Pupils make good progress, overall, as they move through the school. In Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils enter Year 7 with levels of attainment that are below average, overall, and, in their early lessons, make good progress in learning practical skills and the underlying theory as a result of carefully structured lessons with clear learning objectives. Pupils have opportunities to solve problems and work independently or in small groups, to develop their skills of investigation and research and this aids their progress. The department emphasises good standards of graphical skills and presentation of work. Pupils make good progress in their work in resistant materials, textiles, electronics, graphics and food technology. There is no difference in the progress of boys or girls, and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
120. In Key Stage 4, pupils are able to consolidate their learning satisfactorily and build on their skills of designing, their practical competence to solve more complex problems of design and their knowledge of food preparation. They know how their work is assessed and quickly learn how to judge their standards and how to improve. Pupils in the higher sets, particularly electronics and food technology, make rapid progress, responding well to the challenge and pace of lessons. Pupils with special education needs generally make good progress and, sometimes, very good progress when extra support is provided in class.
121. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils to learning are always good. Pupils show an interest in their work and maintain high levels of concentration and work to their best standards. They listen attentively and watch carefully to understand what they must do and to carry out practical tasks accurately. They show pride in their achievements. Pupils co-operate well with teachers and work responsibly in all practical areas without close supervision. They take responsibility for their areas of work and in organising their tasks.
122. Teaching throughout the department is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan well to ensure that lessons have suitable pace. The most effective lessons have clear, short term objectives and are well planned, with careful attention paid to the sequence of activities, which contributes to the good pace. This

makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make. Practical activities are well organised and the supervision of lessons effective, with appropriate interventions to support and sustain individual pupils' learning and maintain appropriate expectations. Teachers' expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour are high and work is flexibly planned to provide for pupils' different levels of attainment and interests. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and teachers give helpful oral and written comments. Assessment concentrates upon tracking experiences and outcomes and is used to inform what pupils need to do to improve their work. Homework is set to reinforce the content of lessons.

123. The subject is managed well, with a clear vision and direction leading to effective strategies to promote raising standards. Curriculum time and funding are satisfactory. Accommodation is generous and a good level of tools and other resources enhances the coverage of the programmes of study and the standards that pupils can attain. The technician staff make a significant contribution to the organisation of the department. The use of display in classrooms and open spaces around the department provides interest and stimulation. At present, there are very few opportunities for pupils to use computers in design technology lessons. There are no details in the scheme of work on the use of control systems, computer aided design, spreadsheets and data bases. The department does not carry out any risk assessment at present. There is no effective ventilation system or external dust extraction unit in the timber preparation area and this creates an unhealthy working environment.
124. The department has responded well to the last inspection. There has been an improvement in the levels of attainment and progress. The quality of teaching has improved. Display of pupils work is now a prominent feature of the department. Issues which still need to be addressed from the previous report are the use of computers to support the teaching of design technology and issues related to health and safety.
- 124.
124. **Drama**
125. In drama, GCSE results were below the national average in 1998 and were at their lowest level after a downward trend. In 1999 the proportion of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades was significantly higher than in 1998. Except for 1998, girls' average examination performance has always been significantly better than that of the boys but in that year it was only slightly better.
126. Standards in drama are good by the end of both key stages and are a result of the clear focus on supporting individual pupils and providing challenging work. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils produce interesting designs for costume and make-up for productions such as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', although they do not produce enough written work to support the practical work they do. Other pupils make very inventive and original designs for Romeo and Juliet. Lower attaining pupils show thought and a sense of colour in their designs for Hiawatha.. Some pupils have very clear ideas of what they want to perform. Most can act naturally but there are still too many who are rather inhibited when performing for the rest of the class. Some boys display good spatial awareness and fluid, controlled movement.
127. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils keep very full performance diaries which are carefully composed and show good use of information technology. An example of this was seen in the work of a higher attaining GCSE candidate who gave a clear, instructive account and analysis of her own commentary on 'Shirley Valentine' and 'Educating Rita'. In Year 11, some pupils work on costume design to a satisfactory standard, although often derivative in style. Others, who have chosen the performance option, show real acting talent and the ability to improvise around a theme such as "power". They speak very expressively and clearly.
128. Progress is good at Key Stages 3 and 4. As pupils move through the key stages, their written pieces lengthen and improve in the quality of expression. They are also more meticulously illustrated. At both stages, some valuable experiences are acquired as pupils overcome difficulties in bringing performances from page to performance and learn how much time they need to do so. Year 9 groups practise make-up and show a wide range of perception and increased self-confidence. By means of role-play, games, movement and mime, pupils make particular progress in imaginative and swift response as part of their preparation for later work on improvisation and performance. In Year 8, pupils explore characterisation and the appropriate physical changes that their roles entail. Year 7 spend their time learning the basic skills necessary for the rest of their drama course such as teamwork, listening, problem solving, confidence building, independence and presenting

to others.

129. Pupils' attitudes are good. More girls than boys take drama at GCSE. Motivation improves at Key Stage 4 and many pupils develop a capacity for personal study and for good group work. Behaviour is mature and pupils are co-operative, willingly participating in the extra-curricular activities which the staff arrange. Gender and ageist issues often feature in role-play and older pupils show increased ability to empathise. When involved in group work, pupils display initiative and willingness to take responsibility. Some like to direct and others prefer to enable the work to proceed.
130. The standard of teaching is mostly good and occasionally very good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and they plan lessons well. They use a variety of teaching methods and include opportunities for discussion and debate. The main strength of the teachers is their wish to help all pupils to make the most of their talents. To this end they set extension tasks for the highest attaining pupils and handouts are especially designed to provide for individual needs. They assess pupils' work with insight and use their findings to inform their teaching. Sometimes, they allow pupils to waste time if there are too many groups doing too wide a variety of tasks and requiring too much attention at the same time. Marking is conscientiously done and targets for improvement are indicated with advice on how these may be achieved. Self-assessment is emphasised and pupils practise evaluating their own work and the performances of others. Classroom management of pupils is good and arises from the well planned teaching, challenging work and variety of activities provided.
131. The department is effectively managed and led. Resources and accommodation are particularly good, up-to-date and well used, but there is a serious lack of reference books in the department.

## **Geography**

132. In the end of Key Stage 3 teachers' assessment in 1998, the proportion of pupils obtaining the expected levels was below average and a small proportion reached the higher levels. The results in 1999 were better than the results of 1998 and inspection evidence confirms these results. In 1998, GCSE results were broadly in line with national averages at A\*-C and A\*-G grades. There was a steady improvement in GCSE results between 1995 and 1998. In 1999, the proportion of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades was lower than in 1998, but exceeded the school's predictions.
133. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is below national expectations, overall.. The highest attaining pupils have broadly average knowledge. For example, they learn appropriate key words associated with mapwork in comparing Seaburn with Benidorm as a holiday resort. The same pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the positive and negative effects of tourism. Most have a sound knowledge of the structure and function of a river channel, but many have difficulty using the appropriate language to help them explain their thinking. Literacy skills for many pupils are below average, which has an impact on the quality of work, for example, in producing holiday brochures
134. By the end of Key Stage 4, the attainment of pupils is broadly average. In work on natural hazards, the highest attaining pupils have a good understanding of the plate structure of the earth's surface and how it can lead to earthquakes. They have a good understanding of the disruption caused to human activity by volcanic eruptions. Most pupils grasp how information is gathered to predict when earthquakes may occur. In examining local issues, lower attaining pupils have a basic knowledge of how traffic problems arise on local roads. However, in studying some areas of the subject they find difficulty in using their knowledge to explain their understanding.
135. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, overall, and is improving as a result of teaching focusing on clear learning objectives. This is evident, for example, in Years 7 and 8 where attainment is rising as a result of good progress in basic geographical skills and effective use of mathematical skills to enhance the quality of mapwork. Progress observed in class is good; pupils' are developing good learning skills as a result of challenging teaching. Pupils are beginning to use information well to make choices and to solve problems.
136. Progress at Key Stage 4 is good and is better in Year 10 than in Year 11. Pupils' mapwork skills develop significantly and the highest attaining pupils make good progress in their work to track the plate boundaries to

show where earthquakes are most likely to happen. Lower attaining pupils make good progress in understanding the economic difficulties of farming, although their oral explanations are more detailed than their written work. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, overall, at both key stages and good progress where there is individual support, but this is rare.

137. Attitudes are good. Pupils are punctual to lessons and well prepared for learning. They settle to work quickly and maintain their concentration over the whole lesson. Behaviour is good and pupils work well together and co-operate well with their teachers as a result of the well established working relationships. They respond well to the effective use of resources, for example, the stimulus of photographs, maps and atlases and video-recordings to provide vivid images of natural disasters. Pupils often work in periods of silence, which are well used by teachers to encourage concentration and independent work, but lessons at other times, have a buzz of working conversation, encouraging a high level of collaborative work.
138. Teaching is good. It is occasionally of very high quality and never less than satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection. Examination classes in 1998-99 experienced late changes of teacher, compounded this year by long-term sickness absence. However, the school has made effective arrangements that ensure that attainment and progress are maintained this term. Lessons are well planned and good materials are well prepared in advance. The aims of lessons are clear so that the pupils know what they have to do and why. Instructions are clear and crisp; the pace of lessons is good with varied tasks to ensure continued engagement of the pupils which is effective in maintaining good discipline. New female staff offer good role models for girls, which has a positive impact on girls' progress. Regular marking allows teachers to accumulate accurate information by which to identify individual pupils' progress. Marking is thorough and feedback both oral and written is constructive.
139. The department is well led and is being carefully steered through the departure of long-established teachers, the appointment of new staff and the adoption of fundamental changes of both examination syllabus and teaching style. Leadership remains positive and direction clear. The consequence is rising standards. However, neither report writing nor target setting is linked to simple, identifiable criteria to help pupils identify accurately what constitutes attainment and what they have to do to improve. Time allocation at both key stages is lower than is usual in many schools which limits the depth to which some topics are taught, restricts the amount of field work done, the use of information technology and extended enquiries at Key Stage 3. The frequent use of mathematics in geography lacks planned progression, although in early Key Stage 3, for example it is used well.

## History

140. In the end of Key Stage 3 teachers' assessments in 1998 the attainment of pupils was broadly average and in 1999 results were similar. In the 1998 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades was below average, but coincided with the first attempt at a new examination syllabus, the format of which was not familiar to the teachers. Attainment in the GCSE examination over recent years was in line with national averages. Results in 1999 show a return to the previous levels.
141. By the end of both key stages, attainment is in line with the standards expected. By the end of Key Stage 3, all pupils recognise the importance of evidence as the basis for obtaining facts and forming views on historical events. Higher attaining pupils interpret evidence effectively and use their own experiences and values well to explain how, for example, war artist evidence from English, French and German artists, most describes the change in attitudes of front line soldiers by the end of the war. Higher attaining pupils interpret the feelings of soldiers towards people at home well and understand that their experiences will influence their views of what they will do when the war has ended. By the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE the majority of pupils have a sound understanding of the history of medicine and how ideas about what causes illness and disease have developed. Higher attaining pupils use technical vocabulary accurately. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of the social and economic factors that enabled the opening up of the American West and the highest attaining pupils have a good grasp of how these factors influenced early settlers into moving their families to unknown territories. Pupils use secondary sources competently for their research; the highest attaining pupils obtain significantly more detail from these materials.

142. Progress in both key stages is satisfactory. From the beginning, pupils use evidential approaches well and also acquire a sound factual base. For example, they know that Harold and William the Conqueror fought at the Battle of Hastings, and that Henry VIII had six wives. By using written and pictorial evidence in Year 8, however, they can also see how and why Henry came to change the church in England. The higher attaining pupils understand the power struggles that surrounded those events. In Year 9, the study of the two world wars gives insights into the background of the present day. By this time, all pupils including those with special educational needs use and understand the importance of source material and can make judgements appropriate to their levels of attainment. By reading letters home from World War I soldiers, they can see how the enthusiasm of going off to fight changed because of the fighting conditions. The higher attaining pupils use and evaluate evidence effectively, such as the acting in 'Blackadder' to understand the effect of the views of the commanding officers and the technology of war on the lives of the men in the trenches, as well as the longer lasting effects. They understand how this influenced the views of politicians in the 1930s. Those who choose to study history in Key Stage 4, a substantial number, develop skills and knowledge well in tracing the development of medicine through time and the development of the American West. They understand for example, that there is continuity of belief in practitioners of medicine from one culture to another and that the reasons for people 'going west' were complex and responded as much to the attractions of a new life as to wanting to get away from an old one. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages.
143. The attitudes of the vast majority of pupils are good, with a lively learning atmosphere in most classes. This makes a good impact on learning, with a readiness to answer questions and give opinions based on the evidence they are using. Pupils display a non-judgemental view on people in different societies through the ages. Behaviour in class is overwhelmingly good thus providing a good learning environment.
144. Teaching is satisfactory, overall; about one third is good, predominantly in Key Stage 3. Lessons are based on sound long-term plans and secure lesson plans. Questions and answer techniques are skilfully used and at their best are open and directed, to involve all pupils including those with special educational needs to understand, for example, that the result of Thomas Cromwell's inspection of the abbeys was directly influenced by what Henry VIII wanted. Where teaching is good, questions are challenging, as are expectations of the teachers, such as when analysing the pictorial evidence of World War I. The pace of lessons is usually good, with time for pupils to think about and consider their own feelings and reactions to historical events, for example, how soldiers in the trenches would feel about families back in England. Teachers use a sound range of approaches and resources, including drama and video-clips. There is little use of different work specifically set for pupils of different prior attainment. However, teachers know their classes well and give individual attention and provide challenging work to stretch pupils to their maximum. There is a consistency of approach by all teachers that ensures that any change of teacher from year to year causes minimal detriment to pupils' learning.
145. The subject is well managed and there is a close collaboration among all staff. The curriculum is well planned, taking account of the learning needs of all pupils. Assessment is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress and to help guide their learning. Monitoring of teaching is informal and not as effective as other aspects of management, lessening the good impact of a closely-knit department of well-qualified teachers. Below average allocation of time in Key Stage 3 means that some elements of the subject are not covered to the depth they require. Nevertheless, there is a good ethos for learning in all classes. Accommodation is good and is backed up by adequate resources. Good use is made of video clips, and effective use of information technology.
146. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection. There has been an improvement in the use of information technology. The recent change in syllabus, after a poor start, is showing signs of being of benefit to the whole range of pupils taking the subject at GCSE.

#### 146. **Information technology**

147. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 show that the majority of pupils obtained the average and higher levels. 1999 results indicated that standards have been maintained, and since 1997 standards have risen. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels has risen steadily since 1997. In the 1998 GCSE

examinations the percentage of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades was below average and in 1999 results were better. Results have fluctuated over the last three years.

148. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in the taught information technology lessons is above the national expectation and this is reflected in the end of key stage teachers' assessments. Pupils have good skills in word processing, helping to improve their spelling and presentation of work. They are familiar with spreadsheets to organise information and the simple use of formulae to make calculations. The use of computers for the strands of the programmes of study is above that expected for pupils of a similar age and they have sufficient opportunity to develop skills in the use of desk top publishing, simple drawing packages and the use of a data base. They have limited opportunities to develop skills in the use of control systems and the use of two- and three-dimensional graphics.
149. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment in information technology is above the expected standard for 16 year old pupils. Higher attaining pupils are confident enough to work independently. For example, using a wide range of software applications, they skilfully produce portfolios based on the promotion of a product or service; they use graphs, charts, text and graphics. This is achieved to a very high standard of content and presentation. They have opportunities to apply their skills to solve more complex problems, particularly in handling information and data. The higher attaining pupils understand and use applications to organise, refine and present information for different purposes and produce results of good quality. They are able to discuss their work with confidence, solve problems and come to reasonable conclusions when given a task to complete. The majority of pupils use keyboards well, moving text and graphics around the screen competently, editing, saving and printing their work confidently.
150. In both key stages, the majority of pupils make progress through a range of opportunities to develop aspects of information handling, word processing, combining text and graphics. The quality of teaching, particularly the personal interaction between teacher and pupil, but also the challenge and the opportunities for pupils to work independently, play a significant part in enabling pupils to progress well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; they often find working individually, with the support provided by teachers, beneficial to their particular needs.
151. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge of and application of a wide range of skills. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers and practise these skills in their other subjects which helps their progress. In art, they create images using a scanner and digital camera. In mathematics, they use logo and spreadsheets. In English lessons, they use desk top publishing for creative writing. Their progress in the use of control systems and computer aided drawing is less satisfactory as insufficient attention is paid to these aspects.
152. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and behave very well in lessons. They treat equipment with care and work hard to master new skills. All lessons include much independent work, which pupils enjoy as their confidence grows. Pupils arrive promptly for lessons and are prepared to use their own time to complete work. They are co-operative and responsive, listen carefully to teachers' instructions, read the guidance material thoroughly and try to work accurately. They enjoy discussions about their work, set themselves suitable targets to achieve and try to meet them.
153. Teaching is good in specialist lessons. There are also examples of competent teaching in English, mathematics, science, business studies, art and some other subjects, which contributes to pupils' acquisition of subject knowledge and skills. Lessons are planned to a high standard and have suitable challenge. The management of classes is good. Clear targets are set for pupils of similar levels of attainment. This careful matching of work motivates pupils and maintains their interest. Learning objectives are clearly stated and work is flexibly planned to provide for pupils' different levels of attainment. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and teachers give helpful oral and written comments. Assessment concentrates upon tracking experiences and outcomes and is used to inform what pupils need to do to improve their work. Homework is set to reinforce the content of lessons. The good resources are used well. This aspect has improved since the last inspection. Relationships are very good and the skilled support given to pupils in their work quickly builds their confidence.

154. The leadership and management of the department are good, with a clear vision and direction leading to effective strategies to promote curricular improvements. Curriculum time and funding are satisfactory. The department has responded well to the last inspection and improvements made include an increased challenge in work set for pupils and improvement in access. Technical support is very good. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers during the lunchtime and there is an after school study club where pupils can develop their computer skills and have access to the internet. The school's provision is good but there is insufficient use of computer aided design and control systems. Pupils' achievements across the curriculum are not assessed or fully recognised. Training has been provided for staff so that they can use applications and access the network. Opportunities for the consistent application and development of information technology in other subjects is not sufficiently planned or co-ordinated to achieve full coherence and progression.

**154. Modern foreign languages**

155. In the end of Key Stage 3 teachers' assessments in 1998 the attainment of pupils was below average. These results were worse than those in 1997 and, although there are no national averages for comparison in 1999, the proportions of pupils obtaining the average and higher levels was lower than in 1998. Generally, standards are falling and attainment has not risen over time in common with national averages or with other subjects in the school. In both French and German, the results for girls are higher than those for boys, but the difference is no greater than that found nationally. There are no significant differences across the four aspects of the subject although speaking is marginally the strongest. In the 1998 GCSE examinations the level of A\*-C passes, in both French and German, was below the national average, below the average for similar schools and below the level of most of the other subjects in the school. In the 1999 GCSE, the proportion of pupil obtaining A\*-C grades was lower than in 1998.

156. By the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of pupils is below average. By age 14, pupils can answer questions about such topics as countries in Europe, the parts of the human body, food and drink, sports and leisure, healthy eating and descriptions of people. Pupils are generally attentive listeners to tapes, teachers or other pupils talking, but their understanding is limited. There is a minority of pupils at the start of Key stage 3 who have under developed listening skills, but there is a general improvement over the key stage. Speaking is marginally the strongest of the four aspects of the subjects because many lessons place an emphasis on it. Pupils are generally confident speakers, but the responses required by teachers are often short and not sufficiently demanding. These are well below the national curriculum levels expected. Pupils' reading skills are unsatisfactory. They often skim passages in textbooks to find the answers to questions, but they do not have enough planned opportunities to read at length or use a wider range of texts. In their written work, pupils, in general, do not make satisfactory progression from writing single words or phrases to longer paragraphs using a variety of language and verb tenses. These are not at an appropriate level to raise standards. Some higher attaining pupils in Year 9 produce pieces of extended writing, but they are not very long and the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is low. Pupils with special educational needs acquire basic language skills. Middle and higher attaining pupils do not reach their maximum potential because of a lack of work tailored to their specific needs and a lack of extension work in lessons for those pupils who finish their work quickly. The previous report stated that "able pupils under-achieve," and this is still the case.

157. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is still below average, mainly because of the weak base established in Key Stage 3. By the age of 16, pupils return to the topics studied in Key Stage 3 and add others such as studies of cities, the media, careers and employment, tourism and the local environment. The level of texts for reading improves because they are mainly those that are used in GCSE examinations. Similarly, the nature of the examination requirements allows more scope for written work, but higher attaining pupils do not produce extended writing on a wide range of topics. When they are allowed greater scope, higher attaining pupils produce good work. For example, Year 11 pupils produced quite good poetry.

158. Progress in Key stage 3 is unsatisfactory because the level of work in most classes does not present a suitable challenge to raise standards. Where the teaching does provide good variety, pace and challenge, pupils' progress is better, as for example, in a Year 7 French class who were already developing a sound vocabulary base and were able to use and vary their language with confidence. In a Year 9 German class, the teacher's skilled use of question and answer made pupils think about and vary their use of language to answer his

questions. Overall, in Key stage 4, pupils make satisfactory progress, but this is not sufficient to improve their performance in time for GCSE examinations. Boys make less progress than girls. Because of the basic level of work provided, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but this then limits the progress of middle and higher attaining pupils.

159. Behaviour in class and pupils' attitudes to work are generally very good. However, in one Year 11 lesson, a majority of the boys were uncooperative and rude to the teacher. There are limited opportunities for pupils to undertake personal study, especially in Key stage 3. There are good relationships between pupils and with their teachers in the vast majority of lessons.
160. Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, although there is a good teaching in almost one fifth of lessons. In a majority of the lessons, the principal weakness of the teaching is a failure to set work at a level that will either challenge pupils or raise standards. For instance, it is not work at an appropriate level for higher attaining sets in year 9 to be doing "fill the blank space" exercises or for pupils in the higher sets in Year 8 to be writing only short phrases in their written work. This applies especially to middle and higher attaining pupils. In addition, most teachers do not provide extension work for pupils who finish their work quickly and this leads to time being wasted. Where the teaching is poor, rather than unsatisfactory, there is the additional factor of the teacher having limited strategies to overcome some challenging behaviour from the pupils. There are, however, strengths in the teaching. The majority of the teachers have good class control and subject knowledge is good. In the best lessons, there is little wasted time and the target language is used well, a weakness mentioned in the previous report which has now largely been corrected. Regular homework is set. Pupils' books are marked and corrected satisfactorily. The teachers show a high level of care and commitment to the pupils and are freely available to give help and advice, often running extra lessons after school. In the good lessons, teachers provide work which makes the pupils think about the use of language, gives good variety to maintain interest and is set at a level which provides challenge and raises levels of attainment.
161. The departmental handbook and schemes of work have been much revised and up-dated and now provide for good continuity across and within the key stages, so that pupils have a progressive programme of work. There is good use of assessment to track pupils' progress and attainment, but little use is made of the data available to set targets or to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. The time allowance is generous at Key Stage 3. The school has two exchange arrangements, in conjunction with another local school, for exchange visits with schools in Germany and France. These provide good social and cultural development for the pupils. There has been some instability in staffing in recent years and this has had an additional effect on attainment and progress. The head of department has no regular, structured time to monitor and support teaching in the department and this is not being done on a systematic basis by the senior management team. Statutory appraisal is not in place, and this combination of factors has meant that there has been little regular monitoring of teaching or standards in spite of the failure to raise attainment.
162. The main issue raised in the previous report was under achievement by higher attaining pupils and this has not been successfully addressed. Overall, there has been no rise in attainment and the department has not made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

## 162. **Music**

163. In the 1998 end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum teachers' assessments, pupils' attainment was broadly in line with national averages and results have improved steadily over three years. In the 1998 GCSE examination, nine pupils were entered and all achieved A\*-C grades; comparison with national averages are not secure because the number of pupils entered was small. In the 1999 exam, seven pupils achieved grades A\*-C and one D grade; only eight pupils were entered for the examination. The 1999 figures show that girls' achievement was better than that of boys.
164. In lessons and in work seen, the overall attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectations. In performing, pupils have knowledge of the notes on the keyboard and are able to play simple melodies, either from memory or reading from traditional notation. This was most noticeable in a World War 1 topic, pupils successfully playing a melody and adding an accompaniment. Pupils have good rhythmic skills.



Pupils listen to and appreciate various styles of music. They are able to identify different instruments being played and can describe the texture of the music using the correct musical vocabulary. Pupils' attainment in composition is unsatisfactory. Pupils have had some opportunity to compose their own music, but their improvisation skills are limited. Their knowledge of structure is insufficient, resulting in compositions that lack form and creative development. The attainment of pupils who play musical instruments is good and they use their knowledge well in lessons to develop their understanding.

165. The attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is above the national expectation. Many of the pupils are competent instrumentalists and have good technical knowledge. These skills are used effectively in their compositions that have structure, development and complex rhythm patterns. Pupils' understanding of the main historical developments in music is good, describing accurately the different styles of music. This knowledge also contributes to their creative development. Pupils are beginning to use information technology programs effectively to support their compositions. The standards of attainment have remained at the levels of the previous inspection.
166. The progress of pupils at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Although pupils' previous musical experience is varied, they reach the required standard at the end of the key stage in most aspects. In their early lessons, emphasis is placed on developing technical and rhythmic skills. This knowledge is effectively transferred during keyboard sessions. These skills are further developed in Year 8 and pupils play more difficult melodies with increased rhythmic accuracy. Pupils in Year 9 continue to progress and, with their gained technical and listening knowledge, play melodies that are rhythmically correct. This was noticeable, for example, when pupils played a march style song, combining the melody with a chordal accompaniment. The progress with composition work, however, is slower. The contributory reason for this is the limited opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
167. Progress improves and at Key Stage 4 is good. Pupils' theoretical knowledge is well developed through extra lunchtime lessons. Through a structured programme of work they build on and consolidate previous experiences and this knowledge is used to develop their compositions. The progress of pupils who play musical instruments is good. Progress has been maintained since the previous inspection.
168. The attitude of pupils in lessons is good. They listen carefully to instructions, take an interest in the subject, have a positive approach and enjoy practical lessons. Their behaviour is generally good and they are attentive when other pupils are performing. They use equipment with care and are keen to discuss their previous experiences. Attendance at the extra-curricular activities is good and they take pride in participating in the ensembles
169. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory; it is good in the majority of lessons. Teachers have good knowledge of music, know their pupils well, transfer their enthusiasm to them and use their skills to demonstrate the music. An example of this good demonstration was a teacher playing the keyboard in a Year 9 class and the playing of a brass instrument in a stage band rehearsal to add authenticity to the music. Where teaching is good, there are clear explanations at the beginning of the lesson with clearly defined targets. Teachers have good discipline and deal sensitively with unacceptable behaviour. The planning of lessons is good, with an appropriate choice of music to promote listening and rhythm development. Teaching is occasionally weakened when there is insufficient evaluation at the end of lessons to ascertain pupils' understanding and too long spent on one activity, in particular the listening section of a lesson, giving limited opportunity for pupils to practise their keyboard skills.
170. The curriculum is broadly balanced and is designed to give pupils a wide experience of different styles of music, but the shorter term plans lack sufficient emphasis on composition and the development of creative skills. Although pupils' work is assessed at the end of each topic there is a lack of audio-recordings of pupils' performance and compositions to promote pupils' self assessment. The quality of leadership of the department is very good. The programme of instrumental teaching is well managed together with the extra-curricular activities. The accommodation of the department is very good and, together with the open house policy of the department, contributes well to pupils' progress. Although there has been a programme of professional development, the head of department has had insufficient opportunity to acquire expertise in curriculum

development. Information technology has been introduced into the curriculum but it is under-used as a tool to promote composition.

170. **Physical education**

171. In end of Key Stage 3 teachers' assessments in 1998, the majority of pupils obtained the levels expected and in 1999 results were better than this. Pupils were entered for the GCSE examination in physical education for the first time in 1999, and forty-two per cent obtained A\*-C grades.
172. By the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of pupils is in line with national expectations, which is below the teacher assessment for the end of key stage. The difference arises because the school has not identified pupils who, while achieving the expectation are actually working beyond the requirements. Girls have good games skills, showing considerable tactical ability in moving around the netball court, receiving and passing a ball. In gymnastics, the great majority of pupils show good physical control and plan their movements well. Pupils swim well and have a good awareness of safety issues concerned with being in a swimming pool. In rugby, ball skills are sound and the introduction of the scrummage as a means of restarting the game enabled boys to develop their skills in a game situation. Boys and girls have a good understanding of the games they play.
173. By the end of Key Stage 4, the attainment of pupils is in line with expectations. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies and the highest attaining pupils have a very detailed understanding of the importance of aerobic exercise. They can plan a range of activities effectively to produce a personal fitness programme. In games, for example, badminton or rugby, most pupils have a satisfactory range of skills, while the best control the shuttlecock or rugby ball with considerable skill. They work together well in teams and understand the finer details of sports they take part in. They coach their partners and umpire the games competently with support from the teacher.
174. Progress in both key stages is good, overall. There are variations within key stages. In Key Stage 3, good progress in games skills was marked by the development of sending and catching skills with a partner in pairs and small groups and expanding this into small games related to the developing skills of the pupils. In mixed gymnastic lessons, girls made significantly more progress than the boys where their interpretation and tension were more refined. In Key Stage 4, very good progress was seen in a GCSE netball lesson from the initial use of video to pupils managing the whole of the lesson from warm up to conclusion with support from the teacher. The girls had an excellent understanding and they displayed notable confidence to develop their own and others' skill. Pupils with special educational needs made satisfactory progress, overall, but this was hindered by a lack of clear strategies to support their individual needs.
175. Attitudes are good. Pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their activities. This was clearly shown when pupils had the opportunity to work independently. Relationships within groups are good. Behaviour is good throughout the department. Attendance and participation rates are high.
176. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. It is nearly always good, occasionally very good and excellent and only rarely unsatisfactory. Teachers have very good subject knowledge allied to good relationships. The most effective teaching occurs when pupils are challenged to think for themselves and various strategies are used to meet differing needs. Work to match the needs of all pupils is a weakness in some teaching. The weakest teaching showed a mismatch between planning and the ability of the group to respond. Opportunities to plan and evaluate are undeveloped. Day to day assessment to inform planning was not always clear. However, it was clearly seen when teachers reviewed the lesson in consultation with pupils and the work was set for the next lesson.
177. The curriculum meets the requirements of the national curriculum and is effectively augmented by the addition of the GCSE course. This provides a broad and balanced curriculum. There is a varied extra curricular programme at lunch times and after school which is valued by the pupils and parents. Assessment is clearly indicated in the units of work, but not so clearly in lesson plans.
178. Day to day management is good. The head of department is newly appointed and has set clear targets for the future. There is no appraisal or monitoring of teaching. The development plan is clear but not prioritised and the response to staff development is in need of more careful planning. Accommodation is good but health and safety is an issue; no risk assessments are undertaken in the department. The strategic use of accommodation

and resources provides access to a wide range of learning experiences, which affect positively attainment and progress.

179. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. There are still no established procedures for the review and monitoring of teaching and learning. The development plan is improved but issues need prioritising.

179. **Religious education**

180. The results in the 1998 GCSE examination were significantly below the national average and in 1999 they did not show an improvement. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with their attainment in other GCSE subjects within the school and the average point score in religious education is close to the whole school average point score. From 1997 the number of pupils entering for the examination has steadily risen from 4 to 25 in the current Year 10 and the number of boys and girls is becoming more evenly balanced. In recent years, the numbers of candidates are too small for detailed statistical analysis. Staff have identified several factors which have reduced the overall attainment of pupils, such as the failure of pupils to complete course work and in 1999 the failure of four pupils to sit the second examination paper. Within the last year the department has appointed a new and experienced teacher and is also implementing strategies to raise attainment, but the effectiveness of these has yet to be seen. Although evidence is limited, the attainment of Year 11 GCSE pupils is average and most are beginning to cope satisfactorily with the challenges of a public examination syllabus.
181. By the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of the majority of pupils is average in relation to the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have built up a modest conceptual framework of religion and they can identify the main beliefs, practices, places and objects associated with Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and especially Christianity. They can explain the meanings of symbols and can begin to appreciate the different emphases of religions in relation to practices such as birth and coming of age customs, marriage and death rites. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls by the end of both key stages.
182. By the end of Key Stage 4, the attainment of the majority of pupils on the non-GCSE course is average in relation to the new locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils can identify the main features of Buddhism, Islam and Christianity and confidently use technical vocabulary such as anicca, dukkha and kamma. They can also explain some practices and key beliefs and show how the latter affect the conduct of people. Pupils can also discuss the responses of religions to social and moral issues such as drugs, marriage and use of animals in medical research.
183. The progress of pupils is good, largely as a result of recent changes. Pupils make good progress at each Key Stage, because tasks are often challenging, questions are thought provoking, explanations are usually lucid and interesting and learning takes place in an orderly atmosphere, conducive to work and concentration. In one lesson in Year 10, pupils made good progress in applying knowledge from previous lessons to their tasks on Buddhism's Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. A worthwhile extension task was available for higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs also progress well, because teachers match tasks to their needs and help them appropriately with their learning. The progress of a small number of pupils is restricted because of poor motivation.
184. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good. They sustain concentration well and co-operate sensibly with each other. They usually listen attentively to teachers and to each other. Differing viewpoints, beliefs and practices are respected, as seen in a Year 9 class discussing a video on capital punishment. Behaviour is satisfactory, overall and often good, although there is occasionally minor silly behaviour, which is dealt with quickly and quietly. Most pupils willingly talk about their work and treat visitors courteously. Displays of pupils' work, learning resources and classroom furniture are treated with respect. Although pupils' attitudes to work vary at times, many are keen to do well.
185. The teaching is consistently good at both key stages. All teachers have formal specialist qualifications and are experienced and enthusiastic. Lessons are well planned and delivered at a brisk pace. Expectations of pupils are realistic and work is generally well matched to the learning needs of all pupils. A variety of tasks,

interestingly presented, facilitate learning. Clear expositions and instructions, together with the use of stimulating learning resources and questions, are effective in rousing pupils' interest and challenging their thinking. In a Year 11 class, pupils' thinking about the nature of proof and evidence was provoked by an interesting and amusing dialogue between an alchemist and his assistant. Videos, textbooks, worksheets and especially work booklets in a GCSE class were used very effectively. Homework is regularly set. The marking of pupils' work is careful and consistent and it is especially thorough in the GCSE option.

186. The department benefits from very good accommodation in which pupils' work is displayed to create a stimulating working environment. The head of department gives sound academic and professional leadership and staff ensure that the subject makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. The department meets statutory requirements for religious education.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

187. The team consisted of 13 inspectors, including a lay inspector, who were in school for a total of 54 inspection days. During the week, 234 lessons or parts of lessons, including tutor periods were inspected. The total time spent observing lessons was 159 hours 5 minutes. In addition, inspectors attended registration sessions and house assemblies. Teachers were seen teaching a variety of subjects and observations of pupils were made at break times, lunch times, before and after school. Inspectors talked to pupils formally about their views of the school and to individuals and groups in lessons and around school. There were discussions with teachers, heads of departments, heads of house, members of the senior management team, the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, other governors, support staff and parents. Discussions also took place with administrative, site management and caretaker staff. Pupils' attendance records and reports were examined and the school's budget figures were examined. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books, folders, displayed work around the school and photographic evidence of previous work.
188. Documentation provided by the school was analysed before and during the inspection. The Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 85 parents before the inspection and the team considered 1070 responses from parents to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

## 189. DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y11	1457	14	121	242

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	87.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5

#### Education support staff (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked each week	367

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	77.3
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	23
	KS4	19

### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
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	£
Total Income	2,949,077
Total Expenditure	3,006,840
Expenditure per pupil	2,077.98
Balance brought forward from previous year	97,585
Balance carried forward to next year	39,822

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

1457

Number of questionnaires returned:

1070

### 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	20	65	10	4	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	38	57	3	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	21	57	18	4	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	22	65	8	4	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	30	58	8	4	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	33	60	6	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	29	56	12	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	24	62	6	8	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25	60	11	3	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	21	60	14	4	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	30	57	8	4	1

1.

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