

# INSPECTION REPORT

**The Deanes School**  
Thundersley

LEA area : 881 Essex

Unique Reference Number : 115340

Headteacher : Mr P.T. Beashel

Reporting Inspector: Miss Rose Godfrey  
2047

Dates of Inspection: 11-15 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708113

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:	Self-Governing (Foundation)
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I.R. Rudd
Date of previous inspection:	14 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> November 1994

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Julie Baker	Special Educational Needs	Teaching
Steven Blowers	Information Technology Vocational Courses Key Stage 4 including Business and Leisure and Tourism	Efficiency
Karen Brock	Music Drama/Theatre Studies	Personal and Social Education
Peter Dacombe	Modern Languages French and German	Staffing
Laurence Moscrop	Religious Education	Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development
Christine Jones	Science	Support, guidance and pupil welfare Careers Education
Grant Jones	Art	Display
John Lace	Geography History	Curriculum
Keith Page	Mathematics Numeracy Overview	Resources for learning
Ian Punter	Design and Technology	Behaviour, attitudes and Personal Development
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## MAIN FINDINGS

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards of attainment in GCSE examinations are well above national averages and are improving.

- High levels of attainment and very good quality provision are achieved in physical education.
- More than half of teaching was judged to be of good quality or better.
- Some excellent teaching was observed in English, physical education and science.
- The school is very successful in meeting its declared aims in many aspects of its work.
- The school has established a climate whereby all pupils enjoy coming to school to learn.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to work and are eager learners.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and teachers are very positive.
- The behaviour of pupils of all ages, both in and out of lessons is very good.
- The school cares for its pupils very well; a clear overview of individual progress is maintained.
- The Inclusion of physically disabled pupils is very good; these pupils make very good progress.
- Pupils' social development is very good.
- Extensive community links, including community mentoring as part of the 'Student Extra' programme, provide very good enrichment of pupils' learning experiences.
- Induction arrangements for Year 7 pupils entering the school are very good and develop from close pastoral links with primary schools.
- A very wide range of extra curricular activities extends provision very effectively.
- Careers education and guidance are very good.
- Financial control is very good. Well-informed financial planning sets clear direction for future developments.

The strengths identified represent very good achievements and are set in the clear context of an overall good school.

### WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

Standards of attainment in Key Stage 3 tests are below national averages and are very low in comparison to results achieved by other similar mixed comprehensive schools.

- I. Results in science at Key Stage 3 are poorer than those achieved in English and mathematics.
- II. There is a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, especially in mathematics, which slows down progress made by some pupils.
- III. Teaching does not always provide challenge for the most able pupils.
- IV. Support for lower ability pupils with learning needs does not ensure the same good progress as for physically disabled pupils.
- V. In some subjects assessment information is not used to ensure improvement in future learning.
- VI. Tutor time is not always used well enough and very varied use of the materials provided for the tutorial programme leads to significant inconsistency in pupils' experiences.
- VII. Recording attendance is not secure; absences from lessons are not followed up consistently.
- VIII. The school's programme for monitoring the quality of teaching lacks the necessary rigour to bring about improvement and therefore has not been fully effective.
- IX. The school does not fulfil its legal requirements in the following areas:
- X. Not all Key Stage 4 pupils are receiving their entitlement to the programmes of study for information technology or the implementation of the agreed syllabus for religious education;
- XI. the requirement for the daily act of Collective Worship is not met fully;
- XII. there are shortcomings in meeting all the statutory expectations of reporting to parents.

Overall the school has many more strengths than weaknesses.

*The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians at the school.*



## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has made sound progress since its last inspection in November 1994. Improvements in GCSE results have been sustained at a rate, which matches that achieved nationally. The high level of good quality teaching has been sustained. The school's provision for physical education is a model of good practice and is a strength.

Five of the six areas for action identified in the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. School planning has been developed well and clear whole school priorities for improvement identified. Staff development needs are more closely linked with the improved planning. Improvements to staffing structures and curriculum organisation have improved curriculum provision. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have access to the curriculum at an appropriate level as a result of improvements in provision.

Approaches to assessment are more consistent at whole school level and procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are much improved. However the use of assessment to inform planning to improve future learning still needs further development in a number of subject areas. Systematic structures for monitoring and evaluation have been put in place but their implementation lacks sufficient rigour and consequently outcomes are inconsistent. As a result some unsatisfactory teaching remains. Provision for mathematics remains as a weakness. The school still has to ensure that all pupils are able to participate in a daily act of collective worship.

The governors, Headteacher and staff are committed to raising standards still further. The good quality of the school's long-term planning means that it is well placed to bring about further improvements in the quality of provision and in the standards that pupils' achieve. Inspection evidence shows that strategies identified in the current School Development Plan are already beginning to improve the quality of provision in Key Stage 3; for example teaching quality in this key stage was similar to that observed in Key Stage 4.

## STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 year olds in 1999 national tests and by 16 year olds in GCSE examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
			<i>well above average</i> A
			<i>above average</i> B
			<i>average</i> C
			<i>below average</i>
			<i>well below average</i> E
Key Stage 3 (1999)	D	E*	
GCSE examinations (1998)	A	B	
A/AS – levels	n/a	n/a	

Results in the national tests for 14 year olds have been below national averages for the past two years. In the 1999 national tests there were significant differences in the standards reached by pupils in each of the core subjects. In English results improved significantly whilst results in mathematics remained broadly similar. Results in science are significantly poorer and show a drop in standards since 1998. There is no evidence in any of the core subjects of improvement in pupils' attainment at the higher levels (Level 6 and above). Boys improved their performance in English in 1999 tests. In mathematics and science boys and girls achieved similar results. Compared with results from similar schools, the standards achieved in Key Stage 3 national tests remain very low, particularly in mathematics and

science. English results are closer to the average for similar schools.

GCSE results have shown a steady improvement since 1994. This improvement was sustained in 1999. Standards achieved in GCSE examinations are above the national average for all schools. Almost all pupils achieved at least one GCSE grade (A\* to G) in both 1998 and 1999. Both boys and girls continue to show above average levels of achievement compared with national figures. In 1999 the girls' results improved at a faster rate and the gap between boys' and girls' GCSE achievements widened. The school performs well in GCSE examinations when compared with similar schools. English results are above the school average and are significantly better than those in the other core subjects. In 1999 pupils performed less well in mathematics and science than in most other subjects. Improvements in physical education results were exceptionally good in 1999.

## QUALITY OF TEACHING

	<b>Overall quality</b>	<b>Most effective in:</b>	<b>Least effective in:</b>
Years 7-9	Good	Geography, physical education, religious education	Mathematics
Years 10-11	Good	English, history and physical education	Modern Foreign Languages
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		

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

Teaching quality has been sustained at similar levels to the last inspection with a high proportion of good quality teaching. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 90% of lessons seen. It was very good or excellent in 16% of lessons and good in a further 37%. Teaching is not always sufficiently challenging for more able pupils.

The ten percent of lessons in which teaching was unsatisfactory, including a small amount which was of poor quality, occurred across both key stages. The greatest amount of unsatisfactory teaching was in Key Stage 3 mathematics. In science some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in both key stages.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good, with high standards at all times, including when pupils are moving about the school.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average for secondary schools. Unauthorised absence is well below average. Punctuality needs improving. Recording of pupils' attendance needs to be more exact.
Ethos*	Very positive. Pupils come to school willing to learn and show good attitudes. Relationships are very good at all levels.
Leadership and management	The Headteacher, other senior managers and the governing body lead the school well, providing a clear sense of direction. Governors are well informed and are fully involved.
Curriculum	All pupils have a broad and balanced programme of study. The school extends this provision very effectively through a wide range

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

Aspect	Comment
Pupils with special educational needs	The identification of pupils' individual needs, including pupils with high ability and those with special educational needs is effective. They make satisfactory progress. The school provides very well for physically disabled pupils.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Pupils' social development is very good; moral and cultural development are good. Promotion of spiritual awareness is sound but there is scope for further development of some aspects.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Accommodation is good throughout the school and excellent for physical education. The school uses its resources well. Longer term financial planning is very good. Financial control is very secure.
Value for money	Given the overall good quality of education provided for pupils the school provides good value for money.

The school has particular strengths in physical education. Following the award of Sports College status it has invested heavily in new facilities for dance, physical education and fitness training. The school is increasingly recognised as a centre of good practice for physical education and is currently engaged in developing a number of local and national initiatives.

#### THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>XIII. Staff are very approachable and parents are very appreciative of the school's welcoming atmosphere.</p> <p>XIV. The school's positive attitude towards the inclusion of physically disabled pupils.</p> <p>XV. The way the school helps their children grow up into 'well rounded' individuals.</p> <p>XVI. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities</p>	<p>XVII. The amount and quality of homework</p> <p>XVIII. Not all parents feel they the school child's progress.</p> <p>XIX. Some parents are not happy about</p>

The vast majority of parents are pleased with the school and the education it provides. Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. The school is welcoming. The care and concern staff show for all pupils, particularly when they first arrive at the school, is a strength.

#### KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

What the school should do now:

In order to raise standards further and to continue improving the quality of the school's work the governors; Headteacher and staff must give attention to the following matters:

##### 1. Further improve the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils by:

- sharing the excellent and very good practice which exists in the school;
- ensuring that appropriate levels of challenge and support are provided for all pupils in teaching and learning; particularly through providing well planned activities which challenge the most able;
- planning tasks which are matched better to the range of pupil abilities in classes; particularly ensuring appropriate levels of support for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties;
- developing more effective curriculum liaison with feeder primary schools thereby ensuring that curriculum planning supports the continuity in pupils' learning and builds on their previous work;
- making better use of information about pupils' prior attainment, including their current knowledge and understanding;
- developing more consistently across subject departments assessment practice which informs planning for lessons and ensures future teaching is more appropriate;
- continuing to develop the current short-term individual target-setting procedures and using assessment feedback more effectively to inform pupils about how they could improve;
- ensuring more rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in subject areas to eliminate unsatisfactory teaching and slow pupil progress.

*(refer to paragraphs 9, 10, 17, 21, 33, 35, 68, 94, 112, 114, 116, 127, 129, 130, 163, 171, 188, 184; 94, 105, 107, 120, 173, 175; 43, 64, 91, 100, 105; 22, 35, 45, 107; 35, 47, 48, 104, 118, 168, 176; 9, 46; 68, 69, 78)*

## **2. Improving the quality of provision in mathematics and raising standards by:**

- eliminating the unsatisfactory and poor quality teaching;
- planning lessons which build more precisely on what pupils' already know and can do;
- ensuring that teacher assessment and record keeping identifies what pupils can and cannot do;
- focusing learning more closely on mental mathematics, problem solving and conceptual understanding in all National Curriculum attainment targets;
- providing pupils with more opportunities to use information technology and use and apply mathematics;
- increasing the rigour of department leadership and management;
- using the resources at the departments' disposal more efficiently.

*(refer to paragraphs 33, 69, 100; 33, 35, 100, 105, 107; 35, 44, 46, 104; 15, 24, 99; 99, 103, 151; 106; 71, 87)*

## **3. Improve the procedures for registering and recording pupils' attendance by:**

- ensuring that the recording of pupils' attendance is accurate and meets all legal requirements;
- improving the procedures for following up pupil absence from lessons and the consistency of their application;

- encouraging more consistent use of the tutorial programme provided for tutor group sessions.

*(refer to paragraphs 39, 49, 56)*

**4. In order to meet statutory requirements ensure that:**

- Key Stage 4 pupils receive their entitlement to:
  - the National Curriculum programmes of study for information technology;
  - religious education, through the teaching of the Essex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education;
- all pupils are able to participate in a daily act of collective worship;
- reporting to parents meets the national expectations for reporting the results of the national tests at Key Stage 3 and reporting in the foundation subjects.

*(refer to paragraphs 23,38,66,84,154; 38, 40, 66, 180,185; 49, 66; 59, 66)*

## · INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

#### · The School, its pupils and the area it serves

1. The Deanes School is an average sized, 11-16 co-educational, comprehensive school educating 1020 pupils. The school has been designated as a specialist school with Sports College status since 1998. The school is situated in the relatively affluent area of Thundersley at the north-eastern edge of the urban conurbation of Benfleet. The school, which is one of three secondary schools in the area, is popular and oversubscribed. There has been a slight increase in pupil numbers, with an increase of five percent since the last inspection in 1994. About half of the pupils who attend the school live in the school's traditional catchment area and come from local primary schools. The others, including pupils who were unable, or did not want, to be in selective education in the Southend area, travel considerable distances to attend the school. The school organises buses to aid pupils' journeys from these and other areas. As pupils attending the school come from a wide area, a considerable variety of social and economic backgrounds and circumstances is represented in the school population.
2. The pupil intake contains the full ability range. The average ability profile has not changed significantly since the last inspection, although the results of standardised tests indicate an overall improvement in the ability of pupils entering Year 7 in September 1999. Fifteen percent of the school's pupils are identified on the school's register of special educational needs, a proportion which is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need (1.7%) is close to the average for Essex but is below the national average. The school is the South East Essex centre for integrating physically disabled pupils into mainstream education and currently nine physically disabled pupils attend the school. The building has been suitably modified to ensure that all pupils have access to the all parts of the school and these pupils are fully included into the life and work of the school. Approximately 7.5% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, this is less than the national average. Most pupils are white. In 1998 almost four fifths (78%) of the pupils stayed in full-time education at 16. Most pupils continue their education at South East Essex Sixth Form College (SEEVIC) with which the school has close relations.
3. The school recognises the need to '*continue to raise the achievement of all pupils and the quality of their school experience*'. The key priorities identified in the School Development Plan [SDP], are:
  - the development of an effective assessment policy for Key Stage 3 and the introduction of target setting for Key Stage 3 pupils;
  - the further development and extension of enrichment activities for the school's most gifted and talented pupils in all subject areas of the curriculum;
  - every department to have strategies in place specifically designed to enhance the opportunities for boys to achieve at Key Stage 3;
  - to ensure a smooth transition to the new funding arrangements which apply from April 1999;
  - to continue fund-raising and the development of community links;
  - the implementation of the Sports College Development Plan;
  - the implementation of an appraisal system which will support the work of staff and satisfy the requirements of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE).





## 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
1999	95	109	204

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	69	70	49
	Girls	76	61	49
	Total	145	131	98
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	71 (57)	64 (60)	48 (56)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC	School	25 (25)	33 (33)	12 (18)
Level 6 or above				
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	143	131	110
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	70 (➤)	64 (➤)	54 (➤)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	26 (➤)	36 (➤)	17 (➤)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

National comparative data for 1999 taken from Key Stage 3 Autumn Package

<sup>1</sup>

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

## Attainment at Key Stage 4<sup>2</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	101	116	217

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	49	96	97
	Girls	69	112	114
	Total	118	208	211
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	54.4 (52.9)	95.9 (90.3)	97.2 (96.2)
	National	43.3 (44.6)	89.8 (88.5)	93.4 (92.3)

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	40	85
National		77.6

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised	School	6.0
Absence	National comparative data	7.2
Unauthorised	School	0.5
Absence	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	19
Permanent	0

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	54

Satisfactory or better	90
Less than satisfactory	10

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

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

#### **Attainment and progress**

##### **Attainment:**

- 4 The Deanes School has a pupil ability profile which is average overall. Currently the intake in Years 7 to 11 includes the full range of ability. Whilst the majority of pupils are of average ability the pupil population contains similar proportions of pupils with well above average ability and well below average ability. Fifteen per cent of pupils are identified on the school's register of special educational needs of which seventeen have statements. The school has its own information about pupils' abilities on entry, obtained from standardised tests taken by all Year 7 pupils. This data confirms that the attainment of pupils on entry is average in comparison to all schools nationally. The results of 1999 test show that the new Year 7 intake has an improving ability profile. The information from these standardised tests is compared with the results from pupils' Key Stage 2 national tests taken in English mathematics and science at the end of year 6. This allows the school to ascertain pupils' prior attainments more precisely. Records of test results from primary schools and standardised tests taken at the school are also used to identify which pupils would benefit from individual programmes. Increasingly action is taken to make sure such programmes are provided. The abilities of boys and girls entering the school are not significantly different.
- 5 Overall the standards achieved by pupils at the school are high. Although the combined results in the national tests for 14 year olds are close to the national averages, in GCSE examinations results are well above national averages. Inspection evidence shows that standards achieved in pupils' work reflect the range of abilities represented in the school population. Standards are above average in approaching one third of the observations and were average in a further two fifths. Standards were below average in just over a quarter of observations.
- 6 In the national tests for 14 year olds, taken in the summer of 1999, taking all the results together, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of 5 or higher is close to the national average for all secondary schools. The most comprehensive measure of attainment for the pupil group is the average points score achieved by Year 9 pupils at the end of Key Stage 3. In 1999 the combined results, for English, mathematics and science in terms of average points score are below the national average. The 1999 Key Stage 3 national test results are poorer compared with those achieved by similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected level of 5 or above is low in comparison to the results achieved by similar schools. At the higher levels of 6 and above the school's results are very low in comparison to the average achieved by similar schools. The average points score for all the core subjects combined is well below the average for similar schools.
- 7 In 1999 there was a marked discrepancy in the results achieved in each of the core subjects; significant improvements are evident in English whilst in science there is a marked decline in the results. The best results are achieved in English where almost three-quarters of pupils achieved the nationally expected level, and a quarter achieved at the higher levels of 6 or above. In mathematics, results are close to the national average with two thirds of pupils reaching the nationally expected level with a greater proportion (one third) achieving the higher levels of attainment. Results in science are less good, less than half of the pupils achieving the nationally expected level and only one eighth reaching the higher levels.
- 8 Taking all the core subjects together Key Stage 3 results at Level 5 and above have been very close to the national average for the past three years. Trends in English and mathematics were close to those achieved nationally whilst results in science were below the national average

figures. Over the past three years overall Key Stage 3 results in the core subjects do not show any clear trend of improvement.

- 9 GCSE examination results have shown a steady increase since 1995; the level of attainment in 1999 was the same as in the 1994 inspection. The combined 1998 results for boys and girls achieving both 5 or more A\* to C grades and A\* to G are above the national average. The 1999 results sustain the above average performance and confirm the clear trend of improvement in Key Stage 4 outcomes. Standards in many subjects show some variation from year to year. In the core subjects, the highest standards are achieved in English where the average level achieved is more than one grade above the school average grade. Results in science are almost half a grade lower than the school's average grade and in mathematics the average grade achieved is more than one grade below. Results in creative arts, drama, music and art in 1999 are very good when compared with pupils' other results. Pupils have performed less well in German and design and technology in 1999. The greatest improvement is in physical education where the proportion of pupils achieving A\* to C grades has risen by over a fifth. The school performs well in GCSE examinations when compared with similar schools. It is particularly successful in the average total points score and in the number of pupils who achieve at least one GCSE grade.
- 10 The evidence from written work and lesson observations shows that overall pupils reach average standards. Key Stage 3 pupils were working at levels that match or exceed national expectations of 14 year olds in just over three quarters of the observations. High standards, where pupils were working at levels above the national expectation, were achieved in a quarter of observations, particularly in the upper ability sets in English and science. Lessons in some subjects fail to provide sufficient opportunities for more able pupils to access higher levels of attainment. The proportion of pupils who do not reach the nationally recognised standards sometimes reflects the grouping of pupils into teaching sets by ability for subjects. However standards were below expectation in a significant number of design and technology, mathematics and science observations in this key stage. The school itself identified underachievement in Key Stage 3 and has put in place a number of strategies to improve performance. The introduction of target setting for Key Stage 3 pupils and the commitment to strategies to enhance the opportunities for boys to achieve in this key stage in particular are beginning to be effective. Inspection evidence shows that these strategies are beginning to impact on pupil's attainment and should contribute to higher standards in future end of key stage test results.
- 11 There is no significant difference evident from classroom observations in the standards achieved in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Inspection evidence shows that standards are average or above in over two thirds of the observations. Pupils' attainment exceeds national expectations in almost one third of observations. Pupils exceed the national expectation in some art, history, geography, music and physical education lessons. Standards in mathematics and science are average overall. The more able pupils in this key stage are not always being sufficiently challenged in lessons. Whilst attainment in GCSE religious education is good, insufficient provision means that standards for other pupils are below the expectations of the Essex Agreed Syllabus.
- 12 Whilst overall there were no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls some variation is evident within the different subjects of the curriculum. In Key Stage 3 national tests there is no significant difference in the combined results for the three core subjects and boys and girls have maintained a consistently average performance over the past three years. In 1999 girls attained better than boys in English, however, boys and girls achieved similar results in mathematics and science. In GCSE examinations boys results for 1998 are well above the national average for boys, and those for girls are very high when compared with girls' results nationally. In 1999 the results achieved by both boys and girls have improved. However girls' show a faster rate of improvement and the gap between results achieved widens to 11%;

this is more than double the 1998 figure. In 1999 there was a difference of half a grade in the average grade achieved by boys and girls. The difference between boys' and girls' performance was greatest in English and French. There were negligible difference in attainment of boys and girls in drama, German and science.

- 13 All subjects have a literacy policy. There are good examples of the technical vocabulary and language of subjects being reinforced in lessons through display and discussion in English, geography, history, physical education and religious education. Speaking and listening are well developed across the school. Where pupils are given the opportunity they can give sustained explanations and oral presentations. They can argue a point of view, listen carefully, and question critically when appropriate. The quality of small group discussion is particularly high in English and some drama lessons. The majority of pupils read independently with good understanding. All Year 7 pupils receive a useful introduction to the school library and it is well used by pupils both in lessons and at lunch-times. Pupils are encouraged to research independently using reference and information books and CD ROM facilities in art, English, design and technology, geography, history and science. The library is well stocked and the school librarian makes an important contribution to fostering pupils' interest and enjoyment of reading through Book Week and the promotion of World Book Day.
- 14 In some subjects, such as English and history, the work books and resource collections extend and develop pupils' reading and writing. In others, worksheets constrain pupils' literacy by limiting opportunities for extended writing, for example in religious education at Key Stage 3 and in some science lessons. The presentation of writing by pupils of high or average ability is generally neat and legible and there are some excellent displays of pupils' writing, including the use of word-processing and desk top publishing packages in discrete information technology lessons and English. Writing frames are used effectively to develop extended writing in history and English. A range of writing for differing purposes is used in English, history, geography and science at Key Stage 3 and additionally in GNVQ courses at Key Stage 4. The correction of spelling and grammar is less consistent across the curriculum.
- 15 Pupils with literacy difficulties receive additional support for spelling and reading in withdrawal groups. These groups clearly develop pupils' self confidence and the least able make good progress. Others would progress more quickly if smaller guided reading groups were adopted so that adult support is deployed to maximum effect. English teachers offer additional support for spelling and handwriting at lunchtimes. The withdrawal of pupils from English lessons for literacy support should be reconsidered as this takes them away from lessons where reading and writing is being taught effectively.
- 16 Classroom observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils use numeric and graphic skills in a range of subjects including art, design and technology, humanities and science. However there is a need for the school to develop the mental calculation skills and numeric confidence of the majority of its pupils. The present mathematics department policy prescribes a restricted number of calculation methods to be taught by staff and recorded by pupils but has not been revised in the light of the National Numeracy Strategy. Also, the policy has not been shared across the school. Links made with the science and special needs departments, through joint staffing, have not been used to establish a common approach to numeracy or to set individual pupils targets to improve their knowledge and understanding of numeracy.
- 17 Senior managers are developing the use of prior attainment data to inform target setting procedures and the monitoring of pupils' progress. The school uses data on pupils' achievements more effectively, especially at senior manager level. Information from test and examination results is used to identify pupils for additional help through the 'Student Extra' programme as they approach GCSE examinations. The community mentoring programme makes an effective contribution to these processes. A start has been made in using assessment

data to determine pupils' progress over time and the relative performance of departments. Through target setting the school expects the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C to rise from 57% currently to 60% in 2001. This is a realistic target, particularly in the context of the rate of improvement achieved over the past three years. Individual subject areas have also set GCSE targets for 2001. A range of other targets has been set, in addition to attainment targets, including targets for personal development of pupils and targets associated with Sports College developments.

- 18 The school has introduced the 'Gifted and Talented Education Programme' (GATE) as one of its strategies to raise standards. This provides good extension and enrichment activities for more able pupils. The programme is a target on the school development plan and is being developed by a focus group. Their work so far has produced a very good system for identifying and tracking pupils. This system is able to identify both pupils with specific talents and those who may be multi-talented. Progress can then be monitored closely. Activities provided by the school are of considerable benefit to the identified pupils and have an impact on both their social and intellectual development. At the time of the inspection the GATE programme was not well implemented in lessons and was not having sufficient impact on more able pupils classroom experiences. Teachers do not act on information they receive about these pupils and are not yet sufficiently flexible to revise what they do as circumstances change and pupils develop. The next planned developments focus on provision in lessons and aim to meet the needs of the identified pupils in their everyday classroom activities.

**Progress:**

- 19 The majority of pupils make at least sound progress at both key stages. The school adds significant value in Years 10 and 11 when pupils make good progress in their GCSE work. In physical education all pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3 and very good progress at Key Stage 4. In religious education all pupils make very good progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress in the GCSE examination group. In art, geography, history and music progress is never less than sound and is frequently good. Progress made by all pupils in English at Key Stage 4 is good. In information technology pupils make good progress in the discrete IT modules taught as part of design and technology in Years 7, 8 and 9, in GCSE information courses, and in GNVQ courses in years 10 and 11.
- 20 Good or very good progress almost always results from effective teaching. Some of the features identified across subjects include high expectations and challenge of pupils of all abilities, and good individual support where appropriate. Lessons have a well-planned structure and sequence, brisk pace and a range of teaching methods and activities are employed. There is very good interaction between teacher and pupils through skilful questioning and an expectation of active and independent involvement by pupils. Homework is linked to classwork and it both reinforces and extends learning.
- 21 The progress of some more able pupils is being hindered in some subjects. In design and technology, pupils are under-performing as a result of a lack of challenge in tasks. In science, planning to meet the needs of the more able is not always effective and, in religious education, able pupils would benefit from more extension activities.
- 22 Pupils in Year 7 make good progress at the start of their French course but in Years 8 and 9 the rate of progress is slower as many tasks are pitched at a relatively elementary level. Progress in English accelerates through Years 8 and 9. In Year 7 more attention could be paid to pupils' prior attainment.
- 23 Pupils in Key Stage 4 who do not opt for the GCSE in Information Studies or for GNVQ courses have too few opportunities to use information technology. In both key stages, pupils make



insufficient progress in developing their IT capability across the full range of elements in the National Curriculum programmes of study in a wide range of subject contexts.

- 24 Throughout both key stages, in mathematics the inappropriate use of calculators and insufficient opportunities to use computers and to use and apply mathematics, limits progress in mental mathematics, problem-solving and conceptual understanding. The modularised curriculum employed in art and drama leads to the attainment of short term goals at the expense of reinforcement of learning and progression in these subjects.
- 25 Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with physical disabilities make good progress and sometimes very good progress. Progress is good for significant numbers of pupils with statements of educational needs. The progress of some SEN pupils who are not statemented and who have learning difficulties is sometimes unsatisfactory when they do not receive additional in-class support. This is identified for example in some mathematics lessons. These pupils do make progress when supported appropriately. The progress of pupils with literacy difficulties would improve if these pupils were not withdrawn from English lessons.

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

- 26 There has been improvement in the already good standards of pupil attitudes and behaviour identified in the last inspection.

#### **Attitudes to learning**

- 27 The pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and this makes a significant contribution to standards of attainment. Pupils' response is sound or better in the vast majority of the lessons observed. In over two-thirds of lessons the pupils' response is good, very good or excellent. The response of pupils in Key Stage 3 is slightly stronger than that of Key Stage 4 pupils, although the inspection team noted the particularly positive attitudes shown by Year 11 pupils in comparison with many other schools. Although pupils show positive attitudes in all subjects their response to learning is particularly strong in English and physical education. Strengths of pupils' response in lessons are demonstrated when pupils listen attentively to instructions and explanations, willingly offer answers to questions and show high levels of application, concentration and interest. Weaknesses are often linked with lower quality teaching and, on occasions, a few pupils talk over the teacher and engage in off-task discussion. In one lesson a few pupils misbehaved by abusing science equipment. On all other occasions, however, pupils work safely with equipment and materials in design and technology, physical education and science and follow safe working procedures. Pupils on the special needs register respond positively in lessons and work hard to achieve their best.

### **Behaviour**

- 28 The school is an orderly community in which pupils behave very well both in class and around the school. Behaviour is consistently very good across all year groups and there is no significant difference evident between boys' and girls' behaviour. Very few examples of inappropriate behaviour were observed during the inspection and these were mostly confined to some pushing in congested areas of the school when pupils are moving between lessons. The revised and updated rewards system (IXL) is valued and understood by pupils across both key stages. IXL is applied consistently by teaching staff and makes a significant contribution to the high standards of behaviour in the school. The evidence from pupil interviews and parents' comments indicates that some bullying takes place, although it is not raised as a significant problem. The pupils report that any cases brought to the attention of the pastoral staff are dealt with effectively and in line with the detailed school policy. There is little evidence of pupils mistreating the school environment and litter and graffiti are kept under control. The schools'

fixed period exclusion rates are not exceptional and there were no permanent exclusions in the twelve-month period prior to the inspection.

## **Relationships and other aspects of personal development**

- 29 The quality of working relationships is a major strength of the school. These relationships, between pupils and with teachers and adults, are very good throughout the school at all levels. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other, to their teachers and to visitors. Pupils with physical disabilities are very well integrated into the school community and the inspection team noted many examples of support by other pupils. Most pupils are able to work effectively together in pairs or small groups. Although these opportunities are not made consistently available in all subjects particularly good examples were observed in English and physical education. Given the opportunity, pupils are able to progressively take responsibility and ownership for their learning and are developing a capacity for independence and personal study. High quality discussions were noted in English with pupils participating well and listening carefully to others. In some other subjects, good examples were seen of pupils showing respect for the views of others and taking interest and pleasure in other pupils' achievement. The School Council provides pupils with opportunities to contribute to the running of the school. Project Trident visits, arranged as part of the curriculum in subjects such as art and design technology, and the wide ranging extra-curricular programme make a major contribution to pupils' personal development. In this context, the programmes within the physical education curriculum and extra-curricular clubs is a major strength.

## **Attendance**

- 30 Attendance is good. Last year the rate of attendance was higher than it had been in the previous three years. It is above the national and county average for similar schools. The attendance of pupils in Year 11 has improved since the last inspection and it is now above 90%. This occurred even though the year group had a few pupils with a poor attendance rate. The rate of attendance by other year groups has remained above 90%. The rate of unauthorised absence has fallen and is now below the national average. Some unauthorised absence is due to truancy.
- 31 Punctuality is a concern. During the inspection too many pupils were late to school; on one of the days this was partly due to buses arriving late. Lateness disrupted both the Year 8 and Year 9 assemblies. Similarly, some pupils do not get to the afternoon registration on time. The lessons that follow registrations usually start on time but a few pupils delay the start of other lessons, for example by being too slow at return from physical education lessons.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

- 32 The quality of teaching is good overall, with a similar profile to the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons. In over half of these lessons teaching of good or better quality was observed and 2% of this teaching was excellent. Teaching is unsatisfactory in almost one in ten lessons. The quality of teaching is very similar across both key stages.
- 33 Standards of teaching vary in the core subjects. In English, the quality of teaching is good across both the key stages. A high proportion of very good teaching, including an example of excellent teaching, was observed in Key Stage 4. This high quality teaching is characterised by high expectations, evident through excellent preparation of a very challenging task and very brisk pace, as seen in the excellent lesson where pupils were studying post 1900s war poetry. Clear objectives were identified, and shared with the pupils. Other strengths included very well

structured lessons, stimulating use of resources and very good reinforcement of key concepts and vocabulary. One unsatisfactory English lesson was observed in each key stage. In mathematics, whilst the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, there is a significant discrepancy between the quality of teaching observed in each of the key stages. At Key Stage 3 over a third of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory and some even poor. Unsatisfactory mathematics teaching is often due to a lack of teacher expertise and low expectations where teachers' planning places little value on previous learning and there is a slow pace to the lesson. Almost a third of Key Stage 4 mathematics teaching is of good quality. In these lessons there is good planning with clear objectives, resources are well prepared and there is effective direct teaching, including good mental strategies to introduce lessons. Teaching in science is good overall, with a fifth of teaching judged very good, including some excellent. However there is too high a proportion of unsatisfactory teaching across both key stages. Lack of challenge and poor match of task to pupil ability, particularly for the most able pupils, often resulted in these lessons having too slow a pace. Teacher explanation was not always sufficiently clear. Where science teaching is of a high quality, secure teacher knowledge ensures there is clear planning with good progression in concepts and ideas and the use of information technology is integrated well into the lesson. Excellent teaching made very effective use of role play allowing Year 8 pupils to illustrate various sources of energy.

- 34 The overall quality of teaching across foundation subjects is good. Occasionally in physical education teaching is excellent. In geography, music, personal and social education and religious education much of the teaching is very good. Teaching is also good in history and information technology. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in history, geography, in timetabled information technology lessons, music, personal and social education or religious education. This high quality teaching is characterised by secure teacher knowledge, high expectations, effective planning, very brisk pace to the lessons, good classroom organisation and the effective management of pupils resulting in high standard of discipline. Teaching quality in art, design and technology, modern foreign languages and vocational courses including GNVQ business and leisure and tourism is satisfactory overall, reflecting some very good and good teaching but also including some unsatisfactory teaching.
- 35 Where there are weaknesses in teaching or where teaching is judged to be unsatisfactory it is most frequently the result of ineffective use of assessment. This is evident in design and technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science and where insufficient account is taken of pupils' prior learning, hindering the match of work to the abilities represented in the class. Commonly, teachers pitch their teaching largely to the middle of the ability range in the class but provide some additional support for those who might otherwise struggle. This results in lack of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. Too often the tasks set for the whole class put an upper limit on what able pupils can achieve which is well below their capability. Sometimes the teaching strategies used do not ensure access to the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. Much lesson time is wasted either because the pace is too slow, the chosen teaching method is inappropriate, or simply because the full period of the lesson is not well used.
- 36 The specialist special educational needs teaching of literacy is satisfactory but does not sufficiently build on the good practice of the National Literacy Strategy. The in-class support of pupils with special educational needs is effective and ensures access to the curriculum. It is particularly good when teachers plan formally for this support as, for example in design and technology and modern foreign languages. The support for physically disabled pupils, by all staff, is very good and a strength of the school.

## 5.2 The curriculum and assessment

- 37 The school now has a good set of curricular aims and there is a clear rationale underpinning the

curriculum provision. The school's Key Stage 3 curriculum includes all core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum, and a second modern foreign language. All pupils have 9% of their curriculum time allocated to physical education. Schemes of work meet statutory requirements in all National Curriculum subjects in Key Stage 3. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is relevant to the demands of modern society with core subjects of English, English Language, mathematics, a modern foreign language, physical education and science at examination level. GCSE physical education is part of the core Key Stage 4 curriculum with all pupils taking GCSE in either dance or physical education. Religious education, personal, health and social education are studied as non-examination subjects. Sex education is provided through the science and personal, health and social education programme and is based on a clear policy statement endorsed by the governing body. Other GCSE and GNVQ choices exist from four option groups. All this information is well presented in a detailed options information booklet.

- 38 National Curriculum requirements are now being met in music, an improvement since the last inspection. Although sufficient discrete information technology activities are provided in Key Stage 3 to meet the demands of the National Curriculum not all pupils receive their entitlement to planned information technology experiences in Key Stage 4. There is insufficient use of information technology across subject departments in both key stages. At Key Stage 4 some pupils do not receive their entitlement to religious education through the teaching of the Essex Agreed Syllabus.
- 39 The curriculum provision for personal, health and social education (PHSE) is good. Although the programme is delivered by a number of staff in the school, lessons are well planned and sensitive issues are dealt with effectively. However, the timetable does not permit regular PHSE lessons at Key Stage 3 and it is taught in half termly blocks sharing the remainder of the term with drama lessons. In addition many PSHE issues are also dealt with in tutor time. During the inspection these were often less effective with pupils given worksheets for completion without any guidance from the teacher. This did not always support the good practice observed within lesson time.
- 40 Overall, pupils with special educational needs, have access to the curriculum at the appropriate level. The most able pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in English and physical education. When support is available, all pupils with special educational needs have access to the full curriculum entitlement. Occasionally when support is not available their access is reduced. There is an increasing amount of learning support being made available and the linking of these assistants with departments has led to a better understanding of support planning and an opportunity to share information about individual needs. Up to eight pupils are being withdrawn from Key Stage 3 religious education lessons and consequently are not receiving their legal entitlement.
- 41 The school has made satisfactory progress in improving targeted levels of challenge across the curriculum. Good supportive worksheets in a number of subjects like geography, history and science help pupils with special educational needs to make sound progress. There are still departments where the over-prescriptive nature of worksheets leads to a reduction of the independence of the learner and consequently lower attainment. Subject links are stronger although not formally monitored, although there is some strategic and negotiated timetabling taking place between some departments and their learning support assistants.
- 42 Links with business in the local community are strong and make a significant contribution to the work-related curriculum. The school's vocational experience is well received by local employers and the pupils find it a welcome insight into future expectations of them in the workplace. The school's work in career education in partnership with the Essex Careers Company has been externally recognised as being of a high quality. The career education library is well stocked and includes access to computer facilities. The teacher with responsibility for career education works well with other staff, particularly year heads and those with responsibility for personal and

social education to ensure that all pupils have good quality advice and support. The school is piloting a liaison group for targeted pupils in Year 10 with special educational needs and runs an effective transition group working in conjunction with an advisory teacher and the Essex Careers Company. Liaison with local sixth form providers is good and supportive structures help pupils to make the transition to further education, training or employment. The careers education programme is well supported by the link governor and entire governing body and provides a well judged programme of business links, school banking, outside visits and targeted guidance for all the school's pupils.

- 43 There are very good opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular activities both during school time and after school. There is particularly strong support for music and sport. The Deanes Music School attracts up to 180 pupils each week. This activity takes place on two twilight sessions. In addition there are a range of music activities on offer during lunchtimes. The English department also offers a poetry club, regular theatre trips, a calligraphy club as well as hosting a Book Week each year. There has been a significant increase in community sports provision. The diet of opportunities for all pupils in the extended curriculum is excellent. The extra curriculum programme in physical education has been extended since the school gained Sports College status. The management of this and the commitment to it of pupils, teachers and coaches is excellent. It provides a clear pathway for young people to continue an active and healthy lifestyle in the wider dance and sporting community. Links with feeder primary schools are stronger in some subjects than in others. The large number of contributory primary schools creates difficulties for curriculum liaison which the school needs to address.

## **Assessment**

- 44 The procedures for assessing attainment are satisfactory. Whole school documentation for assessment is comprehensive and department policies are in place. These reflect the school ethos. There are sound systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment. Assessment procedures are very good in art, English, and history. Practice, however, is varied between subjects and teachers. Most teacher assessment relates accurately to National Curriculum standards, however, in mathematics teachers' plans and records are not related, nor do they identify, what pupils can or cannot do.
- 45 Good progress has been made since the last inspection with the collection of pupils' performance data. There is an efficient and comprehensive system in place for this. Key Stage 2 data is not used sufficiently in setting minimum target grades in Key Stage 3. Assessment information for pupils is particularly clear in Key Stage 4. Pupils in Year 9 and Key Stage 4 know and understand the progress they are making and what is needed to support improvement.
- 46 Good progress has been made since the last inspection with the production of a whole-school marking policy. In the more effective departments policies reflect this whole-school approach. Pupils receive detailed explanation of marks that are related to National Curriculum levels. Pupils are involved in regular termly reviews of performance and good departments have a clear idea of pupil progress. In art pupils are fully involved in a self-evaluation process. Resource booklets given to pupils in history are forthright in their references to what pupils are expected to complete. Marking in English is very detailed and positive. Marking in some subjects is not always as informative and the quality of the commentary varies from teacher to teacher. In design and technology some teachers give no indication on how a pupil can improve. In mathematics marking is too infrequent and often fails to offer pupils advice or targets to support their future learning.
- 47 Assessment information is not always used to inform planning. For example in modern foreign languages the end of unit test is not used to inform future modules or the planning of future lessons. In design and technology there is a good recording system which follows the pupils

from teacher to teacher however teachers make insufficient use of the information to inform their expectations of individual or groups of pupils. In science the focus on worksheets reduces flexibility and does not allow lessons to be adapted and to respond to the outcomes of assessment.

- 48 At the time of the previous inspection there were no Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in place for pupils with special educational needs. These have now been introduced. These IEPs do not use assessment data sufficiently to identify the way forward. Some individual targets for pupils with special educational needs are not specific enough. In some departments IEP targets are not used to inform teacher planning.

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

- 49 Overall, the provision for this aspect of school life is good. Some dimensions are particularly strong while others require additional emphasis. There is no single school policy document which covers this area of provision for the pupils. Provision for the spiritual aspect is satisfactory. Several individual departments provide specific opportunity for reflection. This is particularly the case in religious education where pupils are encouraged to slow down, relax and meditate on pleasant and other experiences characteristic of human life. The religious education department also encourages the pupils to develop a knowledge and insight into the values and beliefs of several world religions. In English, the pupils are able to develop spiritual awareness in the opportunities given to reflect and express their feelings on a range of sensitive subjects such as the Titanic, the isolation of many elderly people and the plight of Kosovan refugees. Several other subjects, too, have this spiritual element in their work such as in geography, history and mathematics. Across the school as a whole however, opportunities to be quiet and reflect are often lost or insufficiently recognised as being situations where this aspect of pupil development might take place. School assemblies and tutor times are good examples. In this respect, progress since the last inspection on this aspect has been modest. There is no daily act of Collective Worship and statutory requirements are not being met.
- 50 Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are expected to behave well, care for others and have a clear sense of right and wrong. The school Code of Behaviour clearly indicates that the pupils are expected to show courtesy and consideration to others and not to behave in a manner that is likely to bring the school into disrepute. Several assembly themes such as rules, responsibilities, racism, bullying and sexism serve to underline this moral stance. A focus group of staff, work on a behaviour initiative and an award system encourages a positive reinforcement of good behaviour. The personal, social and health education programme has units of work on several moral themes and these have the clear intention of fostering this aspect of self-development in the pupils. Individual departments too have strong moral components in their programmes of study, such as in geography in their study of the morality of poverty and war.
- 51 Provision for social development is very good. The school has clearly worked hard to ensure that pupils know how to develop positive relationships, take responsibility, participate in the community and develop an understanding of citizenship. Several assembly themes touch on this aspect such as themes on friendship, self-esteem and personal awareness. Personal, social and health education programme themes, such as a very substantial unit on citizenship, endeavour to create a clear awareness of the importance of personal development in this area. Social development in the school, however is not simply restricted to theory as there is a multitude of opportunities in the school whereby the pupils' can involve themselves in practical activities and put the theory into practice. Examples of these are the business day events, community mentoring, the School's Council, a large number of charitable activities, helping the elderly, working with wildlife trusts, the HSBC bank, Changemakers, environmental work, the open door policy, service awards and fund raising events. Some individual departments too help to achieve the schools' stated aim of fostering social skills, sensitivity to others and

developing self-esteem and self-confidence. They do this by encouraging collaborative work, independent work and by ensuring that opinions and viewpoints other than their own are both considered and respected.

- 52 Provision for cultural development is good. There are ample opportunities for pupils to acknowledge and appreciate their own cultural traditions, for example, in visits to galleries and museums, geography field trips to local villages and history study visits to Canterbury and Dover. Lots of clubs and extra-curricular activities involve the pupils in concerts, classical and popular music, theatre productions such as Bugsy Malone, public speaking, carol concerts and vocal groups to name but a few. Dance is also a significant aspect of the school. Around the school there are art displays and displays celebrating the life and work of William Shakespeare. Opportunities exist for pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures. There are international sporting relationships with Kenya and links with schools in Germany and Japan and art trips to France. A one-world week was organised by the school which gave the pupils the opportunity to experience several cross cultural themes. From this point of view there has been progress since the last inspection but, nonetheless more could still be done in the school to acknowledge and celebrate the fact of Great Britain itself being a multi-cultural society.

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

- 53 The Deanes School is a caring school providing effective support, advice and guidance for its pupils. The pastoral system involving tutors and heads of year is good and allows a clear overview of the pupil to be maintained, especially by the heads of year. Very good relationships exist throughout the school and the pupils say that they feel "well-known and well looked after". Form tutors develop constructive and supportive relationships with their pupils and these relationships are maintained as tutors move through the school with their group. Most tutors are very clear about their role and tutor time makes a valuable pastoral input where it allows tutors to monitor personal development. However tutor time varies in quality, particularly through the inconsistent use made of materials provided for tutors as part of the schools PHSE programme and the emphasis placed on reflection as a dimension of spiritual development.
- 54 The mentoring system operating from Year 9 onwards is effective in supporting both the pupils' academic progress and their personal development. Good systems are in place to track pupils' progress and effort in their work. Additional community and extra mentors have contributed to raising the achievement of pupils who needed extra guidance and support.
- 55 The Gifted and Talented Education [GATE] programme provides good extension and enrichment activities for more able pupils. The option choice programme in Year 9 and careers education are very effective in supporting pupils in making decisions about their future careers. The School Council continues to be an effective forum for pupils to contribute directly to the life of the school.
- 56 There is a strong ethos in the school that promotes discipline and good behaviour. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and a strong code of conduct is well supported by the governing body. A range of strategies such as the extensive extracurricular programme, Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and the IXL system of merits promote positive attitudes. These merits are valued by all of the pupils and they compete for them in all year groups. Detailed policies are applied consistently and well managed through the academic and pastoral systems in the school. Most pupils do not consider bullying to be a problem and feel that they know where to go to obtain help to deal with any incidents. Systems for monitoring attendance are not secure. Registers are not checked consistently nor unauthorised absences followed up satisfactorily. The school does not maintain correctly a central record of holiday absence or record absence over the 10 days allowed.
- 57 The school has four trained designated first-aiders and the medical room is always open and

staffed appropriately. Health and Safety procedures are satisfactory although some issues have been reported to the school – particularly those relating to training in the use and supervision of machines in design & technology. Regular reviews are carried out, these include issues such as safety in cycling to and from school. The Health & Safety Committee is effective and informs the relevant members of the governing body. Child protection procedures are secure and named members of staff have received appropriate training. The few child protection issues that do occur are dealt with promptly and effectively. The school employs its own counsellor who is always available to the pupils to discuss any problems.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 58 Overall the information that the school provides for parents is satisfactory. The documents provided are good and very informative. The school values its links with parents and parents find it easy to approach the school but some think that the systems of communication could be improved.
- 59 Some parents do not think they are kept well informed about their child's progress. Year 7 parents would like information about their child's achievement in the autumn term progress report. Progress reports for pupils in Year 8 to 11 are good. Improvements have been made in pupils' reports since the last inspection and most parents find them helpful. The quality of pupils' information in reports is variable. In some subjects the comments read well and clearly indicate pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the subject, as required. However, in others, the language is stilted and the comments are unbalanced; all strengths if a pupil is doing well but mostly weaknesses if they are not. The school is still not fulfilling statutory requirements in reporting on information and communication technology (ICT). Similarly, the prospectus, governors' report to parents for 1997/1998 and pupils' reports for Year 11 do not meet legal requirements.
- 60 Parents' support for the school and their children's education is good. Parents see the partnership with the school as important and are keen to be active partners; almost all have signed their home-school agreement forms. Their support for learning at home is helping to improve standards. Parental support for pupils with special needs is a strength of the school. The attendance at parents' evenings and other meetings is very good. The parent teacher association makes a significant contribution to the school by raising money, providing social events and helping at events. Parents also help on visits and in other ways, for example by providing transport to and from sporting events and collecting pupils after school when they have been attending after-school activities.
- 61 The extensive links the school has with the local community make a very good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. The school actively encourages all pupils to help those in the community; for example the school has won two Barclays New Futures awards for its excellent involvement in projects in the Roach Valley Way and Little Haven nature reserve. Pupils regularly help senior citizens in several residential homes. Younger pupils are involved in the Changemakers initiative. Many older pupils achieve their trident gold award and Duke of Edinburgh bronze award. Pupils are very good at supporting charities; the local children's hospice has received over £10000 since 1995.
- 62 The specialist school initiative, required as part of Sports College status, has resulted in a seamless pathway to the global community. At home, pupils benefit significantly from coaching by professionals and the chance to excel in fourteen different sports and learn to be sports coaches. In a wider dimension, the Year 8 sports world project, where all lessons involved aspects of sport, pupils learnt about the limited opportunities for sport in some third world countries and contributed towards the Game of Two Halves project to provide sports equipment for Kenya. In the summer, some pupils visited Kenya to coach pupils in football.



- 63 The school also benefits considerably from the time and generosity of a large number of businesses. Many provided financial support for sports college status and continue to provide valuable first-hand experiences for pupils through work experience placements and visits. In addition, members of a number of businesses are involved in Year 9 Industry Days, curriculum links and act as mentors for selected pupils.
- 64 The school has very good links with the emergency services that help with the school's exciting safety week. The school has improved its links with its very large number of feeder schools since the last inspection and is now able to get personal and academic information on all pupils by the time they start in Year 7. Curriculum links have been established with partner schools but at yet the limited information gathered is not being used to great effect. There are very good links with the careers service and local post-16 institutions, in particular with South East Essex sixth form college (SEEVIC).

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

### **Leadership and management**

- 65 The school has a very positive ethos and provides a clear framework for the work of teachers and pupils. This establishes a sense of common purpose about what needs to be achieved and enables most of those who work in the school to work towards improving performance and raising standards. The revised school aims, which seek to develop pupils as 'rounded' individuals, now inform all aspects of the school's work and provide clear guidance for future development. The positive attitudes to learning, particularly evident amongst Year 11 pupils, are just one way in which the school has been successful in fulfilling these aims. The school has identified clear priorities and targets for its further improvement. Governors, staff and pupils all have a strong commitment to the school. Parents also appreciate the values promoted by the school.
- 66 The Headteacher, other senior managers and the governing body lead the school well. The Headteacher provides energetic and creative leadership and has a clear vision of what sort of school The Deanes should be. The other senior managers share this vision and provide effective support for strategies to achieve its realisation. The governing body is an active and supportive group, which brings considerable expertise to the leadership of the school. The Headteacher and senior managers provide governors with full information about all aspects of the school, which they use to help them make decisions; as a result governors are well informed and are fully involved. Their roles in guiding the longer-term development of the school are well established. The governing body uses its committee structures well to set targets for the school. Governors rely on the senior managers to ensure that staff and pupils are fully engaged in the achievement of these targets. Although governors are playing an increasing role in planning the school's educational and other priorities their monitoring role remains under-developed. The school's system for monitoring the curriculum needs further development. Governors discharge most of their responsibilities satisfactorily. Statutory requirements are not fully met in:
- curriculum provision for National Curriculum information technology for all Key Stage 4 pupils;
  - implementation of the agreed syllabus in religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11;
  - reporting to parents;
  - ensuring that all pupils are able to participate in a daily act of collective worship.

- 67 Development planning has improved since the last inspection. Clear development priorities are identified at whole-school level and the plan sets out clear targets for the whole school. This is supporting progress towards the realisation of the school's aims. Many of the current priorities are about securing improvement at all levels, with a strong emphasis on improving the curriculum and raising standards. The establishment of 'focus groups' to promote implementation of each priority has secured the wider involvement of staff in the identification of strategies and more detailed planning. The intention that subject development plans are linked to the whole school development plan is not always realised. These plans are not always matched well enough to whole school expectations and do not always set out the detailed action that needs to be taken. Consequently staff are not always deployed to best advantage to support the realisation of the targets and to achieve the expected improvement in quality and standards.
- 68 Processes for monitoring the progress made towards achieving the targets set in subject development plans are not sufficiently rigorous, and there is inconsistency in this area. Success in implementation of initiatives is not always monitored well enough. The success criteria lack the precision needed for effective monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the planning on pupils' learning. The implementation of the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) initiative for more able pupils provides a clear example. The school has put together a programme to support its most able pupils which is well organised. There is effective early identification of a pupil's potential for high attainment. The blend of in-lesson and out-of-class provision is recognised as a key feature of the programme; however, although information about these pupils is communicated to staff they do not always act on it when planning their lessons. The shortcoming in the implementation in practice means that the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons. This limits not only the progress made by these pupils and the standards they are able to achieve but also the success of the initiative in lessons.
- 69 Improvements at whole-school level include the introduction of a systematic programme for monitoring curriculum provision and the quality of provision in the classroom by senior managers and subject leaders. A regular programme has been put in place with a variety of elements including focussed discussions with senior managers and termly observation of lessons. In practice, however, there are inconsistencies in implementation and the programme lacks rigour. A consequence of this is that a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is still evident and the improvements needed in mathematics, highlighted in the last inspection, still have not been achieved. Subject leaders need to play a more active role in guiding practice and monitoring the quality of provision in the areas for which they are responsible. Senior managers are developing the use of prior attainment data to support the monitoring of pupils' academic progress. This is also being developed at departmental level, but a number of subject leaders need to make more use of such information.

## **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

### **6.2a Staffing**

- 70 The school has experienced and well qualified staff. There is a good mix of age and experience, with one tenth of the teachers who have been at the school for 15 or more years and one twelfth of teachers appointed during the last two years. Three fifths of staff hold posts of responsibility, one fifth are men and two fifths are women.
- 71 The teaching staff are well qualified and are mostly deployed to their strengths. There is some non-specialist teaching in physics, but an appropriate programme of training has been organised. In mathematics, there is also a significant amount of non-specialist teaching in Year 7, but there is no programme of support and training. There are now fewer split classes than at the time of the last inspection although there are still some in modern foreign languages. The

department manages this situation well.

- 72 The level of staffing provided to support pupils with special educational needs has improved considerably since the last inspection. There are three SEN support teachers and also a team of ten learning support assistants covering a total of 164 hours each week. Regular training is provided for this team and over half of the assistants possess formal qualifications. Assistants are attached to departments and this helps to build up relationships and subject knowledge, making their work more effective.
- 73 There are good levels of technical support in a number of curriculum areas. Technicians in design and technology and science are well-qualified and experienced. Staff who provide support for information and communication technology provide efficient support with equipment and resources. In art and in physical education the technicians work not just in a supporting role, but are involved in the teaching and make a significant and direct contribution to pupil learning. Training has been made available to some of the technicians, for example safety training in science. However, in design and technology there is a need for formal health and safety training in the use of machinery for the technician and some members of the teaching staff. In physical education, more training is needed for some coaches when they work with disabled pupils.
- 74 The school is an efficiently run organisation and the effective work of the support and administrative staff makes a very important contribution to this. Financial management is very good.
- 75 Since the last inspection the arrangements for staff development have been reviewed and good progress has been made towards linking staff training with whole-school and departmental priorities. Annual departmental audits are carried out in order to assess the INSET activities of the previous year. Plans for further training are informed by this audit and must also link into the priorities of the school development plan. Departments are encouraged to consider a variety of avenues for staff development, including attendance on courses, visits to other departments or to other schools, peer observation or inviting in outside consultants. Staff who have been involved in any INSET activity are required to write an evaluation which is seen by the deputy head, who oversees staff development. A database of all INSET activity is also maintained for each curriculum area and this is used to monitor the spread and balance of INSET activity over a period of time.
- 76 The school ran an imaginative Skills for the Future programme last year, with four events which focussed on improving teaching and learning and also on managing effectively. All four sessions were well attended. The use of closure days is also well linked to the school's planning system. Last year one day was devoted to monitoring pupils' work at Key Stage 4, whilst another was given over to a review of the 1998 examination results and target setting for the year ahead. A day was also set aside so that all staff could be involved in planning ahead for the 1999/2000 academic year. A fifth non-pupil day was used to launch six focus groups, which involve every member of staff. These groups have clear aims and objectives and also offer good opportunities for staff development in a cross-curricular situation.
- 77 In the last two years, staff turnover has been relatively low and there have not been more than one or two newly qualified teachers at any one time. Induction is therefore arranged on an individual basis with a mentor in the same department. Whenever possible, new teachers join the Year 7 tutor team, so that the senior teacher responsible for induction can keep in regular contact in her role as head of year. The extra non-contact time now available for NQTs is constructively used for mentor sessions, regular opportunities to observe other lessons and to be observed teaching.
- 78 An appraisal system was in operation for approximately three years. This has now been

replaced by a termly monitoring system with a specific whole-school focus. Link managers observe curriculum managers and they in turn observe members of their own departments. Provision for written feedback is built into the system. This policy has been implemented in all curriculum areas, but there are some inconsistencies in its implementation. Whilst in some curriculum areas the system is followed thoroughly, in others there is less rigour and lesson observations are not full-length. Practice does not yet fully match up with policy in this area.

## **6.2b Accommodation**

- 79 Overall the accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. It has improved since the last inspection. The physical education department has benefited considerably since gaining Sports College status by the addition of a new fitness suite, dance studio, seminar room and an outdoor jumping area. The physical education department now has very good accommodation that is having a significant impact on teaching and the curriculum. In addition, there are more rooms for special needs pupils and learning studio for disabled pupils allowing them full access to the site. The facilities for art include a large dark room and computer suite and those for information and communications technology courses (ICT) are very good. Accommodation for most all other subjects is good. It is satisfactory for history and GNVQ courses.
- 80 The school is situated in extensive, attractive and well-maintained grounds that have plenty of seats and an area designed and built by pupils in memory of a teacher. As before, most subject departments benefit from having a suite of rooms close together with almost all lessons being taught in specialist rooms.
- 81 The English classrooms are conveniently located close to the library and drama area. The career area is appropriately located within the main library. The furniture in the art studios is old and inadequate. The music department has two very large teaching rooms but the position of the benches in the main room make it difficult for pupils to see the teacher. The two history classrooms are very narrow. In some areas the corridors are too narrow to cope with the large numbers of pupils trying to move along them. This can be a problem for pupils in wheelchairs.
- 82 Overall the displays around the school are good. They are excellent in English, where they celebrate pupils' work superbly; very good in physical education, science, religious education, geography and history, and good in other subject areas. The new system for displaying pupils' work and community initiatives is making a considerable impact on the quality of display.
- 83 A programme of in-house redecoration is underway. There is still a need to improve the entrance hall and refurbish the music practice rooms that are in a poor state of repair and require different doors (a child protection issue as they have no windows). The sports hall is still shabby and the surfaces of some tennis courts are crumbling and worn.

## **6.2c Resources for Learning**

- 84 The adequacy and accessibility of learning resources is good. The evidence gathered across the full curriculum indicates that the level of provision is never less than satisfactory and in many subjects is good or very good. The resourcing of learning in art, design and technology, English, humanities, physical education and modern foreign languages is a strength of the school. There is no evidence of pupils having to share the main texts issued to support the schemes of work and in practical subjects the stock of consumable materials is good. The school library is well stocked with appropriate resources and is well used by pupils and staff. Generally pupils of all abilities respond positively to the resources they are given to work with. In some departments, such as humanities and science there is a tendency for teachers to take increasing control over the production of the resources to be used for learning. This

development has been well supported by a senior management that has provided some departments with their own reprographics facilities. This initiative has improved for many pupils the accessibility of the department's schemes of work and the National Curriculum. However, the access to information technology in some departments is unsatisfactory and not only limits the progress of some pupils but also restricts the progress of the school's development plan.

### **The efficiency of the school**

- 85 Until 1<sup>st</sup> April this year the school had grant maintained status. Since the previous inspection the school has also benefited from being awarded sports college status. Income and expenditure per pupil have been above national averages. Additional resources available to the school have been well used and efficiently deployed. From the start of the current financial year, funding is received from Essex County Council. The school has managed this change in its status very effectively and has been able to sustain a comparatively favourable staffing structure for the benefit of its pupils.
- 86 Overall financial planning in the school is very good. The governing body is fulfilling its strategic responsibility for planning the use of resources in the school. The school development plan now includes more detailed costings of activities and financial planning is more closely linked to supporting the achievement of whole-school priorities. A closer link between some aspects of departmental planning and the school development plan would assist the school to deliver its key priorities.
- 87 Effective use is made of teaching and support staff, particularly in art and physical education, ensuring that their expertise benefits pupils in the school. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed across departments to support pupils with special educational needs. In mathematics, however, links with the special educational needs department and learning support staff are weak.
- 88 The availability and use of learning resources and accommodation in the school is good. Additional grants, to develop the school's sports college status, have been very effectively used, contributing to significant gains in pupils' attainment. The overall provision of computer equipment in the school is good, although not all subject departments make effective use of information technology resources to support pupils' learning.
- 89 Financial control and the administration of financial systems in the school are very good. Systems are well developed and spending is effectively monitored. The negotiation of contracts with external organisations, for example, in providing for catering and grounds maintenance enables the school to secure value for money. Monthly summaries enable budget managers to control expenditure within agreed annual limits. Information is summarised for the governing body, which is appropriately involved in monitoring overall expenditure. The most recent auditors' report identified no significant weaknesses in the school's systems.
- 90 In the context of broadly mixed socio-economic circumstances and pupils' average level of attainment on entry to the school, the school supports pupils in making good progress to achieve above average levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 4. Overall, the school continues to give good value for money.

## PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

#### English

- 91 Over the last three years attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in national standardised tests has been close to the national average in English. The results for 1999 show a significant improvement and an above average proportion of pupils achieved level 5 or higher. Although girls outperform boys, the girls' results are slightly below the national average while boys' performance is roughly similar to the national average. Attainment overall is appropriate for pupils' differing abilities. In Years 7 and 8 about ten per cent of pupils have difficulties with spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and independent reading. By Year 9 the majority of pupils are writing in the appropriate style, both formal and informal, with increasing fluency and accuracy. Most pupils enjoy reading and can read and understand a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. The quality of speaking and listening is good. At the start of Year 7 more account needs to be taken of pupils' previous knowledge, skills and understanding. The progress of pupils of all abilities accelerates through Years 8 and 9.
- 92 Results for GCSE English show a gradual improvement over three years and are slightly above the national expectation for similar schools. Results for GCSE English Literature have shown marked improvements and are well above the national average for 1999. Girls outperform boys overall, although some boys do also achieve the highest grades. Key Stage 4 pupils of all abilities can give a clear and detailed oral explanation. They can listen carefully and argue a point of view or develop a character through improvisation and role-play. Virtually all pupils can read independently from a range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama and media texts. They can make judgements and refer to the text to support those judgements on characterisation, the writers' intentions and style. They can skim read and scan, selecting and summarising relevant information. Written work is thoughtfully planned, organised and well presented. All pupils use language appropriately for a variety of purposes and express themselves clearly. Pupils of high or average ability write imaginatively, precisely and ambitiously. Progress for pupils of all abilities at Key Stage 4 is good.
- 93 Pupil response in English lessons is often good or very good and always satisfactory. At Key Stage 3 where the response is good pupils all contribute their ideas in discussion. They are willing to share experiences and anecdotes and are willing to explore and test ideas. They are interested, involved and listen respectfully to the teacher and to each other. They all participate in reading aloud when required, show a genuine interest and enjoyment in reading and the less able persevere when they have difficulties. Pupils collaborate well with each other, for example when planning and drafting writing. A few pupils of low ability lack confidence and have low self-esteem although teachers are very encouraging. Where the response is good at Key Stage 4 pupils clearly feel secure in their learning environment. They develop and sustain a point of view, modify their opinions and suggest alternatives. There are very good examples of independent reading and research in lessons and for homework and pupils respond well to challenge.
- 94 The quality of teaching was very good or excellent in one third of lessons. It was nearly always satisfactory or better although two lessons were unsatisfactory. There is no noticeable difference in quality between the key stages. Where the teaching is effective teachers have very good subject knowledge and share their enthusiasm with the class. The learning objectives are explicit, communicated to the pupils and frequently reinforced. Questioning is thoughtful and open ended allowing pupils room for reflection and a deeper response. There were good examples in Year 7 where pupils were exploring poems about bullying and starting school, and in Year 10 where pupils were reflecting on a Grace Nichols' poem about childbirth. Praise is used very positively. Teachers value and build on pupils' contributions emphasising

key concepts and vocabulary. Lessons are well structured and an effective variety of groupings and activities are employed. There is good modelling of note making and essay writing and high expectations of pupils' independence. Resources are well prepared, stimulating and varied. For example, excellent use was being made in Year 11 of background videos and a department-produced booklet on war poetry. Where teaching is less effective more able pupils are not being extended; learning support is not being employed as efficiently as it might be, or a lesson lacked coherence because of disparate activities.

- 95 The National Curriculum for English is fully covered by detailed schemes of work which include appropriate tasks for pupils with SEN and extension tasks for the more able. The schemes of work ensure effective progression. The department is also successfully incorporating some principles of the primary Literacy Hour into Year 7 lessons. Although specialist lessons are provided for pupils with literacy difficulties, they would benefit more by not being withdrawn from English lessons. Pupil assessment is very effective. Day-to-day marking is detailed and helpful and conforms to a departmental marking policy. Pupils are involved in regular, termly reviews of performance. There are very good moderation procedures to ensure standardisation.
- 96 English is well led and has a high profile in the school. The subject makes an important contribution to cross curricular and extra curricular activities such as the "One World" project. Children's writing is celebrated through displays of high quality and school produced anthologies. The department is staffed by experienced and well qualified teachers who keep abreast of professional developments. The subject is well resourced. There is a purposeful learning ethos in the English area. Rooms are conveniently placed to enable easy access to the library and IT room which are regularly used, but there is still need for an additional specialist English room if all pupils are to have equal access to a positive environment for literacy development.

## Mathematics

- 97 Compared with all schools the performance of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 since 1996 has been consistently close to the national average with no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. However, when compared with schools of a similar type the results of Key Stage 3 tests are well below national averages. The evidence gathered during the inspection showed that pupils throughout Key Stage 3 make sound progress and attain in line with national norms for all schools. Pupils of all abilities in Years 7 and 8 consolidate the topics they first met in the primary school such as drawing bar charts, converting between simple metric units, recording standard calculation skills and using compasses and protractors. By the beginning of Year 9 the least able learn angle facts and rules for estimation. The average ability and most able pupils learn conventions for approximation and rules for substituting in and manipulating simple formulae.
- 98 Compared with all schools the 1998 GCSE results were well above the national average. The 1999 results are similar to those for 1996 and 1997 when they were close to the national average for all schools. Since 1996 the performance of girls has improved year on year whereas the performance of boys has been variable and fell by 5% in 1999. The evidence gathered during the inspection showed that pupils throughout Key Stage 4 make sound progress and attain in line with national norms for all schools. The least able achieve good results in City and Guilds Basic Numeracy Tests. By the beginning of Year 10 the average and most able pupils are beginning to understand ratio, proportion, simple probability and inequalities all set in simple contexts. The least able are recognising simple transformations of shape.
- 99 Throughout both Key Stages 3 and Key Stage 4 the inappropriate use of calculators and insufficient opportunity to use computers and use and apply mathematics adversely affects

attainment and progress in mental mathematics, problem solving and conceptual understanding in all National Curriculum attainment targets.

- 100 The overall quality of teaching is sound in both key stages. There were no instances of unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4. There are too many instances of unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 3 and too few instances of good teaching in both key stages. Good teaching emphasises the importance of the use of precise vocabulary. A brisk start to the lesson is provided by involving pupils in discussions of calculations and concepts, and ensures the lesson proceeds at a good pace by setting clear and appropriate learning and productivity targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the lesson has not been planned to take account of the pupils' previous learning, expectations are low, the use of imprecise language undermines pupils' understanding. Too often the textbook is followed without reference to the schemes of work and without any enhancement being provided by the teacher.
- 101 Pupils' response is generally very good. Pupils are productive, sustain concentration and display good levels of interest and perseverance. They respond positively to homework and coursework. Their ability to communicate is sound but restricted by the quality of some teaching and, on occasions, their own lack of presentational skills and failure to arrive at lessons with the necessary materials and equipment. When the targets for the lesson are unclear pupils are slow to respond and work passively.
- 102 The majority of pupil behaviour is good. Pupils are mutually supportive and form constructive relationships, particularly when pupils who have specific learning difficulties join them. They show respect for their learning environment and are willing to take responsibility. The few instances of unsatisfactory behaviour are linked to teaching that is poorly planned and provides low expectation and insufficient challenge.
- 103 The breadth of the curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is supported by sound schemes of work and a department handbook that contains a clearly documented set of policies. This represents some improvement since the last inspection. However, there remains a lack of curriculum balance; the opportunity for pupils to use and apply mathematics is rare and is not sufficiently incorporated into teaching and learning.
- 104 Day-to-day use of teacher assessment, marking and record keeping remains unsatisfactory since the last inspection. Assessment opportunities are not included in the schemes of work and although marking and records are up to date they fail to identify what pupils can and cannot do and are not used to inform lesson planning or set pupils targets to further their progress.
- 105 The overall quality of the provision for SEN pupils and slow learners is unsatisfactory. The quality of SEN support teaching is good and improves pupil's progress. The unsatisfactory nature of the linking that exists between the classteacher and the SEN support staff and the unsatisfactory use of previous learning to inform planning limits the progress and provision for SEN pupils in those lessons when specialist support is not available.
- 106 The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. The management team, which consists of a head of department and a second in charge, has ensured that schemes of work are in place, and that regular department meetings are held and that some are minuted. They also provide clear educational direction and have linked the department development plan to the school development plan and their purchase of new learning resources has improved the continuity of learning between lessons. The head of department in conjunction with the senior management of the school has undertaken some monitoring of teacher performance. However, department managers have not ensured
- that the roles and responsibilities of staff are supported by appraisal,
  - subject specific job descriptions and targets;



- subject expertise is efficiently distributed across year groups;
- resources for information technology are used efficiently;
- strong links are made with other departments;
- the development plan has been fully met and supported by action plans;
- the means by which pupils are set is secure
- the monitoring and evaluation of department development is consistent.

There is no numeracy policy and the implications for the school of the National Numeracy strategy have not been assessed.

- 107 Resources are sound and the accommodation is good. The number of split classes has been reduced to two and none are taught by non-specialists. The links between the teachers of one split class is weak and fails to ensure that learning has continuity and progression. The quantity and quality of textbooks is good but the provision of small apparatus and equipment is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient practical resources to support the least able pupils. The department's own room of ten computers is seldom used to deliver the allocated responsibility for teaching spreadsheets.
- 108 The department since the last inspection has made improvements to the resourcing and organisation of mathematics. However in planning and teaching which have a key impact on pupils' progress, the improvements are too slow.

## Science

- 109 Standards reached by pupils in the 1998 Key Stage 3 tests are close to those achieved nationally. Results for 1999 show a drop in the number of pupils achieving both level 5 and level 6. Standards are well below average in comparison with similar schools, especially at level 6 and above. The 1999 results are significantly poorer than those achieved by the same pupils in English and mathematics.
- 110 Inspection evidence shows that in lessons and work examined pupils reach standards that are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils are able to use tables and graphs to present and interpret data and understand the need for repeating results. Pupils are developing a good understanding of scientific ideas and are able to apply them in a range of contexts such as using word equations to represent chemical reactions. Pupils are making experimental predictions linked to underlying scientific concepts and have a clear understanding of the importance of fair testing.
- 111 Results in the GCSE examinations for 1998 are in line with the national average. Results for 1999 show an improvement. Inspection evidence shows that attainment is in line with national standards. Pupils are confident in their use of scientific vocabulary and can deal with abstract concepts in a range of contexts such as the formation of ions. They are familiar with the use of chemical symbols and make good use of structural formulae to represent organic molecules.
- 112 There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys at either key stage. The department is aware of the needs of special needs pupils; the learning support teachers are well briefed and knowledgeable and make a significant contribution to the lessons. Suitable provision is not always made in lessons for more able pupils.
- 113 Pupils are making sound progress in most lessons. The younger pupils are starting to understand abstract ideas such as the particulate nature of matter and are developing accurate observational skills that they can apply in their investigations. Pupils are developing research skills that they can use to access and present information. Older pupils are making progress in more complex scientific concepts such as understanding the links between atomic structure and the periodic table of elements. Some pupils make very good progress where the lessons are

structured to develop thinking and analytical skills. Progress is not as good where lessons lack depth and pupils develop a limited understanding of scientific principles.

- 114 Pupil response is good or better in almost half of lessons and is satisfactory in most of the other lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about their science and work well together. A good humoured, busy working atmosphere exists in most classes. Pupils are keen and eager to answer questions and to discuss their work. Where the more able pupils are stretched by the demands of the work, they ask pertinent and relevant questions showing that they give thought and consideration to their science. Where pupils do not engage with the lessons it is linked to a lack of opportunity for them to act as independent learners and the tasks are not sufficiently demanding or instructions are unclear.
- 115 Teaching is satisfactory or better in over four fifths of lessons. It is very good or excellent in one fifth of these lessons. Teachers show a good knowledge of all aspects of National Curriculum science. The lessons are characterised by very good relationships and good classroom management. Teaching is well paced with regular time calls keeping pupils on task. Lessons are planned to ensure a good sequence of activities that encourage progress in difficult areas such as understanding atomic structure. Questioning is used effectively to draw out the pupils' knowledge and to draw them into the lessons. Well-structured worksheets focus pupils' responses on key issues and ensure commonality of coverage across different groups in the same year.
- 116 Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in each of the key stages. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, classroom and behaviour management are not secure. Planning to meet the needs of a range of pupils within a class is not secure or effective, particularly for more able pupils. There is a lack of clarity about intended learning outcomes and the pace of lessons is not maintained. Use of worksheets becomes the focus of the lesson and, while this may ensure coverage of the content, it does not ensure understanding. Marking is regular and, in the best instances, is thorough and developmental. However, this is not consistent across the department and the quality of feedback given to pupils is varied.
- 117 Schemes of work are well planned and are more established at Key Stage 4. Information technology is integrated into the planning especially in relation to the use of sensors and measurement. Extension activities, especially those for the more able pupils, enliven and add considerable value to science teaching.
- 118 There is regular testing and assessment at both key stages and reporting procedures have improved since the last inspection. The significant differences that arose between the 1998 Key Stage 3 test results and the teacher assessments have resulted in the present review of assessment practices. The assessment cycle is not yet complete and results of assessment do not yet make significant impact on future planning of the curriculum.
- 119 The department is effectively managed and there is a clear agenda for improvement. Targets have been set for attainment in both key stages and the strategies to ensure that these are achieved, especially in Key Stage 3 are under development. Technical support is very effective and responsive to the needs of the pupils. Laboratories are well maintained and the good display of work acknowledges the pupils' achievements.

The department has made sound improvement since the last inspection.

## **ART**

- 120 Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at Key Stages 3 and 4. There is some variability at both key stages and there are many instances where standards are better

than expectations, particularly at Key Stage 4. GCSE results are improving year on year and are consistently significantly better than the national average. Where standards are good, works are well made and inventive, designs are carefully crafted and pupils' skills of pattern making are evident. Works reveal a good understanding of the 'design process' and outcomes are informed by preparatory studies and other closely related works. Works which are based on direct observation of rich visual stimuli such as figures, fruits and flowers, show a diversity of interpretation and sharpness of perception. There are some excellent photography work journals at Key Stage 4. In general, works reveal sound or better understanding of materials and processes. At Key Stage 4, experimental photography is good and often very good and there is creative use of photocopied materials. Where works are less successful, the level of conceptual challenge is not well matched to the pupils' capabilities, there is insufficient use of materials of quality and there is overuse of inadequate secondary source materials as a springboard for pupils' works.

- 121 Pupils at both key stages make sound and often good progress. Key Stage 4 progress is better than that in Key Stage 3. All pupils show a good understanding of the sequential stages of the production of art and design works. Pupils' knowledge of artists' works has improved since the last Inspection and they can often relate artists' works to their own practices. However, in many cases they know of the artists without fully understanding their achievements. Knowledge and understanding of the works of craftworkers and designers is more limited. Pupils have developed knowledge and skills in using a wide range of materials in diverse contexts. They are familiar with fine art, graphic design, ceramics and other work in three-dimensions. They are able to sustain their efforts over time and recognise clearly the relationship between sustained work and achievement. All pupils monitor their own development and the good assessment practices used by the staff ensure that pupils are all aware of their progress. The needs of more able and less able pupils are met through careful targeting and focussed teaching and pupils with special needs make sound progress. Where progress is less satisfactory, there is insufficient visual challenge in some of the projects and pupils do not observe closely, analyse thoroughly, develop ideas thoughtfully and select materials and processes sensitively. The carousel timetable and the modularised curriculum lead to the attainment of short term goals at the expense of progression and continuity in the development of the core skills of the subject and in the use of art as a visual language. The majority of pupils have sketchbooks and, although many of them contain good work, their potential is only partially realised and they are rarely dynamic and vital elements in the pupils' learning. Although considerable improvements have been made in the level of ICT provision in the department and interesting projects are now emerging, the power of its applications has yet to be experienced by Key Stage 3 pupils. Homework contributes to pupils' progress but it is of varied quality and does not always link well with classwork.
- 122 The attitudes of pupils at both key stages are good and are sometimes very good. They are particularly good in Key Stage 3. Pupils work well and develop ideas fluently. They persevere throughout lessons and sustain their efforts over the length of projects. They enjoy the focus of the six week module. They are well behaved in lessons and are keen to participate. They often show enthusiasm for their own work and are respectful of the works of others. They listen well, organise their own materials and produce lots of work.
- 123 The quality of teaching is sound overall with far more strengths than weaknesses, particularly at Key Stage 4. All teachers organise well, prepare thoroughly and have a good grasp of the subject. They have good classroom presence and employ appropriate teaching strategies. In the best lessons, the teachers give practical demonstrations of processes and techniques and sometimes show pupils examples of their own works in conjunction with good verbal explanations which include technical and aesthetic vocabularies. Such exemplification provides pupils with a clear sense of direction. Displays in the department are not always fully effective although those in the public spaces adjacent to the art suite are very good. Although teachers generally use time well and establish a brisk working pace within lessons, the failure to provide

appropriate visual stimuli can constrain pupils' opportunities and depress attainment and progress over time. As a result, teachers' and pupils' expectations are sometimes set lower than would be appropriate. On such occasions, the connections between task, materials and stimuli are not fruitfully established. Teachers use praise very effectively and their use of frequent assessment, on the basis of criteria shared with pupils, ensures that short term goals are clear and that pupils are aware of how well they are doing.

- 124 The documentation is extremely detailed and the curriculum focuses on giving the pupils a broad range of experiences. However, this breadth sometimes leads to an absence of opportunities for pupils to practise regular and frequent repetition of the central behaviour in art and design and to learn in depth. The last inspection identified assessment, recording and reporting as a good feature of the department's work and it continues to be so. Teachers' records of pupils' attainment are very detailed and procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very good. The use of assessment to inform curriculum planning is good, with regular meetings being held to focus on the effectiveness of individual projects. Extra-curricular clubs make a good contribution to the art curriculum. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual development; there are opportunities to reflect on artists' works and there are some opportunities for pupils to engage with the environments in which artists worked. Contributions to moral and social development are also sound and there are many opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility in the department. In respect of pupils' cultural development, the subject makes major contributions. The programme of local, national and international visits is good, there are exchange opportunities with pupils from France and Germany, an Internet connection is planned with a school in Japan and artists work in the school. The celebration of the cultural pluralism of Great Britain is less well developed although some multicultural projects are explored through units of work. The needs of special needs pupils are understood by the staff who are familiar with their IEPs. Additionally, a member of the art staff is represented on the school's special needs committee.
- 125 The department is well led. There is a clear structure for the curriculum and the head of department is aware of what's going on in his department. Communication within the department is good and the rotation system ensures that all staff know all of the pupils. The ethos for learning in the subject is very positive. The well qualified teachers work hard and are committed to their pupils and the contribution of the art technician is considerable. Accommodation is very good, the studios are juxtaposed and there are good specialist facilities for ceramics and photography. Most of the furnishings are old, of mixed origin and of poor quality and the lack of in-class storage leads to some clutter and visual disorder. However, the environment for learning is good.

### • **Design and Technology**

- 126 GCSE results have been maintained at above national averages since 1997. This represents improvement since the last inspection. In 1998 the combined results for boys and girls show that over half of pupils achieved grades A\* to C. The school achieved almost six percent more A\* to C grades compared with the national average for all maintained schools. In 1999 a similar proportion of pupils achieved GCSE grades A\* to C, although performance was closer to the 1999 national average figure. A quarter of pupils achieved the higher grades of A\* A and B. The 1999 results are subject to the outcome of an appeal. The department has set a target of 53.5% for 2000, although this sustains the current above average levels of attainment it does not anticipate any notable improvement over current performance. Boys outperformed girls in 1998 when they achieved well above the national average for boys in this subject. Girls' attainment in 1998 was below the national average for girls. In 1999 the relative performance of boys and girls was reversed with girls significantly outperforming boys. The 1999 General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) Part 1 Engineering results are very good with ten of the eleven pupils gaining the award. Four of these pupils passed with merit or distinction.

- 127 The standard of work seen in lessons during the inspection was similar to those reported in the 1994 inspection. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows inconsistencies in work carried out in different material areas. In both key stages standards are lower in designing than in making. There is evidence of some under-achievement by more able pupils. A number of factors contribute to the low levels of challenge for these pupils. In Key Stage 3 teacher's expectations are not sufficiently well focussed on National curriculum programmes of study and level descriptions. As a result many tasks provided for these more able pupils lack appropriate challenge, consequently their work lacks the rigour and detail to support higher standards. Some activities, for example design work in Key Stage 3 and the use of information technology in both key stages, lack an effective context in which pupils can apply their knowledge and understanding.
- 128 In Key Stage 3 standards are close to national expectations. When designing pupils can generate and record their ideas using sketches and notes. Pupils' design work does not always take sufficient account of users' views and preferences or make best use of criteria or research to inform their ideas. Standards of presentation are varied with some evidence of standards that are below average. Formal drawing methods are not well used to communicate design intentions. When making pupils can apply their knowledge and understanding of materials to make successful products. Pupils work safely with tools and machinery and the levels of skill demonstrated in the finished work are satisfactory. Accuracy and finish are occasionally of lower standards than expected and reveal a lack of understanding of construction techniques and the working properties of materials.
- 129 Standards of attainment in Key Stage 4 lessons are overall in line with national averages. Some pupils are working at above average standards but the frequency of high attainment is less than expected. When designing most pupils are able to make appropriate design decisions based on an accurate analysis of data and take appropriate action. Standards of presentation are mostly good. Some pupils follow a superficial approach to designing which lacks rigour and leads to standards that are below expectations.
- 130 Pupils' make sound progress overall in developing design and technology capability in both Key Stages 3 and 4. In most lessons pupils make sound or good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. The scrutiny of pupils' previous work confirms the judgement that pupils of middle and lower ability are developing a satisfactory range of skills at a reasonable rate. Many Year 11 pupils have made impressive progress with their GCSE coursework projects and are well placed to achieve good standards. In a few lessons more able pupils make only slow progress.
- 131 The positive response that pupils bring to this subject is a major strength of the department. In Key Stage 3 lessons the pupils' response is always good or very good. Most Key Stage 4 pupils' response is at least sound and often good or very good. Pupils' behaviour is very good and working relationships between pupils and with teachers are very positive. Most pupils work thoughtfully and show concern for the quality and standards of their work. Many pupils demonstrate good levels of concentration and application and are attentive to whole class teaching. Given the opportunity pupils can work effectively in small groups. A few Key Stage 4 pupils show lower levels of application and fail to engage meaningfully with activities; consequently in one Key Stage 4 lesson pupils' response was unsatisfactory.
- 132 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4. Teaching quality is similar to that observed in 1994. Teachers' knowledge is secure and homework is used well to extend and support classroom activity. Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and interventions with individual and groups of pupils are effective in taking pupils forward with their work. Shortcomings evident in teaching are in the area of medium and short term planning. Some Key Stage 3 activities lack an effective context and

project workbooks are over prescriptive. The quality of marking is variable and is often over-generous for the quality of work produced. Assessments systems for recording pupils' attainment in Key Stage 3 are effective and the mentor system works well in supporting the setting of individual pupil targets for improvement. This data however, is not well used by teachers to inform their expectations of individual and groups of Key Stage 3 pupils. Teachers' understanding of GCSE and GNVQ standards and syllabus requirements is more secure and better informs their expectations of pupils. The understanding and use of technical vocabulary is given a good emphasis and teachers' management and organisation of pupils is effective.

- 133 The allocation of curriculum time in both key stages is good. Schemes of work are in place for all courses with homework planned as an integral element. The breadth and balance of the Key Stage 3 curriculum is insecure. The short length of the modules constrain pupils' attainment and the art department input is not fully relevant to design and technology. Electronics, mechanisms and structures are under-represented and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate products designed and made by others. Some significant improvements have been made in response to the weaknesses reported in 1994 but some still remain. The use of information technology is becoming established in the curriculum but is not always taught within an effective context. The coverage of computer control is now secure in Key Stage 3 and in most Key Stage 4 courses but in every case activities lack a secure design and technology context in which pupils can apply their knowledge and understanding. The curriculum continues to be enhanced by a range of visits and visitors. All workrooms are open to pupils at lunchtimes and sometimes after school to provide more working time.
- 134 There is strong departmental leadership. Key strengths are the quality of working relationships and the strong department ethos which encourages the purposeful response from most pupils. The department has made good progress overall in addressing the issues raised in the 1994 inspection. Management of the department is sound. Inconsistency of practice across the department in terms of expectations and the assessment of standards are shortcomings needing resolution. The department receives effective technical support and all teaching staff are qualified and deployed to be working to their strengths. Some teachers and the workshop technician do not however, hold appropriate health and safety certification for the safe personal use and informed supervision of workshop machinery. This matter should be dealt with as a matter of high priority. All workrooms are well organised and managed and there is effective display to celebrate pupils' achievement and to support teaching and learning. The department is well stocked with equipment and consumable materials. There are, however, no computers in the food technology rooms with appropriate software to support control activities and dietary analysis or construction kits to support the teaching of mechanisms.

## • **DRAMA**

- 135 Drama is taught as a discreet subject at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Standards of attainment are variable across both key stages. However, by the end of Key Stage 4 pupils achieve good results with % of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in the 1999 results. In lessons standards of attainment are linked to good teaching. When this is effective at Key Stage 3, pupils show a good understanding of different styles and genre, are able to structure their work effectively and are able to perform with confidence. By Key Stage 4 many are able to show a very good range of skills and show excellent ensemble playing. Where teaching is less effective pupils are not managed well and the lessons lack a clear structure and focus. Although there is a head of drama the majority of the lessons are taught by members of the English department who follow the drama departments scheme of work.
- 136 Drama is not taught on a regular basis but shares a modular arrangement of half term slots with personal, health and social education (PHSE). Although drama does allow opportunities for PHSE work through its schemes of work the separate nature of each of the subjects denies a

continuity of experience for many pupils. Skills that are developed through one unit of work are not revisited for up to 8 weeks later in the next terms' programme.

- 137 There is a specialist drama studio and drama teaching room. Drama is also taught in the hall. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular drama work such as school productions and theatre trips.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 138 The level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national expectation. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of geography. Lower attaining pupils are able to show a mature feeling for the lifestyle of poor farmers in developing countries. Skill development is relatively sophisticated and Year 9 pupils are confident in interpreting satellite images of the Bay of Naples and able to draw conclusions from their analysis about land use in the region. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is significantly above the national average. GCSE results have shown a notable improvement since the last inspection and the provisional figures for 1999 at two thirds of pupils gaining A\* to C with one fifths at A\* and A is an impressive performance. This built upon three fifths of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in 1998; again above the national average. Pupils in Year 11 are able to display good understanding about the impact of foreign tourism upon the economy of African countries. Pupils' use and interpretation of data using radar graphs and regression analysis in their coursework illustrates the good numerical skills that pupils possess.
- 139 Progress is mainly good and never less than satisfactory. This is attributed to well-focussed teaching and lessons that have a clear learning structure. This is evident when pupils are investigating connections between physical and human geography in the Lake District. Good expectations for pupil progress help pupils think more deeply about geographical issues. Pupils with special educational needs are frequently observed making good progress in gaining knowledge and learning geographical terminology. They are able to recognise and name the capital of Kenya from photographs and benefited from modified work and good quality support.
- 140 Pupil behaviour is good. They persevere with activities and are frequently observed enjoying geographical learning. Course work undertaken at Key Stage 4 shows a mature attitude to independent work and pupils produce some excellent enquiries based on an investigation of the Southend Central Business District.
- 141 There is much good and some very good teaching at both key stages; no teaching was less than satisfactory. Preparation is good and teachers possess a good knowledge of the subject. Most lessons have a good variety of activities, occasionally constrained by the 45 minutes lesson periods, and discipline is firm. Good relationships are evident across classes. Assessment is particularly thorough and allows Key Stage 4 pupils to know what targets they should be aiming for. Day-to-day marking contains most elements of good assessment but needs to inform all pupils at regular intervals on how well they have done geographically.
- 142 The leadership of the subject area is very effective and significant improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection. Fieldwork forms a more coherent part of the department's teaching and learning in most years and information and communication technology is beginning to be used. The displays around the department and in other areas of the school send a clear message about the subject. The department has built well on its past successes.

## **HISTORY**

- 143 The level of pupils' attainment, at the end of Key Stage 3, is above the national expectation. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 against attainment levels for the National Curriculum show pupils exceeding the expected national level. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' GCSE results for the last three years show consistent attainment above the national averages. Differences between boys' and girls' attainment are not as marked as nationally. Levels of pupil attainment shows significant improvement compared with those in the last inspection report.
- 144 Pupils achieve well in coursework and are able to work independently when handling historical concepts. They show a developing understanding of history in controversial areas like the Gulf War. Many pupils are confident orally and are able to discuss historical issues connected with events like 1066 or the conditions of black slaves on transportation ships. Pupils gain historical knowledge throughout their courses and are able to use this in extended writing. Teachers often provide writing frames and many pupils can highlight salient points about events like the King's flight to Varenne quickly during The French Revolution.
- 145 The majority of pupils make good progress. In both key stages pupils' progress in lessons observed and work scrutinised is never less than satisfactory. Discussion with pupils working on tracing the causes of change in medicine over a significant time period showed that they were able to enhance their conceptual understanding with the aid of timelines. Pupils enquiring into the lives of key personalities in the struggle for Black Rights in the USA were well able to illustrate both similarities and differences. Some differentiated material was used effectively to assure progress.
- 146 Overall curriculum planning is very good. Behaviour and attitude towards the learning of history is positive across the department. Pupils usually listen attentively and carry out instructions effectively. They respond to questions quickly and carry out research with a degree of efficiency. Special educational needs pupils were supported effectively by the specialised learning support assistant. Fieldwork is an important part of the curriculum with visits to Rochester and Dover contributing to higher pupil achievement.
- 147 The vast majority of the teaching is good and is never less than satisfactory. Teachers prepare well for their lessons and involve pupils in a range of activities including appropriate use of information and communication technology. Overall pupils make good progress in their history lessons. In some lessons, which are relatively shorter than others, the drawing together of progress is not always conclusively achieved.
- 148 Resources created by the department are well focused on the key areas of historical understanding and most pupils enjoy using their workbooks. The department is well led. Accommodation is still only just satisfactory, one particularly cramped and poorly ventilated and sometimes over-hot room is not conducive to effective pupil learning. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection in the teaching and learning of history, and it has developed and strengthened its place in the school curriculum.

## **· INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 149 Since the previous OFSTED inspection the school has made good progress in ensuring that all pupils receive an experience of working with information technology which fully reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study in Key Stage 3. Attainment in the information technology modules taken by all pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 in technology lessons reflects National Curriculum expectations. Pupils can use information technology to handle information, for measuring and modelling and to control events. They achieve above the nationally expected level when using information technology to communicate information, for example, when using desktop publishing software to combine text, graphics and photographs to



produce a magazine for a familiar audience. Pupils make good progress in these modules in developing their capability in using word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheet and database software.

- 150 Pupils in Key Stage 4 follow a GCSE option in information studies. There is no national comparative data available for this course; however, in terms of the proportion of pupils each year achieving grades A\* to C, results in 1997 and 1998 have been well above the national average for pupils taking GCSE Information Technology and for all GCSEs combined. This performance has been maintained for results in 1999. In 1997 and 1999 girls' achievement has been higher than boys'. Current levels of attainment continue to reflect this level of performance, with no significant variation between girls and boys. Pupils taking GNVQ courses in Key Stage 4 also achieve above the level expected in the key skill information technology element within their individual course. In all these courses pupils make good progress across the key stage in developing their ability to use a range of business standard software applications.
- 151 Since the previous inspection good progress is also evident in a number of subject areas the school has needed to meet the specialist school initiative requirement that information technology should permeate across the whole school, in particular, physical education and music. In some subjects and especially in mathematics, however, the use of information technology to support teaching and learning is limited. Pupils in Key Stage 4 who do not opt for the GCSE in information studies or for GNVQ courses have too few opportunities to use information technology and make limited progress in Years 10 and 11 in developing their capability in school. Overall, in both key stages, pupils make insufficient progress in developing their information technology capability across the full range of elements in the National Curriculum programmes of study in a wide range of subject contexts.
- 152 Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to using information technology, in the modular programme in technology in Key Stage 3, in the GCSE Information Studies course, GNVQ courses and in work undertaken in other subject areas. They are well behaved, show respect for equipment and often demonstrate a very good ability to work unsupervised. Some of the information technology activity undertaken in computer rooms during the lunch break however, does not support work in pupils' lessons.
- 153 Overall, the quality of teaching in the modular programme in technology in Key Stage 3 and in the GCSE Information Studies course is good, demonstrating a number of significant strengths. Teachers have very good subject expertise. Good questioning enables pupils to make progress in lesson time in developing their skill in using software applications. The technical infrastructure supporting pupils' learning is excellent. The school is converting from older Acorn computer technology to PCs running Windows. This process is being managed very effectively, maintaining pupils' positive attitudes to using both computer platforms. The curriculum contexts in which planned activities using information technology are set, however, could be more demanding of pupils. This would contribute more significantly to developing pupils' information technology capability to support higher level work in other subjects.
- 154 The schemes of work for the modules in technology in Key Stage 3 reflect the requirements for information technology in the National Curriculum. There is, however, insufficient planned work with information technology across a range of other subjects. Planning within the school at Key Stage 4 does not currently enable all pupils to access the full breadth of information technology activities across the programme of study at a sufficiently high level. Assessment arrangements within the GCSE course are effective and support pupils, including those with special educational needs, in making progress. The school does not, however, meet statutory requirements in reporting to parents on other Year 10 and 11 pupils' progress in information technology.

- 155 Clear direction is given for information technology within the modules taught in Key Stage 3 and the GCSE course in Key Stage 4, encouraging a strong ethos for learning. Overall, however, there has not yet been agreement within the school on how to ensure delivery of the full programme of study in Key Stage 4 to all pupils and across all subjects in Years 7 to 11. Agreed delivery within departments needs to be monitored to ensure its impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Arrangements are in place to further develop staff expertise across the school. Technician staff make a positive contribution in supporting pupils in using information technology. Resources have been improved since the previous inspection and further improvements and the necessary funding sources are indicated in development planning. Accommodation and the overall level of hardware and software resources currently available within the school are good.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

- 156 Since the last inspection, French GCSE results have improved and are now above the national average. In 1998 over half of pupils achieved an A\*-C grade, compared to two fifths nationally in comprehensive schools. Provisional results for 1999 are very similar to 1998, although with slightly fewer higher grades. In German in 1998, half of pupils achieved an A\*-C grade, which matches the national average. Results for 1999 are currently the subject of an appeal.
- 157 Pupils in Year 7 make good progress at the start of their French course. They quickly build up short conversations about their families which they speak from memory. In Years 8 and 9 the rate of progress is slower. Although there are examples of pupils engaging in tasks such as discussions on pocket money where they speak from memory, many tasks are pitched at a relatively elementary level. Pupils' spoken contributions are often limited to individual words or short phrases. Although a lot of new vocabulary is introduced, grammatical progression does not keep pace with this and pupils have insufficient opportunities to express themselves using a range of structures and sentence patterns.
- 158 In Key Stage 4, pupils make satisfactory progress overall and standards meet national expectations. Pupils understand a range of tape recorded conversations and pick out the key facts. In response to a homework task pupils write 120 word passages about their holidays with a fair degree of accuracy. Pupils are less confident when it comes to speaking and in some classes there is insufficient emphasis on speaking from memory.
- 159 The standard of behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils concentrate well, answer questions willingly and co-operate well with their teachers. Their attitude towards language learning is good, with only the occasional hint of restlessness when an activity lasts too long. Written work is mostly well presented. Pupils are very used to practising in pairs for short periods, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to show a greater degree of independence or to produce more sustained pieces of work, especially in speaking.
- 160 Lessons contain a good variety of activity and the pace is often good. Pairwork is regularly used in all classrooms to give pupils the opportunity to practise new material. Good use is also made of surveys and reporting back. Pupils are well managed and are very familiar with classroom routines. Exercise books are regularly marked and standards of presentation are good. Good use is made of repetition to reinforce correct pronunciation, but insufficient attention is paid to explicitly teaching the relationship between spelling and pronunciation, especially in French. This leads many pupils to make mistakes when they are using the textbook or worksheets to help them prepare speaking tasks.
- 161 There is a consistent approach to planning lessons, but also some significant differences in the way in which these plans are put into practice. There is considerable variation from classroom to classroom in the extent to which French and German are used as the means of

communication. In some cases the amount of English used is excessive, and in consequence pupils are not making sufficient progress. There is also some inconsistency in levels of expectation. In some lessons pupils are expected to practise until they have learned new material by heart, but in others they are allowed to use written prompts at all stages of the lesson, which does not allow them to become fully independent with the language.

- 162 Departmental schemes of work offer clear guidelines on the topics, vocabulary and structures which are to be covered. Specific learning activities and creative outcomes are now written into every unit of work. Many of the specific learning activities are reflected in the classroom. However, there is far less evidence of pupils working towards the creative outcomes, which would offer pupils opportunities a wider range of opportunity to practise and reinforce their language skills.
- 163 There are good systems in place for assessing pupils by means of regular tests and the results of these are maintained on a database to which all staff have access. However, the tasks identified in the schemes of work and teachers' day-to-day planning are not directly linked to the level descriptors of the National Curriculum. As a result of this, in French some of the tasks presented to pupils are not sufficiently demanding and progress, especially in Years 8 and 9, is held back. Assessment needs to be more closely linked to planning.
- 164 The department is well resourced with books, tape recorders and overhead projectors. Pupils are all able to have their own copies of textbooks which helps teachers link homework closely to the classwork. There is a good standard of display both in classrooms and in corridors. These factors help create a positive learning environment. The long-standing and regular exchange links are a significant and important feature of the departments' work, enabling many pupils to gain first-hand experience of the language and culture in France and Germany.
- 165 The department has a well qualified team of teachers and has further support from two part-time foreign language assistants and some learning support. The learning support teacher and a classroom assistant work closely with the other teachers and ensure that pupils with special educational needs progress well. The department functions very effectively as a team and has the capacity to continue the improvements made since the last inspection.

## **MUSIC**

- 166 Standards of attainment in music are in line with national expectation at the end of Key Stage 3 and above at Key Stage 4. The 1999 GCSE cohort achieved 81% A\* to C grades which is well above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 3 many pupils are able to compose simple melodies and are able to read and notate music. Most pupils are able to play instruments with confidence and perform either on their own, or as a class. In one lesson for example pupils were engaged in a project on medieval music. Although this was a lower ability group they were well able to play the tune "The song of the Ass" on glockenspiels and keyboards. They knew the basic terminology associated with topic, such as drone and mode, and were able to talk about these in their work. The class was also able to perform together maintaining their individual parts with confidence. In other lessons pupils are able to use their skills in music technology to great effect. All pupils are proficient in the use of computers and keyboards. All pupils make good progress in practical lessons.
- 167 Pupils clearly enjoy their music lessons and their attitudes and response to all musical activities are good. Pupils listen with concentration to music played. They are particularly well motivated when they have the opportunities to play the instruments and compose their own work. All pupils appear to work well with each other especially on collaborative group work. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good with over two thirds of lessons seen being judged good or better. When teaching is very good lessons are well structured with a clear focus.

There is a good recall of previous material and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupil management is very good and relationships in the class are excellent.

- 168 The curriculum meets statutory requirements with all aspects of the National Curriculum covered through various topics. However, there are still too few opportunities for focussed listening work and although pupil use of music technology is very good there are too few opportunities for pupils to use non-tuned and tuned percussion instruments both in class performance and in their own compositions. In some lessons the focus for learning is unclear and the lesson is not structured to include the integrated activities of performing, composing, listening and appraising. The issue relating to the time given to the teaching of the subject across Key Stage 3 has not yet been addressed. Some pupils in Years 8 and 9 receive two lessons of music per week and some receive only one. In addition the 45 minutes of lesson time is far too short to expect effective delivery of the National Curriculum especially if the teacher wishes to integrate activities, as required. During the inspection, opportunities for practical work in some lessons were limited. Since the last inspection singing has also been introduced into lessons. Standards are variable across the Key stage although in one Year 9 lesson the ability of all the boys to engage willingly in the activity was impressive. There is a good scheme of work which supports progression and continuity across the Key Stages. Assessment procedures are particularly impressive at Key Stage 4 where pupils are given clear targets for improvement.
- 169 The department is enthusiastically led by the director of music and is ably and well supported by the second in department. The team works well to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to develop themselves musically whilst they are pupils at the school. There are two main teaching rooms and a number of practice rooms for pupils to use for group work. Although there has recently been some redecoration of the main rooms the practice rooms are unattractive working areas. The department is well resourced with keyboards and computers but there is a poor range of tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities on offer both at lunch times and after school. In addition the Deanes Music School makes an excellent contribution to the musical life of the school and to the pupils' experience. Over 180 pupils take part in this activity.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 170 By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils are working within national expectations, with some working beyond these. Pupils' achievement at this stage is mainly good. In Year 7 pupils are able to improve their own work and help each other to improve in athletics. This results in more effective sprint technique. In Year 8 pupils are able to analyse their technique in tennis and sustain a rally with consistency. Year 9 pupils know and understand the benefits of, and the difference between, types of training methods such as speed play and can sustain prolonged activity. All pupils know and understand the rules of specific activities; they can name muscle groups and know and understand the importance of safe preparation for activity. When attainment is average pupils have little opportunity to practise and refine the quality of their work. This was seen in a Year 9 volleyball and trampoline lesson.
- 171 In 1998 the percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C in physical education was in line with the national average in relation to similar schools. This follows a downward trend since 1995. However, the number of pupils gaining A\*-C in 1999 rose by 22%, a significant improvement which will be well above the national average. In 1999 fifty-six pupils took a short course in games. At the time of the inspection the school results are not available. In Key Stage 4 standards in lessons are mainly above average. In trampoline all pupils are able to understand and use technical language to improve each other's performance. Higher attaining pupils are efficient and effective coaches. In GCSE dance pupils are able to analyse "Swansong" and interpret the choreographer's intentions. In football all pupils show good knowledge and understanding of tactical and positional play and use this knowledge effectively within the game. Some pupils in

Key Stage 4 are not challenged to think. In this situation pupils have little opportunity to show tactical knowledge. When this occurs higher attaining pupils find the task too easy. The standards achieved by physically disabled pupils are very good. These pupils are able to adapt and modify their actions with very good support from teachers and coaches. They are able to refine their actions and be accurate performers.

- 172 The attainment of pupils taking part in the extended school and community programme is very good. Many pupils achieve regional, national and international honours in a range of activities, supported by the school and national governing bodies of sport. Since becoming a Sports College this range of opportunities has increased enormously.
- 173 Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and very good progress in Key Stage 4. Disabled pupils make very good progress and other pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. Pupils make most progress when given tasks that match their ability and challenge their thinking. Pupils with special educational needs make most progress when the task and equipment is appropriate and when supported by feedback from the teacher which describes clear steps for improvement. Higher attaining pupils make most progress through increased and different challenge. Little progress is made when the practice has little relationship to the game situation. Little progress is made in learning when the teacher over directs pupils and does not allow them to solve problems.
- 174 The ethos of the Sports College with the wider community experience offered contributes much to the personal development of pupils. Relationships with other adults (particularly coaches from national governing bodies of sport), primary schools and the community enrich and enhance this development. The attitudes and behaviour of all pupils are very good. They are hard working, persevere and want to succeed. There is an ethos of enjoyment and mutual respect. Relationships with teachers and coaches are excellent and all pupils work exceptionally well together. They listen to each other's views with respect.
- 175 Overall the standard of teaching is good and teaching in over a quarter of lessons is very good or excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Every teacher and coach has very good knowledge of the activities and the best teachers have very good teaching skills. All teachers are well organised; use time efficiently and show very safe practice. All teachers use learning support assistants, visiting adults and coaches very effectively. When teaching has an impact on improving standards the following features are present.
- Tasks are planned and relate to the needs of each pupil.
  - Many opportunities are given to pupils to be analytical and thinking performers.
- Analysis of pupils and professional athletes and dancers on video is used as a tool to allow this to occur. Good teachers give supportive, evaluative, descriptive and critical feedback that indicates how each pupil can improve. They challenge each pupil by providing different tasks, different equipment and targeted questioning. Less effective teaching allows few opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their work and does not always provide for the very different needs of each pupil. The support given by a SEEVIC student to disabled pupils is outstanding. He provides an excellent role model and acts as coach and mentor.
- 176 There has been good progress made since the last inspection in relation to curriculum planning. The Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum now meets statutory requirements. Time allows for increased depth of knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities. Planning of the curriculum is comprehensive, thorough and mainly provides a framework that supports all teachers and coaches. Some units are not as good as others. These few describe skill acquisition rather than tactical and strategic principles. The assessment objectives in these units do not reflect the material and activities described. Assessment in physical education has made very good progress since the last inspection. Assessment criteria are reflected in planning and matches the National Curriculum requirements. The marking policy is good, however, teachers are not always consistent in the

quality of their comments. Most teachers review the needs of pupils and adapt the units of work; however, some teachers do not consistently use this assessment to inform their planning.

- 177 Leadership and management of physical education is very good. The director believes in a shared Sports College vision and has the drive and commitment to achieve this by supporting, encouraging and challenging the whole teaching, coaching and support staff. Within the exciting ethos of a Sports College there is a clear rationale for physical education and a drive to improve teaching and learning skills. The efficient involvement of national governing bodies of sport, their coaches, the technician, SEEVIC pupils and teachers and ex pupils makes an excellent contribution to both curriculum and extra curricular provision. There is excellent management of specialist facilities.
- 178 Sports College designation has had a very positive effect on teaching and learning, planning schemes of work, curriculum, extra-curricular and community provision, management of the subject and the ethos of the department and the whole school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 179 Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are high. In the majority of lessons standards achieved are above the expectations of the Essex Locally Agreed Syllabus and standards in the rest are well above expectations. There is very good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and several other religions represented in Great Britain, particularly Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Pupils have a good grasp of several central religious concepts that are common to world's religions. They have a good understanding of both the cultural diversity in contemporary society and of how religions can interpret human experience. Pupils' attainment in knowledge and understanding is stronger than it is in relation to evaluation. Pupils can understand and use specialist language in a meaningful way. Pupils demonstrate very good use of skills, for example they can actively participate in question and answer sessions and they can use their knowledge and understanding in other contexts. Their ability in extended writing is less strong.
- 180 No pupils have been entered for the GCSE Religious Studies examination. The Essex Agreed Syllabus is not being implemented at Key Stage 4. No classes were seen during the inspection and there was no written work to inform judgements about standards. A new GCSE option group has started in the current Year 10. Standards of attainment in this group are above the standards expected at this key stage. There is good knowledge and understanding about the principal teachings and beliefs of Islam, including the beliefs about the nature of God, the nature and destiny of humanity and the relationship between God, humanity and the rest of the natural world. Pupils' attainment in general skills is good, particularly in examination practice, but attainment in an evaluation of issues is less distinct.
- 181 Pupils make good progress in the majority of Key Stage 3 lessons. In the rest they make very good progress. At Key Stage 4 the progress of the examination group is good. There are clear and purposeful gains in knowledge and understanding of the elements set out in the examination syllabus. Good progress is made with the two main aims, although learning about religion is stronger than learning from religion. Progress in learning about the principal beliefs and practices of a variety of world religions, including Christianity, is distinct and purposeful but progress in a knowledge and understanding of the more implicit religious elements indicated in the syllabus is less developed. Progress in skills is generally very positive, particularly in terms of knowledge and understanding and some reflection, but progress in a wider range of skills such as attitudes and personal responses is less pronounced. In both key stages there are gains both in individual lessons and over time. The learning outcomes specified in the Agreed Syllabus are developed so that previous knowledge and understanding is consolidated and extended. Consequently the pupils can, for example, increasingly see how the principal

teachings and beliefs of Islam are expressed through worship and symbolism. The progress of the pupils is less marked in identifying, reflecting and applying what they are learning to more immediate questions, such as the purpose and meaning of life and other issues more immediately relevant to them.

- 182 The progress of pupils identified as needing support because of special educational needs is satisfactory in both key stages. In Key Stage 3 there is some in-class support and most teachers are aware of individual pupil's needs and plan work accordingly. Some differentiated work enables the lower attainers to make satisfactory progress. The progress of the more able pupils is less satisfactory as there is insufficient extension work for this group of pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that girls are making better progress than boys.
- 183 In the majority of Key Stage 3 lessons pupils' response is very good. In the remainder response is good. The response of pupils in the Key Stage 4 GCSE class also is good. In both key stages the pupils arrive promptly for their lessons and quickly settle down to work. They show an interest in their work and are keen to respond both to question and answer sessions and written work. They also participate enthusiastically in meditation exercises. Pupils concentrate well and are able to sustain this concentration. There is good use of general skills although personal response to specifically religious issues needs further encouragement. Pupils are always pleasant, polite and well behaved. Relationships are positive and pupils show respect both for individuals and for the immediate environment. Pupils are respectful of the teacher and of each other and also of the viewpoints of the religions they are studying.
- 184 At Key Stage 3 the teaching is good in the majority of lessons and very good in the rest. Teaching quality is good at Key Stage 4. The teachers are secure and confident in the subject matter. Lessons are well planned and the general objectives are clear but a broader range of more specific objectives drawn from the Agreed Syllabus would widen the Key Stage 3 learning objectives. An appropriate range of methodologies is used to put across the objectives of the lessons. In the very good Key Stage 3 lessons there are clearly defined periods of revision, acquisition of new knowledge, and consolidation. The pupils are encouraged to develop a range of skills, including meditation. High expectations are expressed in terms of both good pace and depth. Although the level of Key Stage 3 lessons is appropriate, higher attainers would benefit from the provision of more difficult and challenging work. More extended writing and more personal evaluation of specifically religious issues would broaden Key Stage 3 pupils religious education experience, as would clear indications and investigations as to how their study might be immediately relevant to their own lives and experiences. A wider range of learning objectives drawn from the GCSE examination syllabus would also facilitate the development of a broader skills base and would help the Key Stage 4 pupils relate what they are studying to their own immediate lives and thoughts. In both key stages there is a pleasant working atmosphere and discipline is firm and decisive which ensures that optimum use is made of the time available. Good relationships are also an aid to positive productivity. Homework is regularly set and marked and the pupils are keen to do well and achieve good results. Marking and assessment are satisfactory, the principles of assessment as laid out in the examination syllabus are being applied.
- 185 The department is well managed by a qualified and experienced head of department. Two non-specialists very ably assist her. The Agreed Syllabus is being implemented at Key Stage 3 but it needs to be more rigorously applied. The department's own handbook, schemes of work and individual lesson plans need to reflect more explicitly not only the two general aims and content of the Agreed Syllabus, but also the seven implicit religious education categories, the skills, attitudes, personal qualities, evaluation and the spiritual. A significant number of pupils are withdrawn from religious education in Key Stage 3 for learning support. This means that they are not receiving their statutory entitlement. Christianity is not taught in Key Stage 4. The Agreed Syllabus is not being implemented at Key Stage 4; consequently Year 10 and 11 pupils

are not receiving their statutory entitlement. No specific issues were raised in the last inspection report. The department makes a positive contribution to the standards of literacy in the school with its introduction and explanation of new words and phrases. The opportunities the subject gives for reflection also makes a very positive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspect of the school as does the study of other religions and moral codes. The department has computers which are used by the pupils for learning support. The accommodation and resources are good and the main religious education room is attractively and appropriately decorated.

### **Business and Leisure & Tourism Vocational Courses**

- 186 There was no report on business subjects during the previous OFSTED inspection. The school has subsequently introduced GNVQ courses in Key Stage 4 in business at intermediate and foundation levels and in leisure & tourism at foundation level. One hundred per cent of pupils following the business course at intermediate level achieved a pass grade in 1997. There were no merit or distinction grades. The proportion passing in 1998 was 90%, with 33% gaining a merit or distinction grade. In 1999 this increased to 92%, with 50% gaining a merit or distinction grade. In 1998, 79% of pupils following the foundation business course passed, with 68% passing in 1999. The current Year 11 pupils are the first to follow a foundation course in leisure & tourism. There is no national comparative data available, but these results are likely to compare favourably with national standards.
- 187 The attainment of pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 at foundation level matches course requirements. Pupils are able to identify key aspects of consumer expectations for a range of products and key features of a leisure facility. They make sound progress overall in developing their understanding of key business principles on both courses. Attainment at intermediate level also matches course requirements. Pupils can identify changes in employment patterns and key features in job roles and business organisation. They make good progress over the two years of their course, with many pupils reaching a high standard by the end of Year 11. In all courses, pupils make good progress in using information technology to support their work with standards in this key skill area often exceeding course requirements.
- 188 Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards GNVQ courses in business and leisure & tourism. Many pupils are engaged in effective background research between lessons. Behaviour is good and pupils take care in presenting their work. The standard of teaching overall is good, demonstrating a number of strengths. Units of work are well planned and have clear learning objectives. Teachers have good subject expertise. There is an over emphasis in some lessons, however, on using information technology to support work, at the expense of developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the vocational area. Some pupils following courses at foundation level are off-task on occasions in class, unable to sustain their concentration. This is associated with a lack of variety in teaching style. Over the two years of each course, however, teaching is effective in enabling most pupils to become independent learners, encouraging positive attitudes to education in school and post-16.
- 189 Course planning is very effective. Assessment procedures enable pupils to plan and evaluate their work and to aim for higher grades. Good use is made of business examples, visits out of school and visiting speakers. Courses reflect the vocational nature of GNVQ qualifications. A good contribution is made to the development of pupils' social skills. Leadership for these courses is effective. Assessment decisions are monitored through the internal verification process, but formal monitoring of teaching is not yet carried out by the co-ordinator. Development planning addresses the key issues relevant to these courses, but links with the whole school development plan are less clear. There is a good match of staff expertise to the demands of each course and good support for pupils with special educational needs. Staff have had access to professional development to support the introduction of these courses, although the formal training needs for internal verification have yet to be addressed. There is a satisfactory range of business and leisure & tourism resources available, with particularly good



access to computers, software and the Internet. Overall, these GNVQ courses have been well established and make a positive contribution to achievement of the aims of the school.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

190 The team of fourteen inspectors was in the school for a total of 60 inspection days. They observed 203 lessons. All teachers including the Headteacher were seen teaching at least once and many were observed more often. Inspectors also attended a sample of registration periods across the year groups as well as assemblies, and a large range of extra-curricular activities, including the weekly Tuesday evening music school.

191 Inspectors were able to look at pupils' work in lessons and observe work on display around the school. The work of a sample of pupils chosen by the school to represent the ability range in each of Years 7 to 11 was examined. Discussions were held with the pupils about their work and life in school. In addition to arranged sessions many informal discussions with pupils took place and some pupils took opportunities to discuss their work and interests with inspectors.

192 Planned discussions were held with governors and senior managers of the school. Inspectors spoke with governors, including the chairperson of governors and a parent governor. In addition to at least 40 planned meetings with senior managers, heads of department, pastoral staff there was considerable informal discussion with teachers and support staff.

193 The school provided a wide range of whole school and subject documentation and policies on all aspects of its work, which were scrutinised both before and during the inspection. Inspectors read minutes of meetings from all levels of the school's management, including records of meetings of the governing body.

194 The views of parents were sought by questionnaire and 293 returns, representing 29% of the pupils, were analysed. The Registered Inspector, accompanied by the Lay Inspector, held a meeting attended by 34 parents.

## 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
1999 - 2000	1020	15	167	77

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	62
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.0

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

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked each week	444

#### [Secondary schools]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	73.7
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Average teaching group size:	
KS3	23
KS4	21

## Financial data

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total Income	3,214,266
Total Expenditure	3,280,092
Expenditure per pupil	3,238.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	137,841
Balance carried forward to next year	-65,826

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

1020

Number of questionnaires returned:

293

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	16.3	62.2	18.1	2.8	0.7
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	37.2	57.2	3.1	1.4	1.0
The school handles complaints from parents well	17.6	50.0	26.8	3.7	1.8
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	21.2	67.1	7.2	4.1	0.3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	23.0	59.6	7.7	9.4	0.3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	28.0	63.0	5.9	3.1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	41.1	51.4	5.5	1.7	0.3
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	21.5	58.3	10.1	7.6	2.4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	24.0	64.1	9.1	2.4	0.3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	20.6	61.3	12.9	4.5	0.7
My child(ren) like(s) school	36.4	52.9	6.5	3.4	0.7

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents' expressed mixed views about homework. Some feel there is too much homework, especially in Year 7 whilst others feel there is insufficient, especially for more able pupils. Inspection evidence showed that homework is used well in most subjects to extend pupils' learning. Parents' views of how the school responds to their concerns vary. Some feel that enquiries are handled well but a small number feel there have been delays and limited action. The inspection team found that sometimes the school's response to enquiries was not always as effective as it could have been.