

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Baysgarth School**  
Barton-upon-Humber

LEA area: North Lincolnshire

Unique Reference Number: 118109

Inspection Number: 184052

Headteacher: Mr. F. A. Salt

Reporting inspector: Mr. N. E. Power  
2790

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708507

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. W. Witter
Date of previous inspection:	November 1994

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Mr. N. E. Power, Rgl		Attainment and progress
		Teaching
Mrs. E. A. Longfield, Lay Inspector	Equality of opportunity	Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Mr. W. Baxendale	Modern foreign languages	Leadership and management
Mr. H. Davies	Key Stage 4, Sixth form	
	Business studies	
Mr. F G Harris	Religious education	Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		The efficiency of the school
Mrs. C. Harrison	Science	Curriculum
Mrs. C. Hodgson	Mathematics	
	Information technology	
Mr. M. Johnson	Art	
Mr. S. Johnson	Music	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Learning resources
Mr. G. Leech	English	Staffing and accommodation
Mr. D. Maltby	Physical education	
Miss J. Mounsey	Design and technology	
Mr. T. Osgerby	History	Assessment
Mr. M. Overend	Geography	
	Special educational needs	
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London WC2B 6SE

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Attainment in the core subjects at the end of Key Stage 3 is above average
- There is a substantial amount of good and very good teaching, particularly in the sixth form
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are enabled to make good progress
- There is purposeful leadership and clear educational direction for the future development of the school
- Sixth form students are prepared well for future study or other career paths
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, particularly in the development of literacy skills
- There is very good management of the school's financial resources

### • Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The time available for teaching is not always used efficiently
- II. There is insufficient use of information technology in most subjects
- III. There are not enough opportunities for pupils' spiritual development

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

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

The school has made significant advances since the last inspection and has several areas where it is continuing to develop. Most of the key issues have been addressed successfully. Much work has been done to establish procedures for monitoring and evaluating developments plans and policies and further strategies are being initiated. A structured scheme for personal and social education is now in place, although more needs to be done to improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development and to ensure that the contents as well as the arrangements for collective worship comply with statutory requirements. Attention has been given to the management and co-ordination of special educational needs provision and there are now good arrangements in place. The safety issues have been dealt with and physical education now fully complies with the National Curriculum. Standards have improved in many areas. The quality of teaching is higher than at the last inspection when one lesson in five was unsatisfactory. The determination to raise standards further, which is shared by the headteacher, staff and governors; the initiatives under development, particularly under the leadership of recently appointed middle managers; and the move towards a well constructed system of self-evaluation places the school in a good position to make further improvement.

### • Standards in subjects

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

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

A/AS - levels	C	C	
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Standards achieved in 1999 in the end of Key Stage 3 national tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above the national average and in English well above. The overall performance of the school in the Key Stage 3 tests in 1999 was well above the standards achieved in similar schools. This achievement represents a significant improvement on the 1998 tests. In the GCSE examinations of 1999 the proportion of pupils who achieved the national standard of 5 A\*-C grades was close to the national average and more than twice the figure achieved by the previous cohort of pupils. The number who achieved 5 or more A\*-G grades was also in line with the national position for all schools. A particular feature of the achievements in 1999 was the performance of boys which was above the national average for 5 A\*-C grades: this contrasts with the national picture as girls usually do better than boys at this stage. Boys also achieved nearly all the school's A\* grades. Performances in nearly all subjects were better than in 1998, in some substantially so. Attainment in the sixth form also matches national standards. At A level the standard of the previous year has been maintained and performances at GNVQ level have improved.

### Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	English, science, design and technology, music	
Years 10-11	Good	English, design and technology, physical education	
Sixth form	Very good	Art, modern foreign languages, music	
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		

There is a substantial amount of good teaching, with far fewer unsatisfactory lessons than in the last inspection. In nearly two thirds of lessons seen during this inspection the teaching was good and in more than one in seven it was very good and occasionally excellent. In less than one in twenty was the teaching unsatisfactory or poor. The strongest teaching overall occurred in the sixth form where one lesson in four was very good. Features of the best lessons are the teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects, their planning and the methods and organisation they use. In each year group most pupils make good progress, including those who have special educational needs. In the good lessons teachers often make careful assessments of pupils' progress and use homework effectively. Whereas most teachers exercise good class control there are a small proportion of lessons where pupils are allowed to disrupt the learning of others. Weaknesses in some lessons is inefficient use of time which stems from failure to plan for sufficient and varied activities and to estimate accurately the time pupils should need to accomplish them.

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



## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Attitudes and behaviour are good in most lessons, but in a minority disruptive behaviour adversely affects progress.
Attendance	Satisfactory attendance rates, but punctuality at lessons is often poor. Unsatisfactory overall.
Ethos*	Satisfactory: teachers have a clear desire to raise standards, but inefficient arrangements for movement around the school and poor library and information technology provision inhibit pupils' learning opportunities.
Leadership and management	Good: provides a clear educational direction for the future development of the school.
Curriculum	Satisfactory at both key stages and good in the sixth form. Procedures for assessing pupils' work and progress are good. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
Pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good and well organised enabling all pupils with special educational needs to make good progress, especially with literacy.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Overall provision satisfactory, provision for moral and social development is good, but spiritual and multi-cultural provision are not sufficiently developed across the curriculum.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The number of appropriately qualified teaching and non-teaching staff matches the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation is spacious, but not always used efficiently. Resources for learning are adequate.
Value for money	The school provides good value for money.

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

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>IV. The school encourages their children to get involved in more than their daily lessons</p> <p>V. That it is easy to approach the school with questions or problems</p> <p>VI. The work that their children are expected to</p>	<p>X. The amount of poor behaviour in the</p> <p>XI. That too much homework is set</p> <p>XII. The way the school handles complaints</p>

do at home	
VII. Their children are enabled to achieve a good standard of work	
VIII. The encouragement for parents to play an active part in the life of the school	
IX. That their children like school	

Although the number of responses represents a fairly small proportion of the parents, the inspectors agree with the positive comments. They also agree that the disruptive behaviour of a small minority of pupils affects both the pupils' own progress and that of others. Whereas they recognise that on occasions too much homework may be set and is occasionally inappropriate, inspectors also judge that most of the homework is relevant and helpful to enable pupils achieve good academic success. Inspectors examined the manner in which the school responds to complaints and are satisfied that local education authority procedures are followed appropriately.

### · **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

To raise further the standards of attainment and to enhance the quality of education provided the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- XIII. make more efficient use of the time available for teaching by:
  - examining and subsequently minimising the movement patterns between lessons in order that lessons start on time,
  - giving attention to the structure of lessons and the amount of time devoted to different activities within the lesson;
 (Paragraphs: 15, 26, 29, 31, 38, 39, 76, 83, 90, 146, 148, 167)
  
- improve the opportunities for learning in information technology by:
  - encouraging more use of information technology throughout the curriculum and keeping records of the experiences pupils have had,
  - training teachers in the use of computers in teaching their subjects
  - making computers more easily accessible to all subject departments,
  - amending the timetable arrangements for the short GCSE course so that there is continuity of provision throughout Years 10 and 11;
 (Paragraphs: 13, 31, 36, 76, 82, 91, 116, 123, 130, 134, 137, 157, 167, 171, 172, 177)
  
- improve the provision for the spiritual development of pupils by:
  - ensuring that awareness of spiritual development activities is raised across the curriculum,
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to reflect on experiences, develop feelings and emotions, and consider the non-material dimensions of life,
  - ensuring that the 'thought for the day' and the accompanying extension activities are fully explored, thereby also complying with statutory requirements relating to collective worship provision,
 (Paragraphs: 32, 39, 49, 53, 186, 187)

In addition attention should be given to the following less significant concerns:

- the guidance which some teachers need to be able to cope with the disruptive behaviour of a small, but persistent, minority of pupils;  
(Paragraphs: 15, 20, 30, 113, 121, 166)
- the quality of library provision so that it is a more effective resource for the support of research and independent learning.  
(Paragraphs: 31, 76, 86, 91, 172)

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

1.The school is situated on a pleasant and spacious site in Barton-upon-Humber in sight of the Humber Bridge. With 968 pupils on roll, aged 11-18, it is slightly above the average size for a secondary school. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is broadly average as is the proportion on the special needs register which is about one in six of the pupil population.

2.The school serves the town of Barton-upon-Humber and several rural villages, so that about 40 per cent of the pupils come to school by bus. The socio-economic indicators of the ward in which the school is located and where the majority of pupils live show that the percentage of adults with higher educational qualifications and the proportion of children living in high social class households are below the average for the country. The proportion of pupils for whom free school meals is claimed is close to the national average, but the headteacher and governors believe that more are eligible than claim. The view of the headteacher and governors is that the area suffers significant socio-economic disadvantage, a higher than average proportion of children are on the child protection register and there is a high incidence of unemployment with many single parent families. This view of the level of disadvantage accords with an independent research study undertaken of the area and is supported by a successful application for a single regeneration budget grant.

3.The overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school is rather below average, both in respect of reading ages and performance on Key Stage 2 tests, although somewhere in the region of one third of pupils achieve above average levels. In recent years the level of attainment on entry has been rising and is now broadly average for the current Year 7.

4.The mission statement of the school indicates that the school community strives 'to make the school one in which learning, working or visiting is a happy and rewarding experience'. A simplified form of the school's aims are stated as:

- 'to provide the best possible teaching and learning
- to encourage good relationships
- to encourage responsibility and adaptability
- to celebrate and award personal and academic achievement
- to work with the wider community to provide opportunities for development'

1.The school has set an overall goal of raising expectation and achievement and has established targets, agreed with the local education authority for performances in external assessments. Additional goals are to plan for reduction in the size of accommodation with the probability of moving onto one site; continuing improvement of the school's reputation and continuing development of partnerships with parents; encouragement of pupils to have more ownership of their learning; development of improvement in relationships in the school community; staff development and training and celebration of success. After careful preparation, including guidance and support from an external agency, members of the senior management team have devised a scheme for school self-evaluation: a pilot programme is about to commence in two departments. There is a plan to incorporate the scheme into the school's improvement strategy.

## 2.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	81	82	163

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	57	51	49
	Girls	69	55	50
	Total	126	106	99
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	76 (58)	65 (53)	61 (62)
	National	64 (64)	63 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	39 (21)	43 (30)	30 (27)
	National	23 (34)	35 (36)	20 (27)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	47	56	50
	Girls	67	59	51
	Total	114	115	101
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	70 (54)	70 (N/A)	62 (69)
	National	64 (61)	64 (64)	60 (61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	39 (18)	38 (N/A)	33 (21)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	23 (30)

<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
1999	75	87	162

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	37	65	70
	Girls	35	82	85
	Total	72	147	155
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	44.4 (19.6)	90.7 (95.6)	95.7 (98.7)
	National	47.8 (44.6)	88.4 (89.8)	93.9 (95.1)

## Attainment in the Sixth Form<sup>3</sup>

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

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	17	27	44

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	15.3 (17.0)	17.9 (16.8)	16.8 (16.9)	6.0 (0.0)	6.5 (0)	6.4 (0)
National	N/A (16.2)	N/A (16.0)	N/A (16.5)	N/A (3.2)	N/A (3.0)	N/A (2.8)

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

	Number	% Success Rate
School	13 (9)	54 (22)
National		N/A (--)

<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>3</sup>

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

## Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.15
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.26
	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	11
Permanent	1

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	14
Satisfactory or better	95
Less than satisfactory	5

## 6. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### 6. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### 6. Attainment and progress

3. The achievement of pupils overall in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form is broadly in line with national averages. Generally pupils make good progress as they move through the school. There are variations between year groups in the quality of their performances and the amount of progress they make.

4. In 1999 pupils achieved above average results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3. The proportion of pupils who gained at least a level 5 in English and the percentage who achieved the higher level 6 were well above the national average. The proportion who gained level 5 in mathematics was close to the national standard, but the number who achieved level 6 was above average. In science performances at both levels were above average. In relation to similar schools performances in all three core subjects was well above average, except for the proportion which achieved level 5 or better in mathematics where the achievement was above average. These performances were a great improvement on the previous year, particularly in English. The 1999 performance was particularly notable as the year group started from a slightly lower base than their predecessors. Girls performed rather better than boys in English, but there was little difference in mathematics and science. Teachers' assessments of attainment in other assessed subjects, at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, were generally below average, specifically in French, design and technology, history and information technology, although in geography performance was above average.

5. Achievements at GCSE in 1999 were much improved on 1998, particularly in respect of the proportion of pupils who attained 5 or more A\* - C grades. In 1998 the proportion who achieved this standard was 19.6 per cent, but in 1999 the comparable figure rose to 44.4 per cent, which was close to the national average and also average for similar schools. Nationally, girls achieve higher performances than boys, but in 1999 the boys in the school significantly outperformed the girls and achieved nearly all of the A\* grades. This achievement by the boys resulted from a continuing effort by the school to make the boys and their parents aware of the need to raise their aspirations and to strive for the highest possible results they could achieve. In several subjects in 1998 the proportion of pupils who achieved A\* - C grades was well below the national average. In some of these subjects there was notable improvement in 1999, particularly business studies, English (both language and literature), geography, history and mathematics. In physical education there was a very substantial increase from 11.5 per cent to 74.1 per cent, with 33 per cent achieving A or A\* grades. Achievement of 5 or more A\* - G grades was also in line with the national average and that for similar schools and in most subjects the percentage who achieved A\* - G grades was similar to or above the national figure.

6. Standards in examinations in the sixth form were also in line with the national average. The average points score for students entered for two or more A/AS levels in 1998 was 16.9, which was above the average for comprehensive school of 16.5 although below the national average of 17.6. The difference between the school's average and the national figure was lower in 1998 than the previous year. In 1999, the school's average points score was virtually the same at 16.8. There has been an improvement since the last report in 1994 in respect of this indication of the level of attainment. The proportion of pupils who completed a GNVQ course successfully was a clear improvement on the previous year.

7. Pupils with special educational needs reach levels of attainment that are in line with their previous achievements. In some subjects such as art and science they are higher than expected, while in English and geography levels of attainment are higher for some pupils. Where pupils receive additional support for literacy on an individual basis attainment is good.

8. Most pupils display competence in their use of literacy skills. This is an area on which the school is giving particular focus at present, particularly in regard to reading. A successfully implemented paired reading scheme, whereby older pupils regularly support others who have difficulty with their reading, is appreciated by both partners in the process. Although there are a few who experience difficulties, some of whom receive additional support, most read fluently and with expression when reading aloud. There are few instances of pupils whose progress is seriously affected by their lack of facility in reading. In several subjects, including English, history, business education, pupils write at length and are able to develop reasoned arguments. In geography, however, the regular use of worksheets tends to restrict the opportunities for engaging in extended pieces of writing. A significant minority of pupils has not yet mastered the art of listening attentively and accepting the information or explanations given. Others, however, listen carefully and respond appropriately. When given opportunities to speak, many are able to present well developed and sustained responses. This skill is particularly fostered in drama lessons and used successfully, especially by older pupils, in discussions when pupils work in pairs or small groups.

9. Pupils have reasonable numeracy skills and are able to use them effectively in business studies, particularly in statistical work, and geography when testing hypotheses in fieldwork analysis. In science, however, some pupils, including a few high attainers, lack confidence when undertaking calculations resulting from experimental work. Although many pupils acquire satisfactory basic skills in information technology in Key Stage 3, they do not use them in many subject areas. Other than in design and technology, where it is fairly easy to gain access to computers, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use the skills they have acquired in the support of their learning across the curriculum.

10. Throughout the school pupils generally make good progress. Most willingly apply themselves to their work and show interest in their lessons. In the sixth form, particularly in Year 12, pupils sometimes make very good progress when they are assisted in their studies by some very good teaching and students' own mature approach to learning. Although progress is good in most other years it is less strong in Years 9 and 11. As the pupils in these two year groups will be the next to sit external assessments the school needs to try to increase their motivation for learning. In over half of the lessons of the other year groups observed during the inspection the progress made was good. The best progress occurs where pupils are interested and desire to do well and when they respond positively to good, and sometimes very good, teaching.

11. Progress in lessons is sometimes restricted by the disruptions created by a few pupils who are allowed to be badly behaved and inconsiderate. A further hindrance to progress is the loss of time at the beginning of lessons, which sometimes amounts to as much as 10 minutes, as pupils move from one site to the other. In a smaller proportion of lessons the structure of the lesson does not make the most efficient use of the time available, especially when activities are allowed to continue for too long or when pupils' concentration is allowed to wane towards the end of the lesson.

12. Pupils with special educational needs usually make good progress, especially when they are supported by the well focussed assistance of teachers and support staff who have specialist skills in dealing with such pupils. In some of the larger sets in mathematics that contain a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs such pupils do not always make as much progress as on other occasions as there is not always enough support available.



13. For several years the school has kept detailed records of performances in standardised assessments and examinations. The senior management team of the school has used the information acquired to analyse strengths and weaknesses and subsequently to identify action which might be taken to improve pupils' rates of progress and their ultimate attainment in Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations. This information is now shared with the staff as a whole, particularly heads of departments, pupils and parents. Clear predictions are made of likely achievements by pupils and they and their parents are kept informed of their progress in terms of whether they are on target to meet the prediction. This target setting process worked effectively in 1999 when action was taken to try to improve the performance of boys in GCSE. Although the boys' performances nationally are generally inferior to those of girls, the proportion of boys who achieved 5 or more A\* - C was above the national average and clearly better than the percentage of girls in the school who achieved the standard.

14. At the time of the last inspection no Key Stage 3 tests had been taken, but achievement at GCSE was close to the national average. Since that time performances in GCSE have dropped below the national average, but in 1999 the lost ground has been recovered and the improvement in national standards has also been matched. In 1993 the points score achieved by A level students was below the national average. There has been improvement since that position with the A level points score now better than the national average.

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

15. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in all subjects. Pupils are usually interested in their work and concentrate well, working with enjoyment. Generally they persevere with their tasks but sometimes lower attaining groups of pupils lose concentration and this affects behaviour. This happens particularly in modern foreign languages and also in middle groups in science.

16. The standard of behaviour in the school overall is satisfactory. However, in a small minority of lessons disruptive behaviour occurs and this is often linked to teaching that does not hold the pupils' interest, particularly in the latter part of the lesson. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a positive behaviour policy and developed the merit card system into a broader Rules, Rewards and Sanctions Policy. The school has sound structures for encouraging good behaviour and the 'isolation unit' now has fewer pupils referred to it because of improved classroom procedures. Similarly the number of exclusions has fallen since the last inspection and parents are fully involved in the process. The draft anti-bullying policy referred to in the last report has now been introduced and has resulted in a fall in the incidence of bullying. In general the pupils have responded well to the school's behaviour policy and conduct in most lessons is good. Movement around the school and between the two sites is orderly and the pupils are courteous and considerate to visitors. However there are some examples of unruly behaviour such as unnecessary pushing, usually at the end of the school sessions.

17. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. The pupils also enjoy good relationships with each other. When required they collaborate effectively; for example, in modern foreign language lessons pupils help each other in paired work and in music lessons they work in small groups producing joint compositions and performances.

18. Pupils' personal development, generally, is satisfactory. They show respect for school property and equipment and generally treat it with care. They also respect the opinions of others and appreciate high standards of work produced by their peers. The school provides opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility in such ways as membership of the School Board, a community service programme for sixth form students and a paired reading scheme in which Year 11 pupils act as mentors for younger pupils. There are good examples of sixth form students and Key Stage 4 pupils taking responsibility for organising their own project work. In lessons there are fewer opportunities for personal development in this way.

19. Parents feel that teachers have struck the right balance in the way they respect pupils and talk to them as young adults but make their expectations clear. As a result of this the pupils attend school willingly.

## **23. Attendance**

20. Although the attendance of most pupils is satisfactory a significant amount of lesson time is lost as a result of late arrival of pupils at most lessons. This is an unsatisfactory situation. In the last academic year pupils' overall attendance was 92.3 per cent. This is in line with the pattern of attendance nationally. Attendance was good in Years 7 and 8 at 93 per cent but in Year 11 it fell below the national minimum. There are fewer authorised absences than in most secondary schools whilst unauthorised absences are in line. The school makes every effort to encourage parents to send their children to school and contacts parents when a pupil is absent without prior notification. There is no evidence that truancy after registration is a problem for the school.

21. The marking of registers meets statutory requirements. An accurate record of absence is maintained and registers are scrutinised weekly by the heads of year and educational welfare officer. The headteacher monitors the year groups averages weekly. There is an efficient signing in procedure for the sixth form and tutors work closely with students and provide a network of support to ensure regular attendance.

22. The school places appropriate emphasis on pupils being punctual for school and a prompt start is made to the school day although registration periods are rarely used purposefully. The nature of the site, with the school occupying buildings which are some distance apart and the timetable arrangements, result in significant movement of pupils between lessons. As a consequence many lessons start five minutes, or sometimes as much as ten minutes, late. This delay to the start of lessons has an adverse effect on the levels of progress and attainment and is unsatisfactory.

## **26. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **26. Teaching**

23. In nearly two thirds of the lessons seen during the inspection the quality of teaching was judged to be good. In one lesson in seven it was very good or occasionally excellent. In less than one lesson in twenty teaching was unsatisfactory and occasionally poor. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons is much reduced from the last inspection when one in five were below standard. Teaching in the sixth form is strong: nearly all lessons were judged good, none was unsatisfactory and a quarter were very good.

24. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their specialist subjects and very few lessons are taught by teachers for whom the subject is not their main area of expertise. They are able to respond confidently to points or questions raised by pupils that relate to aspects of the subject outside the area of immediate focus. The teaching in the sixth form is particularly well supported by teachers' very good subject knowledge. In Key Stage 3 teachers' expectations of pupils are usually appropriate and realistic, although some pupils are not always challenged enough. In some lessons insufficient account is taken of the weakness some pupils have in listening and the demands placed on them are inappropriate in helping them to improve such skills. Teachers have good expectations of both behaviour and academic achievement in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form the well focused and challenging work enables students to make good progress.

25. Lessons are generally planned carefully with clear objectives and the methods used are usually appropriate. However, although the provision is good overall and most lessons are well organised, there are a few lessons where insufficient thought is given to the way lesson time will be used. Planning for personal and social education lessons, drawn up by the new head of department, is clear on paper, but not all teachers have sufficient time or inclination to give very much detailed thought to the way they might conduct the lesson. In a minority of lessons across a range of subjects some activities are allowed to continue for too long and there is insufficient variation in focus to maintain pupils' interest. Some initial expositions by teachers continue for too long without involving pupils enough. Occasionally the tasks set are not well enough matched to the different attainment of all the pupils in the class which results in some, usually those who are capable of the highest attainment and those who need more time to appreciate what is required, not making as much progress as they should in the time available. There is some recognition, particularly in the mathematics department, that even in classes where pupils are grouped according to attainment there can be a wide spread of achievement. During the inspection, however, there was very little evidence in the tasks set for some of these classes that action has been taken to ensure all pupils are able to make the best progress of which they are capable.

26. With the exception of a few lessons where a minority of pupils cause disruptions by their unsociable behaviour, teaching is conducted purposefully with very little need for teachers to make an overt display of controlling the class. In the great majority of lessons teachers manage pupils well. There are very good relationships between teachers and students in the sixth form where the purposeful attitude to learning which teachers engender is communicated to their students who apply themselves responsibly to their studies. In a minority of lessons progress is sometimes interrupted by the poor behaviour of a few pupils. Some of those who cause disruption have been placed on the special educational needs register in acknowledgement of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most teachers are able to manage these pupils, but one or two teachers need more guidance and support in the techniques and strategies which they might employ.

27. Generally the resources teachers use in their teaching are appropriately selected and well organised to support learning. However, the resource of time is not always as well used. In addition to the failure to plan a range of activities that makes the best use of the time available, many lessons start late, sometimes by as much as ten minutes as pupils move between different parts of the building and, in particular, between sites. The delay in assembling the whole class has resulted in a culture of 50 minute lessons, rather than the hour for which they are scheduled. The libraries are underused as a resource for research and independent learning and little use outside the sixth form is made of computers and associated technology to investigate other sources of information.

28. Some of the loss in educational experience which results from the reduction in the length of lessons is compensated for by the effective use made by teachers of assessment during lessons. Regular checks are made, often by skilful questioning, to ensure that pupils understand the work they have been set and the concepts which are in process of development. Reference to strengths and weaknesses in homework done previously is made to help pupils recognise how they can improve and to ensure that they do not continue to make the same mistakes. Several pupils, when questioned by inspectors, were appreciative of the value of homework, especially when they receive feedback either personally or collectively in class or in written comments. Although some parents expressed concern about the amount of homework that is set, some saying there is too much while others suggested that too often none is set, inspectors judged that on the basis of the evidence available during the inspection, homework is used effectively to support pupils' learning. There is very little time during the school day for pupils to reflect on their learning experiences although some of the homework activities provide opportunities for pupils to give further consideration to the subject matter of the lessons they have had earlier in the day or week. The lack of time for reflection adversely affects pupils' spiritual development. By the time they reach the sixth form most

students have begun to take a more mature approach to work which they do outside lessons and they view it as an integral part of their learning. The tasks set them are appropriate and designed to further their understanding.

29. In all subjects teachers are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. In planning lessons most teachers give due regard to the importance of designing materials that cater for these needs. In several subjects they are responsible for writing individual education plans for pupils. As a result the tasks pupils are asked to undertake often closely match the targets set in these plans. Worksheets of good quality are a feature of much of the teaching. Occasionally, however, pupils lose interest because tasks are too difficult or the teacher dominates much of the lesson. Teaching makes good use of the additional support provided by classroom support assistants and there is good liaison between these and teachers so that pupils benefit from the arrangements made for them. The quality of teaching in small groups is good and pupils are eager to take advantage of the additional help given to improve their literacy.

### **33. The curriculum and assessment**

30. In Key Stages 3 and 4, the curriculum has satisfactory breadth and balance and fulfils all the requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education. In Key Stage 3 pupils follow courses in personal and social education and drama in addition to the basic National Curriculum subjects. In Years 8 and 9 all pupils learn German as a second modern foreign language. The total time allocation for modern languages is slightly above the national average at this stage but this time is not sufficient for pupils to make appropriate progress in both languages. A further problem arises because each language has one lesson per week in one of the years and two in the other. When there is only one lesson each week, there are long gaps between lessons in the particular language and this hinders the continuous development of pupils' skills. There is a similar difficulty for history and geography in Years 7 and 8 when one of the subjects has only one lesson each week instead of the two in other years in Key Stage 3. If a pupil misses a lesson, he or she misses all the work in the subject for the week and progress is significantly interrupted.

31. In Key Stage 4, pupils follow courses in all the National Curriculum subjects and choose additional subjects from a good range of options. There are opportunities for pupils to select subjects which match their needs and interests. Lower attainers, for whom a large number of GCSE courses is too demanding, can gain certificate of achievement qualifications in English, science, modern foreign languages and religious education. A GNVQ part 1 course in information technology has been introduced this year. It provides an appropriate, work-related modification to the curriculum for the few pupils who are likely to become disaffected with a timetable which meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The timetable in Key Stage 4 provides satisfactory arrangements for most subjects. However, there are weaknesses in the timetable and the grouping of pupils for GCSE religious education. Pupils in the highest attaining set in mathematics follow a full GCSE religious education course in one lesson per week. This time is insufficient for the demands of the course, and the progress which pupils can make is limited, particularly since the highest attaining pupils in mathematics are not necessarily the highest attainers, or the most highly motivated pupils, in religious education.

32. There are weaknesses in the arrangements for pupils to use information technology in both key stages. In Key Stage 3 there are specific lessons in information technology and good opportunities for pupils to develop their competence in using computers. In Year 10 pupils follow a short GCSE course in information technology. However, in both key stages, there are very few opportunities for pupils to use their information technology skills to support their learning in other subjects. In particular, there is insufficient use of computers in lessons in science, modern foreign languages, history, geography and music. This is a significant weakness for Year 11 who do not have any specific information technology lessons and

hence have little opportunity to practise and develop the skills they acquired in earlier years as they prepare for the GCSE examinations.

33.The curriculum in the sixth form offers a good range of A level courses and there are GNVQ intermediate courses in business studies and health and social care. There are also opportunities for students to follow GCSE or GNVQ foundation courses where these are more appropriate. In addition, students follow an 'enhancement studies' programme which includes a satisfactory component of religious education with personal and social education and also gives students an opportunity to gain an A level qualification in general studies. These elements combine to provide good breadth of curriculum for each student and give a good foundation for proceeding to further or higher education if they so wish.

34.The planning of the curriculum is generally good, both across the whole school and within individual subjects. Most subjects have an appropriate allocation of time for lessons in both key stages and in the sixth form. However, pupils often need to move between the two sites on which the school's buildings are situated. It takes around five minutes to walk from one site to the other but this time is increased if pupils are moving between particularly inaccessible parts of either building or if there is congestion along paths or corridors. A few pupils take longer than necessary to make the journey, arrive even later than their peers and interrupt the beginning of lessons. Over a period of time, there is a significant loss of the time available for teaching and this restricts the progress which pupils make.

35.Every morning there is a twenty minute period which is used for registration and assemblies. Pupils who are not involved in assemblies on a particular day have form time with their form tutor. The school has introduced a 'good start ' initiative in which the form time is to be used to improve literacy and numeracy skills and to enable groups to reflect on a 'thought for the day'. In practice, the use of this form time varies between groups. In some classes there is an opportunity for pupils to read or do useful work on spellings. Tutors use some of the time to check pupils' homework planners. Some pupils with special educational needs take part in valuable 'accelerated learning' activities during form time. However, the 'thought for the day' is not considered by all groups. In some classes pupils spend much of the session talking among themselves and the time is not used effectively to contribute to their learning or personal development.

36.There are satisfactory links between the school and the feeder primary schools to provide smooth progress through the curriculum when pupils move from the primary school into Year 7. However there are some variations between subjects. For example, science has well established links with regular meetings, joint projects and a shared approach to investigations.

37.Pupils in all year groups follow a course in personal and social education which is well planned and provides appropriate coverage of health, sex and drugs education. However, the large number of teachers involved in the programme makes coordination difficult. Heads of year could be more vigilant in monitoring the quality of teaching in lessons. The personal and social education programme, from Year 9 onwards, includes components on careers education which are of good quality. There is particularly effective liaison with the careers service and pupils benefit from valuable guidance from the careers officer.

38.The arrangements which the school makes for pupils with special educational needs are good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. There has been a distinct improvement since the last inspection in respect of the management and coordination of the provision for these pupils.

39. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities including sporting and musical activities, a drama club, theatre visits and a German exchange visit. There are some clubs associated with subjects, for example in art, science and information technology. There are also opportunities for pupils to seek extra help with coursework or revision. However, there are several subjects where there are no associated clubs or visits and this aspect of extra-curricular activities is not as successful as the individual events which the school runs to raise money for charity or its own development. All the extra-curricular activities provide valuable additional learning experiences; participation rates are good and pupils and their parents appreciate the opportunities provided.

40. The school re-arranged its timetable shortly after the previous inspection and successfully tackled almost all the weaknesses in curriculum which were identified in the inspection report. In particular, a whole lesson was provided for personal and social education in addition to the time being used within other subjects and the contribution made in form time. The curriculum arrangements for pupils with special educational needs have also improved significantly. There has, therefore, been good progress in developing and improving the curriculum since the previous inspection.

41. Assessment in the school overall is good. An effective whole school policy has been developed, which is used as a baseline for departments to add on appropriate sections. Detailed pupil profiles, based on computerised assessment records, are used to track progress from entry in Year 7 to GCSE grades. The system is monitored effectively both within the departments and by senior management.

42. Statutory reporting requirements are fully met. Reports to parents are issued three times a year and are clear about strengths and weaknesses in pupil performance, especially by the use of grades for effort. The next reports will indicate National Curriculum levels, which are understood by both pupils and parents.

43. There is satisfactory use of assessment to inform curriculum planning in most subjects. Exemplar portfolios of National Curriculum levels are kept in some departments. Schemes of work are constructed to ensure progression for pupils of all levels of attainment. Assessment tasks are regularly set. Most teachers use the broad guidelines of school marking policy consistently and add constructive comments. Effort grades are put on pupils' work but the links with National Curriculum levels are not always clear. There is good classroom monitoring in some mathematics lessons and some effective self-assessment in science, based on the National Curriculum levels.

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

44. The provision the school makes for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. There are, however, distinct variations between the provision for spiritual development which has unsatisfactory features and cultural development which is satisfactory, and that for moral and social development which are good. The school's policy statements for pupils' development in these areas are weak and do not give staff sufficient guidance on activities that could be used to promote spiritual and cultural development. They do not include a process for monitoring and evaluation of these across the school.

45. Whilst English, drama, music and sixth form enhancement studies make significant contributions to the spiritual development of pupils, in most other areas of the curriculum opportunities are missed for reflection, developing a sense of awe and wonder, and discussion about such matters as the conflict between the forces of good and evil and beliefs about life after death. Assemblies are good social occasions and the re-enforcement of moral standards takes place but only on two occasions in Year 8 and 9 did they effectively contribute to the spiritual development of pupils by involving pupils and giving time for reflection. The programme of 'Thought for the Day' is ineffective and only on one occasion in a Year 10 class,

where the thought was effectively developed, was any significant contribution made to pupils' spiritual development.

46.The provision the school makes for the moral development of pupils is good. All staff and all departments in the school positively support the school's aims and staff provide good role models for the pupils. Most subjects incorporate ethical considerations into their schemes of work and allow time for pupils to discuss them. The school's merit scheme encourages good behaviour and rewards pupils for their efforts. The procedures for dealing with misconduct are displayed around the school and are clear and effectively used. Moral standards are re-enforced in assemblies and any misbehaviour is dealt with quickly and fairly through the pastoral system. Pupils comment that they feel safe within the school and that there is always someone to whom they can turn if they have a problem, although some in Year 9 state that they prefer to turn to their friends first.

47.The school makes good provision for the social development of pupils. There are many examples of good collaborative work, such as paired reading and social responsibility through charity and fund-raising work. All subjects encourage pupils to work together, to help one another and to participate in the school and local community. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and involvement by the school and a local company in a high level project. Contacts with the community are varied, the school holds a regular careers convention and many pupils are involved in musical performances.

48.Although the school's provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory in that it gives pupils opportunities to explore their own culture and heritage, there are few opportunities for pupils to experience and investigate other cultures. In religious education, music, English and sixth form enhancement studies opportunities are given to investigate beliefs, traditions, customs and contributions of other cultures, but in other subjects such opportunities are not taken to introduce pupils to other cultures and the effect they have on people's beliefs, values and attitudes.

49.The school has addressed the issue from the previous inspection related to the planning and organisation of personal and social education and tutorial arrangements. There is a new head of department in place and new schemes of work being developed. However, more guidance needs to be given to staff who teach the topics in the programme and opportunities provided for them to be more actively involved in the planning of lessons. The issue of collective worship remains as the 'Thought for the Day' scheme introduced by the school is not used effectively on the three days when pupils are in tutor groups. As a result the school does not yet comply with statutory requirements for the provision of collective worship.

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

50.The effective support, advice and guidance provided by the school is based on a well-managed system of heads of year and form tutors. Tutors and pupils stay together in Years 7 and 8 and from Year 9 to Year 11, giving opportunity to build stable relationships. Staff are accessible and responsive to pupils' needs and the quality of the support they give is good. Pupils are generally confident and able to cope with everyday school life. They enjoy being at school.

51.The tutorial session at the start of each day allows tutors to provide some pastoral interaction, in addition to dealing with registration. The atmosphere and relationships in these sessions are generally good but the time is not always used productively

52. Students with special educational needs receive good support from the learning support department both within lessons and through initiatives such as ALPs (accelerated learning programmes). Pupils with statements of special educational needs are supported by individual education plans drawn up by each faculty.

53. Attendance is carefully monitored and the educational welfare officer visits the school weekly. The school has very thorough procedures for following up absences and lateness. Certificates are awarded for one hundred per cent attendance. Pupils with long-term absence problems are sensitively supported and integrated back into school life.

54. The school promotes self-discipline through the various merit cards, high expectations and effective role models in school. As a result behaviour is satisfactory and pupils are generally tolerant and respectful of other's feelings and property. The school's stance on bullying is clear and effective. Pupils feel secure and know how to seek support through the 'anti bullying' box when required. Heads of year keep records of all pupils, with details of their academic and personal development, attendance and behaviour patterns.

55. There is an effective child protection policy. The newly appointed designated person has received training. The staff are aware of the procedures. Advice on examination technique and time management helps prepare pupils for examinations. There are successful induction programmes for Year 7 pupils so that they settle into their new surroundings quickly. The quality of advice for work experience and career guidance is good.

56. The arrangements to safeguard pupils' wellbeing are good. The school nurse provides caring and valuable support and accidents and sickness are dealt with efficiently. Active and effective steps have been taken to make the school accessible to those with physical disabilities, although there is not a lift to upper floors.

57. Clear procedures are in place for identifying and controlling risks to health and safety in most faculties. Fire notices are displayed around the school and regular fire drills take place: as witnessed during the inspection, these are well managed. The health and safety issues mentioned in the last report have been addressed.

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

58. The school maintains an effective partnership with parents as commented on at the time of the last inspection. The overall quality of information provided is good. Parents are kept well informed of school events through the 'The Bridge', the termly newsletter, and other correspondence. It provides clear written information about its work in its prospectus, handbooks and governors' annual report.

59. Parents are well informed about their children's attainments and progress at annual consultation evenings and through the termly grade reports and the annual written report. Information in the annual reports about pupils' progress is satisfactory. Most parents feel that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught and are satisfied with the arrangements for homework. A minority of parents expressed views, that indicate dissatisfaction with the organisation of homework, while others are pleased with the provision.

60. Very good information is provided for parents of children with special educational needs. They also attend the review meetings and receive an annual newsletter and a good guide to the department.

61. Parents' involvement with the work of the school and with their children's work at home is satisfactory overall. Parents sometime provide practical help in school. There is a parent teacher association that organises social and fund raising events. The parents, together with the school and community have raised over £9,000 for the Baysgarth Arts Theatre scheme to



up-grade the facilities in the school hall. For example, the pupils have twice run the café in the local supermarket for a day and raised over £1,000.

62. There is good liaison with the large number of partner primary schools for the transfer of information about pupils' attainment. There are regular meetings and strategies that enable the smooth and successful transition of pupils from Year 6 to Year 7. The school's faculty departments take it in turn to organise cross phase projects for Year 5 pupils to work with Year 8 pupils.

63. There are effective links with a local international company that offers support for science project work, Young Enterprise scheme, career advice and GNVQ courses. The Young Enterprise team went through to the regional final. Links with the business world for the scheme are missing. There is good support for the school from the careers advisory service. Year 10 pupils' placements for work experience are supported by the careers advisor and are visited by members of staff. The Education Business Partnership together with local industries helped Year 9 pupils for three days to hold a successful Mini Enterprise. The school newspaper 'The Bugle' which is issued annually is sponsored by local businesses. Pupils' artwork was displayed at the local Christmas Fair and a pupil from the school won the competition to design a new town sign.

64. The local community uses the school premises regularly during the evenings. The school supports the Christmas Shoe Box appeal and Year 7 pupils hold a fun run annually to raise money for Christmas Hampers for the elderly.

## 68. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### 68. Leadership and management

65. The leadership and management of the school are good. Having predicted the well below average 1998 GCSE results, the senior management team set appropriate measures in place that mitigated the fall to an extent and produced the substantial up-turn in 1999. Improvements include better evaluation of practice and setting targets, very successfully in the case of boys. Substantial changes since the previous inspection have seen the appointment of a new headteacher who has, in collaboration with the governors, appointed a senior teacher and seven, already effective, heads of subject or year.

66. The headteacher has a clear vision of a successful school that provides rewarding experiences for all. His vision has the support of governors, staff and pupils, but its expression in the school motto does not fully reflect the relevant, increasing expectations and rigour that led, for instance, to the better GCSE outcomes. The school aims, values and policies are satisfactorily reflected in its work, but progress, for instance towards self rigorous self-evaluation, is demonstrating a greater sense of urgency than is apparent in the aims statement. Having initially dedicated much time working to redress some of the inefficiencies associated with the nature of the school site, the headteacher has also effectively modified previous practice by increasing the responsibility and accountability of each tier of management. This has led to the development, in close collaboration with a local college of further education, of comprehensive self-evaluation strategies.

67. The school has a very good, clear sense of direction and purpose that recognises the need to continue to improve as the best means of stopping a worrying increase in the numbers of local pupils deciding to pursue secondary education in schools further afield.

68.The senior management team has a good balance of skills that are well channelled to exploit strengths, for instance in personnel management and data analysis. The link role of senior managers to subjects is improving: it is assuming clearer evaluation duties to complement effective annual professional reviews now conducted by the senior management team and reported to governors. These form part of an improving programme of support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development by senior and some middle managers. Pertinent steps to increase the programme's effectiveness are envisaged in the trial self-evaluation project.

69.The governors undertake appropriate training and operate through suitable committees. The attachment of a governor to most subjects enhances their focus and the highly professional inter-relationship between the chairman and headteacher indicates clearly the improving ways the governors hold the school effectively to account.

70.Middle management is good. Working to general job descriptions, heads of subject and year are improving the operation of their areas of responsibility. Very good leadership in, for example, physical education, design and technology and English, ensures coherent planning, mainly within the whole-school priorities; it increasingly evaluates practice including, along with management in modern foreign languages, the quality of teaching to generally appropriate, but differing criteria. The pattern of this activity still, as at the previous inspection, lacks uniformity and rigour. Timely measures to address these weaknesses are contained in the energetic move towards full-scale self-evaluation, now at an advanced stage of planning. A new special educational needs co-ordinator is starting to improve the management of individual education plans, efficiently and effectively. Weaknesses in the middle tier of management lie in mathematics, as leadership lacks some clarity. Subject management has also failed to integrate information technology into most other subjects.

71.Development planning is good: it has improved since the previous inspection. It now covers eight relevant areas of focus that combine means of raising standards, celebrating success and improving the ways the school interacts with its community. Progress towards reaching the objectives of this plan is measured regularly by the headteacher and governors. Subjects and pastoral structures plan effectively, using the school plan as a focal point, pursuing appropriate initiatives that stem from it.

72.The school's learning ethos is satisfactory. Whilst the benefits of increasingly effective target setting and planning are spreading throughout the school, and good relationships and equality of opportunity already exist, the inefficiencies in the use of the site, the unsatisfactory availability of information technology to subjects and the poor state of the libraries inhibit the establishment of a better ethos.

73.The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and managed and is very much improved since the last inspection. Although the coordinator for special educational needs is a new appointment, the arrangements made during the last two years are good. There are appropriate policies and procedures, links between governors, departments and the coordinator. All statutory requirements to provide information and hold reviews are met. Individual education plans, which are drawn up by subject teachers, are in place for many subjects but this is not universally the case.

74.Statutory requirements are met except in the provision of a daily act of collective worship.

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

### 78. **Staffing**

75. The school is satisfactorily staffed to deliver the curriculum. There are 48 full-time and 12 part-time teachers – equivalent to 53.13 full-time. This gives a pupil to teacher ratio of 18 to 1, which is above the average for this type of school. The proportion of the week spent in teaching – 81 per cent - is greater than the national average.

76. There is a blend of young and experienced teachers. Changes of staff in recent years have resulted in a total of 17 who have spent fewer than 5 years in the school. There is a good match between teachers' qualifications and the subjects they teach. A small number of periods of French, music and religious education is taught by non-specialist but experienced teachers. There is no longer the concern about the limited range of ages and attainment levels of pupils taught by some staff expressed in the last inspection report.

77. Well-qualified and experienced non-teaching staff provide satisfactory administrative and technical support. Expenditure on education support staff compares favourably with national averages. The level of support for design and technology, judged inadequate in the last inspection, has increased overall but it is still limited for food technology and textiles. Technical support is needed for three-dimensional work in art. The library assistant has to divide the week between two libraries. Although there are some weaknesses in specific areas, the overall provision of non-teaching staff is satisfactory.

78. There is a satisfactory induction programme for newly-qualified teachers. Staff appraisal has been conducted but is at present suspended until the publication of a national scheme. There is a sound policy for staff development and beneficial use has been made of in-service training for both teaching and non-teaching staff. The school development plan includes a comprehensive and costed strategy for the identification of training requirements. There is a need, however, for specific training for teachers in the use of information technology in the teaching of their subjects. Overall the arrangements for the professional development of staff are satisfactory.

### 82. **Accommodation**

79. The provision of classroom and specialist accommodation is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum but the split site necessitates pupil movement which has an adverse effect upon the use of lesson time. Some of the shortcomings in accommodation identified in the last report have received attention. Access and facilities for the disabled have been improved. Most subjects are now grouped in faculties except science, languages and expressive arts. Languages in particular suffer from a lack of cohesion because of their location and time taken for pupil movement has a particular impact.

80. There is a rolling programme of maintenance but there are still problems with windows, decoration and heating in the upper school. Mathematics and information technology areas can become too hot and ventilation is inadequate. The food technology and textiles area is drab and in need of some refurbishment. Good use is made of display throughout the school, celebrating pupils' work, but the general quality of decoration throughout does little to enhance pupils' learning experience. Staff and governors demonstrate proper concern. Maintenance and improvement is a significant element in the school development plan. The annual expenditure is a greater proportion of the total school budget than the national average for such expenditure. The planned closure of the main lower school building should bring about some economies and reduce the time spent in pupil movement.

#### 84. **Learning resources**

81.School expenditure on resources is average. Resources are adequate in most departments but unsatisfactory in geography, religious education and art. Although the provision of computers in the information technology department itself is good there is generally unsatisfactory provision or access to computers in most subject departments. There is also a need for more subject specific software. Most subjects have a sufficient range and quantity of text books in the department with specific deficiencies only in geography, art, religious education, information technology and business education.

82.Since the last inspection, little progress has been made in improving the central libraries and developing them into learning resource centres. There is only one computer in each library with no Internet access. In the last two years the school has improved the fiction stock with many new books and the deletion of out-dated titles. However, there are still many books that are out of date and inappropriate to the pupils' needs; there is no evidence of the greater involvement of subject departments recommended in the last inspection report. The book stock is unsatisfactory or poor in all subjects except design and technology, history, physical education and information technology.

#### 86. **The efficiency of the school**

83.The quality of whole school financial planning is good. All the elements of good practice are present in the school and departmental development plans and priorities are clear, costed in terms of money and time, and clearly related to the improvement of attainment. Planning is effectively monitored to ensure close links between the departmental plans and whole-school development priorities.

84.The governing body gives active support and is kept fully informed of priorities and developments. It makes strategic decisions on spending based on clear and detailed information supplied by the headteacher and senior management team. The school has a small deficit but the rise in numbers will overcome this situation in the next financial year.

85.The overall use of teaching and support staff is good and teachers are deployed well according to their qualifications and experience. The exception to this is in religious education and music where non-specialists are employed to teach these subjects. Science is particularly well served by its dedicated technician staff and there is particularly good use of special educational needs support staff.

86.The school is on two sites and the time taken by pupils to travel between lessons is excessive and decreases the amount of actual teaching time available in the curriculum. This has a detrimental effect on the attainment and progress of pupils.

87.There is an excess of accommodation particularly at Lower School and therefore some inefficiencies exist in terms of heating, lighting and overall costs. The use of information technology resources is unsatisfactory with an inequality of access for pupils. The libraries are not effectively used as an educational resource base. The way in which accommodation and some resources are currently used is unsatisfactory.

88.Whole school financial control and school administration are very good. The governing body and senior management team regularly monitor the budget and spending. The formula funding for capitation is clear to departments and arrangements are in place for departments with special requirements to bid for extra money. The school has responded to the external audit which commented on the 'effective systems' within the school for budgetary control.

89. The school effectively and appropriately allocates and uses funding and resources for pupils with special educational needs. Money allocated to subject departments for special education, however, is not always used to meet the requirements of the pupils at whom it is targeted. Funds allocated for in-service training are targeted according to agreed school priorities and monitored for effectiveness.

90. The school has addressed the issues outlined in the previous report and priorities in the school development plan are now clear with objectives costed in terms of time and money. Monitoring and evaluation of action plans is now effective.

91. Taking into account the good quality of education provided, the good progress pupils make and the average income per pupil which the school receives, the school continues to provide good value for money.

## 95. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 95. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

#### 95. English

92. Attainment in the standardised tests at the end of Key Stage 3 is now above the national average although in 1998 it was below both the national average and the average for schools with pupils of similar backgrounds. There is no significant variation in attainment according to gender other than the national tendency for girls to do better than boys. In the lessons observed during the inspection attainment was in line with national expectations: the current Year 9 pupils are not achieving as high a level of performance as the previous cohort.

93. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A\* to C in language had declined to well below the national average over the previous three years. Targets have now been agreed with pupils and, as a consequence of mentoring by staff, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* - C increased significantly in 1999. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* to G, however, has remained close to the national average throughout. GCSE results in literature follow a similar pattern to those in language, though the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* to C is still below the national average. There has been some variation over time according to gender. Boys now attain higher than girls. In GCSE drama the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* to C is below the national average. In lessons, pupils' standards of attainment generally match the levels expected nationally. Higher attainers demonstrate good language skills in responding to material presented, both orally and in writing. Middle and lower attainers are less fluent in their responses but are still able to communicate articulately. Pupils with special educational needs are limited, both orally and in writing, but few pupils do not obtain a grade in GCSE language or a merit or distinction in the Certificate of Achievement in English. The underachievement in Years 9 and 10 observed in the last inspection is no longer in evidence.

94. On the evidence of the lessons observed and students' work attainment in the sixth form is generally average. With relatively small numbers of students involved, comparison with national averages can be misleading but the average points score obtained by candidates in the 1999 A level literature examinations is below the national average while in media studies it is higher and in line with the national average.

95. At Key Stage 3 the progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good in relation to levels of prior attainment. Good teaching in individual lessons encourages pupils to respond well. As advocated in the last inspection oral skills are being developed systematically as a consequence of well-chosen teaching strategies. Pupils, particularly higher and middle attainers, express themselves articulately and with confidence in question and answer sessions. Pupils generally read aloud without inhibition, though lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs are less fluent and sometimes need assistance with unfamiliar words. Pupils build upon their skills of listening and speaking in a variety of pair and group activities in the classroom, assisted by the good practice of teachers in taking care to ensure that in the mixed-ability classes tasks are matched to pupils' capabilities so that all can contribute. Reading skills develop well and pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of texts – in Year 7, ghost stories and how suspense is built up and in Year 8, the use of similes and metaphors in a poem. In the last inspection a need for a structured programme to improve reading fluency was identified. Teachers now make good use of carefully structured units of work which offer graded reading and response tasks to meet the needs of the different levels of attainment within a class. In addition, reading for pleasure is encouraged by the timetabled use of the library, by help and guidance on the choice of books and by the use of book boxes in form time. Paired reading sessions and mentoring by older pupils support the improvement of reading skills of identified lower-

attainers and pupils with special educational needs. Question frameworks in work booklets enable pupils to produce competent written responses with individual help from teachers and classroom assistants who support some pupils with special educational needs. Extension tasks are offered to high-attaining pupils who write fluently and, when required, at some length. Lower-attainers in Year 9 develop a narrative from an "X Files " storyboard with good individual support from the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs in Year 8 are able to produce a newspaper story based on a poem they have read. In drama the skills of movement, mime and improvisation are developed so that by Year 9 pupils can present a gangster story in the style of a silent film, working in small groups which enables all to make a contribution whatever their level of prior attainment.

96. At Key Stage 4 the progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good in relation to levels of prior attainment. Pupils undertake and execute increasingly demanding speaking and listening tasks – exploring literature texts, sharing their responses with the class and, in expressive arts, preparing a production to be presented to junior schools. High attainers are able to respond fluently and independently. The oral work of middle and lower attainers is improved through good constructive assessment provided by teachers. Teacher expectations are high and care is taken to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are able to meet the requirements of the syllabus. High attainers develop quite sophisticated reading skills – in Year 10 exploring the ways H. G. Wells builds up fear in his story, "The Red Room" and, in Year 11, identifying the sonnet form. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs develop understanding of texts by the good provision of support material and individual help by teachers. Pair and group discussion enables pupils to assist each other in the formulation of conclusions. Good planning by teachers ensures the production of a range of extended pieces of writing which meets the requirements of the course. Pupils can respond sensitively to a variety of classic and modern texts, write imaginatively and sustain a discussion. High attainers are able to produce written responses quite independently. Middle and lower attainers are more dependent upon the structures provided in work booklets but with their help can, for example, assess the poetry of Simon Armitage in the GCSE anthology. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to make coherent responses by the provision of writing frames. There are problems with spelling but generally the quality of written expression is good. Teachers take great care to encourage correctness through careful marking and the good use of the practice of drafting and revising, which is developed in Key Stage 3. This is well-used to improve the quality of written response.

97. In the sixth form the progress made by students is good in relation to levels of prior attainment. Students explore texts in a scholarly manner, developing their understanding by sharing ideas with each other and their teacher. Lower attainers are supported by the provision of work unit booklets.

98. The attitude of pupils to learning is good. They are able to work independently with a minimum of teacher direction. Pupils show interest and make enthusiastic contributions in lessons particularly in Key Stage 3. In pair and group work they collaborate well, undertake tasks quietly and purposefully and appreciate the efforts of others. Relationships in the classroom are good-humoured but with a proper respect for teachers.

104. The quality of teaching is good at all key stages and contributes positively to pupils' attainment and progress. In all the lessons observed it was at least satisfactory and good in three fifths. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced and have good subject knowledge. Lessons are planned very thoroughly to ensure that pupils' English skills are developed systematically and these skills are consolidated by the regular setting of homework tasks which are linked to the work done in class. In the last inspection a lack of tasks and materials to cater for pupils' differing needs was observed. Teachers now offer a range of tasks in work booklets which are supplemented by additional support material and, in some

cases, by separate task sheets and writing frames to enable pupils with lower levels of prior attainment to participate fully. Teachers work closely with the special needs department to make the best use of support in lessons and ensure the consistency of practice observed as lacking in the last inspection. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, co-operation between the teacher, a classroom assistant and two members of the sixth form enabled all the pupils, including a significant number with special educational needs, to present, in groups, dramatisations of a poem to the enjoyment of all. More can be done to meet the needs of pupils at both ends of the ability spectrum and the department is working with the advisory service to extend the range of tasks and materials. Class control is secure but friendly and the good relationships between teachers and pupils promote high standards; pupils are appropriately challenged and respond well. Teachers' concern for standards is reflected in their very supportive but detailed marking, which pays attention to the weaknesses in mechanical accuracy identified in the last inspection. Teachers make good use of assessment to secure attainment and progress, modifying their teaching strategies in the light of pupils' achievements, and care is taken to make reference in the marking to National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades so that pupils are always clear about the standard they have achieved. No teaching is less than satisfactory but in a few lessons the pace is slow, there is too heavy a reliance upon the writing activities in the work booklets and a need for more variety of activity. The best teaching communicates interest and pleasure in the subject, so that, for example, a Year 8 class responded with enjoyment to a dramatic reading of "The Highwayman" and a Year 10 class felt the fear in the reading of a ghost story.

1. The English scheme of work meets statutory requirements and is very carefully structured to enable the monitoring of pupil performance. Attainment and progress are very carefully reviewed to evaluate the achievement of targets and inform future teaching. Each work unit includes an opportunity for the use of information technology and the contributions to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are identified.

2. The management of English is very capable and committed. A strong structure has been created to ensure the proper delivery of the curriculum and enable all pupils to make good progress. Good departmental development planning reflects the priorities of the school. Good records are kept and processes are in place to monitor performance. The distribution of responsibilities and regular meetings ensure that all members of the team are able to make a contribution. The ethos in which the subject is taught is distinguished by its commitment to achievement. Good use has been made of departmental accommodation in celebrating the work of pupils.

3. Sound management of drama provides clear direction for the subject. The scheme of work is comprehensive, detailing activities and identifying lesson objectives. Arrangements for assessment are good and include pupil self-assessment. Pupils with special educational needs are able to participate fully. A drama club and the opportunity to participate in productions contribute to pupils' social and cultural development. The new GCSE course may prove to have more appeal to a wider range of pupils than the present one.

#### 107. ***Literacy across the curriculum***

4. The school has made a priority of raising standards of literacy. An action plan which is part of the school development plan targets pupils in Years 7 and 8 whose reading ages are substantially below their chronological ages. A range of strategies is undertaken to improve reading competence. Pupils are withdrawn for individual attention, involved in paired reading activities and given support by classroom assistants in lessons. Book boxes are available in form time to encourage reading for pleasure and progress is rewarded. A deputy head is the school's literacy co-ordinator, assisted by a member of the English department. The head of English manages paired reading sessions and another teacher of English offers help and guidance in the library at lunchtimes on the choice of books.



5.To develop speaking and listening skills across subjects, opportunities are offered for discussion. In all subjects this takes the form of teacher-led question and answer sessions but in all subjects except science there is, in addition, pair and group discussion. Generally pupils are articulate and happy to express their ideas though students in sixth-form science make only limited contributions. Students are expected to listen attentively – most lessons begin with some form of introductory explanation. In music and languages, however, specific listening activities are a formal part of the course. Listening is generally active and sustained but in design and technology and science lower attaining pupils can find it difficult.

110. Other than in English, opportunities for reading in lessons tend to be limited to specific course materials. In history, however, students are offered a range of primary and secondary source texts and, in business education, media articles and material on the Internet.

111. A variety of writing opportunities is offered in notes, answers to questions, projects, reports, as well as personal and imaginative responses in English, religious education and history. The general standard of written expression is satisfactory in relation to students' levels of prior attainment. The practice of drafting is used in English, religious education and science to improve the quality of written work. There is careful presentation of new vocabulary, in English, design and technology, business education, music, mathematics, history and geography. Keyword lists are displayed in most subject areas to reinforce understanding and aid spelling. The vocabulary of lower-attaining pupils can, however, be limited and specialist words, for example in science, are not used with precision. Concern is shown in the marking of work for handwriting and presentation. The written work of pupils is generally legible and pride is taken in presentation.

109.

## **Mathematics**

1.Attainment at Key Stage 3, which was broadly in line with national averages at the time of the last inspection, improved significantly in 1999 and was above national averages and well above the attainment of similar schools. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a good understanding of symmetry, they handle number confidently, can understand inequalities, and can collect and collate data to extract information about populations. They have developed some mathematical language. At Key Stage 4 GCSE attainment, which was in line with national averages at the time of the last inspection, has fallen and is now below the national average. In 1999, however, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* - C rose from nearly 17 per cent a year earlier to 35 per cent. Pupils work competently with calculators, gain understanding of shape and space, can calculate area and can manipulate quadratic equations. A level attainment remains well below the national average and has shown a downward trend since the last inspection to 36 per cent of pupils gaining grades A – E in 1999. Sixth form students can manipulate and compare data from different populations in order to make judgements. They can use parametric and Cartesian equations and sketch curves with asymptotes. Algebraic skills are poor. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

2.Progress at Key Stage 3 is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils of lower ability make good progress as a result of well chosen teaching methods. For example, pupils gained understanding of rotational symmetry by working with brightly coloured shapes temporarily fixed to the whiteboard and using tracing paper for individual work. In a small number of classes the poor behaviour of a few pupils inhibits progress, because the teacher has to spend time managing behaviour instead of teaching. At Key Stage 4 progress overall is good. At both key stages pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their teachers are aware of their needs and plan lessons to support them. Progress in the sixth form is good because teachers' expectations are high.

3.The response of pupils to the subject is satisfactory overall. Most pupils come to lessons prepared to work hard. They are well behaved, listen attentively and are confident to ask or answer questions. A small number of pupils, however, find it difficult to concentrate and avoid work or distract others. Relationships between pupils and with staff are good. They show respect for other people and for property, and are courteous. They take pride in their work which is usually well presented. At Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils are too passive in their learning and they rely on the teacher tell them what to do to solve questions instead of tackling problems themselves.

4.The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. It has improved since the last inspection with nearly all lessons satisfactory or better and almost two in five good or better. Teachers are well qualified. They plan thoroughly using strategies that are appropriate to most of their pupils. They have high expectations, although they do not always give opportunities for pupils to 'discover'. For example, pupils learning about area of a sector and length of an arc were given the formulae instead of being challenged to try to deduce them for themselves. In the best lessons teachers use a variety of activities to interest pupils and develop understanding. Year 7 pupils in one class were used as a resource at the front of the room to represent the intervals on a number line segment from 200 to 300. Pupils could understand how to round values to the nearest 100 by judging whether a child was nearer to 200 or 300. Teachers motivate pupils to learn by developing good relationships and maintaining sound discipline. They check pupils' understanding by the quality of the pupils' verbal contributions and responses to questions and through regular assessment of written work. In the least effective lessons teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high and pupils find the work too easy. Homework is generally used effectively.

5.The management of the department is satisfactory. Development plans are in place but need to be implemented fully to provide clearer direction of the way forward and to ensure that standards of attainment are raised. The schemes of work are comprehensive and textbooks used make the standards of attainment clear. However, information technology is rarely included in the curriculum at Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 and pupils do not, therefore, have opportunity to use their computer skills to improve their progress in mathematics. Assessment procedures are good, rigorous and aligned to national standards. The environment is conducive to learning, with spacious, light rooms and good displays.

#### 116. ***Numeracy across the curriculum***

6.The school is aware of the need to develop number skills and action has been taken to improve such skills. Most mathematics teachers introduce short activities in mental arithmetic into lessons. A numeracy summer school held last summer was very successful and pupils from many of the local primary schools took part. Pupils across the school have made progress as a result of numeracy worksheets completed in form tutor time. However, departments do not include numeracy in their curriculum at Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 although they sometimes need to use it in their lessons. For example pupils in design and technology measure accurately and are competent in the use of statistics for market research and surveys. In music lessons pupils are able to count and use proportions in note values. Plans are being developed to ensure that all departments aim to include number skills within their schemes of work.

#### 117. **Science**

7.In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportions of pupils at the age of 14 achieving levels 5 and above and levels 6 and above were above national averages. The average level which pupils achieved was well above average for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. Girls and boys achieve similar results at this stage. Results in science in 1999 were better than those in mathematics but not as good as those in English. The results remained close to the national average in the years 1996 to 1998 but improved in 1999. In the 1999 GCSE double award science examinations, the proportions of pupils

gaining grades A\* - C and A\* - G matched the national average. There was a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* to C between 1998 and 1999. Boys gained a significantly higher proportion of grades A\* - C than girls. Pupils did better in double award science than they did on average across all their subjects. In the 1999 A level examinations in biology, chemistry and physics, all students gained grades A - E, half the students gained grades A and B and the average points scores were well above the 1998 national average in all three subjects. The average points scores in 1999 were similar to those in 1998 but the proportions of students gaining grades A and B increased.

8. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards of attainment at the age of 14 are above those expected for pupils of the same age nationally and at the age of 16 they match the levels expected nationally. These standards reflect the attainment in recent test and examination results. Most pupils in both key stages have secure knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied recently. Pupils' investigative skills generally match their attainment in other aspects of science. Most pupils present their work carefully and have good skills in drawing graphs. Some pupils attain standards which are well above the national average. For example, in Year 9 they use their knowledge of the reactivity series to predict the outcome of their experiments. In Year 11, higher attainers accurately describe the different kinds of wave and relate frequency of sounds to their pitch. However, many pupils in middle and lower attaining groups in Key Stage 4 find it difficult to give precise answers to written and spoken questions and often make mistakes in calculations. Standards in the sixth form vary from year to year according to the attainment, at the end of Key Stage 4, of the individual students who join the small A level groups. In the current sixth form, standards are average in biology and above average in chemistry and physics.

9. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. Pupils enter the school with attainment which is below the national average and achieve GCSE results which are average, indicating good overall progress as they move through the key stages. The progress which pupils make in individual lessons is closely related to the quality of teaching they receive; where teaching is good, pupils respond well and make good progress. Occasionally, pupils make excellent progress. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, pupils who have already built up a good understanding of the periodic table move on to constructing formulae and balancing chemical equations. Within each group, all pupils, boys and girls, make similar progress. However, pupils in middle attaining groups, particularly in Key Stage 4, do not make progress as quickly as those of higher and lower attainment. Some pupils in these groups do not concentrate as well as they should in lessons and do not make enough effort with their homework. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages. For example, in a Year 10 physics lesson for the lowest attainers, pupils responded well to the calm and supportive atmosphere created by the teacher and support assistant and quickly improved their skills in building electric circuits. Pupils' progress in both key stages is restricted by a significant loss of lesson time when they move between sites.

10. Most pupils in both key stages have good attitudes to their work in science; their behaviour is good and they apply themselves willingly to practical and written tasks. Many girls in Key Stage 4 do not enjoy the 'physical processes' section as much as other aspects of the science curriculum. This lack of enthusiasm leads to very few girls studying physics or chemistry in the sixth form. A few parents are concerned that science lessons are occasionally disrupted by the poor behaviour of some pupils. In the very few lessons where teaching is poor, or where the management of pupils is ineffective, some pupils do behave badly, and the progress of the class is restricted. Students in the sixth form work conscientiously and their files are usually well organised. However, students in Year 12 lack confidence in speaking about their work and, even in Year 13, students remain rather quiet.

11. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan lessons carefully and generally provide activities which are well matched to the needs of the group. Teachers set valuable and interesting homework tasks; they usually mark pupils' work carefully and give valuable suggestions for improvement. In Key Stage 3, there are a few lessons in which teaching is excellent or very good. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the teacher and technician worked together to enable pupils to enjoy and be successful in their first use of a microscope. In Key Stage 4, the teaching of the 'physical processes' component of the course is not as consistently good as that of the other attainment targets. This is having a significant effect on pupils' progress in double award science, particularly in middle attaining groups. In the occasional lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, the pace is slow and learning activities are not sufficiently demanding. A major strength of the faculty is the consistently good teaching in all three A level subjects. The teaching is secure and well organised and all teachers have high expectations of students in terms of both effort and attainment. However, the variety of activities in sixth form lessons is limited.

12. The faculty is aware that it does not make sufficient use of information technology to support learning in science. There are occasional uses of, for example, light sensors and data-logging equipment and computer simulations; some pupils use word-processing in writing up their investigations. However, the consistent and regular use of computers in lessons is hampered by restricted access to the whole school information technology facilities and the shortage of a fully equipped and up-to-date computer in each of the science areas for use in the laboratories.

13. The leadership and management of the department are both good. The head of faculty has been in post for less than a year but is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Teaching is monitored and some support is provided where it is needed. However the action taken is not yet sufficient to ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory. There is not enough use of the considerable skills which exist within the faculty to inform and improve the practice of other members of the team. The faculty undertakes a thorough analysis of its examination results and has a detailed development plan containing appropriate strategies for improvement.

14. The faculty has made good progress since the previous inspection. Attainment has improved in Key Stage 3 and in A level examinations but GCSE results are not as good as they were. The quality of teaching remains broadly the same as it was at that time but the teaching of the lowest attainers, and those with special educational needs, has improved and the introduction of the certificate of achievement course has been particularly successful.

## **125. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **125. Art**

15. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* - C in GCSE examinations in 1999 was below the national average. Over the past year the trend in results has been rising with girls performing better than boys. A level candidates achieved grades above national averages, almost half achieving an A grade. Since the last inspection the department has been through an unsettled period and now with stable, well qualified and committed staff delivering good teaching, standards are rising. In Key Stage 3 standards observed during the inspection were in line with national expectations. By the end of the key stage they are above the average level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. Pupils studying art perform well in comparison to attainment in most other subjects in the school. At Key Stage 4 pupils are able to develop and sustain a chosen theme in their work and can, in general, investigate and explain their use of a range of visual and other sources in order to do so. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to use line, tone and texture effectively in their drawings. They observe buildings well and understand the rules of perspective. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils use their skills to create interesting mixed media compositions and achieve average

standards. Confidence in a wide range of media, using both traditional and more original techniques, is achieved at the end of the sixth-form when standards are above average.

16. Progress is satisfactory for all pupils in Key Stage 3 and at the end of the key stage attainment is in line with expected levels. Progress is good in the investigation of relevant visual and other information and pupils make effective use of media, making connections across a range of ideas and information to support and extend their own ideas. At Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory and sketch books show evidence of the pupils' ability to develop and improve their work, incorporating well known artists' styles into their own compositions. Insufficient use is made towards the end of Key Stage 4, of the individual interests and media skills of pupils. In the sixth form good progress is evident, especially in direct observational skills. Confidence with tools and materials enables them to tackle large-scale compositions in individually creative ways. Their sketchbooks reflect wide understanding and well-developed research skills, which enables them to produce work at a high level of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs respond positively to the subject at both key stages. Such pupils benefit from individual attention, their progress is good and they frequently show attainment which is higher than that expected of them.

17. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and apply themselves purposefully to their projects. Attitudes and behaviour throughout the department are good and in the sixth form are very good. This is a direct result of the enthusiasm teachers bring to their work and the high standards they set. Pupils are well behaved and respectful to adults and each other. They listen attentively to the teachers and are disciplined in their work. Lessons are orderly and characterised by good relationships. Sixth-formers speak eloquently and confidently about their work and demonstrate good knowledge and understanding. Their independence enables them to be trusted to manage their studies in working towards examinations.

18. The quality of the teaching overall is good and makes a positive contribution to the standards achieved. In the lessons observed during the inspection teaching was good in Key Stage 3, satisfactory in Key Stage 4 and very good in the sixth form. As reported in the previous inspection, the teachers create a secure framework for learning and provide individual support where it is needed. Teachers have good levels of subject expertise and use their own skills to demonstrate techniques to the pupils. This is a strength of teaching. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on interiors and school environment the teacher used her skilled knowledge of perspective to demonstrate and to challenge pupils to improve. Teachers plan and introduce lessons effectively and pace them well, finishing with an assessment of the pupils' progress through the lesson. In a Year 12 lesson, "Portrait and Identity", an evaluation session at the end of the lesson checked on what was learned of spatial awareness and need to refocus students' ideas. The teachers establish an effective working ethos in which pupils are expected to behave and do their best: the very good relationships they have with pupils contributes to this ethos. The use of homework, to plan and extend work, in all key stages is well-integrated into lessons. Requirements for the annotation of work are a strength of the department. Older pupils are challenged to research and develop their work using a wide range of artistic influences, although there is insufficient use of non-western cultures and the earlier influences on our multicultural society. Lessons convey the vigour of the subject along with the sense of enjoyment and fulfilment that pupils can find in exploring visual ideas with clarity.

19. The subject is well led and managed. Teaching schemes and departmental policies are clear, comprehensive and provide good guidance for teachers. Individual teachers' strengths are deployed well to ensure pupils experience different aspects of art. Some of the issues raised at the time of the last inspection, concerning the use of information technology and the introduction of ceramics to all key stages, have not fully been addressed. There is only limited access to computers in any one art room. Storage and preparation space are still inadequate for three-dimensional studies. There is no technical support to help with the preparation of clay and glazes. Visits to museums and galleries improve pupils' awareness and help to raise their

attainment. The availability of good quality reference books and visual aids is insufficient to meet fully the element of knowledge and understanding needed for a subject with such a wide cultural base.

### 130. **Business studies**

20. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in the GCSE course is below the national average. GCSE results in 1999 were below national average figures for the higher A\*-C grades, but above for overall grades A\*-G. All pupils gained a grade in business education. These results are a very significant improvement on those achieved in 1998. A level was examined for the first time in 1999 and both the higher A-B and overall A-E grades were below those expected nationally. Attainment by the end of the A level course is currently below the national average. A small number of students are on a General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) Intermediate courses in business education and the completion rate in 1999 was above the national average.

21. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 display a good knowledge and understanding of key business ideas and use specialist language successfully. This was observed in lessons on break even analysis and in the importance of teamwork in business organisations. These pupils are able to relate theoretical models to real business situations through the analysis of case studies. Other pupils lack these analytical and evaluative skills. Lower attaining pupils display weaker retention, literacy and sometimes concentration skills, which adversely influences attainment. Girls' attainment is above that of boys but it is within the range of the gender difference found nationally.

22. In the sixth form the majority of A level students have good listening skills and are good orally, with girls in particular participating fully, but as in Key Stage 4, most find the analyses of theoretical models and communication of ideas in writing much more difficult. Most students demonstrate satisfactory numeracy skills in accounts and when using graphs to illustrate business models and procedures. GNVQ students display a satisfactory understanding of the required processes and are developing independent research and learning skills.

23. Progress overall is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in knowledge and understanding of business organisations, financial procedures and the role of the marketing function. Most average and lower attainers make satisfactory progress. Progress is related at this and the other key stages to enthusiastic and well planned teaching and the positive attitude shown to the subject by a large majority of pupils. Students on the A level course are making good progress. In files and in lessons observed there is evidence that some students are progressing at a higher rate than their end of Key Stage 4 predictions suggested. The small number of students on the GNVQ course are making good progress in understanding and applying GNVQ processes and in their knowledge of the Internet as an information gathering source and in the organisational structure of firms. Progress is limited because students on GCSE and A level courses do not have enough opportunities to use information technology to communicate and analyse information and to enable them to understand the wider business and social implications of its use.

24. Most students have a very positive attitude to the subject and this has a beneficial influence upon progress. Their response to the subject overall is good. They are well behaved and relationships are very good. Pupils can work collaboratively and they listen to each other's views. A significant number at GCSE sustain interest and concentration through lessons, as do all students in the sixth form.

25.The quality of teaching is good throughout the school with some examples of very good practice. Teachers are very secure in their subject understanding and knowledge and lessons are well prepared, with appropriate and clear learning objectives. Work is challenging and teacher expectations are high. This was seen in lessons on break even analysis, in peer evaluation of the value of team building in Year 10 and in sixth form lessons on human resource management and the nature of consumers. Teachers use specialist language carefully and accurately and provide clear links between theory and the real world, through appropriate and challenging case studies. In GNVQ courses teachers act as guides and facilitators, supporting and encouraging independent learning. In all areas, a good range of teaching and learning strategies is employed. Regular homework tasks are set and marking and assessment are carried out regularly and thoroughly.

26.The head of business education is well organised and in a relatively short time in the school has had a significant influence on raising standards in the subject. Pupils' access to information technology, particularly in the GCSE and A level courses, however, is difficult and this has a detrimental effect on standards. Links with local businesses are weak at GCSE and A level. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to visit businesses and to hear speakers from industry and also to link work experience to the scheme of work in business education.

### **137. Design and technology**

27.By the end of Key Stage 3 attainment in designing and making, as confirmed by teacher assessments, is below the national average. However, by the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is above national averages. Attainment in this subject is above that of many subjects in the school for GCSE grades A\*- C. In lessons, pupils in Key Stage 3 are fully aware of the design process and understand the importance of making quality products. In Key Stage 4 pupils take pride in their work, paying attention to detail and undertaking research for the GCSE projects on which they are working. Pupils in both key stages are interested in the subject, enjoy their lessons and make every effort to produce quality products, this was especially noticeable for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers expect pupils to produce work that relates to their ability and all pupils in Key Stage 4 are working towards target grades and their performance is constantly monitored. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are on course to meet national expectations in designing and making, along with pupils for this year's GCSE entry who are being well prepared for the forthcoming examinations. Their design work is promising and they are on course to exceed national expectations.

28.In Key Stage 3 pupils make satisfactory progress and in Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress. During Key Stage 3 pupils develop their understanding of the design process through a wide variety of projects that interest them. When making products in construction materials, food and textiles pupils put their knowledge of safety to good use. However, a small minority of pupils make poor progress because they fail to listen to instructions carefully and don't concentrate in lessons. This is most noticeable in lessons towards the end of Key Stage 3. A large amount of time is wasted during lessons when teachers repeatedly try to gain the attention of these pupils: this has an impact on the progress of these pupils and the others in the group. In Key Stage 4 progress is good and this is brought about by the good relationships fostered between teachers and pupils. Pupils take pride in their work, aim to improve its quality and value the help and support given by the teachers. In a Year 11 food technology lesson observed, pupils were working well on their coursework projects, evaluating products and adapting them in line with judgements made by their taste panel. Also in a Year 11 textile technology lesson pupils were making a prototype of their initial design ideas and evaluating the quality of the products they had made. Good use is made of computers to aid the design process in Year 11 graphics lessons and in all courses at this level. At all times in Key Stage 4 pupils are given much individual guidance and encouragement to keep them on target for their predicted grades. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages and the effective use of classroom assistance and targeted tasks allow these pupils to reach their full potential. Progress for these pupils is better in designing

than making, although they still gain great satisfaction from making individual products.

29. Pupils apply themselves to tasks and have a good attitude to learning. They work well together and are willing to discuss their work and help each other to solve problems of a design and practical nature. Pupils in Key Stage 4 take a clear responsibility for managing their time and resources and this was shown in all the Year 11 lessons observed. Pupils work well on their own and enjoy the individual nature of design and make tasks. In the small number of cases where poor behaviour was observed pupils showed a lack of interest in the subject or lost concentration because the lesson lacked variety. However, on the whole, pupils make good progress because of their very positive attitudes to the subject, shown in almost all the lessons.

30. The overall quality of teaching is good overall and in two thirds of the lessons seen teaching was good or very good. No teaching was unsatisfactory, but there was less good teaching at Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4. All teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about the courses they offer. In a Year 8 lesson pupils were shown the use of the POEM machine to link computer technology to embroidery. This could be used in their design and make task to produce a 3D textile product: the pupils showed interest and enthusiasm and were keen to try this new piece of equipment. Teachers plan lessons well and provide appropriate activities to match the learning needs of all the pupils. Teachers involve pupils in lessons and explore fully pupils' prior knowledge and understanding of topics. Pupils are taught practical skills thoroughly and this makes a contribution to the good quality products the pupils produce. In a Year 7 lesson to make a key fob, pupils were encouraged to use their own imagination to design and make an original product which matched the needs of their chosen owner. The high expectations of standards of presentation has had a significant impact on raising levels of attainment and maintaining good progress. Pupils work is clearly and consistently marked across the department and homework which is set is appropriate and challenging. Boys and girls are all encouraged to take part in lessons and although more girls than boys opt for food and textiles, all are given equal encouragement. The quality of teaching can therefore be seen to have a positive effect on the progress made by pupils.

31. Since the last Inspection, under the strong leadership of the head of department, the standards of attainment in Key Stage 4 have risen. This has been brought about by the commitment, and hard work of all the staff, to raise pupils expectations. The staff work well together as a team and this is a strength of the department. However, the teaching areas are still separated geographically and some rooms, especially the one used for teaching food technology is well worn and needs attention so that it does not pose hazards in the future. Technical support is available in all areas and is effectively used, but there remains a need to review support available to allow teachers, especially in food and textile technology to use their time more appropriately.

#### 142. **Geography**

32. Standards achieved in geography are in line with national averages overall at the end of each key stage, but there is variation in the levels of achievement in external assessments. The attainment of pupils on entry to the department is below the national average. Although at the end of Key Stage 3 attainment in recent years has remained below national averages, in 1999 the number of pupils gaining level 5 or above in teacher assessments at the end of the key stage rose to 61 per cent, which is above the national level. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment as shown by the results gained in GCSE examinations is rising, though it is still below that achieved nationally. In 1998 nearly 17 per cent of pupils gained grades A\* to C. This grew to over 40 per cent in 1999, a significant improvement, though still below national averages. The number of pupils gaining grades A\* to G also rose from 92.2 percent in 1998 to 97.3 per cent in 1999. At GCE advanced level, attainment has risen in the past two years, though overall levels of attainment remain below those achieved nationally. The proportion of candidates who gained pass grades in 1999 was 89 per cent compared to 84 per cent in the



previous year. Results in geography are not as good as in some other subjects in the school.

33. Overall levels of attainment in geography are now satisfactory in relation to the basic skills and knowledge when they enter the school. Rising levels of attainment since the last inspection are mainly due to improvements in the quality of teaching. Schemes of work have been revised to provide clearer guidelines and there has been a focus on the quality of teaching. Higher attainment in the department is also the result of the enthusiasm brought to teaching by recent staff appointments.

34. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to reach appropriate levels of attainment through the use of materials designed to meet their needs and with the help of additional support from classroom learning assistants. As a result most pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their levels of attainment and sometimes their progress in lessons is good. The progress made such pupils in both key stages is satisfactory overall.

35. An increasing use of practical activities in lessons, including the analysis of fieldwork data, meteorological equipment and stream flow models, stimulate interest and motivation among pupils. As a result, their skills of analysis improve and attainment rises. Pupils' knowledge of the themes of the National Curriculum, especially in physical geography, is good. They are able to build on and use previous knowledge to reach conclusions as was seen in a lesson explaining the reasons for the intense heat experienced in the Amazon Basin or the way sixth form students use their knowledge of ecosystems to explain current changes that are taking place. Attainment is restricted by the late arrival to lessons, by a lack of curriculum time in Key Stage 3 and occasionally by inattentive behaviour on the part of a few pupils.

36. Overall the progress made by pupils is satisfactory and in almost one quarter of lessons it is good. Even in lessons where progress is unsatisfactory, many pupils are making sound gains in their knowledge of geographical phenomena and improving their skills of analysis. Low level or repetitive tasks such as colouring or copying, for example in a Year 7 lesson using the Beaufort scale to measure wind speeds, sometimes restrict progress. The progress made by pupils is also limited when the teacher dominates too large a proportion of the lesson and consequently provides the answers for pupils rather than encourages them to seek answers for themselves. As a result attention wanes and progress is reduced.

37. Pupils generally behave appropriately and concentrate for most of the hour-long lessons. They listen attentively and respond positively when motivated to work together. In lessons of a more practical nature, such as a Year 10 lesson using new number analysis to prove previous conclusions about the distribution of buildings in a town, they showed interest and enthusiasm for the subject. They respond well to questions and move from general classwork to individual study with ease. Concerns expressed by parents in respect of behaviour in lessons were not evident during the inspection though there were occasions when not all pupils concentrated fully and the late arrival of pupils resulted in some inattentive behaviour at the start.

38. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. In only one lesson during the inspection was it unsatisfactory overall. Teachers know their subject well and their enthusiasm for geography motivates pupils. The pace of lessons is often brisk. A variety of methods is used to keep lessons moving. More practical activities have been introduced, for example models of stream profiles, and greater use is being made of the Internet for research at sixth form level. There is, however, insufficient use of information technology in lessons. Much use is made of worksheets, often of good quality, produced by the department, to overcome the shortage of up-to-date resources for teaching.

39. Departmental management is good and benefits from the efforts of a dedicated and enthusiastic head of department. Regular meetings and new schemes of work have raised the quality of teaching and assessment is much improved, being more closely related to levels of the National Curriculum and to grades in external examinations. As yet there is insufficient monitoring of teaching or the use of assessment to check the progress pupils make. Development plans are in place but are short term and not fully linked to finance. Schemes of work are not fully complete and insufficient use is made of the immediate environment of the school for fieldwork.

40. Nevertheless the department is much improved since the last inspection. More fieldwork and practical activities have been incorporated into learning, the quality of teaching and pupils' abilities to analyse and interpret data have improved and attainment has risen. Much valuable work has been done in the last twelve months to re-organise the department. There is now a vision for the future and the potential to achieve the targets that are being set.

## 151. History

41. Standards achieved in history at the end of each key stage are average, although there has been some inconsistency in recent years in performances in external assessments. The levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with national averages.

The 1999 teacher assessments show 49 per cent reaching level 5 and above. This is a decline from 1998 when the figure at level 5 and above was 64 per cent. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results are in line with national averages. In 1999, 56 per cent of candidates obtained Grades A\*-C. This was an improvement on 1998 when the comparable figure was 27 per cent. In 1999, 91 per cent gained Grades A\* to G, which is below the national average and this performance was similar to 1998 when the figure was 92 per cent. In the small sixth form groups in 1999, there were three Grades C to E and in 1998, there were two. In lessons seen, the sixth form students were performing mostly in line with national averages.

42. At Key Stage 3, most pupils demonstrate satisfactory factual knowledge, linking causes and events, but some find the skills of chronology and the use of evidence difficult. Most can use a variety of sources to come to appropriate conclusions, for example in the study in Year 8 of the problem of Mary, Queen of Scots. At Key Stage 4, students use historical sources effectively and evaluate events, recognising that there may not necessarily be a 'right' answer, as shown by their studies in Year 11 of the Vietnam War. They benefit from studies in depth and many produce effective individual research. In the sixth form much good research work is carried out.

43. Rates of progress of pupils in Key Stage 3, including those with special educational needs, are satisfactory and sometimes good. The effect of having only one lesson a week in Years 7 and 8, disrupts continuity of learning. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, rates of progress for all pupils are good. Numbers choosing history at Key Stage 4 are relatively small. Many pupils view history as lacking the same relevance to the modern world as, for example, vocational subjects. Pupils make good gains in their ability to understand the past. They are developing a good knowledge of historical events, their causes and results. They are steadily learning the skills of investigation and analysis of information, for example, in the study in Year 10 of the causes of trench warfare. Appropriate extended tasks intensify knowledge, especially in the sixth form, where students are required to think more deeply. Rates of progress overall are hindered by the loss of time at the start of most lessons, caused by pupil movement between school sites. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4. They are provided with well-selected tasks, matched to their attainment. Class teachers are aware of individual education plans and consult them regularly as they monitor pupils' progress. There is limited classroom support for these pupils.

44. The attitudes of pupils to learning are good across both key stages and in the sixth form.

They display positive attitudes to their work and are usually fully involved in lessons with good levels of concentration. Classroom behaviour is good overall, with only a few instances of time wasting. Pupils mostly remain on task, whether working on their own or in a group. Across both key stages there is much good individual work, for example in the study in Year 7 of a journey across Ancient Rome. Pupils take satisfactory care of books and resources. The presentation of classwork and homework is generally satisfactory. They respect the views of classmates in discussion work and there are good instances of peer support in lessons.

45. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is good. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form it is good. Where teaching is good, lessons are based on secure knowledge, good planning and high expectations of pupils. Stimulating questions challenge understanding, with satisfactory pace and variety in lessons. Classroom relationships are good. Control and organisation in the classroom is generally good. Books are regularly marked, with constructive comments added to help the progress of pupils. Links with National Curriculum level descriptors at Key Stage 3 and projected GCSE grades at Key Stage 4 are being developed. Homework is regularly set and marked. Attendance is always checked at the start of lessons.

46. There is effective monitoring of the curriculum in regular departmental meetings and there is an effective system of assessment and recording of attainment. The department is well led, with a clear vision of future development and appropriate concern for the progress of the pupils. Teaching mostly takes place in specialist rooms, where there are attractive displays of pupils' work. Good use is made of video excerpts. There is an adequate supply of modern textbooks. There is little use of information technology or extra-curricular activities, which is a missed opportunity to enrich learning.

47. The department continues to build on the good practice commended in the last report. There has been a steady rise in standards since the 1994 inspection, with a thorough review of schemes of work. Tasks now more closely match attainment and there is good liaison with the co-ordinator for special educational needs, as recommended in the last inspection. The department is well led and it has many good practices. Its improving examination results show the effectiveness of the teaching.

#### **158. Information and communication technology**

48. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is above average with approximately 60 per cent of pupils being assessed at level 5 or above in 1998 and 1999. Pupils are able to use word processing and spreadsheet packages to enter text and numbers. They can edit, format documents and manipulate data. They can use graphics software and their experience of control applications is better than that seen at the last inspection. At Key Stage 4 attainment, which was average at the time of the last inspection, has fallen to well below average with the proportion of pupils gaining A\* - C grades in the GCSE short course remaining at just over 4 per cent in both 1998 and 1999. Pupils are able to access Internet and use e-mail. In the sixth form two pupils of the four entered for GNVQ at intermediate level in 1999 attained the full certificate, but the overall standard is below average.

49. Progress at Key Stage 3, satisfactory in the last report, is now good. Pupils gain skills as a result of effective lesson planning and organisation. For example, one group of pupils designing a cereal packet was able to discuss their ideas with other pupils and as a result make decisions about the appearance of their design. They considered wording, fonts, colour and graphics. At Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory and pupils learn how information technology is used in the workplace. They are adept at planning, gathering information, handling data and evaluating outcomes. In the sixth form students make good progress and develop their skills to support their learning in other subjects, accessing data from databases or Internet and simulating real life situations. They can represent data graphically to suit a given audience. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 because they are able to work at their own pace and teachers are aware of their

needs. At Key Stage 4, however, pupils do not make satisfactory progress.

50. Pupils' response to information technology is good. In most classes pupils are interested, well behaved and work hard. They are polite and confident to join in discussion. Relationships are good. A small number of pupils avoid work and are uncooperative. Pupils in the sixth form show a good level of independence in organising and planning their work. For example, in GNVQ pupils working at intermediate level show maturity by keeping a detailed record of the progress made.

51. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory with four lessons out of every five observed satisfactory or better of which half were good or better. Teaching in the sixth form is good. In the last inspection teaching was sound or good. In the best lessons teachers plan effectively for the use of resources and accommodation and employ methods which are appropriate to the needs of the pupils and which make use of prior learning. Teachers allow their pupils to tackle problems independently and expect high standards. Pupils are able to work at their own pace but attainment and learning targets are clear and as a result pupils make good progress. In a small number of classes classroom management is less effective and pupils make poor progress because they are not given clear instructions. Formative assessment is good and helps to inform curriculum planning. However, planning does not always ensure that pupils have a good record of work completed to support future progress.

#### **162. *The use of information technology across the curriculum***

52. The management of information technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory and has not improved since the last inspection. Schemes of work for information technology taught in separate lessons from other subjects are thorough, well planned and effective but most subjects do not include information technology in their schemes of work or teaching programmes and pupils are unable to use the skills they have gained to support work in their other subjects. Development plans have been agreed and should be implemented. Information technology teachers have good knowledge and understanding but staff in other departments are not sufficiently skilled particularly in the methods of using information technology in teaching their subject. Resources are good but they are not all accessible to other departments.

#### **163. *Modern foreign languages***

53. Attainment, measured by teacher assessments, is below average at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Higher-grade, A\*-C, GCSE passes have fallen since the previous inspection when they were above the national averages, but at that time only selected pupils were entered, whereas

in 1999 the whole cohort took an examination in at least one language. In 1999, results were in line with national averages in German, but well below in French. The apparent lowering of standards since the last inspection is the result of an amendment in entry policy in response to the comments in the previous report about inequality of opportunity as, at that time, only selected high attainers studied German. The higher standards in German stem from this policy and a slightly better overall quality of teaching. GCSE results, A\*-G, are at the national average in both languages. The girls outperformed the boys in French, but in German the boys did better than the girls after nearly all had been taught in single sex classes. Attainment, overall, in the sixth form is below the national average. In 1999, the A level results were below the national average points scores per student in German; there were no candidates in French.

54. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attainers have above average understanding and oral skills when they discuss, for example, likes and dislikes about school work, reading simple data aloud with average fluency and pronunciation. Lower attainers understand short phrases and use numbers effectively. They copy accurately, but they do not speak with any assurance: their standards are well below those expected. At Key Stage 4, higher attainers analyse

German sentences, write accurate short pieces, adding suitable subordinate clauses, as they effectively learn examination techniques to gain better marks. Many speak fluently and comprehension levels are above average. The attainment of some pupils in both French and German is inhibited by the excessive spread of attainment that makes it difficult for the teacher to cope satisfactorily, despite enterprising attempts. The attainment of A level course students is generally average in listening, speaking, reading and writing in Year 13 and above average in Year 12.

166. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and 4. Progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. There is a clear difference in progress over time, as lower attainers' weaker learning skills slow them down. Writing is the weakest skill. Higher attainers make good progress at each key stage. Progress is closely related to the quality of teaching: increased emphasis on writing leads to higher attainers producing increasingly complex sentences through Key Stages 3 and 4. Lower and average attainers still make better progress in understanding and speaking than in written work. In the best cases, all pupils extend their knowledge as, for example, in a Year 8 French class when a session on telling the time by analogue clocks, ended with newly acquired skills firmly in place. Many more pupils achieve or exceed their predicted targets than fail to reach them in both languages. Girls generally make better progress than do boys in mixed classes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress on the occasions when they are helped by learning assistants Key Stage 3. Most sixth form students respond well to the greater demands placed upon them by very high teaching expectations and make good, rapid progress.

55. Attitudes and behaviour are very good in about one-quarter of all lessons and are satisfactory or better in three-quarters. In such lessons, the pupils' motivation improves their standards at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Relationships are good and pupils work conscientiously for virtually the whole lesson. In the quarter of lessons where response is unsatisfactory, some pupils' immaturity, mainly at Key Stage 3, shows in poor attention spans that prevent the teacher from conducting the lesson smoothly. Often, these pupils find it hard to memorise language, hiding their failure in conduct that means they spend very little time on work that could improve progress. Sixth formers' very good attitudes show strong personal development, indicating effective preparation for further training and study. Students query, debate, research, put forward their own views and try very hard to follow complex spoken language. Progress for many is, as a result, good at this stage.

56. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and in Key Stage 3. It is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form; it is slightly better in German overall. The knowledge and understanding of the specialist teachers are good at Key Stage 3 and 4 and very good in the sixth form. The methods used by non-specialist teachers are unsatisfactory. The ways teachers communicate in the foreign language comply mainly with National Curriculum requirements, but some otherwise effective German teaching fails to do so. Most teachers' expectations are appropriately high at each stage. The weaknesses, mainly at Key Stage 3, are in activities that are, in the case of higher attainers, undemanding and for others over ambitious. Here, the pace of teaching is too slow and the lessons fail to keep the pupils profitably engaged throughout. Textbook exercises that are often unsuitable are followed slavishly. Very high expectations produce above average standards, for example in Year 12 German classes. Most planning is effective: nearly all lessons have suitable stages and good practice in French shares a lesson's purposes clearly with the class, referring to them as the work unfolds. Inappropriate expectations reflect weaker planning. Generally good methods and organisation match planning very closely at each stage. Teachers effectively encourage participation in oral sessions, correcting mispronunciations so as to avoid reinforcing error. The best teaching is spiced with humour and due praise, it makes real challenges and generates a wish to do well. Many teaching aids are used effectively, but the absence of computers is a weakness. A further weakness is the small amount of song and verse used to help the pupils to remember. Sixth form work is well devised: moments when higher attainers can help others are seized

effectively. The management of pupils is satisfactory. Good discipline is commonplace in most classes at each stage. There are weaknesses, however, at Key Stage 3 that lead to unsatisfactory progress. The use of time is unsatisfactory in many lessons: pupils frequently arrive very late and some lessons finish too early, impeding progress. The use of resources, except computers, is good: they improve learning effectively at each stage. In one lesson sandwiches were used to tantalise average and lower attainers, and proved a particularly effective means of sustaining interest. The assessment of work is a general strength of teaching. In the best lessons, effective recapitulations at the end of lessons reinforce learning and complement the questions posed as the lesson goes along to ascertain progress. Formal assessments are the basis of predicting success and homework reinforces learning satisfactorily.

## 167. Music

57. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are close to national expectations. Pupils use keyboards, tuned and rhythm percussion instruments and are able to maintain independent parts with a good sense of rhythm. They are able to choose and control sounds to achieve a desired effect and can compose simple well-structured melodies. The pupils use staff and graphic notation but reading skills in the former are insufficiently developed; for example, a Year 9 class performing carols was still over-reliant on letter names for notes rather than using staff notation. The attainment of instrumental pupils is above average and the school enters pupils successfully every term for Associated Board instrumental examinations. Performance levels are acceptable for low-attaining pupils in relation to their ability but higher attainers would achieve more if more were demanded of them. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. At Key Stage 4 GCSE results and lesson observations indicate standards in line with national attainment levels. The pupils perform on keyboards and various orchestral instruments and use notation both for performance and recording of compositions. However, notation skills are below average and pupils have difficulty in writing down their compositions and in writing melodies from dictation. They show knowledge of technical vocabulary and some understanding of the stylistic features of various musical periods. Instrumental performance is above average, for example, the school orchestra plays ambitious repertoire with a real sense of style, showing good ensemble skills. Pupils of differing prior attainment achieve appropriately without significant differences. The number of pupils opting for A level music is too small for valid statistical comparisons, however observation of lessons, instrumental performance and written work indicate above average standards of attainment.

58. Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 with boys and girls performing equally well. In sixth form classes students make very good progress. In Key Stage 3 there is progress from one lesson to another and from year group to year group. For example, in Year 7 the pupils compose using sounds and organising them to create compositions reflecting a story or mood; these are recorded by means of graphic notation. In Year 8 the pupils compose melodies and write them down in staff notation. The tasks given to pupils allow them to perform at a level appropriate to their prior attainment. This is most successful with average and lower attainers; higher attainers make less progress than they should because they are not challenged sufficiently. In both Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, especially when they work in groups with pupils who have greater expertise. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form good progress is made in the development of instrumental skills through instrumental lessons, extra-curricular activities, such as the orchestra, and performance activities in lessons. Technical vocabulary is increased and listening skills developed through listening to and appraising examples of great works from the Western European musical tradition. Pupils progress at a rate appropriate to their ability through the use of individual composition and performance projects; for example a clarinet player composed a highly effective solo for clarinet in the classical style and performed it with great sensitivity.

59. The pupils in all key stages have a good attitude to music. They are interested and enjoy making music, concentrating on their tasks even when not directly supervised. Relationships are good; they collaborate well and discuss and negotiate effectively in group projects. For example four girls worked on their own in a practice room, producing, after discussion and experimentation, an effective composition called "Skating on thin ice". Behaviour is good, the pupils are courteous and listen well to the teachers. They enjoy listening to each other's performances and compositions and respect and applaud achievement. The take-up for instrumental teaching is in line with the national average and there is good support for extra-curricular work. Take-up for GCSE music is slightly below the national average.

60. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in the sixth form. In most of the lessons seen the teaching was good or better and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The teachers' knowledge in class and instrumental teaching was usually sound but there were some lessons in Key Stage 3 where there was a lack of technical subject knowledge. Subject knowledge in sixth form lessons is very good. Expectations are high and tasks are challenging for low and average attaining pupils. Opportunities are given for higher attainers to work at a higher level but this is not always demanded of them at Key Stage 3. The majority of teaching is linked to practical activities with usually a good variety within the lesson. Assessment is well structured and the marking is very thorough with helpful comments and advice given. Apart from electronic keyboards there is no evidence of the use of music technology and computers.

61. The curriculum is broad and well balanced but lacking in depth in Year 9, where the time allocation is well below the national recommendation. The amount of time in Year 9 was also criticised in the last inspection as being insufficient to cover the curriculum. There should be more use of information technology and the schemes of work need to incorporate more popular culture and give more emphasis to music of other cultures. The resources for learning are good apart from the lack of computers and music technology equipment. The range of books in the department is good but the provision in the central libraries is poor with a need for more general reading books, particularly with reference to world musics and popular culture.

## 172. **Physical education**

62. Pupils' attainment in physical education by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national standard. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment in the non-examination course still matches the national standard and in the GCSE examination course it is significantly above average. In Key Stage 3 attainment rises from a low starting point to reach the national standard. In Key Stage 4 attainment only matches this standard because curriculum time is halved and opportunities consequently limited not because pupils are less motivated. In all areas of the subject pupils' attainment in understanding requirements and executing basic skills is good but they are less successful in refining skills, understanding game situations and strategies and explaining clearly their knowledge or intentions. In the sixth form there is no non-examination course. In the A level examination course attainment is above the national standard. GCSE results in 1999 were exceptionally good with 74 per cent of candidates gaining grades A\*-C, and all pupils achieving A\*-F. Such results are significantly above the national averages. They put physical education amongst the school's and individual pupils' best results. At A level the subject is relatively new with only average take-up but again in 1999 the success of candidates achieving grades A-E was 100 per cent.

63. Pupils entering Key Stage 3 are excited by specialist provision and respond well to new activities. Throughout the key stage they make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in understanding routines, requirements, rules and decisions and in practising basic skills. In Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory overall. In developing and refining skills progress is good but pupils are less successful in planning, evaluating and understanding principles. In the best lessons where pupils are given opportunity to devise their own practices their planning and later evaluations are often good. In all age groups progress is better in traditional

games than in other areas of activity simply because games have the greater share of the time allocated to the subject. Pupils with special educational needs can all be included in the activities. They make satisfactory progress because their needs are understood and sensitively met. They clearly enjoy any success. In the sixth form students following the A level course make good progress.

64. Pupils throughout the school generally respond well to their teachers' carefully planned lessons and high expectations of appropriate behaviour and effort. Only very rarely do any pupils show a reluctance to work. Pupils' work-rate and responses in examination classes are invariably good. Pupils arrive at lessons punctually expecting to work. They listen courteously and answer questions willingly but briefly showing a marked reluctance to expand on ideas and feelings. They talk readily in small group or team activities, and they compete aggressively but fairly. They rarely show initiative but when they do the response from teachers and from peers is invariably encouraging. They do not deride the efforts or failures of others and the acceptance of guidance, criticism and decisions is good. Attainment and progress at all levels are enhanced by the willingness of pupils to meet the high expectation of their teachers.

65. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. In over half the lessons observed the teaching was good and occasionally very good. The teachers are appropriately qualified with good subject knowledge and technical appreciation of practices and progressions. They maintain enthusiasm and secure progress through thoughtfully planned and well paced lessons. They have high expectation of pupils' behaviour and effort. In the best lessons they loosen the tight control and trust pupils to experiment safely and learn more effectively by experience than by explanation and demonstration. They insist on fair play and safe practices but lesson plans do not always include appropriate written tasks for pupils with temporary physical incapacities.

66. The management of the subject is very good. Strong, thoughtful and industrious leadership is a significant feature with its high expectation of staff and pupil involvement, sound financial management and examination success. Development plans and schemes are clearly written with appropriate strategies for raising pupils' achievement. Boys and girls are taught separately in many activities but care is taken to ensure equality of opportunity, expectation, provision and outcome. National Curriculum requirements are met. The faculty can now further analyse then share its most successful aspects of teaching and develop the use of information technology in its preparation, recording and research with appropriate opportunities for pupils.

67. Indoor and outdoor facilities for physical activities are good and greatly appreciated by school and community who share them without contention. Good use is made of these extensive facilities and of human resources and allocated monies in promoting pupils' progress and attainment in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. The faculty can be justifiably proud of the range and take-up of such activities. They contribute significantly to the standing of the department and to the ethos of the school.

68. Since the last inspection the faculty has improved its provision successfully implementing its safety policy and balanced curriculum for all pupils. More significantly it has also introduced A level and GCSE exams with good and exceptional results.

#### 179. **Religious education**

69. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is below the level expected of pupils of that age. By the end of the key stage pupils' knowledge of Christianity is in line with expectations but their understanding is below that expected. Their knowledge and understanding of other major religions is well below what is expected. Pupils have difficulty



interpreting information and do not use religious terms appropriately. They are able to link belief with actions and understand the impact of belief on behaviour in general terms.

70.The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the expectations for pupils of that age. GCSE results for 1999 are in line with the national average and are a significant improvement from the previous year. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity but their knowledge of other faiths is still below what would be expected. They are able to make links between belief and behaviour and are able to explain and discuss how people respond positively to injustice and hardship. They show respect and sensitivity towards religious ideas. No pupils currently take religious education at A level.

71.The progress pupils make throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. They are adding to their knowledge of the basic facts of Christianity and the other major world religions. They grow in their understanding of what worship is and where different people worship. They are exploring what prayer is and growing in their understanding of what it means to Christians, Jews and Muslims. Their knowledge of the Bible is being increased and they are understanding what literature it contains and how to read it.

72.Pupils at Key Stage 4 are broadening their knowledge and understanding of moral and social issues. They grow in their knowledge of the issues involved in making decisions about such issues as racism, abortion and wealth. They are deepening their understanding of what it means to believe in God and how belief is often arrived at. Their debating skills are growing and they are learning how to draw information from a variety of sources, evaluate it and present it in the form of a reasoned argument. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress through both key stages and especially where extra support is given.

73.The attainment and progress of a significant number of pupils is adversely affected by a combination of the setting arrangements at Key Stage 4 and the pressure of attempting to complete a full GCSE examination course in one hour per week.

74.The attitude, behaviour and personal development of pupils is satisfactory. Upheavals have occurred in the subject in the recent past and the subject lost much of its appeal and relevance. It is now regaining some of that appeal and pupils are showing a higher level of interest in the subject and seeing it as an opportunity for developing their social and moral skills. However, there is still a need for more attention to be given to developing pupils' spiritual awareness.

75.There is currently a heavy emphasis on knowledge-based activities and this is necessary to re-establish a good foundation of knowledge in pupils. There is a need to develop from this good base and to provide more opportunities for reflection, creativity, discussion of ultimate questions and a consideration of the non-material aspects of life. The new schemes of work identify this as a priority for the future.

76.The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen in either key stage. Good features of the teaching are the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils, the high expectations of behaviour and attainment, very good management of pupils and good planning of lessons to include tasks suitably chosen for both high attainers and pupils with some learning difficulties. There is good discipline in the classroom at all times. There is a lack of variety of methods. Few visual aids are used and little music to create atmosphere and evoke emotions. There are few opportunities given for reflection and the significant contribution that religious education usually makes to the spiritual development of pupils is not happening although the subject continues to make a significant contribution to moral, social and cultural development. The new head of department has already made a positive impact on the standards in the department and is re-establishing the subject as valuable and worthwhile within the curriculum of the school.

77.The school has resolved the issue of lack of time allocated to the subject indicated in the previous report: however, the arrangements for the 'full course' pupils in Key Stage 4 are unsatisfactory.

188.

### **Vocational studies in the sixth form**

78.The sixth form curriculum provides a wide range of courses and offers a good balance of the academic and the vocational. Nineteen A levels, including general studies, are offered and this year 15 are timetabled in Year 12 with 14 in Year 13. In addition, there are three intermediate General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses and an Advanced GNVQ business education course is also available, if requested by students, to provide progression on to higher education. Students follow a well planned general studies enhancement course, which leads to an A level general studies examination. Provision for religious education in the sixth form is built into the enhancement scheme of work, but it is limited. In the sixth form, careers education is well integrated and taught as part of the tutorial programme of work. There are good opportunities in the curriculum for work experience.

79.The course completion rate in GNVQ is above the national average. This vocational area is well managed and GNVQ planning and assessment procedures are firmly in place. There are good links with local businesses and other organisations to widen students' knowledge of the world of work and to help develop social interaction. The school operates a GNVQ Young Enterprise group, which has been very successful in local area competitions.

80.Students are provided with clear and detailed information about the sixth form and its opportunities. Their performance and progress is carefully and regularly monitored by their tutor and by the head of the sixth form. It is achieved by careful tracking of students' progress across subjects, within a system of regular reviews where targets are set and evaluated. This involves the student, the tutor and, when necessary, parents. The school gives its sixth form students the chance to prepare for higher education and the world of work. Students respond very well to the increased responsibilities offered; for their own organisation and for learning, for involvement in the life of the school and undertaking individual responsibility for registration. This latter system works well and students respect the importance of reliable signing in and out. The system is closely monitored by tutors. Students are given opportunities to develop self-confidence, self-discipline and to contribute to the daily life of the school. This is seen in community work within the school, when sixth form students work with younger pupils. They also carry out supervisory duties, which help the daily activity of the school. The sixth form is well organised by an experienced and effective head of sixth, ably supported by tutors.

## 191. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### 191. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

81.The inspection team consisted of 14 inspectors, including a lay inspector. During the week 200 lessons were observed in full or in part and inspectors attended registration sessions, form periods, assemblies and extra-curricular activities. All teachers were seen teaching at least once and most several times. Planned and less formal discussions were held with pupils, teachers, other members of staff and governors. Inspectors looked at the written work of many pupils, including a sample across the range of pupils' attainment from each year group. A large amount of documentation, including teachers' planning, provided by the school was analysed before and during the inspection. The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 26 parents shortly before the inspection, and analysed 114 responses to a questionnaire about their opinions, distributed by the school.

82.Inspectors spent a total of 54 inspector days in school gathering first-hand evidence. They spent over 160 hours observing lessons, five hours in planned discussion with pupils and 21 hours in evaluating pupils' work.

## 83. DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	968	21	159	140

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	53.13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6

#### Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked each week	418

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	81
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	23.9
	KS4	22.3

### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	2 152 112
Total Expenditure	2 164 003
Expenditure per pupil	2 283
Balance brought forward from previous year	4 801
Balance carried forward to next year	(7 090)

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	958
Number of questionnaires returned:	114

### 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	15	65	18	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	21	59	12	5	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	11	32	34	10	3
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	12	57	20	9	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	21	56	11	8	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	22	55	11	9	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	56	12	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	12	65	4	16	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	14	48	26	8	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	6	41	32	12	4
My child(ren) like(s) school	28	50	14	4	0

\* Not all parents responded to every statement so some of the percentages do not total 100.