

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Broadwater School**  
Godalming

LEA area: Surrey

Unique Reference Number: 125249

Inspection Number: 184062

Headteacher: Mr. Michael Hall

Reporting inspector: Mr. Nigel Power  
2790

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708523

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. David Hampson
Date of previous inspection:	November 1994

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		Teaching
Mrs. L. Bowes, Lay Inspector		Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
		The efficiency of the school
Mr. G. Binks	English	
	The language resource unit	
Mr. J. E. Bowden	Physical education	
	Special educational needs	
	Special educational needs assessment	
Mrs. D. Shepherd	Modern foreign languages	
	Equality of opportunity	
Mr. D. Gowland	Design and technology	
	Information and communication technology	
Mr. D. Kelly	Art	
Mr. N. Mayfield	Music	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs. M. Nathan	History	
Mr. R. Palmer	Mathematics	Leadership and management
Mrs. M. Thomas	Geography	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Mr. R. C. Wilkins	Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr. R. J. Williams	Science	Curriculum and assessment

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Attainment in English, mathematics and science is close to or above national averages at Key Stage 3 and in line with achievements in similar schools at GCSE
- There is a substantial amount of good and very good teaching, including the specialist support given to pupils with special educational needs
- The majority of pupils are helped to make good progress
- Some effective systems have been established for setting individual targets and mentoring older pupils
- The social development of pupils is promoted well
- The pupils in the language resource unit are successfully integrated into some mainstream lessons
- Library provision is very good as are the facilities for information technology, some aspects of design and technology and physical education
- There is good extra-curricular provision, particularly in sport and music
- The school has a clear procedure for monitoring pupil absence
- Effective links with the community have been established and are being further developed

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. As nationally, the performance of boys, particularly at Key Stage 4, is not high enough
- II. Some aspects of its work, such as homework, are not monitored sufficiently
- III. In a few areas the school fails to provide the full National Curriculum entitlement for a significant minority of pupils
- IV. There are some deficiencies in the provision of adequate and appropriate support for the full range of pupils on the school's special needs register which adversely affects the progress of some in Key Stage 3

**The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The governor's 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 is continuing to improve and has made some significant developments since the last inspection. All the key issues identified then have been tackled and some additional initiatives have been introduced. In particular, a substantial investment has been made in information technology equipment and facilities, much of the technology provision has been refurbished and there are plans to complete this shortly by giving attention to the area for food technology and textiles. Procedures for the code of practice for special educational needs are now fully in place, but the provision, made by the school, for an act of collective worship on occasions when there is no whole school assembly is not fully implemented. The development plan produced after the last inspection has been completed and succeeded by a school improvement plan which includes an emphasis on school self-evaluation. Standards in English, particularly at the end of Key Stage 3, have risen during the last two years and the trend is continuing. A fairly recent innovation has been the introduction of a system of individual target setting and mentoring for older pupils. The school is mindful of the need to improve the GCSE performances of boys, but its efforts are hampered by the lack of motivation and inconsistent attendance of some. The initiatives proposed in its improvement plan, recently introduced developments and the dedication and commitment of senior management, governors and staff place the school in a good position to achieve further improvement.

## Standards in subjects

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

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

Results in Key Stage 3 tests were close to the national average in English and well above it in mathematics and science. The standards achieved in mathematics and science were also well above those in similar schools. Standards at Key Stage 3 are well above the average for similar schools. In 1999 the standard in English improved by over 15%, although in mathematics and science, in which subjects there had been temporary staffing difficulties during the year, results were not quite so high as the previous year.

In the 1998 GCSE examinations the school comfortably exceeded its targets, but was still below the national average for 5 or more A\*-C grades. Standards were average in comparison with similar schools. The performance of girls was close to the national average, but that of boys was only about 60% of the girls' achievement. The 1999 results were lower and the difference between boys' and girls' standards widened. In 1998 standards were highest in mathematics, art, drama, French and physical education. They were well below average in German.

## Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	English, mathematics, French, physical education, religious education	
Years 10-11	Good	English, mathematics, art French, physical education, religious education	German, geography
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

Teaching is at least satisfactory in all but a few lessons. In every five lessons the quality is very good in one and good in a further two. In the great majority of lessons teachers display strong knowledge and understanding of their subjects and the level of challenge and expectation is generally appropriate, although there are occasional exceptions. As the inspection took place early in the school year many teachers were not fully aware of their pupils' potential yet the good quality of class control and pupil management was a feature of many lessons. The less successful lessons were those where work was not well matched to

the different levels of attainment of all pupils and where there was insufficient specialist support to give help to the less well motivated pupils or those with learning difficulties.

*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	Satisfactory overall; good in many classes; some disruptive pupils occasionally affect the progress of others
Attendance	Satisfactory, but a few pupils, especially at Key Stage 4, have unsatisfactory attendance records despite the school's determined efforts to promote good attendance
Ethos*	Attitudes to work and relationships are good
Leadership and management	There is a clear commitment by all in management roles to the school's further development and the wellbeing of all its pupils. Some elements of monitoring need to be improved
Curriculum	The curriculum is fundamentally broad and balanced, but the full National Curriculum entitlement is not currently provided for every pupil
Pupils with special educational needs	Procedures and teaching have improved since the previous inspection. However, sufficient specialist support for all pupils on the special educational needs register is not yet provided
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for social development is good, for moral and cultural development it is satisfactory, but the opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum are uncoordinated
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Teaching staff are well matched to the needs of the school, good quality non-teaching staff assist the smooth running of the school, significant improvements in the accommodation and the quantity and quality of the resources effectively support learning
Value for money	Satisfactory, with mainly sound and some good outcomes in relation to the fairly high pupil funding

\* *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
V. The staff are approachable	X. Several parents express concerns
VI. Good information is provided about pupils' progress	XI. A few indicate concerns about
VII. The school is concerned with wider education, not just academic standards, including fostering pupil confidence	XII. A few feel they are not encouraged to
VIII. Pupils like going to school	XIII. Some are concerned about the
IX. The quality of help and guidance given to pupils	

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. Inspectors consider there is justification in the concern about homework provision and that there is insufficient monitoring. The under-performance of boys, especially at Key Stage 4, is acknowledged by the school as an area which needs further attention. Standards of behaviour during the inspection were generally good, but occasionally marred by a small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems. The concern about lack of encouragement to participate in the life of the school was balanced by several who held an opposite view.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The following key issues have been identified by the team for action by the school. The issues are discussed in the paragraphs indicated.

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

- XIV. take further action to raise standards of attainment at Key Stage 4, particularly those of boys, by:
- extending the use of individual targets and mentoring for all pupils,
  - seeking to increase the degree of flexibility within the option system,
  - providing further opportunities for pupils to pursue vocational courses,
- (Paragraphs: 9, 67, 91, 103, 144, 158, 162)
- extend the range of monitoring activities in the school to include:
    - compliance with the homework timetable and the checking of homework diaries,
    - implementation of the marking policy,
    - the provision of an act of collective worship on occasions when there is no whole school assembly;
 (Paragraphs: 24, 25, 34, 35,, 39, 56, 68, 73, 109, 121, 122, 142, 161)
  - amend the curriculum model, particularly for Key Stage 3, and the structure of the school timetable, through the collective involvement of all senior and middle managers in the planning process, to ensure that all pupils are able to receive their full National Curriculum entitlement, particularly in physical education, information and communication technology across the curriculum, the food technology components of design and technology, and drama in Key Stage 3.
 

(Paragraphs: 11, 26 – 28, 69, 73, 76, 95, 126, 137, 151 – 153, 168, 176)

- as resources allow, seek to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate support for all pupils on the school's special educational needs register so that they are enabled to make better progress.

(Paragraphs: 10, 12, 15, 23, 77, 85, 92, 108, 114, 119, 134, 135)

In addition to the above development areas the school, in its action plan, should also address the following issue:

- the extension of the good assessment and pupil performance tracking practices which already exist in some subjects (e.g. mathematics, history, modern languages and religious education) to all curriculum areas.

(Paragraphs: 13, 67, 150)

## • **INTRODUCTION**

### • **Characteristics of the school**

1.The school is situated to the north of Godalming in pleasant and spacious surroundings. With 625 pupils it is smaller than the average 11-16 secondary school. There are around 11 boys to every 9 girls. The school serves a mixed area which overall has socio-economic indicators which are fairly close to the national averages, but there is a significant number of pupils who come from disadvantaged homes. The number of pupils with parents with high academic qualifications is below average and an abnormally high proportion come from homes where parents have separated. A substantial minority come from homes where there is an above average level of poverty and there is a clear variation in the physical development of pupils within the same age group. There are also pupils who come from fairly affluent homes. Although many parents take continuing interest in their children's educational progress there is a significant minority who appear to show little concern about their children's school life. Currently, around 11% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. This figure is close to the national average, but the senior management of the school feel that the proportion who are entitled to claim is higher.

2.The level of attainment of year groups on entry to the school has fluctuated during recent years and although the new intake is of broadly average attainment their literacy skills are below expectation for their age, while performances in science are above the national average. The low quality of literacy in recent years has prompted the school to initiate action to help pupils to improve their levels of proficiency. In addition to the work undertaken within the English department, the school was able, with the help of a charitable trust, to establish a language resource unit two years ago. This unit provides specific help, including support from speech and language therapists, for eighteen pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 who have language difficulties. Some of these pupils live outside the school's notional catchment area. In addition to these pupils nearly 30% of the mainstream school population are named on the school's register of special needs. Altogether 33 pupils currently have statements of special educational needs. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

3.The clearly stated purpose of the school is 'to provide an educational experience of high quality and value that best caters for the needs and aspirations of our pupils and the local community'. The school's aims are stated as:

- to provide a rich curriculum which will develop to the full the ability, personality and character of each pupil,
- to stimulate a sustained sense of interest, curiosity and enquiry, and encourage creativity, imagination and independence of mind,
- to develop attitudes that will enhance the ability to work independently, yet enable each pupil to experience the values of team work and group membership,

- to encourage self-discipline, self-confidence, a sense of responsibility and an awareness of spiritual and moral values,
- to provide equality of opportunity and encourage tolerance of and respect for other people, including those of other cultures, races, religions and to enrich pupils' experiences through an appreciation of cultural diversity and a respect for their own cultural identity,
- to prepare pupils for the adult world with the necessary skills to make the most of further education, employment and leisure-time opportunities.

In order to ensure that these aims are achieved the school has embarked on a process of self-evaluation.

## 1.Key Indicators

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	63	56	119

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	33	42	49
	Girls	37	35	38
	Total	70	77	87
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	60(55)	66(52)	74(64)
	National	65(56)	60(60)	56(60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	35(23)	46(35)	38(33)
	National	35(23)	36(37)	27(29)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	28	47	49
	Girls	39	38	38
	Total	67	85	87
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	60(60)	74(53)	75(57)
	National	62(59)	64(63)	62(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	31(24)	44(32)	37(28)
	National	31(28)	37(37)	31(29)

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	72	49	121

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	23	69	70
	Girls	24	43	46
	Total	47	112	116
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	39 (21.5)	93 (89.7)	96
	National	44.6 (43.3)	89.8 (88.5)	95.2 (92)

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	0	n/a
National		n/a

## Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	8.9
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.4
	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	29
Permanent	1

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	20
Satisfactory or better	94
Less than satisfactory	6

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

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

#### 4. **Attainment and progress**

2. On the basis of all the evidence available the inspectors judge that currently the level of attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is average in relation to national expectations, but that at Key Stage 4 it is below average. This judgement has been based on the national tests at Key Stage 3 and GCSE results, in 1998 and 1999, a scrutiny of pupils' work carried out in all year groups in the last year and observations of lessons. Attainment levels are close to the position they were in at the time of the last inspection. Although performances at the end of both key stages have fallen in the meantime, they are now rising steadily and the school has regained its position in relation to national averages.

3. In 1998, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 was well above average in mathematics and science and close to the national standard in English, but in 1999 results in English tests rose substantially while those in mathematics and science fell. However, there were staffing difficulties in both mathematics and science during the year which could well have affected the performances of some pupils. In all three core subjects attainment in the key stage is judged to be close to and occasionally above national expectations.

4. In the GCSE results of 1998 more pupils achieved five or more A\*-C grades than in either of the two preceding years and the proportion achieving five or more A\*-G grades was the highest for four years. The latter indicator was further improved in 1999 and, although there was a drop in the former, the school achieved its best ever performance at A and A\* grades. The achievement of five or more A\*-G has been consistently better than the national average and in 1999 every pupil gained at least one GCSE. In 1998, whilst the five or more A\*-C performance was still some way below the national average, it substantially exceeded the target agreed with the county education officers for that year group.

5. In the 1998 GCSE examinations, performances at A\*-C grades in mathematics, art, drama and theatre studies, French, physical education were above national averages and there were also good results in design and electronics, office studies and religious education. In addition to English and science, where results were a little below national averages, pupils entered for geography, German and music did not achieve as well at the higher grades as the average across the country. The proportion of higher grades in history was close to the national situation, but performances in the subject were less good in 1999. In 1999, achievement of higher grades was lower in several subjects, but there were notable improvements in food technology, office studies, English literature and the religious education short course. Two thirds of those entered for the new subject of statistics achieved A\*-C grades.

6. A particular concern for the school in recent years has been the achievement of boys. Although nationally boys perform less well than girls, particularly at the 5 or more A\*-C level, the gap between the achievements of boys and girls is widening and this is a matter which the school needs to continue to address. As there are more boys than girls in most year groups their lower achievement tends to depress overall performances. Emotional disturbance, behavioural difficulties, disaffection with school work, lack of parental interest and a sub-culture among boys that it is not 'cool' to excel academically are all factors which affect attainment, particularly that of boys. In 1998 the measure of boys' grades was not much more below the national figure than that for girls, but the gap between them increased in 1999. In 1997, the achievement of girls was poor compared with the years before and in that year the boys performed better. It is clear that the fluctuations in the overall attainment profile of different year groups has a significant impact on results. Nevertheless, there is a downward trend among boys and a slight upward trend among girls.

7. A significant factor in the study of most subjects is pupils' reading and other literacy skills. With the exception of Year 7, which has yet to be tested, all current year groups, on entry to the school, had more than 55% of pupils with reading quotients below average. In the current Year 9 nearly two thirds had a below average reading facility. During the inspection, attainment in Year 9 lessons was more often judged to be below average than in any other year group. As this year group will be the next to be entered for Key Stage 3 assessments the school should ensure that all pupils are encouraged to improve their performances. The amount and effectiveness of the special needs in-class support should be examined with a view to helping all pupils to make the best progress of which they are capable.

8. The focus which the school has given to literacy skills has improved the quality of reading and writing as the continuing improvement in Key Stage 3 English tests results verifies. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are also developing, but further improvement in oracy could be effected by the provision of additional opportunities for pupils to engage in collaborative group discussions in more curriculum areas. The school seeks to build on the work undertaken in Key Stage 2 with the national Literacy Strategy, but, at present, much of this development is restricted to English lessons. The school, particularly within mathematics lessons, is now planning appropriate strategies to build on work undertaken in the primary schools on numeracy. Many pupils already have sound numerical skills and are encouraged to use them in other curriculum areas, particularly science. Although pupils are making satisfactory progress in information and communication technology in lessons specifically devoted to this subject, they do not have sufficient opportunities to use and develop such skills in other areas of the curriculum and therefore do not learn as much as they should.

9. The progress which most pupils make in lessons and over longer periods of time is good. There were few lessons observed during the inspection when progress overall was unsatisfactory and in three lessons in five it was at least good. Pupils were prepared to apply themselves conscientiously to the tasks set by their teachers, there was a good learning environment in most lessons and the quality of teaching encouraged pupils to try their best. However, there are exceptions where pupils could make more progress. Pupils with special educational needs progress well when specialist support is available, either through withdrawal or in lessons, to help them. Where such support is not available, or where a supporting teacher is not a special needs specialist, the progress made by those with special needs is sometimes unsatisfactory. Further, where such pupils also exhibit disaffection with learning or have behavioural problems the progress of others in the class is affected. The poor attendance record of some older pupils also has a negative affect upon their progress and subsequent attainment in national tests or examinations. The small, but not insignificant, core of disaffected pupils has a negative effect upon the school's overall standards. Although the overall progress of pupils identified as having special educational needs at Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory, there is some evidence of good progress in Year 7, particularly in terms of literacy. At Key Stage 4 the overall progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory with many achieving at least a pass grade in a range of GCSE courses. The progress made by pupils in one-to-one withdrawal sessions is good in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs).

10. The school is determined to improve levels of academic performance to match the success it has in other areas of pupils' development. Accordingly, much care is taken, both by senior management and departments in analysing performance data and seeking strategies to effect improvement. Currently, some departments have made more progress in this work than others. The tracking of pupil performance by some departments (mathematics, French, history and religious education) is quite well advanced and a system of providing individual targets accompanied by mentoring has recently been introduced. These undertakings demonstrate the school's commitment to helping pupils achieve their best work.

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

11. Most pupils show good attitudes to learning, are well motivated and interested in their studies. They concentrate well, listen attentively to their teachers and are keen to answer questions. Their behaviour in lessons is good, so that time is well used for learning. Pupils respond well to opportunities to work in groups: some good examples of work in pairs on role play activities in modern foreign languages and effective group work in English were seen during the inspection. Pupils in physical education lessons in Key Stage 4 take responsibility for their own warm-up sessions, coaching each other and evaluating their performances. Relationships with teachers are good and pupils feel able to ask for help when they need it. Behaviour around the school is orderly; only a few instances of boisterous behaviour were seen in the circulation areas of the school, generally when the presence of staff was sparse. Pupils handle equipment safely and sensibly and treat the building and books with care. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contribute positively to their good progress.

12. In contrast to this positive picture, a few pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration through lessons. In Key Stage 3 these are predominantly pupils in lower sets, mainly boys, where pupils with wide ranging needs are grouped with insufficient support. In Key Stage 4 there is a small number of disaffected pupils, mainly boys, whose poor attitudes to learning are reflected in unsatisfactory rates of attendance, poor motivation and disruptive behaviour. Negative attitudes were noted in a few mathematics, science, design and technology and geography lessons. These disruptions have damaging effects, not only on the progress of the few pupils concerned, but on the progress of others.

13. The school has an anti-bullying policy in place and pupils discuss how to deal with the problem in their personal and social education lessons. No instances of bullying were seen during the inspection, but pupils express some concerns about how the school deals with reported cases. The school will no doubt wish to monitor the effectiveness of its procedures. Behaviour at the time of the last inspection was judged to be good; whilst there are still many good features, the rise in behavioural incidents leading to exclusions mean that behaviour overall can now only be regarded as satisfactory. In the twelve months prior to the inspection 29 pupils were excluded temporarily and one permanently; these were for serious breaches of discipline and were reasonable decisions. Since the last inspection changes in the backgrounds of pupils coming to the school and other causes outside the school's control has contributed to a few incidents of aggressive behaviour. This is reflected in the increase in the number of exclusions, which is above the national average for schools of this size. Both parents and pupils express justifiable concerns about poor behaviour, although it is far from being widespread throughout the school.

14. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The skills necessary for personal and independent study are developed in several areas of the curriculum, for example, as part of the physical education GCSE course, pupils plan a fitness training course. Pupils on the vocational course are beginning to plan and carry out their investigations with a degree of initiative and independence. The library contributes effectively to the development of pupils' study skills. However, opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility in some lessons are not well developed, for example in mathematics, science and history, where pupils tend to be reliant on the teacher. Year 11 pupils contribute willingly to the life of the school as prefects and as form attachments to Year 7 tutor groups. Pupils take part in school productions, raise funds for local charities, help with assemblies and in the running of clubs and represent the views of others in the School Council.

## 17. Attendance

15. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory overall and in line with the national average. However, attendance rates in Years 10 and 11 are sometimes lower, with more boys than girls regularly absent. Low attendance rates have a negative effect on pupil's attainment and progress. Since the last report levels of attendance have slightly dropped. Registration procedures are followed carefully and the requirements for recording and reporting attendance are met. The school is fortunate in having a very conscientious Education Welfare Officer who regularly meets with staff. Unauthorised absences are followed up quickly. Punctuality both into school and lessons is sound and there is often a prompt and effective start to the day.

## 18. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

### 18. Teaching

16. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. The great majority of lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory. In three fifths of lessons the teaching was at least good and in a third of those it was very good. In the third of all lessons where the teaching was satisfactory overall any weaknesses were outnumbered by the strengths. However, in a few lessons the weaknesses outweighed the strengths. There was slightly more unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4.

17. There is good teaching in every subject area, with a significant proportion of very good teaching in English, mathematics, science, art, French, physical education, religious education and in the language resource unit. There was a lower proportion of good and very good teaching in science, geography and history than in other subjects. In science this is a consequence of so many of the staff being new to the school and still getting to know their classes. Teaching was not so effective in Key Stage 4 in German, where there was a wide range of attainment, and geography. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support, when it is available, from special needs support teachers and learning support assistants in lessons. This is sometimes complemented by well focused support in individual and small group withdrawal sessions.

18. One feature of the good quality teaching is the good subject knowledge and secure understanding of it which teachers display. This enables them to build on ideas and information which pupils volunteer in such lessons as history, religious education and personal and social education (PSE). Although most teachers teach their specialist subjects, there are occasional lessons taken by teachers who are not specialists in the subject. On only a very few occasions did the lack of specialist knowledge or skills result in the lesson structure being constrained by the need for the teacher to work to a rigid and safe plan. This is an improvement on the last inspection where some of the weaknesses in teaching were attributed to teachers operating outside their specialisms.

19. With some exceptions, teachers' expectations of their pupils stimulate them to make good progress. They provide tasks which challenge the majority of the class. In some lessons, however, the work set does not provide similar degrees of challenge for all pupils: some find it too easy and get bored; others find it too difficult and get frustrated. Lessons are usually well planned and carefully organised with specific objectives which are sometimes, but not always, shared with the class. The more successful lessons conclude with a review of the achievement or otherwise of the objectives and a consideration of future learning strategies. Where this does not happen pupils are left unsure about the further direction of the topics or tasks on which they have been engaged. Enthusiasm displayed by the teacher, as with a Year 7 class experiencing their second technology lesson, or the opportunity for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs or groups, as provided in a PSE lesson, stimulates pupils to make good progress. In some lessons more care could be taken over lesson structure so that teacher

exposition is not too lengthy and pupils are more actively involved earlier in the lesson.

20. As the inspection took place early in a new school year and several teachers were new to the school, and in some cases just starting on their teaching career, relationships were still being developed between teacher and class. In only a few lessons was the teachers' inexperience responsible for unsatisfactory lessons. This is an improvement on the last inspection where weaknesses in teaching were considered to stem from inexperience. In this inspection, a feature of many lessons was the positive class control exercised by teachers with little evidence of overt discipline but rather a quiet and effective style of pupil management. In a minority of classes, particularly where there are several pupils with behavioural difficulties and no in-class support provided, the need to concentrate on class control sometimes results in a tendency for teachers to provide activities to occupy pupils rather than to engage in imaginative and varied teaching techniques. Where the teaching is most successful in fostering good learning the lessons proceed at a good pace, there is a high level of challenge for all pupils and the questioning techniques stimulate pupils to think and to reason. Teachers ensure that appropriate resources are available to support pupils' learning.

21. Most teachers find opportunities to check pupils' understanding of the work they are doing and plan future work on the basis of the information gained from the responses to their questioning. However, in some lessons observed there was little evidence of teachers assessing pupils' progress as a means of determining the methods to be used in future lessons. This lack of assessment sometimes results in some members of a class being given inappropriate work. Although most pupils' work is regularly marked by their teachers, there is inconsistency in the methods used. Pupils find constructive comments helpful, but are confused by the variations in the marking systems employed. The assessment practices developed in some subjects could usefully be extended to other subject areas.

22. The school has a clearly stated homework timetable and pupils have homework diaries which form a useful means of communication about their progress between school and home. However, pupils and their parents commented that the homework provision often does not match the intended practice. There is variation in practice between teachers teaching the same subject and pupils reported that their homework diaries are seldom checked. The main concern of pupils was not one of too much or too little homework, but of unevenness in its provision. Generally, they considered homework useful in helping them to make good progress. In lessons observed where homework was set it usually complemented the work undertaken during the lesson. In order to make homework a more valuable part of the learning process for all pupils the school should undertake regular monitoring to ensure that the policy is being fully implemented in practice.

## **25. The curriculum and assessment**

23. The Curriculum at both key stages is fundamentally broad and balanced and, in its general provisions, meets the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, religious education and sex education. However, at Key Stage 3 a significant number of pupils does not experience a continuous programme in all elements of technology. When the refurbishment of the food technology department has been completed, consideration should be given to provision of opportunities for the study of food technology and textiles in each year of Key Stage 3 rather than seeking to rectify the shortfall in Year 9. Also, a much lesser number does not have full access to all physical education provision. The school needs to address such non-compliance with statutory requirements. Pupils identified as having special educational needs have access to a full range of curriculum experiences.

24. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum provision has been varied and enhanced by the introduction of a vocational course in leisure and tourism leading to qualification (GNVQ). A GCSE course in drama is provided but the lack of drama provision at Key Stage 3 results in limited

background experience for some pupils affecting their ability to benefit fully from the course. Information and communication technology is taught across the curriculum, but provision is not yet coordinated fully. Presently, it is not possible to determine the total information and communication technology experience of individual pupils nor their progress and attainment.

25. Overall, in the areas where problems of provision and organisation exist they have yet to be fully solved. As the school is smaller than the average there is less flexibility available to enable it to provide the range of opportunities that a larger school would be able to offer. Currently no pupils study two foreign languages in Key Stage 4 as too few opted for two, making it not viable to offer the provision. A re-examination of the curriculum model in use through a joint consideration of senior and middle managers, should be undertaken with a view to overcoming shortcomings in curricular provision and to identify where staff may be used more efficiently.

26. The personal and social education programme is taught to all years. It is particularly effective in promoting social development, but provides too few opportunities for spiritual development in, for example, time for reflection. There are opportunities, such as the prefect system, for pupils to exercise responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to support local, national and international charities in various ways on a regular basis.

27. Careers education and guidance provision is currently satisfactory, with potential to be good. Pupils begin a structured programme in Year 8 which is supported and enhanced by a modern, well resourced careers library developed as a 'Centre of Excellence' by the Surrey Careers Service. Each pupil takes part in work experience and receives individual interviews with the County Careers Officer. The careers co-ordinator, who is new in post, has a development plan for this area of the curriculum including building on existing links with business and the local community.

28. Pupils with special educational needs benefit and make good progress when they are supported by the available specialist learning support, whether teachers or assistants. Provision for such pupils is unsatisfactory, however, as currently it is insufficient to meet the curricular needs of all pupils on the school's register of special needs, particularly in Key Stage 3. Individual education plans (IEPs) are in place for all pupils on stages 2 to 5 of the Code of Practice. Learning objectives on the IEPs are realistic and attainable and are reviewed regularly. Where appropriate, new targets are set or existing ones modified.

29. Activities outside lessons are diverse and some support experiences within the curriculum. Such provision in the area of sport and recreation is a strength of the school.

In 1998 51% of all boys and 48% of all girls took part in inter-school competitive sporting activities. There are clubs in curriculum areas that meet regularly, for example, art and French. In addition pupils have access to interest clubs, for example, board games, trips to theatres and other places of interest, foreign trips and exchanges and visits to school by writers. Opportunities for instrumental music tuition are good. Pupils' educational experience is further enriched by the annual production which the school stages. In recent years these productions have included the musicals 'Annie' and 'Guys and Dolls'.

30. The school makes good use of results of standardised tests and assessments and GCSE results to analyse performance and inform planning. Significant progress is being made in the collection and management of a range of assessment and value added data at whole school level. The use of this data to inform planning is developing as departmental staff examine ways to improve the provision they make in their subjects.

31. The whole school assessment policy varies across departments in the effectiveness with which it is implemented and there is a need for a co-ordinated approach to monitoring assessment to ensure the quality of procedures and the effective use of data in informing

teaching and planning in all areas. Good practice exists in mathematics, modern languages, history and religious education. In some departments the use of assessment information to make teaching and planning more effective is not as well developed, although, overall, there has been improvement since the last inspection. The regular marking of homework, application of the homework timetable and use of constructive comments to help pupils is not sufficiently secure across the curriculum. There was a similar weakness at the time of the last inspection.

32.Aspects of whole school policies to improve literacy and numeracy are promoting improvement in pupil performance in these skills. Individual education plans (IEPs) to provide learning targets for pupils with special educational needs are communicated to departments. There is a need to monitor their use within departments to ensure they are effective in helping pupils to make progress. IEPs for the most able pupils are being developed within departments.

33.The Record of Achievement is well organised and informative. It is appreciated by parents and pupils in the way it communicates personal and social development as well as academic progress against attainment levels and records information about pupils' potential.

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

34.While there are elements of good practice, the school's overall provision for the spiritual development of pupils is unsatisfactory. There is little evidence of whole school planning for promoting pupils' spiritual development in what is taught in the classroom. Where there is good practice, as in religious education, English, science, history and art, it is as a result of initiatives at departmental level.

35.The school takes the conduct of whole school and year group assemblies seriously, and they have a number of strengths. Addresses on the weekly themes are well structured and effectively delivered, have good religious, Christian and moral content, and are relevant to the life of the school, and to the pupils' own experience. Assemblies also provide pupils with good opportunities to experience prayer, although they offer too few opportunities for personal reflection. Good use is made of visitors to the school, and of older pupils, in the conduct of assemblies. Pupils of all ages would benefit from being more actively involved in their organisation. The ethos of assemblies would be enhanced with a more widespread use of music.

36.A key issue of the previous inspection report was that the school should make provision for collective worship on Monday mornings, when there is no whole school assembly and pupils meet in their tutor groups. It has developed an appropriate policy, and form tutors are now provided with Bible readings, linked to the weekly theme for worship, to enable them to offer their pupils opportunities for reflection, and for exploring the spiritual dimension of life. The school has not, however, effectively monitored the implementation of this initiative, of which the practice is inconsistent or non-existent. During the inspection week, only one instance was observed where a form tutor took this provision seriously, and used the time effectively for the purposes intended.

37.The school makes sound provision for the moral development of pupils. It has clear values, which enjoy parental support, and which find expression in its discipline and behaviour, and anti-bullying policies. Moral values are reinforced in assemblies. Pupils know right from wrong, and this is reflected in their generally good behaviour and relationships. The morality of caring for others finds practical expression in the very good support which pupils give to charities, for example, the Dr. Marten's penalty shoot-out for National Children's Homes, or the Harvest collection.

38. There is an effective programme of personal and social education in all years, which confronts pupils with a range of moral issues, for example, concerning sexuality and relationships. Pupils are also challenged by important moral issues in English, science, religious education and history. In other subjects, however, opportunities are missed to raise pupils' awareness of moral questions.

39. The school makes good provision for the social development of pupils. Pupils' achievements are publicly recognised, and their sense of self worth enhanced, through the credits and awards system, certificates of achievement, the presentation evening with form and progress prizes, and through publicity in the "Broadwater News". Pupils are given good opportunities to learn to take responsibility, and to develop their leadership and social skills, through the prefect system, the wide range of sports clubs and teams, and through participation in musical and dramatic activities.

40. Many subjects encourage pupils to develop skills of collaborative working in pairs or small groups in lessons. A number of social issues, such as those relating to citizenship, or to the environment, are explored in personal and social education lessons. Pupils also explore social issues in religious education, history, and science, but potential opportunities to do so are not exploited in the majority of subjects.

41. The school makes satisfactory overall provision for the cultural development of pupils, and offers them the opportunity to take part in a wide range of extra curricular activities. Pupils are able to develop their musical and dramatic skills, and to experience performing for an audience through annual productions. They have opportunities to visit the theatre, for example, to see "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" at the Barbican.

42. Pupils' understanding of past British culture is enhanced through the Year 10 week's history trip to York. Their understanding of other European cultures is promoted through foreign language exchanges to Joigny and Mayen. A limited number of subjects, such as religious education, history, English and design and technology bring a multicultural dimension to bear on their teaching. In general, however, the school does too little to make pupils aware of the multicultural diversity of contemporary British society, or of the contribution of cultures, other than the Western European, to the development of present day civilisation.

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

43. Broadwater is a caring school that makes good provision for the well being of its pupils. Parents value the comprehensive support their children receive. The induction arrangements are caring and pupils are assigned a 'buddy' to look after them. Prefects do a valued job looking after each tutor group. The last report stated that the school had sound procedures to promote the health, safety and welfare of pupils: the school has now considerably improved the provision.

44. The quality of care by both teachers and other adults in the school, including the site manager is very good. They show genuine concern for pupils well being. Staff pool knowledge to ensure that tutors and heads of year are promptly informed should any concerns arise. There is a range of detailed policies in place and all staff are conversant with them.

45. The school's procedures for monitoring personal development are good. The very comprehensive personal and social education (PSE) programme helps pupils to examine important issues and effectively promotes pupils' well being. During PSE lessons pupils study a variety of subjects including careers, money, families, health and drugs. The school considers this area to be very important and occasionally holds information evenings for parents about safety, careers and drugs. Parents reported that these sessions were very valuable. An effective mentoring scheme operates for some pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Another effective tool for pupils' personal development is the School Council. Pupils who have special needs are well supported especially when appropriate in-class assistance is available. Procedures for monitoring progress are sound, but the policies for marking and homework need to be more consistently applied.

46. There are sound measures to promote and monitor discipline and good behaviour. The behaviour policy is consistently implemented and the school stresses the importance of parental involvement. However, in a minority of classes the management of poor behaviour is not adequate and pupils' progress suffers. Staff are alert to the possibility of bullying and clearly understand the procedures for dealing with it, although pupils are less confident about the implementation.

47. The school effectively promotes the importance of health and safety, especially in curriculum subjects like physical education, design and technology, and science. The governors are also keen to ensure the health and safety of pupils and the school is checked on a termly basis. However, there has been no risk management assessment of the school. The site manager is a very helpful member of the team and diligently monitors the buildings for possible risks and ensures an outside agency tests fire equipment regularly. There are regular fire drills and the school keeps a careful record of the dates and times they are conducted, although pupils are less confident about the implementation.

48. The school has a detailed policy and follows the county guidelines on child protection. Issues are appropriately dealt with and all staff are aware of the procedures to follow should a child disclose personal information of concern. There is close liaison with the social services. The school positively promotes the importance of pupils' health and many staff have completed first aid courses. There are good arrangements in place for the administration of first aid and medication. The school is conscientious in recording the daily administration of medication. The procedures for monitoring attendance are excellent. The education welfare officer meets with year heads on a weekly basis to follow up any problems. The promotion of attendance is good, although, currently, this is having limited impact on a small minority of older pupils whose attendance is poor.

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

49. The school's partnership with parents and the community is good. Since the last report the school has created several further useful links with the community.

50. Information provided by the school is good. New parents are given clear information when their child joins the school and the transfer arrangements from the feeder schools are very good. There is good liaison and parents are very satisfied with both the transfer and induction arrangements. For example, progress evenings in the first half term ensure that parents are fully informed about how their child has settled down. The school prospectus is friendly and detailed. The governors' annual report, though informative, does lack some items that parents would find useful. The school sends out frequent newsletters. Parents state that staff and receptionists are very approachable and are willing to provide information. Progress meetings and clinics ensure that parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress on a regular basis.

51. The annual record of achievement is clear, informative and meets statutory requirements. Parents also appreciate the termly progress sheets that provide regular information about both academic and personal development.

52. Through the special needs co-ordinator, the school works hard to establish and maintain good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. The quality of information for parents is good and parents are given copies of individual education plans. The school

responds quickly to any parental concerns and parents are involved in the annual reviews. Parents of pupils in the language resource unit (ICAN) also receive regular information.

53. Overall, the school involves parents appropriately as partners in their children's learning. However, a significant number of parents indicated that they were not happy with the quantity or consistency of homework. Although the school has sent out homework timetables for each year group, these are not always followed consistently. Also, not all pupils record their homework in the diary, therefore parents are unaware of all homework requirements. The school is keen to explore ways of further enhancing the partnership with home and has just introduced the home school partnership agreement. Many parents demonstrate their commitment to the school by their support of the parent teacher association, which organises social and fund raising events and provides the school with a good range of resources including information technology and audio equipment.

54. Good links exist with many of the local colleges. The numbers of pupils going into further education is above the national average. Some pupils go directly into work and many have found that the work experience programme is very helpful when deciding on possible careers. The programme offers a huge range of options and very good links exist with numerous employers in the locality. Some local businesses provide money for subject prizes at the Awards Ceremony.

55. There are good links with the local community and excellent links with Guildford Hockey Club. There are also excellent sporting links with other schools in football, netball and hockey. Pupils in the choirs and orchestra perform at both school and other events. Drama productions also make a contribution to the community as many are watched by the local elderly. A wide range of visits is provided for pupils that directly enrich their experience of numerous areas of the curriculum. History knowledge was improved by a residential trip to York and appreciation of English texts has been enhanced by visits to local theatres. There are French and German exchanges that provide pupils with an appreciation of life in other countries. Numerous visitors come to the school, including theatre groups and several authors. Pupils understanding of religions has been enhanced by visitors from local churches. The multi-cultural book week was very well supported. Pupils generously support a wide range of charities both local and national. They have recently provided water purification boxes for Honduras and some building materials for a small village in Uganda. Some pupils have taken the initiative to raise funds themselves for the planned local children's hospice. The school hosts out of hours activities providing accommodation for a music centre and for adult education.

### **The language resource unit (ICAN)**

56. The ICAN Language Resource is now operating successfully in well-equipped accommodation on the second floor of the main teaching area. The full teaching complement of a teacher in charge, a second teacher and three support assistants works closely with the senior speech and language therapist and a second therapist to provide an effective supportive educational programme for eighteen pupils with specific language impairment.

57. In the view of the inspection team the programme provides pupils with valuable specialist language group work and an appropriately extended curriculum which includes English, mathematics, geography, history, religious education and information technology taught in small groups. In addition the pupils benefit from being attached to mainstream tutor groups for registration and personal and social education. Most participate also in science, technology, and physical education lessons with carefully targeted support.

58. Pupils' attainment and progress is monitored and recorded carefully by the resource team. The emphasis in lessons observed is on extending and developing pupils' language skills as fully as possible and at the same time broadening the educational experience. The team achieves this successfully, both in enabling pupils to make good progress in improving their speech and language skills and in equipping them to participate more fully in the mainstream lessons they attend.

59. Teaching and support work is of a high standard. All the lessons or support work seen were judged to be good and over a half reached a very high standard. Teachers know their pupils and their educational needs very well and interact very skilfully with them. In group sessions, literacy hour and numeracy project methods from Key Stage 2 are used productively and successfully, particularly with Year 7 pupils. The research work in history based in the library is well-resourced and engages pupils' interest fully.

60. The school could make more use of the expertise of the language resource team and the establishment of further links and discussions on the methods used with teachers in subject departments could be beneficial both to the designated ICAN pupils and to others.

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

#### **63. Leadership and management**

61. The quality of leadership and management provided by the governing body, headteacher, senior and middle managers is sound overall and good in some aspects. The headteacher has a strong commitment to the school and is effectively supported by the senior management team. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development. They provide active support through a well-defined committee structure and an appropriate programme of meetings. They are kept well informed and are becoming increasingly involved in the life of the school.

62. Significant improvements in management have taken place since the last inspection and good progress has been made in dealing with the key issues identified in the 1994 report. Systems for self-evaluation and school improvement have been introduced and are having a positive impact on pupils' standards. Improvements have taken place against a background of prolonged financial difficulties, recent high turnover of teachers and a decline in the school's public image prior to the appointment of the current headteacher. Effective management of its budget enabled the school to succeed in bringing its financial situation under control a few years ago. The school now plans its expenditure in line with its educational priorities.

63. Performances in public examinations had steadily deteriorated some years ago, partly as a result of a decline in the ability profile of successive intakes. However, pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 in recent years have risen and are close to the national average overall and well above the average for schools in similar contexts. At Key Stage 4 attainment is at least in line with that of schools in similar contexts. These improvements are a direct result of the school's good planning, its increasingly effective provision and use of systems to assess pupils' progress and to set suitably demanding targets. The school did well to exceed its challenging targets for attainment at GCSE in 1998.

64. The current School Improvement Plan (1998-2001) is a potentially good instrument for helping the school to make further advances. There is a suitable focus on the development of teaching, learning and the process of self-evaluation. The plan contains an appropriate list of priorities and sets out strategies, responsibilities, time-scales, resource implications and criteria for judging success. The departmental development plans are closely linked to the School Improvement Plan. In several subjects the processes of self-evaluation and target setting are well advanced and make an important contribution to pupils' attainment and

progress. The extension of these processes to other areas of the curriculum should now receive attention.

65. Although monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work by the headteacher and senior managers is carried out, this has not yet resulted in consistently applied policies for the marking of pupils' work and the setting of suitable homework for all pupils. There is inconsistency in the way some departments interpret or follow school policies. Systems for monitoring the application and effectiveness of the school's policies are not fully effective.

66. There are inadequate procedures for involving all leaders of subject departments in discussion and decision making, in respect of such important matters as curricular development and timetable construction.

67. The headteacher and governing body provide a generally sound educational direction for the school. There are clear and suitable aims, which are reviewed from time to time by staff and governors. These aims are reflected in the school's documentation, its daily life and its planning priorities. The school's ethos of seeking to provide good educational experiences and values for all pupils is apparent in most subjects and classes. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and teachers are mainly good.

68. The management structure is satisfactory. Responsibilities are clearly identified in job descriptions and properly carried out. The quality of leadership and management in subject areas is mainly good and the heads of year operate effectively.

69. The day-to-day organisation and administration are generally effective. There are regular meetings at senior and departmental level. The support staff make a valuable and positive contribution to the smooth running of the school.

70. The school does not yet conform fully with requirements for a daily act of collective worship: although there is a suitable policy in place, there is inadequate monitoring of its application on days when pupils do not attend school or year assemblies. Statutory requirements are not fully met in respect of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology in both key stages.

71. The dedication of those involved in the leadership and management of the school and the commitment they display to the wellbeing and academic progress of the pupils places the school in a good position for further improvement. There is a shared determination to help the school build on the developing reputation it now enjoys and a vision for it to play a significant role in the life of the community it serves.

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

72. There are 41 teachers in the school of whom three teach part-time. There are just over 16 pupils for each teacher and this is average for this type of school. The rate of staff turnover last year was 22% and there are at present 13 staff with 2 or fewer years teaching experience. The induction of newly qualified teachers is well managed by a professional tutor who runs a comprehensive programme which is valued by these staff. However, induction arrangements for new and experienced staff are more informal and do not guarantee support for them. The school has appointed more female members of staff since the last inspection and there is a fairly even balance of men and women in senior management posts. The school has a detailed appraisal policy but its implementation has been inconsistent for established staff members. The move towards self-evaluation should go some way to redress this situation. The budget for in-service training is falling and is deployed according to whole school targets. With a significant number of new staff the school needs to ensure that they have opportunities to update their subject expertise and develop their subject teaching skills.

73. Teachers are well qualified for their work and this is particularly evident in English, mathematics, science, physical education and modern languages. However, some teachers are currently teaching lessons outside their specialisms, sometimes resulting in teaching in their specialist area being undertaken by non-specialists. There is limited provision for drama teaching in the lower school, the drama teacher's part-time involvement being focussed on GCSE in Key Stage 4.

74. A strong team of well-qualified staff runs the library and resource centre and provides strong support for pupils and teachers. The school has invested a good deal of effort in providing support staff for pupils with communication difficulties who are assigned to the language resource unit (ICAN). There are two laboratory technicians, but the lack of technicians in the areas of design and information technology was commented on at the last inspection and this situation has not changed. There is an insufficient number of learning support teachers for the numbers of pupils on the special needs register. The caretaking staff achieve very good results in maintaining the clean and refreshing appearance of the school.

75. In the last report, accommodation was described as adequate. Since 1994 the accommodation has undergone considerable refurbishment, especially to the science laboratories and the resistant material facilities in technology, which have contributed to a significant improvement in the school's overall accommodation.

76. Although the school roll is rising again, there is plenty of available space to deliver the curriculum. The majority of accommodation for the curriculum subjects is good or very good, with attractive, carpeted dedicated rooms. The improvements to the science laboratories, and refurbishment of the resistant materials area have produced high quality accommodation, which facilitates the teaching of these subjects. Accommodation in art, with two dedicated rooms, one of which is a good size, is adequate for the needs of the subject, but time-tabling difficulties affect its use. The textiles and food technology areas have not yet been improved, although they are in the development plan for 1999-2000 and work is due to commence this term. The poor quality of the food technology rooms affects pupils' motivation and limits the progress that they make. Blinds and carpets in the light and airy modern foreign language rooms help make these rooms good acoustically and facilitate oral work. A few subject rooms still lack carpets, but this does not impede learning. The spacious library accommodates large numbers and supports learning well. The cleanliness of the rooms and corridors is noticeably better than in 1994. Display in the subject teaching rooms is good and corridor display now provides a clearer picture of the school's work and achievements.

77. Good quality sports facilities include a bright and clean sports hall and full size basket-ball court, but lack of heating has implications for its cold weather use. The school is very well off for outdoor space. The field area is sufficient for both summer and winter games, and the dual use floodlit hard courts for tennis or netball are county netball standard. The pupils respond well to their attractive physical environment, which is tended to a high standard by the excellent site manager. As in 1994, pupils treat the accommodation with respect. Overall, accommodation is very good and provides a high quality learning environment for the pupils.

78. Resources for learning in the school are good and this has been achieved through the careful management of funds in several subject areas. There is very good provision in physical education and good provision in science and mathematics. The provision of information technology equipment in the school is very good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. There is one computer in the school for every six pupils which is well above average. Most departments have access to computer resources.

79. There have been improvements in the provision of resources in music, modern foreign languages and design and technology. In English, geography, history, special needs and drama provision is adequate. Art provision is also adequate but there are no facilities for three-dimensional work. Resources for learning in food technology are limited by the poor provision of cooking equipment.

80. The library is a well-maintained resource which is valued by pupils and exploited by several departments. There is an ample supply of good quality and well organised materials to support pupils' studies. There is a very good range of media resources: a good stock of CD-ROMs, files of newspaper cuttings and pamphlets, videos as well reference books. Since the last inspection there has been considerable expansion in book stocks to approximately 8000 books and there are now 12 books for every pupil. The library staff have collected a very good range of teaching resources in conjunction with the teaching staff and these are particularly strong in the humanities area. The library is an attractive and well laid out area with stimulating displays. It is capable of use for meetings, classroom teaching and as a bookshop style browsing area.

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

81. Educational developments are well supported through good financial planning. This is largely the responsibility of the head teacher, senior management team and administration officer working in unison with the governing body. The governing body is fully and appropriately involved in making decisions about funding and the use of resources. The aim is to set a balanced budget that reflects the school's commitment to improving standards. There was an appropriate carry forward of funds reported for the year 1998/99.

82. The last auditors' report was complimentary and the recommendations have been quickly implemented. The governing body is very supportive and, with the school, has established sound financial controls to ensure that the budget is administered efficiently. The finance committee meets regularly, it is provided with accurate financial information by the administration officer who gives a clear analysis of the school's current financial situation. However, due to computer problems with a pilot scheme this now takes longer and is an inefficient use of time. Most funds allocated for special educational needs and other specific areas are properly used for their designated purposes. Some special needs funding is directed into the main budget however, resulting in numerous subject teachers, who are not special needs specialists, being involved in enhancing the special educational needs provision. Financial control is sound. Day to day administration is good and the office staff and site manager make significant contributions to the smooth running of the school.

83. Staff and governors have worked hard to compile an improvement plan that is clear and achievable. The plan is effective in identifying appropriate targets which can be achieved efficiently, and there are clear links between the plan and the budget. The improvement plan is also closely tied to subject development plans.

84. The deployment of some teaching staff is unsatisfactory. In a few departments there are subject specialists not teaching their subject when teachers who are specialists in other curriculum areas are doing so, for example; in food technology, religious education and information and communication technology. Pupils studying modern foreign languages can only follow one option at Key Stage 4, unless sufficient numbers opt to study two languages to form a viable group. These factors have an effect on attainment and progress. The lack of support for some pupils with special educational needs in some lessons also has an effect on attainment and progress. The lack of administrative support for the special educational needs co-ordinator is inefficient.

85.Resources in most curriculum subjects are well managed and deployed and have a positive effect on the quality of education. However, a lack of sufficient cookers has an effect on pupils' attainment in food technology. The library is well managed and used. The use of the available accommodation is good. Most lessons begin promptly.

86.As the school is smaller than average for secondary schools it receives enhanced funding. This enhancement results in the income per pupil being high compared with that provided nationally for pupils of secondary school age. The use made by the school of the finances available is appropriately and responsibly targeted at improving the educational provision in the school. Taking the above factors into account, the school is judged to provide sound value for money.

## 89. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 89. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

#### 89. English

87. Attainment in English at the age of fourteen is close to the national average. The scores in the standard assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 are higher than those achieved in the three previous years and higher than the national average scores in 1998. Pupils achieved more highly in English in 1999 than in mathematics and science. This reverses the pattern of the previous three years and represents an improvement since the last inspection. Girls achieve more highly than boys at fourteen as they do nationally. In lessons at the end of the key stage both boys and girls work productively in groups when analysing the language used in prose and poetry. They speak with clarity and confidence when reporting findings to the class.

88. Attainment at sixteen is close to what is expected nationally and to what is achieved in similar schools. Just under a half of pupils achieved an A\*-C pass in English in the most recent GCSE examination and just over a half gained an A\*-C pass in English Literature. The actual grades achieved were above the national average in Literature and below in English. Improvements in recent years are due mainly to purposeful teaching and an improving response by pupils, particularly girls. For example, in the 1999 English Literature GCSE examination over a third of girls gained A\* and A grades, a proportion much higher than the average for similar schools nationally. In the same year group, however, boys' performance overall in English was well below the national average. The work in progress in Years 10 and 11 does not show such a marked difference. Samples of writing and the discussion lessons seen indicate that boys and girls participate with equal enthusiasm. In responding to literature pupils are perceptive in role playing characters in 'Lord of the Flies' and in comparing different interpretations of the central characters in 'Macbeth'. Pupils achieve most successfully and make greatest progress when teachers set challenging tasks and demand a response in a limited time.

89. Most pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3. The reading and writing skills assessed at the age of eleven show improvement by fourteen as indicated by teacher assessment and the national tests. Pupils with special needs are monitored carefully and are well supported in Year 7. At the moment such pupils receive less additional support in the lower attaining sets in Years 8 and 9. This slows down the progress of some pupils in these groups. The additional morning reading sessions for Key Stage 3 pupils guided by older pupils help to maintain momentum with reading. Pupils value them. All pupils make good progress with language skills by the age of sixteen. Most lessons provide opportunities for pupils to practise skills in preparing for both GCSE courses. At Key Stage 4 particularly good progress was seen in lower attaining English sets. In Year 10, pupils conducted a successful formal debate on capital punishment showing a mature ability to organise arguments and counter arguments within their own agreed framework. In Year 11 a similar group, including pupils with special needs, successfully discussed the historical context and the dramatic irony in *An Inspector Calls* in a mature way. Almost all pupils achieved a graded A\*-G pass in both English and English Literature in 1999 despite the relatively low attainment levels of some pupils on entry.

90. Pupils' attitudes to learning in English are good in all age groups. Behaviour in lessons is generally good. The only exceptions occur in two groups, Years 8 and 9, where classes have been formed almost exclusively of pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties, many of whom demand regular adult attention. In most classes pupils work co-operatively in groups; they listen attentively to other people's views; they enjoy role-playing and interpreting the motives of characters in texts read.

91. Teaching in English is of a good standard. Of all the lessons seen, including the support for special needs pupils, and the language work in the language resource unit (ICAN), none of the teaching was less than satisfactory; a half was good and a quarter was of a very high standard. The most successful teaching overall is in Key Stage 4 where teaching is linked to two demanding examination syllabuses. Imaginative approaches to texts such as 'Macbeth' and 'An Inspector Calls' engage the interest of older pupils and give them opportunities to discuss and write in depth. The most successful lessons at both key stages create opportunities for all pupils to participate in speaking, listening, reading and writing during the course of each lesson. In a small minority of lessons the time available is not used as effectively as it might be. In these situations the pupils spend much of their time listening and have only limited opportunities for reading and writing. The subject knowledge of teachers is good and the broad planning of topics and the choice of resources is done well. There is, however, no detailed scheme of work in place for Key Stage 3 which would guide all teachers to use time as productively as it is used in the best lessons seen. Teachers contribute well to pupil development by organising theatre visits, speaking and writing competitions and a lower school drama club.

92. This is an effectively managed and efficient department which has improved pupils' attainment in the last three years. Good links are established with the school library and with the special needs department both of which help to maximise pupils' development. At the moment there is insufficient use of information and computer technology within the curriculum at all stages. Many older pupils word process longer pieces of writing and sometimes find information from CD-ROM in the library but this is not as yet an integral part of their work in English. The department has, as yet, little contact with the specialist ICAN language staff. Closer liaison here would be of mutual benefit.

93. The school has made good progress in recent years in raising awareness in all subject areas about the need to raise literacy skills. The English department, the special needs co-ordinator and the senior speech and language therapist have made valued contributions by providing guidelines, policy documents and by running training sessions on identifying language problems and suggesting ways forward. A whole school reading policy and clear guidelines on handwriting and spelling are within the staff handbook. During the recent August holiday the head of English led a pilot 'Flying Start' programme for pupils coming in to the school in September to combine improvement of reading and writing skills with a recreational programme. This is another part of the school's attempt to improve pupils' attainment. The early morning reading sessions are now a well-regarded and regular feature of the school day. The school library is a particularly valuable resource for the improvement of literacy. History, geography, English, and ICAN teachers regularly use the library for teaching and research. Individual pupils use the books and computers for personal research and homework. Most subjects contribute to the improvement of speaking and listening skills, but fewer subjects give opportunities to improve reading and writing. In religious education, science, French, German, history and geography, pupils are encouraged to read during lessons. Writing is encouraged in a number of subjects. In modern languages and religious education, for example, there is some extended writing which includes letter writing and descriptive writing. In geography and history research writing takes place in the library and GCSE coursework is written in mathematics. In most areas, including physical education, note taking skills are practised. New vocabulary is highlighted in history, geography and in science lessons at Key Stage 3.

96. **Drama**

94. Since the last inspection drama has been removed from the Key Stage 3 curriculum as a separate subject. This presents difficulties for the running of a GCSE examination course at Key Stage 4 as most pupils have only limited understanding of the nature of the subject. The two groups operating in Years 10 and 11 at the moment include some committed pupils with knowledge of theatre and drama from their activities outside school, some enthusiastic and talented pupils who enjoy performing and some who have no serious interest in the subject.

95. Attainment in the drama and theatre arts examination in 1998 was high, with almost 9 out of 10 students achieving an A\*-C pass. This is well above the national average. In the most recent examination, however, only four of thirteen students, all girls, achieved an A\*-C grade which is well below national levels. All those entered were awarded a grade between B and E. The range of pupils' attainment in the lessons is considerable. Some pupils can move well, use space effectively and collaborate well in creating an effective scene. Others need step by step guidance on how to develop an abstract form of drama and are self conscious in developing a scene. The performance elements overall are near to standards expected for this course but the pupils' reluctance to work along lines suggested by the teacher will not help them to reach high examination grades.

96. Pupils show considerable enthusiasm for the performance aspects of the course. The Year 11 group are very noisy in moving into rehearsal mode but become seriously involved in their work when they settle down.

97. Teaching instructions are given clearly but they are not always fully understood or accepted by all the pupils. When pupils are working in groups the teacher is able to guide and advise them more effectively. There is a particular difficulty for a teacher to build strong relationships with older pupils when only coming into school for six hours each week. The work done, however, in organising the major musical production of 'Guys and Dolls', is valued by the whole school.

98. The drama studio near to the school hall is a valuable teaching and rehearsal space. It lacks appropriate lighting equipment and a CD player but the equipment overall for drama teaching and production work is of a good standard.

#### 101. **Mathematics**

99. Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national averages. Results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998, are well above the national average; results for the period from 1996 to 1998 are close to national averages. Over these three years the standards of attainment in mathematics of boys are below those of boys nationally, whereas those of girls are above those of girls nationally. In 1998 the results are above national averages for pupils reaching Level 5 or above, and are well above, for pupils reaching Level 6 or higher. In 1999 the average level achieved by pupils in the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests is close to the national average level of 1998.

100. Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with national averages. Nearly all pupils in Year 11 are entered for the GCSE examination. The percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C grades at GCSE examinations in 1998 is above average. Provisional results for 1999 indicate a similar percentage gaining A\*-C, with an increased proportion gaining A\*-B grades. The absence of specialist mathematics teaching at important times during the last year adversely affected the department's attempts to raise the proportion of C grades among those who eventually attained D grades. The percentage of pupils in Year 11 gaining A\*-G grades at GCSE in 1998 and 1999 is slightly above the national average for 1998. The performances of boys and girls are broadly similar in GCSE mathematics in 1998, but in 1999 girls' results at A\*-C are significantly better than boys. Results in GCSE are higher in mathematics than in many other subjects in the school. Nineteen pupils entered for the GCSE examination in statistics in 1999 and 14 gained passes at A\*-C. This represents a good achievement for these pupils, who were taught, on a voluntary basis, one lesson per week before morning school.

101. The work seen, or scrutinised, during the inspection, in Key Stages 3 and 4 effectively covers all the National Curriculum attainment targets. Pupils' basic number skills are developed and reinforced through the regular use of mental arithmetic. The good emphasis on practical and investigative work promotes pupils' understanding of mathematical processes. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' numerical, algebraic, geometrical and data handling skills and knowledge are generally secure and appropriate to their ability. Most pupils use calculators accurately and sparingly and apply a suitable range of mathematical skills in investigative work. Pupils of low attainment use their satisfactory skills of measuring in a suitable range of work, produce accurate tally charts and can draw and interpret simple graphs. Pupils of average attainment can predict simple number patterns, find terms in various number progressions and display competence in drawing and interpreting conversion graphs. Pupils of high attainment have a good understanding of the geometric properties of plane figures, apply the correct formulae to calculate areas and perimeters, set hypotheses and devise formulae to test their theories.

102. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' coursework for GCSE indicates that they can draw upon a wide range of previous work, which they understand well and can apply confidently in new situations. Their work in the basic rules of number is usually good and pupils make at least satisfactory use of their skills of problem solving. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 acquire good understanding of trigonometry, use graphical calculators effectively to explore relationships and transformations of graphs, and use a variety of algebraic knowledge to extend their work. Lower attaining pupils in Year 11 represent statistical data in a variety of forms and most can calculate simple fractions, decimals and percentages.

103. Pupils' standards in numeracy are good overall and they use their skills confidently in many subjects. In science, pupils enhance their work by using and developing their skills in number, measurement, drawing and interpreting graphs and tables, and apply data to formulae and (at Key Stage 4) to derive formulae. In design and technology pupils use mental computations involving measurements in design activities. In modern languages pupils apply their skills in number and data handling to good effect in work on such topics as time, money, and co-ordinates. Pupils' mental arithmetic skills are further developed by form teachers providing a programme of number activities supplied by the mathematics department for use during form periods and personal and social education lessons.

104. Progress through Key Stage 3 is good for the large majority of pupils. Pupils in the language resource unit make good progress relative to their ability and one pupil in Year 9 joins a mainstream class for mathematics. However, the progress of a few pupils with special educational needs is only satisfactory overall because there is often insufficient specialist support in class, especially for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Pupils acquire a secure foundation in all aspects of mathematics. Progress in lessons is mainly good because lessons are well planned, teachers ensure that the aims are well understood by the pupils, there is frequent review of the main teaching points and provision of regular practice in mental arithmetic.

105. Progress through Key Stage 4 is also mainly good. Pupils of above average attainment make good progress in lessons and over time. They build on and extend their previous knowledge and are well prepared for external examinations. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. As in Key Stage 3, the insufficiency of specialist support assistance, particularly for pupils with behavioural difficulties, hinders the progress of a small number of pupils in some lower sets.

106. Pupils' progress, in both key stages, is enhanced by the good use of assessment information to produce targets for improvement both for individual pupils and the department. Teachers often use this data and information from homework and marking, to adjust the programme of work to pupils' needs. Homework is satisfactorily used to assist pupils'

progress; in higher sets the work set is appropriately demanding; in lower sets the quality and amounts of homework set lack consistency.

107. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good overall. In most classes pupils are attentive, behave well, show interest in their work and respond well to established, clear classroom routines. Most pupils present their work logically and neatly, but a few take insufficient care in drawing and labelling graphs. On the few occasions when individual pupils become potentially disruptive to the rest of the class, teachers generally handle the incidents with sensitivity and calmness.

108. The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages. Teaching was judged satisfactory or better in all lessons observed except one; it was good in about 33 per cent, and very good in a further 44 per cent. This good quality of teaching, together with the planned further application and development of the department's procedures for assessment, is a good indicator of the mathematics department's capacity for achieving further improvement in pupils' attainment in the subject.

109. Teachers use their good knowledge of the subject to provide clear explanations at a suitable level for their classes. They manage their classes effectively, plan lessons well and use a good balance of whole class, individual or small group teaching, constantly reminding pupils of the main points of the lesson. Teachers make effective use of the department's good resources to ensure all aspects of the subject are suitably taught.

110. All teachers in the department effectively promote the development of pupils' skills in speaking, which helps their understanding of mathematics. Oral work is a good feature of all lessons; pupils are encouraged to respond in detail and provide logical and suitably extended answers to probing questions. Pupils readily offer their own hypotheses and suggest solutions. There is a limited use of computers to enhance pupils' work.

111. In the best lessons a good pace is maintained with questioning employed to generate discussion and to check understanding before moving on to the next step in a carefully timed sequence of activities. Pupils are engaged in purposeful and challenging activities throughout the lesson. In the unsatisfactory lesson observed, the main contributory factors are an inability to control a few poorly behaved pupils and the lack of specialist support for the large number of pupils with special educational needs. The shortcomings in the lessons judged satisfactory overall are also mainly due to insufficient specialist support for the pupils with special educational needs, who are concentrated in the same class.

112. The head of department provides very good leadership. She has successfully introduced a number of policies, such as those for numeracy across the school and assessment, which are already having a positive impact on standards of attainment for pupils of all abilities. Detailed analysis of external assessment data is used to set targets and to identify key issues for improvement in the departmental development plan.

113. Issues raised in the last report have been successfully met. At Key Stage 3 attainment in classes is now in line with national expectations; the work provided is appropriate to the range of ability, the standards of teachers' marking are more consistent and there is suitable and regular revision of basic mathematical knowledge and skills.

## 116. Science

114. Attainment at Key Stage 3 over recent years has been close to the national average. However, in 1998, 74% of pupils gained at least level 5 compared with 56% nationally. The provisional figures for 1999 are in line with the national average for the previous year. At Key Stage 4 the numbers of pupils gaining the highest grades at GCSE is increasing but those gaining A\*-C grades is below the national average. The new head of department has made an analysis of recent results in National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 3 and GCSE examinations to inform planning for further improvement in performance.

1. Strategies for emphasising the acquisition of knowledge and promoting understanding are good. Pupils are able to respond knowledgeably to their teachers' questions. They are confident in asking questions to further their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are able to use equipment safely and appropriately in carrying out investigations. Recording results and observations is done accurately. Opportunities to use skills of numeracy skills is a strength of the department. From Year 7, pupils construct line graphs, calculate and use formulae. Skills in graphicacy are less certain. Diagrams are almost always freehand sketches. They are too small and not always in pencil. Literacy is satisfactory and good when oral skills are required.

1. Progress throughout Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and sometimes good when work is challenging. Progress at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall and good or very good when pupils are called upon to perform experiments to carry out investigations and to discuss critically experimental design or accumulated evidence. Pupils learn to work safely using practical skills, numeracy and knowledge and understanding from the start of Year 7. Pupils observe well and record accurately. Sketchy, small diagrams detract from the effective presentation of work. Progress is impeded when a group comprises significant numbers of pupils from the special needs register and there is inadequate learning support staffing.

2. Pupils work collaboratively in groups and show respect for the contributions of others. Attitudes are positive, particularly when work is challenging and objectives made clear. Notebooks and textbooks are treated with respect. Apart from diagrams, work is neat. When the content or pace of lessons is inappropriate, pupils become inattentive.

3. There are five full-time, well qualified science staff, four of whom are new to the school this term. There is a further input from a qualified teacher in another department. The quality of teaching is usually at least satisfactory and good overall. It is often good or very good when lessons are well planned, the task is rigorous, the pace brisk and expectations high. However, teacher expectations are not always sufficiently high. An over reliance on working from books or the board slows the pace of lessons and limits progress, particularly with pupils of average attainment and below. The presence of learning support staff in lessons with significant numbers of pupils with special educational needs enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Closer monitoring of teaching and marking will further improve outcomes in teaching and learning. Hard working teachers exhibit a secure command of subject content. The teaching of practical skills, numeracy and safe practice is strong.

4. The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The GCSE double award modular science course is followed by all pupils apart from those on the GNVQ Leisure and Tourism Course who follow a GCSE single science course. The content and demands of the double award course are inappropriate for the lowest attainers. Assessment is carried out well throughout both key stages and is related to national levels of attainment. The use of assessment information to involve pupils fully in focusing on areas of improvement is not well developed, nor is such information used effectively to inform planning. Regular marking of notebooks takes place but lacks uniformity and there is insufficient use of constructive criticism to aid learning. Sanctions are used to promote good habits in work and behaviour, but the use of rewards for good work is not evident.

5. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect or express wonderment about their discoveries. Display space is limited and, although displays are neat, they lack the impact to stimulate a greater interest in science. Groupwork, a strength in the department, promotes social and learning skills. Currently, out of school links and activities and the functioning of the Science Club are, understandably, in the process of being re-established.

6. The department has six dedicated good size laboratories and two adequate preparation rooms. Resources are adequate. Though there is sufficient general laboratory and audio visual equipment, access to computer equipment within the department is limited and opportunities to develop the use of information and communication technology, within science teaching, are restricted. Each pupil has a personal textbook and access to books in the laboratories. The department has the valuable services of an industrious full-time technician, and the school is in the process of filling an additional part-time post. Safety is assured through the use of hazard cards and the implementation of standard safety (COSHH) regulations. The process of ongoing risk assessment is less well operated.

7. Although the department personnel are mostly new to the school and each other the leadership of the head of department, who is also new, is helping them to form good professional relationships and a common purpose.

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

### 125. **Art**

8. The level of attainment at GCSE over the past four years has been erratic but overall in line with the national average. The general trend is one of improving examination results over this period. At Key Stage 3 the level of attainment is adversely influenced by the curriculum and timetable. Year 7 pupils are taught for only one single period each week and some groups in Years 7 and 9 are taught as a double group in one room by two teachers. This is a way of minimising the effect of using non-specialist staff. The resulting large group is unsuited to a practical subject and the range of work, such as three dimensional work, is restricted.

9. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4. Year 9 pupils have produced some lively and imaginative Cubist style drawings based on the work of Picasso. This links to a 'variation on a theme' project in collaboration with the music department. The skills in tonal drawing developed in Year 8 have been applied to the work. In the GCSE groups there is more emphasis on individual learning and development. The atmosphere is purposeful and relaxed and interventions are made on an individual level to promote progress. Pupils of high, medium, and low abilities are able to work together effectively.

10. Pupils enjoy the subject and the general level of behaviour in lessons is good. They are able to co-operate with each other over the use of materials and discuss informally the development of ideas. There is a small number of pupils who require firm boundaries around their behaviour and find the more open nature of the subject a challenge.

11. The quality of teaching observed was good or very good and never less than satisfactory. The newly formed staff team is beginning to work together and bring good subject knowledge, high expectations, and personal enthusiasm to the teaching. A particular strength is their use of practical demonstrations of techniques as an aid to progress. This was particularly effective in a Year 8 lesson in which the properties of light were revealed in a lively and informative way.

12. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and in many cases this increases confidence and leads to a more open and personal approach to projects. The use of sketchbooks in all year groups is becoming established and much of the homework set relates to ongoing research or techniques linking directly to the work in class. Although Year 7 have produced some colourful and imaginative tribal masks much of the source material is restricted to European culture.

13. The accommodation is not adequate in the context of the present timetable and the smaller art room is very cramped at times. There is a lack of textile and printed work and the opportunities for large scale three dimensional work and painting at GCSE level is further limited by the fact that all the lessons at Key Stage 4 are single periods.

131.

### **Design and technology**

14. In 1998, at Key Stage 3, the teachers assess the pupils' attainments as below the national average, with boys lower than that of girls. In GCSE, at the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998, higher grade results were low in food technology and graphics but above the national average for design and technology in electronics and resistant materials. All those entered for GCSE in design and technology achieved at least grade G. This is better than the national average. In 1999, food technology and graphics results are improved but electronics and resistant materials have lower results. Over recent years, results have fluctuated since numbers entered have been small and the abilities of those taking the subject have varied. In 1999, all pupils were entered for an examination in a design and technology subject.

15. During Key Stage 3, all pupils carry out similar tasks, using a common design process in all areas. Higher attainers carry out work near the level of the national expectation. They use formal drawing techniques, carry out work with electronic components and create recipes. They evaluate resulting items. Most pupils produce a limited number of ideas for projects and evaluate them at a simpler level. Lower attainers are given pre-printed sheets to help their work. Boys are happier carrying out practical activities but their written work is weaker. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils produce very good documentation, especially in graphics work. They produce their own ideas and carry them through with good evaluations. The work is at the level to be expected to produce GCSE higher grades. Most pupils produce a range of ideas and identify one for development. They create this chosen idea and evaluate it. Lower attainers carry out practical work at an appropriate level. They find it difficult to complete the documentation and need similar guidance to that used in Key Stage 3.

16. Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. In Key Stage 4, it is good. The work in Key Stage 3 does not always extend the higher attainers. Lower attainers, especially those with special educational needs, make too little progress since they require a great deal of extra support. This assistance is not often available and its lack results in them doing less work than required. Some higher attainers are self-motivated and make good progress. They identify interesting ideas and follow them through, making such items as travel games of their own devising. Progress is good when teachers encourage pupils to develop their own ideas and be enthusiastic about the work. In Key Stage 4, the pupils and teachers see GCSE clearly as a goal and this motivates most pupils to produce a better quantity and quality of work. The progress in both key stages is also affected by the environment in which the pupils are working. In the newly refurbished areas, pupils are keen to work and the rooms, equipment and display promote good working atmospheres. The food technology rooms are in poor repair and the pupils are affected by their surroundings and less well motivated. The lack of equipment also limits progress in these rooms since the reduced equipment means that some practical lessons have to be spread over two weeks.

17. Pupils are interested in their work and concentrate well although lower attainers find this more difficult without adequate support. A small number of pupils in Key Stage 4 are not interested in the course they are following and are disruptive, for example, not bringing ingredients to food technology lessons and distracting others. However, behaviour is usually good and the pupils respond positively to the teacher when corrected. Pupils with special educational needs require regular support to keep them working and this is not always available. Pupils relate well to the staff and to other pupils. They respond positively to questions and are willing to ask for help when necessary. Girls work together successfully on occasions but boys and girls rarely collaborate in their work.

18. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. It is usually at least satisfactory but better in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. The members of the department have good knowledge and understanding of their specialisms and of the various examination syllabuses. When asked to teach outside their specialism their subject knowledge remains satisfactory. They manage and organise pupils well most of the time, although pupils who have behavioural difficulties can be disruptive and consume time that might be devoted to others. Lessons are well planned. The teachers tell the pupils what they are expected to do in the lessons and this encourages progress. Teaching is very good when the teacher has high expectations of the pupils and shares this with them. They use a variety of activities and this maintains the pupils' interests. Some lessons lack variety and, in others, teachers spend too long on one activity and pupils lose interest. All members of the department encourage the pupils to consider various ideas and so develop their understanding. Teachers use questioning to check the pupils' understanding and knowledge. Homework is set regularly and relates to classwork. The poor resources and equipment in food technology cause some difficulty and the teachers have to modify their practice to cope with them. This causes some frustration to the pupils when they are delayed in their work.

19. The curriculum organisation in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. Although the pupils have sufficient time on the timetable for technology, those in Year 8 receive no food technology or textiles work, one or other of which is a requirement of the National Curriculum. Although this is compensated for in Year 9, pupils do not receive a continuity of experience throughout Key Stage 3. Information and communication technology is used by the department to give the pupils experience of computer aided designing and machining. Design and technology work is assessed regularly and checked to ensure that pupils are working at an appropriate level.

20. Some of the accommodation has been dramatically improved since the previous inspection and is very good. In addition, the displays, especially in the graphics area, are excellent and the pupils and teachers are to be congratulated on the quality of work that is now being produced. There is a positive working atmosphere and this helps to motivate pupils.

### 138. **Geography**

21. Results in the GCSE examinations in geography, whilst below the national average, show improvement over the last two years. In 1998 the percentage gaining the higher grades A\*-C matched the school's average across all subjects. The 1999 results are close to the national average for comprehensive schools and above the school's average across the curriculum. Girls attain more highly than boys and in the 1998 examination the gap between the performance of boys and girls is more than twice that found nationally. Results in teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 have risen sharply from well below the national average in 1997 to well above in subsequent years. However, in lessons observed and in the work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Year 9 was judged to match that expected nationally. Pupils develop a satisfactory level of understanding of how human activities affect the environment and can, for example, identify the benefits and costs that the development of tourism brings to countries. Pupils acquire factual information about places and issues using a range of sources, including information and communication technology

and library resources. Attainment at the end of Year 11 is below the national expectation. Although pupils collect data for their GCSE coursework and use a satisfactory range of graphical techniques to present their findings, only the higher attaining pupils offer significant analysis and interpretation. The work of weaker pupils frequently lacks detail and is incomplete. Year 11 pupils have difficulty applying their knowledge of processes of erosion and deposition to explain the formation of landforms, for example meanders. More highly attaining pupils demonstrate satisfactory levels of understanding of ideas such as hierarchies of settlement and can relate the theory to their knowledge of local settlements.

22. Most pupils make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 3 but in around a quarter of lessons progress is unsatisfactory. Progress varies with the quality of the teaching. In those lessons where progress is good, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the work is well matched to their needs. For example, in a Year 7 lesson lower attaining pupils consolidated and extended their map skills; the additional classroom support teacher contributed effectively to the pupils' good progress. There are opportunities for pupils to produce some pieces of extended writing, but more often written work is copied notes. Where work is based on text books it is not hard enough for more highly attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs in lower sets do not make enough progress when there is insufficient classroom support. Not enough use is made of pupils' individual educational plans to match the work to their needs. Overall progress is unsatisfactory in half the lessons at Key Stage 4. Factors contributing to this are lack of challenge, when pupils copy notes, and the motivation levels of a few pupils. The work is seldom well-matched to the wide range of ability in the groups. The department has identified appropriate strategies to improve pupils' basic literacy skills, but these are not yet contributing fully to improving the quality of pupils' written work.

23. The attitudes of pupils towards their work are generally satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in lessons and make efforts to complete tasks. Many participate willingly in oral work. They respond well to opportunities to work in groups and relationships in the classroom are generally satisfactory. However, a small minority of pupils, mainly lower attaining boys in Key Stage 3, and a few disaffected boys in Key Stage 4, are unco-operative and unwilling to work. They sometimes disrupt the flow of the lesson so that time is wasted and the pace of work is slowed. Poor behaviour and attitudes adversely affects these pupils' progress and that of others in the group.

24. The majority of teaching is satisfactory, and sometimes it is good, but during the inspection almost a third of lessons observed had unsatisfactory features; it is more effective at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. Most lessons are well planned so that tasks are varied through the lesson to hold pupils' attention, but the work is not always broken down into manageable steps and explanations are not sufficiently clear to ensure understanding. The department has widened its range of teaching and learning styles so that pupils have opportunities to carry out some independent research. However, some lessons have a sameness, especially those that rely on textbooks; a wider range of resources and more varied activities are needed to motivate pupils of all abilities. Expectations for some low attaining pupils are not consistently high; pupils in a Year 9 class were not moved on in their learning as the lesson did not provide stimulus materials about different types of holiday destinations so that opportunities were missed to interpret and classify information. Where expectations are high, lessons are well planned to move pupils forward in their development of skills as well as in the acquisition of knowledge. A successful lesson in Year 10 made effective use of practical skills - map skills and ranking of data - to contribute effectively to the understanding of a theoretical model of settlement hierarchies. The use of local settlements gave pupils confidence in handling complex ideas and they were able to use their local place knowledge to make predictions about the outcomes and explain anomalies. Lessons generally proceed at an appropriate pace, although occasionally the pace of lessons is allowed to slow. Overall the amount of pupils' work that is assessed is slight, and marking is not regular. Teachers do not always

provide helpful comments on how to improve. Homework is set but amounts through the year appear modest.

25. The department has developed some fieldwork to enrich the programme, including a residential course for pupils in Key Stage 3. A more coherent programme to develop pupils' investigative skills needs to be incorporated into the schemes of work to ensure entitlement for all pupils. The scheme of work merits review as it contains more than is required by the National Curriculum, which leads to some superficial treatment of topics. The department has a policy for the assessment of the National Curriculum; this needs further attention to enable more secure judgements about levels to be made and to provide pupils with clear targets about what they need to do to achieve the next level. Since the last inspection there has been little change in attainment at Key Stage 3, but results in the GCSE examination are now lower. In part this may reflect a change in the ability profile of pupils opting to study the subject now that it is no longer a core subject studied by all. There is still some underachievement of pupils but this is now at both key stages. The use of non-specialist teachers with split classes where the work relies heavily on the use of text books remains a weakness. It is an inefficient use of teachers' time, which puts additional pressure on specialist teachers who plan, mark and write reports for these groups. The quality of the specialist teaching is now more variable, with more unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4, which is reflected in the wider range of pupils' responses to their geographical studies.

#### 143. **History**

26. In 1998, attainment of grades at A\*-C and A\*-G in the GCSE examinations was close to the national average. These results were above average for the school. Pupils mainly achieved grades in line with expectations. Attainment at Key Stage 4 was variable in the previous report, and has fluctuated over the past decade. In the early 1990s, between 42 and 47 per cent of those entered achieved A-C grades. This proportion dropped to 27 per cent in 1997, then rose to be close to the national average in 1998, but has declined sharply again in 1999 and is currently below national expectations. History, however, usually does at least as well as other subjects in the school, and sometimes better, and generally compares well with similar schools. The number and attainment levels of those opting to study the subject also fluctuate. Boys tendency to obtain lower grades than girls appears to stem from a motivation problem at Key Stage 4.

27. In lessons and work seen at age 16, attainment is average. The evaluation of source material is a strength of the department and pupils, at all levels of attainment, make sensible deductions from a range of sources and compare at least two sources. In their course work on crime and punishment, higher attaining pupils handle questions, which require them to integrate their own knowledge with information from the sources, particularly well. They produce course work assignments which are sustained and fully developed, and which demonstrate a good depth of historical understanding. These answers often reach high levels. Average attainers demonstrate a good factual grasp of the topics studied, but miss some of the more complex points as, for example, in their analysis of smuggling in the eighteenth century. Lower attaining pupils generally grasp the key points of a topic. They tend to write descriptively rather than analytically.

28. At the age of 14, attainment in teacher assessment is close to national expectations. Higher attaining pupils produce good quality, well presented topic work, such as their diaries of a sailor in 1805, with plenty of relevant detail. At all levels of attainment pupils make sensible deductions from sources. In source work evaluation for the 'Black Peoples of America' module, higher and average attainers are able to express their ideas more clearly than lower attainers, and find more points.

29. From a level of attainment on entry that is close to average, most pupils make sound

progress through the key stages. There is a steady improvement in their historical skills. In Year 7, pupils gain a basic grasp of how to evaluate a source. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attainers easily compare two or more sources and make valid comments on reliability. Average attainers make sensible deductions from a range of sources and explain with some confidence what bias is, and lower attainers explain what point a source, such as a picture, is making. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attainers produce a sophisticated analysis of the value of a source to a historian, average attainers generally apply their knowledge more relevantly, and lower attaining pupils improve their understanding of topics and find more points in a source. At both key stages, in relation to their prior attainment, pupils with special educational needs make steady progress towards the targets set for them. At Key Stage 4, a hearing impaired pupil is able to give reasons for her answers, whereas previously she tended to write only one word. The majority of pupils improve at least one level in each year. At each key stage however, a minority of pupils plateau, and do not progress.

30. At both key stages, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory and sometimes good. In history lessons, they are well behaved, co-operative and responsive, answering questions willingly. In all the lessons observed, there was a good working relationship between the pupils and the teachers. Books and equipment are treated with respect, and written work is neat and mostly completed. Pupils remain on task and some persevere even when their grades do not improve. A minority, however, especially at Key Stage 4, are less well motivated. Full and well presented Year 11 GCSE course work indicates this cohort's generally good motivation. When they use the computers or have to work in pairs, pupils collaborate well. During the inspection, although they asked some questions, few pupils put forward their own ideas or showed initiative.

31. Teaching is sound and sometimes good. At both key stages, secure subject knowledge was demonstrated through detailed answers to questions and explanations. Planning is satisfactory, although not including timings for each of its sections occasionally affects the pace and balance of a lesson. The range of activities has improved since the last inspection. Available resources, especially computer programmes and occasional sessions in the school library are used effectively to develop historical skills such as research. Sound use of CD-ROMs enables large groups to work independently and to build up knowledge and grasp of concepts. Regular good whole class teaching of source evaluation has contributed to the pupils' good understanding of how to interpret a source for reliability and use to the historian. Expectations are appropriate. Higher attainers now receive sufficient challenge. In a small number of lessons, the activity selected does not enable pupils to reach higher levels of attainment, and, although the teachers willingly offer additional help to pupils, reliance on whole class teaching means that work is not always matched precisely to the needs of individuals. Appropriate homework and class assessments are set and regularly marked with some helpful advice for pupils.

32. The department has responded satisfactorily to the last inspection, for example in developing a wider range of activities for pupils, although no group work was seen during this inspection. Under the leadership of the committed and hard working head of department, significant advances have been made in the use of information and communication technology and in assessment. A very good tracking system has been developed, which is helping the department identify what progress a pupil makes over a key stage and provides a basis for the teacher and pupil to set targets together. Over time this development should help pupils improve their attainment.

#### 150. **Information and communication technology**

33. In 1998, at Key Stage 3, teachers assessed the pupils' attainment as well above national average in information and communication technology. No pupils followed a course in information and communication technology at Key Stage 4 and the school did not carry out

any assessment of the subject during that period.

34. Attainment seen in lessons in Years 7 and 9 is near the level of national expectations. The level of much of the other work seen during the inspection was below national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils carry out work in communication through word processing. Higher attainers organise their work well and include some clipart. A few combine information from spreadsheets with word processing. All pupils use spreadsheets but there is little evidence of analysis. Pupils use control technology in mathematics and design and technology. In history, pupils work with simulation programs. With the exception of those following the office practice GCSE course, pupils use the computers for very little work in Key Stage 4. Pupils following office practice are developing skills in keyboarding and word processing. They also use graphics and spreadsheets with some graph work. Their work is near the national expectation in these areas of information and communication technology. Overall, attainment at Key Stage 4 is below average, because pupils do not regularly use computers, either in their studies across the curriculum or in sessions dedicated to enhancing their knowledge and skills.

35. Progress in information and communication technology lessons in Years 7 and 9 is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 8 do not receive such lessons. In work across the curriculum, progress is unsatisfactory since many teachers do not fully understand the requirements of the National Curriculum or the levels of attainment in the subject. In Key Stage 4, progress is good for those who follow the office practice course. Other pupils make little progress in developing information and communication technology skills.

36. Attitudes to information and communication technology are good. Pupils work consistently and with interest. Higher attainers show initiative by exploring the various format commands and personalising their work. Most pupils work hard to improve their skills. Behaviour in practical sessions is usually good but some find it difficult to listen sensibly when the teacher is giving instructions. Relationships in lessons are good. Pupils ask for support when necessary and respond positively when the teacher asks questions. Pupils do not usually work together but occasionally they ask for and get help from others near by. Girls tend to help each other more than boys do. Most pupils get on well with their work but some lower attainers lack self-control and need the attention of the teacher to ensure that they work.

37. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and is good in 60% of lessons. Information and communication technology teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject and plan their lessons well. They let the pupils know the aims of the lessons. This encourages good progress. Teachers and pupils appreciate the excellent resources and pupils show respect for the facilities. The teachers use good questioning techniques to develop the pupils' understanding and to check their knowledge. Homework is set appropriately and teachers assess all work using the National Curriculum levels in Key Stage 3 and GCSE criteria in office practice. The level of work set for the pupils is satisfactory although the work could be more challenging for higher attainers. A greater use of varied tasks within a lesson would enable a greater range of skills to be developed.

38. Since the last inspection the school has made very good progress in developing the information and communication technology equipment and has one computer for every six pupils. This is better than the national average. As in the last inspection the coverage of the National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 4 is still erratic, partly due to teachers' own insecurity. Teachers need to develop their own information and communication technology skills so that they are able to help pupils develop their skills in all aspects of the subject across the curriculum and to make use of the improved structures which allow them access to computers to supplement their class teaching. The school needs to ensure that all pupils continue to develop their information and communication technology skills in Key Stage 4. This is an issue that needs to be pursued by most subject departments, along with better use

of the system for recording work undertaken across the curriculum, which the school has established.

156. **Modern languages**

39. Since the last report, examination results at A\*-C in French have been close to the national average, but in German they have been significantly below. However, at A\*-G results in both languages are in line with national figures.

40. At the age of 14, pupils' attainment in French is in line with national standards, whereas in German it is below. Pupils of all abilities enjoy listening to the language and they have a good understanding of the spoken word because the teachers use the foreign language throughout most lessons. Many pupils are also keen to use the language themselves, speaking confidently with good accents. They tackle role play work with enthusiasm and participate in games and songs in both languages. All pupils come to the school with some knowledge of French from their previous schools. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to develop their writing skills and many are able to construct letters and descriptions with a good degree of accuracy. At the age of 16, the attainment of pupils who study French is average, with some demonstrating higher level attainment in all the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Those pupils who study German are working at a level below the average because of the very mixed nature of the teaching groups. There is some difference in the attainment of boys and girls, with girls generally reaching higher standards than boys.

41. In both French and German the progress of pupils at each key stage is at least satisfactory and often good. Where there is insufficient progress it is because the activities do not match the pupils' abilities closely enough. Good progress occurs in lessons which build on existing knowledge and develop the pupils' ability to analyse and adapt the language. There is a good range of resources, including appropriate text books, which enable pupils of all abilities to consolidate their knowledge. The progress of higher attainers in German at Key Stage 4 is sometimes limited because the activities they undertake do not offer sufficient challenge, particularly with regard to developing their writing. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate and sometimes good progress because lessons are well geared to their needs. The emphasis on speaking and listening enables these pupils to communicate effectively and gain a real sense of achievement from their language studies.

42. Behaviour in lessons is good, with many pupils showing interest in their learning and good concentration. They listen to each other politely and willingly volunteer answers to teachers' questions. A few pupils are less co-operative, but good relationships exist in most lessons.

43. The teaching of modern languages overall is good, with some very good teaching but also some which is unsatisfactory. An excellent lesson at Key Stage 3 involved all the pupils in a range of appropriate and challenging activities across the four attainment targets. The teacher had high expectations of the pupils and gave them the support necessary for them to achieve. Interest was held throughout and behaviour was excellent. In a less well taught lesson at Key Stage 4, the teacher had not planned carefully enough to ensure that all strands of the curriculum were covered. The pupils used little French in the lesson and the presentation of the lesson did not hold the pupils' interest resulting in unsatisfactory behaviour. Homework is set consistently although the quality of the tasks set vary in the demands they place on pupils. Marking is on a clear four point scale, but books are not always regularly marked.

44. A second language is taught to higher attaining pupils throughout Key Stage 3. All pupils continue to study one language to GCSE except those who have been officially disapplied. In recent years, however, it has not been possible for pupils to continue to study both languages after the age of 14 because of the constraints of the option system. This is disappointing for those pupils who would like to be dual linguists.

45. The department is very well managed and has made considerable progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and an effort has been made to ensure that reading and writing are given the same attention as listening and speaking, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Standards in German are still well below those achieved nationally. This is mainly due to the structure of the curriculum and the wide diversity of attainment levels in Key Stage 4 classes

## 163. Music

46. Pupils come to the school with a very broad range of attainments in music. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils achieve standards at or approaching national expectations with an even balance of strengths in keyboard playing, music reading and performing. Girls tend to achieve better results than boys. Pupils in Key Stage 4 build on the solid grounding of their studies at Key Stage 3. Pupils have a sound base level of skill in working with keyboards and written music. GCSE results in the A\*-C range have been falling from above to well below national averages in recent years. The relatively small but growing number of pupils taking this subject make trends very difficult to predict.

47. Throughout Key Stage 3 pupils make satisfactory progress. In Years 7 and 8 pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress in exploring the elements and structure of music. Year 9 pupils display growing levels of skill in using variation technique. Lower attaining pupils are given tasks which allow them to develop their skills at an appropriate pace. Pupils perform their work to each other without embarrassment. At Key Stage 4 pupils are taught in mixed ability groups and develop skills at a rate that is appropriate to their needs. They make adequate progress in composing harmonies and melodies in major and minor keys.

48. Pupils are committed to their work and behaviour is good. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 make enthusiastic and sustained efforts to devise music. A small minority of pupils in Year 9 are not as well motivated and this affects progress. GCSE pupils enjoy their music. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and expectations are high.

49. The music teacher has good subject knowledge. Teaching is carefully planned and teaching methods are varied and appropriate. Use of time and resources is good. Homework is regularly set for all pupils and supports learning in the classroom. Good use is made of regular formal and informal assessments. The quality of teaching is good in the majority of lessons and satisfactory in the remainder.

50. National Curriculum requirements are met at Key Stage 3 except that there is limited access to information technology for pupils and as the time given to the music curriculum is below the national average the progress pupils make is restricted. At Key Stage 4, curriculum requirements are met in full and the time given is adequate when the subject is properly timetabled, but some lessons take place out of normal school hours. The curriculum is well planned and meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils progress through each key stage as a result of an approach to teaching that integrates methodology, assessment, pupils' attainments and curricular requirements. The curricular work of the department is enhanced through the provision of a wide range of instrumental lessons in conjunction with the Local Education Authority. Just under 10 per cent of pupils in the school learn an instrument.

51. The department makes a sound contribution to the cultural education of pupils at both key stages through the study of a range of music from around the world. The three school choirs, orchestra and other groups extend the education of pupils through further exposure to western culture. There are several opportunities to perform during the year at Christmas and summer as well as in the annual musical.

52. The subject is led by an enthusiastic and well-organised head of department who is a well qualified and experienced teacher with a real grasp of the school's aims. Detailed records are kept of each pupil's progress and teaching is effectively monitored. As a result development planning is realistic. Since the last inspection the range of learning resources has improved to a good level.

## 170. Physical education

53. The attainments of the majority of 14 year-olds are generally above national expectations in games and gymnastics. The attainments of the majority of sixteen year-olds are in line with national expectations. There are no significant differences in terms of gender. The standards of performance of those pupils following the GCSE course are having a positive impact on the standards overall at the end of Key Stage 4. Across both the key stages pupils have a secure understanding of the effects of exercise on the body and realise the importance of the need to practice, perform and evaluate in order to consolidate and refine their existing individual and teamwork skills.

54. Groups of pupils are entered for the GCSE course in physical education and in 1998 58% of those entered achieved A\*-C grades. This performance was above the national averages for comprehensive schools. There were no significant differences in terms of gender and 70% of pupils achieved their highest or equal highest grade in the subject. In 1999 the pass rate in terms of A\*-C grade passes was 50% and in terms of A\*-D grade passes was 85%. The small number of girls entered this year does not make it possible to make meaningful comparisons in terms of gender.

55. From often poor levels of basic skills upon entry in Year 7, the majority of pupils quickly establish good rates of progress as they move through Years 7 and 8. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the effects of exercise on the body and many are able, for example, to name muscle groups being stretched during warm-up. Individual and teamwork skills are also developing well. Across Key Stage 4 pupils continue to refine and develop their skills and techniques in their chosen activities. In a Year 10 rugby lesson, for example, boys were successfully developing the use of the loop pass. Pupils following the GCSE course, make good progress in both their practical and theory lessons. Many pupils, for example, have produced some good coursework projects. Although no pupils identified as having special educational needs were observed with additional support, they receive appropriate help, are well integrated and make progress in line with their capabilities.

56. Pupils are well motivated and have a positive attitude towards the subject. Participation rates are generally very good. They respond particularly well to the high expectations of their teachers in relation to behaviour and discipline and the belief that pupils should produce their best. All pupils respect the capabilities of one another, work well in pairs and small groups, and respond maturely when given opportunities to coach and evaluate one another. All clearly respect the ethos within which the subject is taught in both their lessons and extra-curricular activities.

57. Overall, the quality of teaching across both key stages is good and is having a positive impact on standards of attainment. All lessons have a clear structure and learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start. This ensures pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Skills are clearly demonstrated and broken down: thus, pupils are made further aware of what is expected of them and what they have to do in order to make progress. In a Year 10 GCSE badminton lesson, for example, this method was very effectively implemented when teaching short service techniques. Teachers use appropriate terminology and, through effective questioning, encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills. Though there are a few missed opportunities, pupils are generally involved in the evaluation of one another. In a mixed Year 8 hockey lesson, for example, pupils working in small groups effectively evaluated each other when developing their passing, movement and spatial awareness skills. Pupils were therefore developing a clearer understanding of what they had to do to make further progress. Teachers successfully convey the expectation that all pupils can have success, thus boosting their confidence and enthusiasm. In a Year 10 netball lesson, for example, a group of girls were provided with a good range of activities related to their individual needs, hence all were able to make progress. The provision in all lessons of a planned and structured variety of activities

helps ensure pupils stay on task and are able to refine and consolidate both existing and new skills. On occasion, though, teachers do not always fully challenge pupils when these skills, having been successfully executed in small group practices, are not then being applied in competitive situations. Teachers are adept at involving all pupils and the few non-participants are usually set appropriate tasks which ensures they are part of the whole group activity. Effective and timely intervention by teachers ensures pupils are making progress and understand further what is required of them. In all lessons, good use is made of praise, encouragement and constructive criticism thus ensuring pupils are becoming aware of their capabilities. Effective whole group summative sessions at the end of lessons are also helpful in this respect. Appropriate homework is set and marked for the GCSE course.

58.The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, not all pupils in Years 8 and 9 have full and equal access to what is provided, as some, because of travel arrangements, are not able to attend the lessons held before the start of the school, day. This lack of opportunity inhibits the progress they should be making. A strength of the department is extra-curricular provision that further enhances pupils' learning experiences. The activities provided include both recreational and inter-school competitive fixtures. As a result, individuals and teams have had success at local, district and county levels and one individual has been selected for regional rugby squad training. Although there are effective procedures for assessing pupils the department lacks a consistent and cohesive format for recording pupils' attainment over the key stages in the course that all follow.

59.The head of department provides effective leadership. Since the previous report he has successfully introduced new teachers whilst at the same time maintaining overall standards of provision, addressing the issues raised and improving pupils' overall attitudes and interest in the subject.

#### **177. Religious education**

60.This is an improving department, with a number of strengths, that has effectively addressed the issues of the previous inspection report. The content of what is taught has been improved, and the quality of teaching raised. Consequently, pupils now have a more secure knowledge and understanding of the subject.

61.By the age of fourteen, the attainment of the majority of pupils is now broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. They have an appropriate knowledge and understanding for their age of the richness and diversity of religion, of the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country, of the distinctive features of those religions, and of religious language, concepts and symbols. By the age of sixteen, the attainment of pupils pursuing the GCSE short course syllabus has been below national norms for the examination. The most recent results have, however, shown a significant improvement, and the majority of pupils in their final year in the school are now attaining appropriately for their age.

62.Between the ages of eleven and fourteen, the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound, and in many instances good, progress in their work. During their first year in the school they acquire, for example, a basic knowledge and understanding of a number of key religious concepts, and explore aspects of the Jewish faith. By Year 9, they have progressed to work demanding higher order skills, and are able to wrestle with difficult abstract concepts, such as the incarnation in Christianity, or the idea of Brahman in Hinduism, and to engage in evaluative writing on different ideas of the afterlife. Between the ages of fourteen and sixteen the majority of pupils again continue to make satisfactory, and in some instances good, progress in their studies. Building on previous skills, they are able, for example, to evaluate philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God, ranging from the teaching of Aquinas, to the theories of the sociologist Durkheim.

63. The majority of pupils in all years respond positively to the subject. They come to lessons keen to learn, are interested in their work, and take pride in it, as was well demonstrated in a superb display in Year 8 work on Islamic calligraphy. Within that context, however, there are small numbers of boys in some Year 7 to Year 9 classes who are less well motivated, despite good teaching. Most pupils are attentive, listen well, and sustain concentration well. They are keen to ask and answer questions, and listen with respect to each others' views and opinions, as was seen in a Year 9 discussion, on how Christians from different traditions believe that their faith has affected their lives. Pupils are given good opportunities for developing skills of collaborative working in small groups, when, for example, exploring Jewish dietary laws in Year 8, or interviewing visitors from the local Christian community about their beliefs in Year 10. They are not, however, provided with sufficient opportunities for developing skills of independent learning, research and enquiry. The very great majority of pupils behave well in lessons, and enjoy very good relationships with their teachers, and with each other. The good response and behaviour of most pupils is a reflection of the overwhelmingly good teaching in the subject.

64. The quality of teaching is a strength of the department. It was at least satisfactory, and in the great majority of lessons observed, good or very good. This good teaching is underpinned by the very good relationships teachers forge with their pupils. They enjoy being with them, and respect and value them as individuals. At the same time, they have high expectations of them, and demand an equal respect in turn.

65. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have a very good command of their subject. They know clearly what they wish their pupils to learn, and plan their lessons effectively to achieve their aims, as for example, in a Year 11 lesson on the Buddhist concept of Enlightenment. Teachers engage and hold pupils' interests through a variety of interesting and challenging activities and tasks, which are well matched to their different needs. They structure their lessons well, and strike a good balance between whole class, group and individual work, and between oral and written work. The use made of visitors to the classroom, and of audio-visual material, is a model of good practice, as for example, in a Year 8 video relating the symbolism of the Passover meal to its historical origins in Judaism, and to the experience of the Holocaust. Homework which extends the work done in class is set regularly, and work is marked conscientiously and supportively. Where teaching is less strong, teachers are less secure in their knowledge of the subject and, in some instances, their teaching style is over-directive.

66. The head of department exercises very effective leadership and management, and gives very good support to non-specialist teachers. He has a clear vision of the educational direction the subject should take, and has successfully engaged in developmental work, which has contributed to the raising of standards since the previous inspection. He has, for example, improved the schemes of work, introduced a GCSE short course, and developed good quality assessment procedures, which help pupils to understand how to raise their attainment. If standards of attainment are to be further raised, the school should now increase opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning, and develop skills of independent learning, research and enquiry.

## 184. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 184. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

67. The inspection team consisted of 13 inspectors, including a lay inspector. During the week more than 170 lessons were observed and inspectors attended registration sessions, whole school and year assemblies and extra-curricular activities. All teachers were seen teaching at least once and most several times. Planned 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 of the previous year. 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 17 parents shortly before the inspection, and analysed 125 responses to a questionnaire about their opinions, distributed by the school.

68. Inspectors spent a total of 49 inspector days in school gathering first hand evidence. They spent over 130 hours observing lessons, seven and a half hours in discussion with pupils and 22 hours in evaluating pupils' work.

## 69.DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 - Y11	625	33	189	71

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	38.94
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.05

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week	272.3

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	63.1
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	24
	KS4	22

### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	1 462 666
Total Expenditure	1 366 568
Expenditure per pupil	2 226
Balance brought forward from previous year	60 376
Balance carried forward to next year	156 474

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

625

Number of questionnaires returned:

125

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

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	20	53	16	10	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	42	49	4	4	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	18	50	14	9	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	13	55	22	7	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	30	53	8	6	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	31	52	9	5	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	49	15	8	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	18	50	9	17	6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	22	46	21	6	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	16	40	26	10	6
My child(ren) like(s) school	33	50	8	6	3