

INSPECTION REPORT

St Cuthbert Mayne School

Trumlands Road, Torquay

LEA area: Torbay

Unique reference number: 113551

Acting headteacher: Tim van Kroonenburg

Reporting inspector: John Rowley
18648

Dates of inspection: 15th - 19th May 2000

Inspection number: 184063

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of students:	11 to 19
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Trumlands Road Torquay
Postcode:	TQ1 4RN
Telephone number:	01803 328725
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father Seamus Flynn
Date of previous inspection:	21-25.11.1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Rowley	Registered inspector	Geography	What sort of schools is it? The school's results and students' achievements How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
John Duncan	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Bill Gent	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	Students' attitudes, values and personal development How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to students? How well does the school care for its students?
Garry Bignell	Team inspector	Special educational needs Design technology Modern foreign languages	
John Morey	Team inspector	English	
Geoff Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Brian Moroney	Team inspector	Science	
Gillian Murray	Team inspector	History	
John Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education	
Michael Bostock	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	The sixth form
Marion Wallace	Team inspector	Art	
Robbie Cathcart	Team inspector	Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Cuthbert Mayne is a voluntary aided comprehensive school for boys and girls. Entry to the school is dependent on 'commitment to an education based on Christian belief and practice of the Catholic and Anglican churches'. The school, which is oversubscribed, draws students from a wide area of South Devon. The school admitted sixth formers for the first time in 1997 and is growing in size. It now has 958 students of whom 157 are sixth formers. Most of the sixth formers were previously students at St Cuthbert Mayne, but a growing number are joining from other schools. There are more girls (523) than boys (435). The number of students entitled to a free school meal is about one in eight. This is in line with most secondary schools. Less than two per cent of the students are not from a white UK background. The level of attainment of students entering the school is in line with the national average. The proportion of students on the special educational needs register is low, but the number of students with statements (14) is in line with the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Cuthbert Mayne is an effective school with many strengths. Students' achievements are very good and attitudes, values and personal development are excellent. The strong Christian ethos is evident in all aspects of school life. The school provides good value for money.

Since the last inspection, the school has gone through a difficult and unsettled time. Consequently, there are a number of significant areas which require urgent attention. Recently, the Governing Body, the acting headteacher, and the newly created temporary management team have taken decisive action to start to address these issues. They have received very good support from the Local Education and Diocesan authorities.

What the school does well

- The acting headteacher has shown very good leadership in taking the school through a difficult time and setting the course for school improvement.
- Since the last inspection, the school has managed major change in the introduction and development of the sixth form. The new sixth form provision is very good.
- Students' achievements are very good. The attainment of students entering the school is average, but at 16 their very good progress means that they achieve results that are well above average. Students with special educational needs make good progress.
- Standards of behaviour are very good. Students respond very well to the positive climate for learning.
- Students' attitudes to the school are excellent.
- There is a very strong sense of community based on Christian principles. Respect for each other's feelings, beliefs and values is an outstanding characteristic. The quality of relationships between students, and between students and staff, is very good.
- The school cares for its students very well. The health education programme is exemplary. The peer mentoring scheme is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching is good. Sixth form teaching is very good. Three quarters of teaching is good or better.
- The school provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- The school offers a very good programme of curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities.
- Standards and provision in history are outstanding.
- The school has very good links with the wider community.

What could be improved

- The role of senior and middle management in leading school improvement is still developing.
- The monitoring and evaluation of performance are unsatisfactory. Consequently, the school has insufficient information to compare itself with others and judge how well it is doing. This means it has difficulty in setting challenging targets for improvement and taking effective action to reach them.
- Time available for teaching is well below Department for Education and Employment recommendations and this has had an impact on the quality of education provided.
- In some parts of the school, poor accommodation has an adverse effect on teaching and learning.
- Resources and provision for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.
- The school does not have effective systems for identifying and sharing good practice in teaching and learning. Consequently, excellent models seen in the school are not understood and acted on by all.
- There are unacceptable variations in the quality of marking and assessment and the way in which assessment information is used to plan future learning.
- Whilst improving, Key Stage 3 test results have not improved as fast as in the majority of schools.
- The provision of information to parents, particularly about the academic progress of their children, is unsatisfactory.
- Not all health and safety concerns are receiving appropriate attention.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

St Cuthbert Mayne school was last inspected in November 1994. Since then, high standards in attendance, attitudes and behaviour have been maintained. GCSE results have been improving at a faster rate than that found nationally, although the most recent results have not been as good as in previous years. Whilst improving, standards measured by Key Stage 3 tests have not improved as fast as in the majority of schools. The amount of teaching that is good or better has risen from half to nearly three-quarters of lessons observed.

Progress on the key issues identified in the last report has been uneven. Until recently, little progress was made in a number of major areas, but in the last year the school has started to address them vigorously and has demonstrated that it has the capacity to see this through. There is a strong commitment to the achievement of high standards. Some work has been undertaken on monitoring and evaluating performance, identified as a weakness in the last report, but this remains a major area for improvement. Similarly, marking and assessment remain as major issues for the school, but the newly appointed assessment co-ordinator has made substantial progress in a short time. The school has reviewed curriculum provision since the last report, but is only moving into line with DfEE recommendations from September 2000. There have been significant improvements in the range of teaching methods employed, although the school recognises that further developments are needed. To some extent, the use of in-service training to meet school objectives, particularly in preparing for the introduction of Post-16 teaching, has improved. This is now being taken forward by the recently appointed professional tutor.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels	n/a	n/a	C	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In 1999, and in the previous two years, GCSE results represented very good achievement for students who entered the school with average levels of attainment. Girls' results are significantly better than boys', but the difference is similar to that found nationally. GCSE results have been improving at a faster rate than that found nationally, although the most recent results have not been as good as in previous years. The school has studied past examination results and set a target of 60% of students achieving higher grade GCSEs in 2000 with an average point score of 43. This target has been agreed with the LEA and is challenging, but achievable. The first A-level results from St Cuthbert Mayne represented good achievement for the sixth formers from their different starting points. Achievement was very good in GNVQ. All students passed and more than half obtained merits or distinctions. Whilst improving, standards measured by Key Stage 3 tests have not improved as fast as in the majority of schools and this is a cause for concern.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. There is a high degree of self-discipline. The small minority of less well behaved students responds to the school's discipline code.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Respect for each other's feelings, beliefs and values is an outstanding characteristic of the whole school community.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance rates are above the national average and unauthorised absences well below.

There is a very strong sense of community, based on Christian principles, of which students feel valued members. There is a deep sense of trust in the school and it is noticeable that the code of conduct, which the students help to construct, is phrased largely in positive terms. Students are relaxed both inside and outside the classroom with a great generosity of spirit. However, this can lead to a lack of urgency and punctuality to lessons is not always as good as it should be.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very good

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

Of the lessons observed during the inspection week:

- 5% were excellent
- 31% were very good or better
- 72% were good or better
- 96% were satisfactory or better
- 4% were unsatisfactory

Only one poor lesson was observed and there was no very poor teaching.

The amount of satisfactory or better teaching and good or better teaching is greater than that found in most schools and results in generally high standards of student's learning. Students are attentive in class, very conscientious and work well together. However, they are sometimes reticent in asking questions, challenging ideas or taking the initiative.

Standards of teaching are strongest in Post-16 classes where 80% of teaching is good or better and more than half is very good or excellent. The quality of teaching is good in English and mathematics and very good in science. There is good or very good teaching in all subject areas, but sometimes the best models of teaching are not shared by all. There is very good practice in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, but it is inconsistent between teachers and departments.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. With the exception of some aspects of information and communication technology, the curriculum is broad and well balanced. Curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities are major strengths.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. Management and administration is very good. When available, classroom support is good. However, the number of hours available for support is inadequate.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very strongly promoted reflecting the ethos of the school.
How well the school cares for its students	Mixed. The school is very effective in ensuring the personal welfare of its students. However, the quality of the academic monitoring of students below the sixth form is a cause for concern.

Under the very strong leadership of the acting deputy headteacher, the school has

established very effective systems to ensure the personal welfare of all of its students. This is undoubtedly a major strength of the school. However, the use of performance data to, for example, identify progress being made by students, to detect trends in performance, to identify under-performance, to evaluate teaching and learning and as an aid to target setting - students being given information about what they need to do to improve - is underdeveloped.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Since the time of the last inspection, the school has had three chairs of the Governing Body, two headteachers and two periods in which the school has been led by an acting headteacher. In that time, it has changed from an 11-16 to an 11-18 school and seen major changes in buildings, admissions, transport, finances and staffing. In late March 2000, the then headteacher took early retirement following a long period of ill health. Since March 1999, the school has been led by an acting headteacher, a deputy headteacher in the school. In the last year, there have been substantial changes in the Governing Body of the school, including three new committee chairs. Inevitably, these changes have had a major impact on the leadership and management of the school.

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the acting headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher and key personnel have shown very good leadership in taking the school through a difficult time. The recently created management team has shown the will and capacity to lead school improvement. However, leadership and management roles are still developing.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	In the past the governors have not been fully involved in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. Recently, the governors have provided vision and direction to the school and are becoming effective in fulfilling their responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school does not have all the systems and practices in place to 'know itself'.
The strategic use of resources	After a difficult period, the governing body and acting headteacher are taking a more assured grip of long term planning. Arrangements are now satisfactory and show signs of further marked improvement.

Overall, staffing levels are satisfactory. There is a good student:teacher ratio. Support staff serve the school extremely well, but are stretched and it is only their calibre and commitment that makes things work as well as they do. Available accommodation is used well. The new sixth form and resources centre is excellent. However, the overall standard of accommodation has an adverse effect on teaching and learning. Overall, learning resources are adequate, but provision for information and communication technology, particularly the number of students per computer is unsatisfactory. The school is well aware of and committed to the principles of 'best value', although it recognises that it has much work to do in applying these principles in its management and use of resources. The school lacks some of the systems to compare performance, challenge itself, consult on what the school community wants and judge cost effectiveness.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian ethos of the school. • The attitudes and values that the school promotes. • The way that the school cares for, and values their children. • The standards that the school sets. • The range of activities that the school provides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework that is set and the regularity and care with which it is marked. • Information provided by the school, particularly about their children's progress.

The school is fortunate in having a set of parents who wholeheartedly support the school, show pride in St Cuthbert Mayne and work through the home/school association to raise funds and extend the family of the school into the community. Parents support the school in many ways and are, in the main, satisfied with the standards achieved and with what the school provides. However, their concerns that homework is not marked as regularly or with as much diligence as needed are justified, and the information parents receive about the progress of their children requires a fresh approach. The school should improve methods for identifying the views and concerns of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In 1999, and in the previous two years, overall GCSE results were well above the national average and those of similar schools. This represents very good achievement for students who as a whole entered the school with average levels of attainment. Girls' results at GCSE are significantly better than boys'. However, the difference between the GCSE performance of boys and girls is similar to that found in most schools, but both boys and girls are doing better than their national averages.
2. In 1999, 54% of students gained five or more higher grade (A* to C) GCSEs. On this measure, the school is above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. These results were not as good as those obtained in the previous three years when higher grade passes were well above the national average. The school needs to monitor this closely. However, the trend in the school's GCSE results since the last inspection shows them improving at a faster rate than that found nationally.
3. In 1999, the proportion of students obtaining five or more GCSE passes at any grade (A* to G) was very high in comparison with both the national average and the average for similar schools. The proportion of students that left school without any qualification in 1999 was well below the national average and that of similar schools. These comparisons, which are similar to those from previous years, reflect the success of the school's strategies for supporting students who find learning difficult.
4. GCSE results in 1999 varied between subjects. GCSE results in history and English literature were outstandingly good.
5. In the core subjects, GCSE results were well above the national average in English and science. In mathematics, results were in line with the national average. In other subjects, GCSE results were above the national average in English literature, food technology, geography, history, music and textiles. GCSE results were close to national averages in art and design, graphic products, and religious education. GCSE results were below national averages in child development, French, information technology and business studies, physical education, and resistant materials.
6. Comparing GCSE results with national averages can be misleading where only some students take the subject. An alternative is to look at how well individual students did in one subject compared to their other subjects. Using this comparison, students in recent years have done exceptionally well in history; and very well in English language, English literature, science, and art. In contrast, students have not done as well as in their other subjects in resistant materials, French, graphic products, child development, information technology and business studies, and physical education.
7. The school has studied past examination results and information about the potential performance of the students. This has been used to set targets for the future which are challenging, but achievable. The targets have been agreed with the Local Education Authority.
8. Whilst below national averages, the standards achieved by students with special educational needs are good. Students with a range of needs are making good progress

towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEPs).

9. The impact of recent school literacy initiatives is being seen in a number of areas, but standards across the curriculum are still variable. Overall, standards in literacy are above national averages, with strengths in reading and, to a lesser extent, writing. There are good examples of students speaking well in a range of contexts, but this is not always the case across the school and speaking is underdeveloped. Students nearly always listen and respond appropriately.
10. The school is starting to work on numeracy and students demonstrate a satisfactory level of competence in numerical and graphical skills across the curriculum.
11. In 1999, results at A-level were in line with national averages. These results were from the first group of students to complete A-level courses at St Cuthbert Mayne. The relatively small number of students in the year group and the absence of comparative information from other years, means that it is difficult to make general statements about performance. However, a careful analysis of information about the A-level students' GCSE performance indicates that their results represented good achievement.
12. In 1999, all GNVQ students passed in each of the subjects. In business studies half the students gained a merit or a distinction in the subject, in health and social care there were two passes and one merit, and in art and design nearly 80% achieved a merit or distinction. These results overall show a significant achievement for the school with its first cohort of students following a relatively new style of course.
13. In 1999, overall results in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests were in line with national averages, but better than those for similar schools. Students started at the school with average levels of attainment. Therefore, being in line with the national expectation after three years represents achievement that is at least satisfactory. Classroom observation and the analysis of student work during the inspection supports this conclusion. As with GCSE, there are differences between the performance of boys and girls. In all the core subjects, boys were close to, but below national averages. Girls were close to, but above average in English and science, and above average in mathematics.
14. There have been variations between the three core subjects in Key Stage 3 tests. Test results in English and science in 1999 were in line with national averages, whilst mathematics results were above the national average. Compared to similar schools, test results in 1999 were below average in English and science, but above average in mathematics. Within a narrow band of difference, there has been a pattern of higher performance in mathematics in recent years.
15. Overall, Key Stage 3 test results for English, mathematics and science have been close to the national averages over the last four years. However, overall test results have not improved as quickly as they have in similar schools. Other inspection evidence does not support a conclusion that Key Stage 3 standards are unsatisfactory, but clearly the test performance is a cause for concern.

16. There are no national tests in other subjects at the end of Key Stage 3. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of students compared to national expectations is: above average in art and history; average in design and technology, geography, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and music; but below average in some aspects of physical education.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Overall, students' attitudes to the school are very positive. There is a deeply embedded sense of community of which students feel valued members. The positive attitude towards school which students display stems, in large part, from the fact that the families from which they come themselves subscribe to the values which the school upholds. There is a deep sense of trust in the school and it is noticeable that the code of conduct, which the student themselves helped to construct, is phrased largely in positive terms.
18. Students are relaxed both inside and outside the classroom though, in terms of movement between lessons, this can lead to a sense of lack of urgency. In their everyday dealings, students are generally very courteous towards each other and towards adults in the school. Good-natured greetings, often between older and younger students, are a noticeable feature of school life. Courtesy is offered towards visitors, students exhibiting a desire both to help and to please.
19. Behaviour in lessons is generally very good, students exhibiting a high degree of self-discipline. In those few instances where there is poor behaviour – sometimes associated with small groups of boys – this is more often to do with activities that fail to interest or poor classroom management than it is to wilful misbehaviour.
20. Students are attentive in class and willing to follow the course of the lesson. When given opportunities, they work well together, whether with members of the same sex or not. This means that group work, in which students collaborate together in order to learn, is a positive feature of classroom life. At the same time, however, students are sometimes reticent in asking questions, challenging ideas or taking the initiative. This is a contributory factor in some underdevelopment of speaking skills.
21. Students are very willing to get involved in the life of the school and show a mature sense of responsibility in wanting to do so. In applying to become school prefects towards the end of their Year 10, for example, many students stated that they wanted to give back something to the community from which they themselves had taken much. Again, representatives on the various student councils, which regularly meet in the school, acquit their role with good-humoured earnestness.
22. Strong and trusting relationships between students, and between students and adults, is a significant feature of the St Cuthbert Mayne School community. The positive, but relaxed, atmosphere is particularly marked in the sixth form centre. Students display a generosity of spirit in their dealings with each other and take pleasure in each other's achievements. Students are protective towards others' needs and adopt a positive attitude towards diversity. Those with special educational needs are considered as much a part of the school community as anyone else. Though incidents of bullying do occur, students recognise that avenues of support are readily available within the school. Students have no difficulty in identifying others within the school to whom they can turn for help should the need arise.
23. Levels of attendance are high, attendance figures being well above the national average. Unauthorised absence figures are well below the national average.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching is good. It is the main contributory factor in the high standards, both academic and personal, across the school. As a result of good teaching, students' learning is good or better in nearly seven out of ten lessons and is only unsatisfactory in about one lesson in ten. Good teaching motivates and challenges students. In most classes, they work with sustained interest, consolidating their previous work or acquiring new knowledge and understanding. However, whilst very conscientious, they are sometimes reluctant to contribute or take the lead.
25. Three quarters of the teaching observed during the inspection week was good or better and nearly one third was very good or excellent. The teaching in less than one lesson in twenty was judged to be unsatisfactory, and only one poor lesson was seen during the week. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is less than that found in most schools, whilst the proportion of teaching that was good or better is significantly higher. Whilst there were variations between subjects, there was very good teaching in all curriculum areas and no subject where teaching was unsatisfactory overall.
26. Teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. There was very little difference in the quality of teaching in these key stages.
27. Teaching in the sixth form is very good. In A-level and GNVQ classes, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed and four out of five lessons were good or better. More than half of the teaching was very good or excellent. This picture of very good teaching is particularly noteworthy as the school is only in the third year of Post-16 teaching. The staff, particularly those who have not had recent experience teaching at this level in other schools, have adapted very well to the different demands of sixth form work.
28. An example of the very high standard of sixth form teaching was in A-level psychology where both of the lessons observed were judged to be excellent. The teachers showed detailed knowledge of the subject and of the demands of the syllabus. Their presentations provided the students with models of how to learn and apply ideas. Questioning drew out earlier learning, made connections and challenged students to explain and develop points. There was a very good balance between individual, group and whole class work with high expectations of what the students could achieve.
29. The greatest proportion of good or better teaching was in mathematics, science, art, business studies, history, psychology and the GNVQ subjects. In art and history, the teaching in four out of five lessons was very good or excellent. In science, business studies and GNVQ, no lesson was less than good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in science, art, business studies, design and technology, GNVQ, information and communication technology, history, psychology and modern foreign languages.
30. Whilst good overall, the quality of teaching was less consistent in English, mathematics, geography, physical education and music. However, in all these subjects, very good teaching was observed. It is important that this good practice, and that from other areas of the school, is shared, so that the best approaches are applied by all.

31. Where teaching is good or better, it is characterised by careful short-term planning, based on detailed schemes of work. These take account of the different needs of the students in the class, including those with special educational needs, so that all can make the maximum progress. In lessons where support is provided, this is of good quality and students make satisfactory or better progress with their work.
32. An example of an excellent lesson was in a Year 9 history class where the standard of work completed would more normally have been seen in a Year 11 lesson. The students were presented with the challenge of a decision-making activity that required them to work in mixed groups to determine what they would have done at a series of key points leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War. The introduction made powerful links with earlier learning, drawing on the students' existing knowledge, and explained why the method was being used. Key ideas and concepts were presented. Classroom management skills meant that the students were organised in groups very quickly with resources already on the desks and displays around them to support their work. They worked intensely, exchanging ideas and evaluating different options. The teacher circulated to check knowledge and understanding, asking supplementary questions rather than offering answers and fed in resources and ideas to present additional challenge. A brisk pace was maintained throughout. A powerful conclusion summarised the learning, talked about the meaning of hindsight and appeasement, and demonstrated the complexity of cause and consequence in explaining the past.
33. The teaching of the skill of literacy across the curriculum is uneven. There are displays of specialist vocabulary in most classrooms. Frames to help with the writing of a variety of texts are used in a number of subject areas. Students' writing is frequently technically accurate. Sustained writing was seen in history, GNVQ courses and in media studies. However, opportunities to write independently are often restricted; much writing across the school is too tightly constrained or of limited scope. Similarly, there is good practice in developing oral work, particularly with older students, but opportunities to develop purposeful speaking and listening in, for example, presenting a summary or mounting an argument are not always taken.
34. Across the curriculum, some good examples of teaching numeracy skills can be found, but these are not co-ordinated and are therefore less effective than they could be. There is, as yet, no whole school policy for the teaching of numeracy. Numerical skills are well taught in the mathematics department, although there are some students, particularly in Year 10 and Year 11 whose knowledge of multiplication tables is not totally secure. In science, good work is done with measuring and measurements. In geography, the reading and understanding of scale is useful for interpreting maps and good graphical skills are evidenced when producing maps, diagrams and charts. In the sixth form, students studying for GNVQs show very effective skills when reading and interpreting graphical information about trends in tourism; and in business education students discuss the reasons for using one scale rather than another with knowledge and confidence. Students use calculators with accuracy and appropriately in many subject areas.
35. The school is at an early stage of developing a coherent approach for gifted and talented students, but there are examples of good practice. For example, good use is made of the individual talents of musicians, sportsmen and sportswomen and native speakers of modern foreign languages, whilst gifted students are being entered for extension papers in mathematics.

36. Information and communication technology is used well in some subject areas. In the teaching of history, for example, students evaluate information from the school Intranet. However, information and communication technology is not sufficiently used in all subjects and remains an area for development across the school
37. In the few cases where teaching is unsatisfactory, the most common reason is weaknesses in planning, so that all students are not able to show what they know, understand and can do. This is either because of a lack of attention to the different abilities within the class, low expectations or a poor balance between different elements of the lesson. Therefore, students are passive for too long and do not have enough opportunities for activity. In some lessons, the needs of students with special educational needs are not fully met as teachers are not taking account of their individual education plans (IEPs).
38. The scrutiny of students' work and discussions with them indicated wide variations in the quantity and quality of homework set and the way in which all work is marked, although this was not evident during the inspection week. At best, an appropriate amount of homework is set regularly that is challenging, but achievable and either consolidates work in class or prepares for future learning. The best marking is completed and returned regularly, informs students how well they are doing and provides guidance on how to do better. Unfortunately, these good practices are not shared by all. There are too many examples of irregular or inappropriate homework and cursory or non-existent marking.
39. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was described as 'good in half the lessons observed and in more than three quarters of the remainder it was satisfactory'. Whilst direct comparisons are not possible because the method of grading lessons has changed, it is evident that there has been substantial improvement overall. In particular, the amount of teaching that is judged to be good or better has increased from half to three quarters of lessons. The last report concluded that 'a greater range of teaching approaches and materials is needed to provide more challenge for the able, appropriate tasks and levels of support to low achievers and to encourage students to be more involved in their learning . . . Practice in setting homework is inconsistent.' Matching teaching and materials to different abilities is still an issue in a few classrooms, but has been addressed in most. Strategies for involving students actively need to be more generally applied. The quality of homework and marking remain as serious issues for the school.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO STUDENTS?

40. In nearly all respects, the curriculum is broadly based and well balanced at both key stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. It substantially contributes to the school's aims for promoting the intellectual, personal and physical development of students. However, provision for information and communication technology in Key Stage 4 is inadequate.
41. Whilst the percentage of time for all subjects except information and communication technology is broadly average, the total amount of time available for teaching subjects is less than that found in most schools. This is because the length of the teaching week is considerably shorter than that recommended by the Department for Education and Employment and places the school in the bottom two percent of comprehensive schools nationally. In some subjects, particularly those involving practical activities, insufficient time has an impact on what can be provided. The school has recognised this issue and is increasing the amount of teaching time from September 2000.

42. A considerable degree of challenge is presented to the majority of students by the curriculum as a whole and many subjects plan for good continuity and progression from eleven to nineteen. This is done through the provision of clear schemes of work to support teaching. For students with special educational needs, individual education plans (IEPs) are clearly laid out and show student targets, long-term and short-term action needed to achieve them, and details of support available.
43. Overall, the curriculum is accessible to all students who have equal opportunity to make progress and achieve their potential. The arrangements for banding and setting are generally helpful in promoting good learning. However, the way that the timetable works can limit the opportunities for children with special educational needs to receive appropriate support in higher groups.
44. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities offered are major strengths. Virtually every curriculum area is represented, with sporting and musical activities featuring strongly. Students and parents speak highly of the programmes and participation rates for most clubs are good.
45. The school provides very effectively for the personal and social education (PSE) of its students. The rich and varied programme that it has developed – including aspects relating to health education, sex education and drugs awareness - is carefully planned and well administered and is valued by students and teachers alike.
46. The provision for work-related education, including careers education and guidance, is good. Work experience is provided in a broad range of employing institutions. Educational and employment information is provided both in printed form and through an up-to-the-minute networked database. A solid professional and beneficial relationship is maintained with the varied institutions in which students continue their education and training. The school has received both the 'Investors in Education Business Partnership' and 'Investors in Careers' awards as a result of their good practice.
47. The system, which the school has established for maintaining links with the primary schools from which its own students are drawn, is exemplary. Future students and their parents are met, students interviewed and key information recorded on transfer forms. Both students and parents are very appreciative of this system.
48. The school is very successful in promoting its students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is undoubtedly a great strength of the school.
49. The school gives all its members a positive experience of living within a community grounded in Christian principles and values. All those joining the school have the nature of the school community made clear to them and the school Mission Statement fronts the school prospectus. Events like the welcome service for new Year 7 students and staff, and the leavers' service for Year 11 students, express much that the school holds important – that life is a journey and that all individuals are unique, for example.
50. The school makes very good provision for promoting students' spiritual development. In its ethos, the school encourages its members to adopt a responsible, thoughtful and reflective stance towards life. Whilst dealt with in detail in the Section 23 inspection of the school, it is worth noting here that collective worship in its several forms both supports and develops this. Similarly, the work of the religious education (RE) department is an important influence and RE teachers have a highly developed understanding of their role in this respect. In the best teaching, students are challenged to look for meaning and to develop their own sense of curiosity. Encouraging an experience of joy is evident in the

way in which art is taught in the school: students are encouraged not only to appreciate professional artists' work but also that of each other. Promoting students' spiritual development is also evident in the sporting life of the school. In their code of conduct, for instance, the advice offered to basketball players includes 'Play to the rules and spirit of the game', 'Applaud all good play, your own team and your opponents' and 'Enjoy yourself!'

51. Though the term 'spiritual' is often used in the school, there has not been an attempt to articulate how this might be promoted across the curriculum. This might be one of the reasons why, in some subjects, there are insufficient opportunities for students to reflect on their own ideas, insights and experiences.
52. In providing an environment where reference to moral principles is frequent and instinctive, the school's provision for promoting students' moral development is very good. Students were involved in formulating the school code of conduct, ten rules which start with the Christian golden rule: 'Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself'. The principles of reconciliation and forgiveness are deeply embedded in the life and practices of the school. A student who admits to having been troublesome, but who now wants to make a new start is held up as someone to be admired. On those rare occasions when someone is permanently excluded, those involved in the decision feel a deep sense of regret.
53. The social development of students is very strongly promoted by the school. The school has developed a wide range of ways in which students can contribute to the running and well-being of the school community. In its student council system - created since the last inspection - the school provides students with a very positive experience of responsible discussion and decision-making. The design of the upper school student's planner, the grey tie worn by school prefects and the provision of picnic tables are all the direct result of student council requests. The role of school prefect, students making applications for this post towards the end of their Year 10, is an important one within the school. The head boy and girl, as well as their deputies, demonstrate many of the positive values that the school upholds. The school is well placed to respond to national citizenship-related developments.
54. In the many and varied cultural experiences and opportunities which it provides, the school promotes students' cultural development very effectively. Though the last inspection report judged that multi-cultural aspects were lacking, this is no longer evident. Across the whole curriculum, students are now able to engage with material and ideas drawn from a range of times, places and cultures. In setting up displays and holding events like quizzes, the library also makes a significant contribution to the cultural life of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

55. Under the very strong leadership of the acting deputy headteacher, the school has established very effective systems to ensure the personal welfare of all of its students. This is undoubtedly a major strength of the school.
56. There is a deep conviction held by all members of the community – younger and older students, staff and parents – that in welfare terms this is a school that ‘knows its students’. This stems from a number of factors including the ethos and values espoused by the school. Another factor is that students largely remain with the same pastoral team as they progress from Year 7 to Year 11 and therefore a strong bond is usually formed between students and tutors.
57. The PSE programmes makes a significant contribution to the welfare of students: through including elements relating to personal safety and the effects of peer pressure, for example. The provision for health education is outstanding and exemplifies the broad and imaginative approach which has often been distinctive of the school’s approach to such matters: facing up to the issue, clarifying needs, evolving solutions. There is a very clear health education policy and a number of strategies have been adopted. These have included the holding of occasional ‘Health Education Awareness Weeks’ and the setting up of a ‘School Nutrition Action Group’ (SNAG) which has a broad membership, including students. The school, which has also held a number of health and drugs-related awareness-raising evening for parents, was awarded the Torbay Schools Drugs Awareness Initiative Charter in 1998.
58. Systems to support students who have personal concerns or needs, including being bullied, have been set up and are very effective. Child protection procedures are fully complied with and, when appropriate, outside agencies are used well. The peer support system, which involves trained sixth form volunteers being available to students in Year 7, has been carefully and thoughtfully set up and is a model of good practice. Systems to promote good attendance, including the use of outside agencies, are effective.
59. At the beginning of the summer 2000 term, attendance overall continued to be above the national averages and unauthorised absences well below. The computerised registers are maintained to a high standard, absences and reasons for them are efficiently recorded at the beginning of the afternoon session, and management and tutors receive monthly printouts in order to detect any developing patterns. Students with 100 per cent attendance receive certificates and those with attendance of 99+ per cent receive commendations. At present, the school and the Education Welfare Officer concentrate their efforts on students whose attendance has fallen below 80 per cent.
60. Unfortunately, the quality of the academic monitoring of students below sixth form age is a cause for concern. The use of performance data to, for example, identify progress being made by students, to detect trends in performance, to identify students who are under-performing, to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, and as an aid to target-setting, students being given information about what they need to do to improve, is underdeveloped. As such, though teachers might know their students and their individual performance well, the school itself is not in a position to ensure that all students make the progress that they should. In the same way, teachers’ marking of work often gives students little clear indication of what is needed for improvement. Department heads monitoring work standards as a key aspect of their responsibilities, through sampling students’ work, for instance, has not yet been fully integrated into school practice.
61. Health and safety regulations are largely complied with though systems for monitoring

this do need tightening. There are a number of health and safety concerns related to the design and technology facilities in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. The school is fortunate in having a set of parents who wholeheartedly support the school, show pride in St Cuthbert Mayne and work through the home/school association to raise funds and extend the family of the school into the community. They are keen, for example, to participate in the exchange arrangements with a school in Normandy, and are always ready to accompany students and staff on local trips to museums, art galleries and sporting events. They volunteer in notable numbers when a geography field trip is announced or to help students who are participating in the Ten Tors Challenge or the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.
63. Parents enjoy the musical, dramatic and athletic performances of their children, attend parent workshops and open evenings and are happy to communicate with the school via the student day books and through informal chats with staff members. When asked, they participate in the consultative process, as demonstrated by their involvement in putting together the home/school agreement.
64. Parents, in the main, are satisfied with the standards achieved and with what the school provides. However, the school does need to evaluate its relationship with its parents and improve methods for identifying their views and concerns. The responses to the questionnaire distributed before the inspection showed many positive opinions about the school, but also highlighted concerns about homework and reports. The school was not previously fully aware of these views.
65. Too many parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were dissatisfied with the amount of homework their children are set and the infrequency and lack of detail with which it is marked. Even more were concerned that they receive too little information about the progress of their children through the school. Inspectors came to agree with parents about these issues. Parents rightly feel that they need to know more about the progress of their children as the year progresses, not just at the end of the year when it is too late for them to do very much about it. Reports of student progress, which are prepared, given to and discussed with parents in the summer term are repetitive, meagre in their inclusion of student targets and, to be truthful, dull. A description of the course for that year is provided when it is too late for parents to support it. The reports from a databank do not individualise the information about the students. For instance, two reports from modern foreign languages for one student written by two different teachers used exactly the same wording in the first four sentences.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The leadership of St Cuthbert Mayne has gone through a difficult and unsettled time in which insufficient progress was made in a number of significant areas. However, in recent months the school has shown that it has both the capacity and will to address these issues. Since the autumn of 1999, the acting headteacher and the Governing Body have taken decisive action to start to address identified weaknesses.
67. In taking the school through these uncertain times, the acting headteacher, supported by the management team, has shown very good leadership. Through his modesty, quiet progress and honesty, he models the values that underpin the school. The clearest evidence for good leadership is the continued good performance of the school and the very successful introduction of the sixth form. In addition, whilst uncertainties have made

strategic planning difficult, substantial progress has been made in a number of areas. For example, the curriculum and timetable have been reviewed with substantial changes being introduced from September 2000.

68. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has had three chairs of the Governing Body, two headteachers and two periods in which the school has been led by an acting head. In that time, it has changed from an 11-16 to an 11-18 school and seen major changes in buildings, admissions, transport, finances and staffing. In late March 2000, the then headteacher took early retirement following a long period of ill health. Since March 1999, the school has been led by an acting headteacher, whose substantive post was that of deputy headteacher in the school. In the last year, there have been substantial changes in the Governing Body of the school, including three new chairs of Governing Body committees. Inevitably, these changes have had major repercussions for the leadership and management of the school.
69. At the school's request, the Local Education Authority reviewed leadership and management in 1999. Whilst recognising the contribution of the then acting management team, their review identified a number of serious issues including: weaknesses in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation; insufficient progress on points identified in the 1994 OFSTED report; a lack of staff confidence; and some difficult personnel issues. The school used this review as the basis for an action plan to move things forward. They received very good support from the Local Education and Diocesan authorities, including the provision of outside advisers and consultants; and funding for additional management posts.
70. Since May 2000, the school has had a new management structure. An action plan in the autumn of 1999 included the proposed appointment of an additional temporary member of the senior management team from outside the school. Unfortunately, it was not possible to make a suitable appointment. Consequently, a revised plan was implemented in the early part of 2000, which broadened the management team to include five more members of the existing staff.
71. The new temporary management team is an effective and representative decision-making body which has the confidence of the staff. Whilst the details of their posts are still being defined, they have clear responsibilities that relate to the priorities in the school improvement plan. Existing members of the management team, and those newly appointed, have all accepted new roles and shown a good understanding of what needs to be done. An outside consultant, a recently retired headteacher, has very ably supported the development of the new management team.
72. There is a very strong, widely shared and deeply embedded vision of the school as a practising Christian community. Recently, the acting headteacher, working with the new management team, the Governing Body, and the Local Education and Diocesan Authorities, has developed a clearer sense of direction for the school within this overarching ethos. However, their ability to do more in this direction is restricted as the school does not have all the systems and practices in place to 'know itself'. Whilst improving, the school's approaches to monitoring and evaluating all aspects of its work, particularly academic standards and the quality of teaching, remains unsatisfactory. Consequently, the school has insufficient information to compare itself with others and judge how well it is doing. This means it has difficulty in setting challenging targets and taking effective action to reach them. The new school improvement plan makes best use of available information and identifies the main issues contained in this report. Whilst still being developed, this plan provides a starting point for how these changes can be achieved.

73. In nearly all cases, subject management is good overall. In different subject areas, there are very good examples of curriculum planning and schemes of work which provide effective support for teaching and learning. Similarly, there are good examples of methods of monitoring and evaluating performance and acting on the outcomes, including subject development planning. However, the best practice is not shared across the school. Consequently, there are unacceptable variations in, for example, the quality of marking and the support for students with special educational needs across, and sometimes within, departments. The school policy of department self-review is not always followed.
74. The management and administration of SEN provision is very good. Documentation is of a high standard and procedures for the identification, assessment and provision of support for students with learning difficulties are clearly established. Copies of the SEN handbook are available to all senior and middle managers of the school and relevant information on individual students is accessible to all staff.
75. Evaluating the impact of the school's provision for SEN is carried out with reference to parents, use of the budget, student achievement and reporting to governors. The recently developed SEN policy is comprehensive. The school is aware that the prospectus and annual report to parents need to include sections on SEN policy and provision.
76. Recently, the Governing Body has provided vision and direction to the school. They are well led, both by the chair of the governors and the chairs of the committees. They acted decisively when the issues causing concern were brought to their attention. They have recognised that they were not always holding the school to account for the quality of education it achieved, but are now developing effective methods for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. They are taking an increasing role in strategic planning and fulfilling their statutory duties.
77. Overall, staffing levels are satisfactory. The student:teacher ratio (16.2:1) is good for comprehensive schools. The size of the staff has expanded in the last two years, reflecting the development of the sixth form. Procedures for the induction of new staff and the monitoring of newly qualified teachers are excellent. The total hours of non-teaching staff are below average. They serve the school extremely well and it is only their calibre and commitment that makes things work as well as they do. With over 100 students at Stage 2 or higher on the special educational needs register, the number of hours available for support is inadequate to meet their needs.
78. The standard of accommodation is uneven, although it is always used well and displays are of a high standard. The new sixth form and learning resources block is excellent. It provides a very good environment to stimulate learning, although the amount of glass and the lack of air conditioning means that it can get very hot. Elsewhere, much of the accommodation is in need of refurbishment and sometimes it is inappropriate for curriculum needs. In particular, poor accommodation has an adverse effect on teaching and learning in mathematics, science, art, design and technology, geography, music and physical education. The numbers of students makes movement along corridors, on stairs and between buildings very restricted and presents potential health and safety issues.
79. Resources for learning are adequate. However, provision for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. The school has one computer for every fifteen students, whilst the average number in secondary schools is about one computer for every eight students.

80. Inevitably, recent management issues have hindered financial planning. However, the Governing Body and acting head are taking a more assured grip of long-term financial planning and management for the school. Arrangements are now satisfactory, and show signs of further marked improvement to come. Internal control and detailed monitoring is of a very high calibre. The finance officer and her team serve the school extremely well as is attested to formally by the recent auditors' report and informally by members of the teaching staff.
81. The governors' finance committee benefits from strong leadership by an experienced and strong chair. It is given very detailed monthly reports of the school's financial affairs which receive close scrutiny and consideration. Recommendations are made to the Governing Body with the best interests of the children's education as the paramount concern.
82. Recommendations from the latest auditors' report are all in hand. The monies coming to the school for specific purposes are all spent as designated. The finance committee is well aware of and committed to the principles of 'best value', although it recognises that it has much work to do in applying these principles in its management and use of resources. The school lacks some of the systems to compare performance, challenge itself, consult on what the school community wants and judge cost effectiveness. There is much still to be done in linking planning for improvement with financial planning.
83. Considering the good teaching the students receive, the good quality of the school leadership and management, the good level of standards achieved by the students and the satisfactory improvement from the last inspection, the school is effective and gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The statements contained in the box called 'WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED' on the second page of the summary report (page 6 of this document) indicate areas for improvement identified from the inspection. In order to bring about improvements in these areas, the school should do the following:

Increase the effectiveness of the management of the school by ensuring that:

- the roles of senior and middle management in leading school improvement are clearly defined and understood.
(Paragraphs 71 and 73 of the main report. This has already been identified as a priority in the school's development plan.)
- there are full systems in place for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of school performance and acting on the results.
(Paragraphs 60,72 and 82 of the main report. This has already been identified as a priority in the school's development plan.)

Further improve the quality of education provided by:

- increasing the amount of time available for teaching in line with recommendations from the Department for Education and Employment.
(Paragraph 41 of the main report. This has already been identified as a priority in the school's development plan.)
- seeking to improve accommodation in mathematics, science, art, design and technology, geography, music and physical education.
(Paragraphs 78, 116, 126, 141, 149, 161 and 229 of the main report.)
- improving resources and provision for information and communication technology
(Paragraphs 36, 40, 79, and 191 of the main report. This has already been identified as a priority in the school's development plan.)

Further improve the high quality of teaching by:

- identifying and sharing good practice in teaching and learning.
(Paragraphs 30, 60 and 73 of the main report)
- ensuring a consistently high standard of marking and assessment across the school.
(Paragraphs 38 of the main report. This has already been identified as a priority in the school's development plan.)
- ensuring that students are properly prepared for the statutory tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3.
(Paragraph 15 of the main report.)
- making consistent use of assessment information to plan the next stages of learning.
(Paragraph 60 of the main report.)

Improve communication between home and school by:

- improving methods for identifying the views and concerns of parents.
(Paragraph 64 of the main report)
- improving information provided to parents, particularly about student progress.
(Paragraphs 65 of the main report)

Address health and safety concerns by:

- ensuring that it has full systems in place to monitor health and safety.
(Paragraphs 61 of the main report)
- addressing health and safety concerns in science and design and technology.
(Paragraphs 130, 149 and 151 of the main report)
- considering ways to improve the circulation of students around the school
(Paragraphs 78 of the main report)

In addition to the key issues listed above, there are a number of other issues that should be considered by the school. These can be seen in the following paragraphs of the report:

9, 20, 33, 34, 37, 43, 51, 75, 77, 82, 107, 118, 130, 142, 152, 162, 202, 214, 215 and 232

THE SIXTH FORM

84. Sixth form provision is very good. The strength of the sixth form is embodied in the commitment of staff to promoting student progress, the quality of relationships, and the quality of the sixth form facilities. The school is, with good reason, proud of its sixth form and the early success that it has enjoyed.
85. The sixth form was opened in 1997 in a custom-built block which provides very good facilities. Numbers are growing and at the time of the inspection it had 157 students. There are plans for further expansion of students and courses, particularly in the area of GNVQ.
86. The first year of examination results was reported in 1999. Students' results in these examinations were in line with national averages across their subjects. There were good results in Advanced GNVQ. The relatively small number of students in the year group and the absence of comparative information from other years means that it is difficult to make general statements about performance. However, a careful analysis of information about the students' GCSE performance indicates that their results represented good achievement. This is a notable success for what was an 11-16 school in developing new courses and adapting the teaching successfully to higher level work. A majority of students have gone on to continue their education in further and higher education.
87. Students show very positive attitudes to their studies and to the school. There is an ethos based on a respect for each other and there is a strong sense of community within the sixth form. Students refer to the friendliness of staff, balanced with firmness, and the high level of support for students' progress as major features of this sixth form. Relationships between teachers and their students, and between students themselves, are good.
88. Students feel that they are able to turn to their teachers to discuss any difficulties that may arise. A peer-mentoring scheme operates with a group of sixth formers, trained in counselling skills, and linked with individual Year Seven students upon their arrival to the school. The Community Sports Leadership Award gives an opportunity for sixth form students to organise opportunities for themselves and for pupils in primary schools. These initiatives provide sixth formers with an opportunity to contribute responsibly to the school and the community and to learn the skills associated with working with others.
89. Teaching in the sixth form is very good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. There are particularly good examples of strong teaching within the vocational subjects, psychology, art and history. Students evaluate the quality of teaching and learning each year and departments use this information when discussing their development plans.
90. The curriculum is broad with all National Curriculum subjects offered. In addition, students can study business studies at A-level and GNVQ (Intermediate) level, psychology (A-level), art and design (Advanced GNVQ), and health and social care (Advanced GNVQ).
91. The school offers a significant range of curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities which include many different sporting activities, musical activities (orchestra, choir, guitar, band), musical productions, gymnastic and dance displays. Many exchanges are organised over the year. There have been visits organised by departments to, for example, Berlin (history), Amsterdam (art), the theatre (English), and the London Zoo and Science Museum (science). There is a project involving the construction industry. There is a community outreach programme and an Industry Day.

There are projects to support Key Skills in conjunction with a major bank. A large number of students are involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at which many students obtain the Gold Award. These additional curriculum activities are appreciated by students and make a significant contribution to their broader education experience.

92. The head of sixth form, who has been in post for two years, is a member of the senior management team. He provides strong leadership, whilst encouraging a team approach to decision-making. A clear sense of purpose and a strong rationale underpin development. This has been a major contributory factor in introducing a successfully operating sixth form. Though, at this stage, the sixth form, with some small teaching groups, is not cost-effective, it is well on its way to being so.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	148
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5%	26%	40%	25%	3%	1%	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y[7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	800	157
Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals	106	n/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	14	0
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	114	1

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	1

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.0%
National comparative data	7.9%

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1%
National comparative data	1.1%

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	67	90	157

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	48	45	44
	Girls	82	59	47
	Total	130	104	91
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	83% (68%)	66% (65%)	58% (64%)
	National	63% (64%)	62% (58%)	55% (56%)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	24% (33%)	28% (38%)	18% (32%)
	National	28% (34%)	38% (34%)	23% (27%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	45	49	44
	Girls	78	64	54
	Total	123	113	98
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	78% (83%)	72% (73%)	63% (72%)
	National	64% (60%)	64% (64%)	60% (61%)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	49% (33%)	36% (40%)	25% (60%)
	National	31% (30%)	37% (37%)	28% (30%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	73	79	152

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	32	73	73
	Girls	50	78	78
	Total	82	151	151
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	54% (60%)	99% (98%)	99% (99%)
	National	46.6% (45.1%)	90.9% (86%)	95.8% (97.3%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	44 (43)
	National	38 (38)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	34	35	69

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	14.8	17.0	15.9	0	n/a	0
National	17.7	18.1	17.9	2.7	2.8	2.8

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	100%
	National	67%

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	946
Any other minority ethnic group	5

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	17	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	59
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	256

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.4%
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.8
Key Stage 4	22.1

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	2319268
Total expenditure	2332471
Expenditure per student	2413
Balance brought forward from previous year	62375
Balance carried forward to next year	48268

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	957
Number of questionnaires returned	188

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41%	49%	8%	1%	1%
My child is making good progress in school.	38%	50%	6%	1%	5%
Behaviour in the school is good.	34%	54%	5%	2%	5%
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20%	57%	17%	4%	2%
The teaching is good.	33%	57%	5%	1%	4%
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26%	42%	24%	6%	1%
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53%	39%	5%	2%	1%
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60%	37%	3%	0%	0%
The school works closely with parents.	31%	48%	17%	2%	3%
The school is well led and managed.	40%	44%	9%	2%	5%
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44%	50%	1%	2%	2%
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39%	43%	11%	3%	4%

The percentages in this table have been rounded up or down to whole numbers and so may not always add up to 100.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

93. Standards in English are very good across the school. Students make good progress in their learning. In both English and English literature, students at GCSE perform more highly than in their other subjects and the difference is greater than that found in most schools.
94. In 1999, GCSE English results were above national averages and exceeded those for similar schools, although they showed a small decline over those for 1998. In English literature, results were exceptionally good and showed an increase over those for 1998. Although both boys and girls were above national averages, girls' results exceeded those of boys by a wider margin than is found nationally.
95. At A-level, the first results for both English literature and media studies were above national averages; a significant proportion of students achieved higher grades.
96. In 1999, the Key Stage 3 test results were just above national averages, but were well above those for similar schools. This continues a trend over the last three years.
97. In both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, standards exceed national expectations in reading and writing. Higher attaining students achieve well in their reading, showing interest in the texts they encounter and responding in some detail in writing when required. Independent reading is well supported through school policies and the very good library provision. Technical accuracy in writing for the majority of students is good and many students write with skill, some at considerable length. Lower attaining students show satisfactory competence in the acquisition and use of basic skills of reading and writing.
98. In both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 standards in speaking and listening meet national expectations for higher-performing students, but not for average and lower-performing students. Students can be reluctant to take the initiative in oral work in whole class settings. Students' achievements are limited, as opportunities to extend their spoken repertoire are insufficiently broad. Teachers do not always challenge students to rework oral responses into more complex forms or to explain their views in detail.
99. At A-level, standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening are above those found nationally.
100. English teaching is almost always satisfactory or better. It is good in six out of ten lessons and one in four lessons are very good. There is a clear relationship between the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. The best teaching is in GCSE classes. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to good effect. For example, teaching in a Year 11 lesson on contemporary poetry showed great skill in maintaining momentum and securing greater student engagement through challenging subject matter. In the best lessons, teachers set clear boundaries for students and demonstrate a belief that they can do well. In a Year 10 lesson on Macbeth, for example, the teacher showed high expectations of what students could achieve and they rose to the challenge.
101. The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching results from ineffective lesson planning and weak student management.

102. Marking and feedback to students on how they can improve their work is inconsistent across the department and sometimes inadequate: comments are too frequently confined to generalised praise or unspecific exhortation. Marking in one Year 11 class was very diligent and helpful in providing detailed guidance to students but this good practice was an exception to the more common pattern of ticking. There are no effective procedures for analysing students' performance or for target setting.
103. Provision for media education is good, particularly at Key Stage 4 and Post-16. The recent development of A-level English literature has been handled skilfully and with notable success. Students' entitlement to drama at Key Stage 3 is a relative weakness. A Year 8 English lesson on the poetry of Wilfrid Owen ignited students' interest by use of drama and showed the possibilities. However, students need more active and systematic drama teaching overall to help develop their speaking and listening skills; to enhance their capacity to collaborate effectively in open-ended activities; and to improve their confidence in articulating their insights. The department's enrichment programme, including visits and work with the English Shakespeare Company partly addresses these issues, but there is a need for more specialist work in school.
104. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through English is very good across both key stages and in the sixth form. The attention given to the range and quality of literature studied is exemplary. A clear work ethic had been established in almost all classrooms, providing a clear purpose and rationale for the exercise of authority to promote learning. Relationships are very smooth. An excellent Year 12 A-level media studies lesson dealt sensitively with issues of sexuality and sexual health in print media. Students analysed the treatment of these subjects with maturity and critical detachment.
105. The department is well led by a very knowledgeable practitioner whose focus on GCSE English and English literature has been very beneficial in raising standards.
106. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement, with significantly enhanced provision for media education and the successful introduction of Post-16 courses. Homework policy has received some attention but still requires greater consistency.

Points for further action

107. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
 - ways of developing speaking and listening skills;
 - improving the quality of marking, feedback and target setting; and
 - the analysis of performance data and the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching to ensure consistency in the execution of policy and to spread effective practice more widely.

MATHEMATICS

108. The most recent mathematics GCSE results were in line with national averages for A* to C grades and above average for grades A* to G. Compared with similar schools, results were above average. When compared with the other subjects at the school, mathematics performed better than average but less well than English or science. Although the results were good, the mathematics department were disappointed that the results in the 1999 GCSE examinations were lower than the challenging targets which they had set for themselves.
109. The first set of results in A-level mathematics were good in relation to the students' capabilities.
110. Students' attainment in the National Curriculum tests, taken at the end of Year 9, was in line with the national average for 1999 for students achieving level five or above, but below the national average for those achieving level six or better. When compared with the results obtained by students from similar schools, results were average. Over the years 1996 to 1999, the Key Stage 3 results have been at the national average. Boys perform above national averages and girls broadly in line. During this time, mathematics results have been lower than those achieved in English and science. The trend in recent years has seen attainment falling in mathematics. The head of department and teachers are well aware of this situation, have identified why this is happening and are taking steps to remedy the position.
111. The teaching observed during the inspection was good. Out of every ten lessons, nine were good or better. Only one example of poor teaching was observed and the school has recognised the need to address this. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding, plan lessons effectively, and have appropriate expectations of what the students should be achieving. They manage the students well so that no time is wasted. To further develop the good teaching, the range of strategies used to ensure the students are learning can be extended in some cases to include more interactive work. Similarly, planning in some lessons can be improved by making sure that the objectives for each lesson are targeted on outcomes and what the students will be able to do, rather than on the idea or concept to be explained. These objectives should then be made explicit and shared with the students so that they are clearer about what is expected of them and what they can do to improve.
112. The students respond well to the good teaching they receive. In all of the lessons seen, behaviour and work produced were at least satisfactory. In almost all, they concentrated hard while listening and their behaviour was good. Relationships in the classroom both between the teachers and the students and amongst the students themselves are good. The quality of relationships does much to contribute to the students' progress.
113. The quality of marking varies. Students' work seen during the inspection was almost always marked, and there is some obvious good practice within the department in this respect. However, there were indications from comments made by parents and by the students themselves that this situation does not always pertain, and that a small minority of the teachers do not keep up to date with their marking. Much of the marking is thorough with helpful and constructive comments, but there are also examples of perfunctory marking with little more than a series of ticks.
114. Provision for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory. There is a thirteen station network of computers in one of the

mathematics classrooms, but this is old and outdated. Access to more up to date machines is severely restricted. Increased use of ICT is necessary if the schemes of work are to be fully delivered. Poor provision is hampering students' opportunities for learning. Lack of access to the Internet is a weakness.

115. Departmental leadership is good and keeps the departmental focus closely on improving teaching and learning. Mathematics teachers are well qualified, and work together. The teachers' work is supported by close monitoring of marking and record keeping, but it is necessary to ensure that the outcomes of this monitoring are followed through to improve professional practice and raise standards. A fuller and more formalised system for lesson observation aimed at ensuring that good practice is shared would help in this respect.
116. There are only five rooms available on a full time basis for the teaching of mathematics. This means that one class is always taught outside of the mathematics area. In some cases the students are taught in a different room for each of their lessons. This is unhelpful for the teacher when planning lessons and does not contribute to raising standards.
117. Most of the issues identified as in need of attention in the last inspection have been addressed with a fair degree of success, and standards of teaching have improved overall.

Points for further action

118. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
 - ways of improving performance in Key Stage 3 tests;
 - ensuring that the best practice in teaching, marking and assessment is applied consistently across the department;
 - ways of improving and supporting the development of numeracy across the curriculum; and
 - increasing specialist accommodation and improving access to, and use of, information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

119. The most recent results in GCSE science were above the national averages, although lower than the results in 1998. Over the past four years, the performance in science by all students has been well above the national average and results have improved since the last inspection. Good progress is made in Key Stage 4 and students do well to reach these standards. Students do better in GCSE science than their average performance in all GCSEs. The percentage of girls achieving A* to C grades in science is slightly better than boys. The department is seeking to raise the performance of all students achieving at grade D and below through earlier identification of weaknesses in learning and understanding in the written papers. A target of 60% grades A* to C has been set for summer 2000.

120. The science department entered candidates for A-level examinations in biology, chemistry and physics for the first time in 1999. Results were close to the national average with students making good progress from Key Stage 4. An example of the way that students are progressing was seen in a Year 12 physics class where students were able to reflect upon their attainment in an earlier modular examination and were using a potentiometer to rapidly measure length and width in the context of supermarket packaging.
121. At the end of Key Stage 3, the most recent national test results were broadly in line with all schools and better than in similar schools. However, performance by students in the tests at the end of Year 9 has been reducing over the past four years. The 1999 results for all students at Level 5 or above were lower than the teacher assessments. The department has recognised the need to give more attention to preparing students for the Key Stage 3 tests.
122. Across the school, attitudes to learning are very good. All students are gaining confidence in their learning and understanding of scientific concepts. Students co-operate well together in using resources, work safely when handling apparatus and have good relationships with teachers. Students with statements of special educational needs and others on the early stages of the Code of Practice make very good progress through the use of differentiated materials and the support from SEN teachers and assistants.
123. The introduction of the *Student Researcher Initiative* is broadening students' understanding of science beyond the classroom. The provision of text-books for all Key Stage 4 students is an urgent requirement to ensure that attainment is improved through increased opportunities for study away from lessons.
124. Teaching in science is very good. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory lessons were seen and all lessons were good or better. In GCSE classes, half of the teaching was very good or excellent. The proportion of good or better teaching is greater than that found in most schools. Lessons begin with a brief introduction, setting the context for learning and maintain a good pace with a variety of activities. For example, good teaching in a Year 12 lesson linked information from a video on ecosystems to current public concerns on the effects of nitrates on human health. Very good teaching in Key Stage 4 included the use of demonstration to simulate movements within the earth's crust. A Year 10 lower ability group had good teaching which consistently encouraged and enthused them to carefully observe the effects of current on an electromagnet and to extrapolate from the data they collected. Very good teaching in a Year 11 upper ability set included timed written responses to questions, the use of BBC *Bite Size* revision video clips and careful encouragement of different student responses to ensure that no one opinion dominated. In Key Stage 3, good teaching was demonstrated in detailed lesson planning to identify differentiated tasks for students and promoted literacy through a focus on key scientific vocabulary.
125. The monitoring and assessment of students' work are variable. Some marking of work is incomplete in both key stages. At Key Stage 3 there is a marked discrepancy between the test results and teacher assessments. The department is at an early stage of analysing and making use of student performance data to make predictions and set targets for future achievement. The use of assessment information through regular moderation of students' work will inform teacher assessments.

126. Two laboratories are in need of refurbishment and some lessons are taught in classrooms, which do not provide an appropriate environment for the teaching of science and restrict opportunities for students to do practical work.
127. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) needs to be developed to enhance the competencies of all students in collecting, evaluating and communicating data from science investigations.
128. The leadership and management of science are good. A development plan clearly identifies the future needs of the department. Schemes of work for both key stages meet National Curriculum requirements. Support from the technical staff is good and, overall, resources for teaching are satisfactory.
129. There have been a number of developments since the last inspection. Students' understanding of scientific concepts is developing and they are now involved in the process of learning. Differentiation in learning has improved as well as the pace of lessons and teachers' expectations of achievement. There is greater variation in teaching with greater use of audio-visual aids and the learning resource centre. Links with the senior management team have been reviewed. Homework is consistently set in all groups. The successful introduction of a sixth form has been a major initiative since the last inspection together with a broader curriculum and an annual science week.

Points for further action

130. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
 - developing marking, assessment and the use of data, particularly at Key Stage 3;
 - setting and using individual targets to track the progress of students;
 - improving access to, and use of, information and communication technology;
 - providing text books for all Key Stage 4 students;
 - improving specialist accommodation; and
 - ensuring fume cupboard air-flow is regularly tested.

ART

131. The 1999 GCSE results were in line with the national average, but this represented better than average achievement as the subject was not taken by all students in the year. Over recent years, there has been a consistent picture of high standards with a steadily improving trend in good pass grades. Inspection evidence confirms this view that all students studying GCSE art and design achieve well.
132. At GCSE, students develop the skill of planning their own work and investigate, research and experiment with materials to create their own responses. The high level of visual research and investigation of artists and sculptors contributes to the high standards achieved. Students investigate artists from a wide range of cultural and historical background, and talk confidently about them and their relevance to their own work. For example, students create their own works using the work of artists such as Escher, Picasso, Gustav Klimt and Magritte as their stimulus. A significant strength is the use of art styles from different cultures such as the use of Aboriginal art and Hokusai.

133. In the sixth form, overall attainment is also very good, but the numbers entering for the examination are insufficient to make a national comparison. A-level students develop and extend their practical ability and critical skills in well considered individual projects. Students demonstrate considerable knowledge of a range of artists and show imagination in their investigative work in all aspects from collage, painting and drawing to 3-D work. They also show imagination in the use of materials from mud to glass and Perspex.
134. GNVQ students explore the impact of art and design in a business context. For example, they design nursery rhyme inspired pictures for the local children's hospital and show competence and awareness of applying for sponsorship. Presenting their work to others provides good opportunities for students to evaluate their own and others' work and contributes to students developing confidence and knowledge of presentation.
135. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is above national average. This represents good progress as students enter the school with average skills, knowledge and understanding in art and design. In Key Stage 3, there is a noticeable progression in the students' ability to research the styles of different artists and to experiment with line, colour, tone, texture and pattern, movement, form, shape and structure. For example, Year 8 students know and discuss the characteristic art style of the Ndebele people. They talk confidently and with appreciation about the colour, repeating patterns and effective use of black outline in the art work. Students use card well to design and make a 3-D insect using the Ndebele art form as a stimulus for their decoration. Skills, knowledge and understanding of working with 3-D shapes are very well developed.
136. Art teaching is very good and is a major factor in the high standards achieved. It is never less than satisfactory and nearly nine out of ten lessons are very good or excellent. The pace of lessons is very good and students are constantly challenged to evaluate and improve the quality of their work, developing self-reliance. Teachers have a clear view of what their students must learn to achieve success in art. Excellent teaching combines a sense of humour with a genuine appreciation of students' work. A strength in teaching is the enthusiasm and appreciation of art forms that are communicated to students. This contributes to students developing high standards and considerable knowledge about art and artists and a genuine appreciation of characteristic styles of art works.
137. An example of the excellent teaching and learning was in a Year 9 class where students completed development work on imaginary cityscapes using research of examples of modern architecture such as the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Teaching provided a clear framework within which students developed their own ideas. Students worked on aspects of design, fashion, transport and architecture and showed imagination and competence in their design, making and appreciation of art forms. They co-operated to produce working drawings and plans. They were working on 3-D sculptures of space age fashion models, design transport and architectural structures.
138. Class management is very good and a positive working atmosphere is created. Students reflect and evaluate their progress after four weeks and set targets for the completion of the work. Clear challenging time targets and expectations about the pace, amount and quality of the work to be produced contributes to a positive working atmosphere. Students complete their own assessment feedback sheet, which gives them the opportunity to reflect on their own work and identify areas for improvement. Both students and teachers complete the assessment profiles which provide a clear guide and record of achievement.

139. Resources are very good overall, and the opportunity for students to use computers in art enriches the provision. The graphics suite enables students to develop their skills in information and communication technology and develop awareness and competence in designing graphic images and researching information for personal study. The imaginative way the graphics suite has been designed helps to create a stimulating environment. Reference books in the library are constantly used and provide good opportunities for students to extend their research and independent study skills. Visits to local and international art galleries in Paris and Amsterdam and the involvement of previous students who have pursued a career in art all help to raise cultural knowledge and awareness.
140. The head of department is committed, enthusiastic and provides very good leadership. He leads by example and the quality of his leadership is a major factor in the high standards achieved. Three teachers, who all share the same aims and objectives, and are dedicated and clear about their work, support him in his work. They all provide good role models and exude enthusiasm coupled with competent teaching skills, challenging students and demanding high standards of work.
141. Since the last inspection attainment has improved. New courses have been introduced for students wishing to study A-level and GNVQ courses at either intermediate or advanced level. The quality of exploration, investigation and experimentation has improved and is now a strength. Good links have been made with design technology. Improved resources have had a very good impact on the quality of research thus developing students independent research skills. Since the last inspection, all teachers involved in the teaching of art and design have received training in information and communication technology. This is having a positive impact on the quality of graphic images produced and students' knowledge and awareness of this aspect in relation to art and design. The teachers have worked hard to create a stimulating environment in all classrooms. However, the size of the rooms is cramped for large classes of over thirty and there is a need for some refurbishment. The quality of teaching has improved from good to very good.

Points for further action

142. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
- improving accommodation in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

143. The design and technology department offers a broad curriculum covering food, graphics, resistant materials and textiles. In Years 7-9, these are taught on a carousel arrangement so that all students experience the range of aspects over the course of Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, the subjects are offered separately and include child development.
144. In the most recent GCSE examinations, results were much improved in food technology with two-thirds of students gaining a higher grade pass. Results in all other technology subjects were worse in 1999 than 1998. Results for boys were particularly low and this has led to their achievement being targeted in future years. For example, through coursework being taken in "bite-size" chunks and handed in for assessment regularly. The work currently being undertaken in Years 10 and 11 is of a satisfactory standard overall and some of the finished products should gain good marks when assessed for GCSE.
145. At the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessments show about four out of five students achieving the expected standard. Some completed work in Year 9 is of high quality. In lessons, students are generally better at making than designing, although there is good quality planning and evaluation of work in all years. Teachers ensure that students evaluate their finished products carefully and learn from experience how to improve their future work. Students with special educational needs respond well to the challenge presented and higher achievers demonstrate greater capacity to analyse a problem and produce more original ideas. Most students understand the processes they undertake and many use equipment and tools with confidence.
146. In design and realisation work at A-level, students have clearly thought through the projects being undertaken and can explain the rationale for their choice of design. There is evidence of good use of computer-aided design and manufacture.
147. Teaching in design and technology is a strength. All lessons are at least satisfactory and nearly half are good or better. Students clearly enjoy their lessons and gain much from the way in which processes are explained through demonstration. Skilful questioning by experienced and knowledgeable staff engages students with the task and ensures they understand each stage of the design and making process.
148. Students are very aware of safety issues and handle equipment with care. This is due in large measure to the emphasis placed on safety by teachers. The workshop technician has served the school for many years and is a great asset to the department. Technical support in the food and textiles area is minimal.
149. Accommodation and related problems of health and safety continue to exist, particularly in workshops. Although some improvements to dust and fume extraction have been made recently, a permanent solution to the problem remains to be found. The location of fixed power machinery in main teaching areas presents a serious hazard, as does the general lack of storage space which results in raw materials and students' work cluttering the already limited workshop areas. The size of some teaching groups exceeds 20 and presents real difficulties for teachers in providing adequate supervision during practical work. Some of the workshop facilities are not conducive to technology teaching in the 21st century and would benefit from a substantial programme of investment, including better access to ICT.
150. The department works more closely as a team than in previous years and is developing

a more corporate identity. Specialists in the contributory subjects are seeking to address issues together and good progress is being made. However, the need to review management structures and responsibilities across the technology team remains. There is a need to further develop schemes of work to support the new national curriculum and improve the match of work to students' abilities.

Points for further action

151. **Urgent attention should be given to the health and safety issues identified in this report.**
152. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
 - the development of schemes of work to support the new national curriculum;
 - the delivery of aspects of technology such as systems and control;
 - improving the match of work to students' abilities; and
 - continuing to monitor the new assessment procedures.

GEOGRAPHY

153. Achievement in geography is good. The most recent results at GCSE are well above the national average. This reflects good progress through the examination course, although students taking geography did not quite match the very good progress found across the school. Over the last four years, students' performance in geography has not improved at quite the same rate as it has in the majority of subjects. GCSE results for girls are much better than those for boys and the gap is greater than that found in most schools. However, geography attracts a higher proportion of more able girls, so the rate of progress and levels of achievement for boys and girls are similar.
154. The first group of ten A-Level geography students achieved satisfactory results compared to their GCSE performance and typical progress in other schools. Other comparisons are of limited value with one set of results from a small group of students, but A-Level results are in line with national averages.
155. Inspection indicates that the majority of students at the end of Key Stage 3 attain levels which are in line with national expectations and a minority attain above this. The very good achievement of lower ability students and those with special educational needs is a great credit to the department. Published teacher assessments at Key Stage 3 are well above levels awarded nationally, but the department has recognised that the assessment process by which these levels were arrived at needs to be reviewed.
156. During the inspection, students were observed to make good progress overall and are developing a range of skills and competencies. Of particular note are the opportunities students have to develop fieldwork skills. Fieldwork develops through the school with students being given increasing independence in choosing areas for investigation and methods to employ. The recent contribution of fieldwork equipment from the Parent Teacher Association has made a significant impact on the quality of this work. In fieldwork, the enquiry process is well established. Whilst still at an early stage, the department is developing the use of information and communication technology to aid enquiry. There are encouraging examples of individual students' work across the school that demonstrates good levels of achievement both in terms of geography and ICT. The department has recognised the need to build on these. Through geography, the key skills of literacy and numeracy are encouraged. Again, the department has responded well to whole school requirements, but recognises the need to take things

further.

157. During the inspection week, the great majority of students were keen and eager to learn. They worked well in individual, group and whole class activities and showed respect and warmth towards their teachers and each other. A small minority, mainly boys, in the middle part of the school, were less committed to their work and at times their behaviour was poor. They were managed effectively, but more consideration needs to be given to ways of stimulating their interest and increasing their motivation.
158. The quality of teaching is nearly always satisfactory with nearly half the teaching being good or very good. A particular strength of the teaching is the extensive up-to-date geographical knowledge of the specialist teachers. For example, work on natural hazards was adapted to incorporate the recent Mozambique flood emergency. Teachers are able to draw on many different contexts to enrich their lessons, particularly through the use of well-chosen local examples. The department has responded very well to the different demands of teaching the subject to A-Level and content is presented to provide stimulus and challenge to the most able students. Across the school, the best lessons provide a good mix of activities and are completed at a brisk pace with opportunities for interaction between students and between students and teachers. In less successful lessons, teacher introductions and explanations are too long and there is insufficient attention to the different abilities in the class.
159. The subject benefits from good leadership by a well-established and dedicated head of department who is ably supported by a strong team. Geography planning is based on a published scheme that includes differentiated tasks and materials. The scheme has been adjusted in response to the student evaluations completed after each unit and has been enhanced by a wide range of resources. However, further consideration needs to be given to the balance between different approaches in geography. At the moment, the coverage of skills, knowledge and understanding and the relationship between them is not monitored or evaluated.
160. Marking is good. However, the department does not make good use of the statistical data on student performance. Target setting needs to be developed for both individual students and groups.
161. At the time of the inspection, geography accommodation was unsatisfactory and the poor decorative state was having an adverse effect on the image of the subject. The department was making the most of what was available and displays were used to aid learning. However, inadequate storage facilities, and work and display areas which were unsuitable for active independent learning limited teaching approaches. In addition, a significant amount of teaching was taking place in small, non-specialist rooms.

Points for further action

162. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
- methods of assessing and tracking student progress;
 - further developing geography's contribution to the core skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology;
 - evaluating the scheme of work to ensure that it reflects the different approaches to teaching geography;
 - ensuring a balance between the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding; and
 - improving accommodation.

HISTORY

163. Standards in history are excellent.
164. In 1999, the GCSE results were well above the national average. Students studying history did significantly better than in their other subjects and this has been the case over the last four years. Girls' results are better than boys, but both achieve well. GCSE students are academically well organised and able to select and use relevant information from differing sources. Course work, involving a survey of eighteenth and nineteenth century transport in Devon, is of very high quality. Students demonstrate a very good understanding of cause, consequences and significance.
165. The A-level results in 1999 were in line with the national average. This represents good achievement for these students who were the first A-level candidates in a newly established sixth form. Current sixth formers' historical skills are well developed. For example, when acting as defence or prosecution witnesses in a mock trial of Edward Seymour, students were able to analyse, to interpret and to use evidence skilfully to support an argument.
166. At the end of Key Stage 3, performance and achievement in history are also high. For example, students are able to work co-operatively and to produce their own scripts for effective role-play. They are able to carry out an historical enquiry and to draw information from different sources as when a Year 8 group studying the French Revolution wrote their own *cahier* using ICT skills to find and to present their historical information.
167. The standards gained are the result of sustained very good teaching. Teaching is never less than good and is very good in more than seven lessons in ten. Some teaching, particularly in the sixth form, is excellent. Teachers know their subject very well and employ a wide variety of strategies to ensure that well planned lessons advance the historical progress of all students. Teaching is clear and direct with pace and energy. It elicits an enthusiastic response from higher attaining groups and stimulates interest in lower attaining groups.
168. Lessons are meticulously prepared and classes well managed. Students understand what is expected of them. The approach at all levels is scholarly and close attention is paid to historical terminology. For example, lower attaining Year 8 students were able to point out anachronisms in an exercise. Students are encouraged to make up their own minds about controversial figures such as Oliver Cromwell and King John.
169. Teaching is pitched at the right level for each class. A volatile group of Year 7 students,

including a number with special educational needs, worked happily in groups and, with careful direction and the aid of a very good handout, succeeded in distinguishing between the real causes of The Black Death and those assumed by contemporaries. For the able child, differentiation is usually by outcome but good differentiated materials are also produced in the department. Project work is a strength and, for example, three differing booklets enable all Year 8 students from the highest to lowest levels of attainment to complete projects on Tudor England.

170. At Key Stage 4, the advance planning of lesson content and the detailed GCSE revision programme enable students to organise their examination preparation efficiently.
171. Sixth form teaching is an interesting blend of precise academic information, using the most recent historical thinking, and progressive teaching methods. Students' concentration is intense and their contributions to the lessons are informed and succinct. An excellent A-level handbook gives students a very secure path to follow. Good relationships between students and with teachers contribute to successful teaching and learning.
172. Information and communication technology is used very effectively. The department has established its own Intranet to ensure the efficient use of historical sources in electronic form.
173. Excellent leadership and management underpin very good teaching and standards. An efficient and well-organised head of department is supported by a team of well-qualified and highly motivated teachers. A departmental self-review programme means that teaching is regularly monitored and its progress measured against well-written schemes of work. Thorough and constructively critical marking, careful assessment and target setting, and precise recording and evaluation sheets keep students informed of their progress and give them a strong sense of security. The subject is well resourced. Trips and visits are a strength both in historical and social terms.
174. Since the last inspection, new teaching methods, more differentiated work and procedures for the assessment and monitoring of teaching and learning have been successfully introduced. The department makes a good contribution to students' proficiency in literacy. The use of ICT to develop students' historical skills is very good.
175. The history department is progressive and forward looking, receptive to change, committed to improving students' academic performance and to ensuring their enjoyment of the subject. It demands the best from its students and in return provides a safe and creative learning environment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

176. Information and communication technology (ICT) is offered at advanced, GCSE and RSA levels. At GCSE, information technology is offered as a combined course with business studies. Provision for students not following examination courses in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 3, all students study ICT in each of the years.
177. 1999 GCSE results were well below the national average and students taking IT and business studies did not do as well as they did in their other subjects. This is a cause for concern. However, there are indications that current standards for students on this course, as judged from lesson observations and the scrutiny of assessed work, are in line with the national average.
178. RSA computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) is followed by a group of students, around half of whom have learning difficulties recognised through Individual Education Plans. The completion rates for the units that contribute to this award are variable across the group, but indicate that a reasonable proportion of students should gain the Part 1 award in this subject.
179. For those students who do not follow an information technology examination course in Key Stage 4, the provision for ICT is unsatisfactory and does not meet National Curriculum requirements. The planned opportunities to use ICT in subjects are patchy. Students who are following courses in history, art, music or design and technology are likely to use ICT at some stage in their studies, but generally, the ICT skills acquired by students during Key Stage 3 are not significantly applied to learning at Key Stage 4. The school recognises that this is a cause for concern and has plans to address it in the next academic year.
180. Results for the first A-level group in 1999 were well below the national average. However, the current standard of work of students suggests levels of attainment at least in line with the national average.
181. The attainment of the current Year 9 students is close to national expectations overall. However, the progress made by Year 9 students across this Key Stage has been slower than the progress now seen by students in Years 7 and 8.
182. By the end of Key Stage 3, the majority of students can use a spreadsheet to model the costs for a business. They can search a database using different criteria and enter and change values. They can use IT to create and alter images in their art lessons, and use data-logging equipment in science. They can create a newspaper, using desk-top-publishing techniques and sources from the school Intranet, in history. They can also create a presentation built from text and clip art images.
183. Overall, ICT teaching is good. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and is good in two-thirds of lessons. Teaching in Key Stage 3 ICT lessons is satisfactory and sometimes very good. Teaching on the combined IT and business studies course is never less than good and sometimes very good. In the sixth form, the teaching of computing is at least satisfactory and sometimes very good.

184. An example of very good teaching was seen in a Year 8 lesson. The lesson was planned in depth with good materials and exemplars available on the network. The use of part-completed sentences aided the understanding of weaker students. All students were able to make good progress and showed a high degree of confidence in using a number of different computer programs.
185. Overall, the areas of weakness identified in the last inspection report have not been improved upon and, in relation to the level of IT provision, the position has deteriorated.
186. In the last inspection in 1994, results in IT at Key Stage 4 were well above the national average. The most recent results in this subject show that attainment has fallen to well below the national average. Significant shortcomings were noted in information technology as part of the National Curriculum and the school at that time did not comply fully with statutory requirements. This has to a large extent been addressed at Key Stage 3, but at Key Stage 4 the use of IT within subjects is still underdeveloped.
187. In 1994, the provision of ICT resources was reported as generally good. However, the investment in ICT has not kept pace with the growth of the school and ICT provision is now a poor feature of the school, with only half the national average number of computers.
188. There is an excellent ICT area integrated into the library, which is used to teach IT courses. Part of this area is used by sixth formers and provides Internet access. The computers are well used by students before school, at break and lunchtime. There is a specialist IT room. Further ICT resources are situated in the art department and the design and technology department, with some older computers in the mathematics department. Available ICT resources are well managed and supported by an able technician.
189. In 1994, the need was identified for greater use of IT in teaching and learning. This is still the case.
190. The school is about to take on further ICT resources under the Government's National Grid for Learning scheme and introduce a training programme for all staff under a national training scheme. These two initiatives should provide a basis for addressing the current deficiencies in ICT.

Points for further action

191. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
 - improving examination performance at 16 and 18;
 - ways of increasing provision for information and communication technology to at least the national averages;
 - increasing the effective use of information and communication technology across the curriculum; and
 - ensuring that statutory requirements in information and communication technology at Key Stage 4 are met.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

192. At St Cuthbert Mayne School, French is taught to all students in Year 7 and this continues as their main foreign language throughout Key Stage 3. German is introduced in Year 8 to students of higher ability. Numbers of students choosing to study German to GCSE level are increasing. Both languages are also offered in the sixth form to advanced level.
193. Standards in French were below national averages in 1999, having been in line with or above averages in previous years. The performance of both boys and girls was worse than in most other subjects. The first cohort of A-level students studying languages all achieved a pass. The results of the small number of students taking German in recent years have been good.
194. At Key Stage 4, most students studying for GCSE display a good attitude to their work and respond well to the challenge presented by the course. The standard of listening and reading comprehension and their range of vocabulary are good, particularly in the top sets. Many students have a sound recall of previously learned structures and phrases. However, lower achieving students find the GCSE course very demanding and a substantial number display a lack of interest in, and engagement with, the subject.
195. At the end of Key Stage 3, students are achieving a satisfactory standard overall. Teacher assessments show almost two-thirds of students reaching the expected level or better. In lessons observed in Years 7 to 9, some work was seen of high quality, especially in top sets. Students' listening and speaking skills are well developed and good progress is made in learning new words and phrases. Attitudes to learning are generally good. In German, where students start in Year 8, progress is very substantial and many achieve standards normally expected from students starting the language in Year 7. This is due to the high quality of teaching they receive which compensates to a large extent for the low time allocation to the language.
196. The very small number of students taking French at A-level are producing some work of a good standard and oral skills are being well developed by the native-speaking supply teacher.
197. Teaching in both languages is never less than satisfactory, and good or very good in half the lessons. A particular strength is the confident use of the foreign language by teachers, often supported by mime or the use of English in parallel. This enables students to understand new words quickly and encourages their own speaking. Other strong features include good use of repetition and questioning to reinforce new vocabulary and aid pronunciation, and good management of classes. Two language teachers, including the head of department, were absent during the inspection and classes were covered by supply staff. In one case, students' progress in those covered classes was slower than elsewhere. As students move through the school, there is more emphasis on the passive skills of listening and reading than on active use of the language by speaking and writing. In order to improve standards throughout the school, the balance of emphasis between these skills in each year should be considered.
198. Students benefit from access to a French assistant who works mainly with small groups for intensive oral practice. This is particularly helpful for those preparing for

examinations. More use could be made of the assistant working alongside teachers in class, modelling language structures and supporting pair or group work.

199. Visits and exchanges to France are a valuable part of the school's language provision and are enthusiastically supported by students.
200. Languages continue to suffer from the long-term absence of the head of department. No second-in-charge has been identified. Consequently, this area of the curriculum lacks leadership and direction. The efforts made by teachers in the department to sustain continuity and progression by students are to be applauded. Schemes of work are not used to support their teaching and guidance is needed on teaching languages to students of all abilities. Consideration should be given to alternatives to the full GCSE course at Key Stage 4, especially for those students who find the complexities of language at that level too difficult. The department should also be planning ahead for the new curriculum in September 2000.
201. Since the previous inspection, some progress has been made on improving question and answer activities in class and the regularity of homework. The quality of marking is now good: work is marked and graded regularly and comments are written in the foreign language and English.

Points for further action

202. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
 - securing robust and energetic leadership for the department;
 - the use of good schemes of work to support teaching and learning;
 - ensuring appropriate provision for students of all abilities, particularly in Key Stage 4;
 - ensuring the right balance between speaking, listening, reading and writing; and
 - the way in which language assistants are used.

MUSIC

203. Standards at Key Stage 4 have been rising and the results in GCSE for 1999 were well above the national average. Students make good use of information technology when composing and many students have instrumental skills, which contribute to their performing ability. Listening skills are good and students are able to discuss musical ideas and concepts using the technical vocabulary of the subject.
204. A small number of students are taking A-level this year. The students' analysis of set works is sophisticated and students are able to discuss with confidence aspects such as melody and motif, form and texture.
205. Standards at Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. Listening skills are good and students are developing the ability to evaluate their own work as well as that of others. Many students demonstrate confidence when performing and composing and show good concentration when engaged in these activities.

206. Music teaching is good. Half the teaching is good or better and only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen during the inspection week. The good teaching is reflected in students' attitudes to learning. They are often excellent with students working co-operatively and discussing their work.
207. In very good lessons, good subject knowledge is put across clearly in a way all students can understand and the teacher provides a good musical role model. Students know what they can reasonably be expected to achieve and are challenged to think through prompts during brisk whole class activities. Learning is supported by demonstrations, playing with a group and giving vocal examples. The effect of all of this is to develop a keen interest by the students, excellent behaviour and sustained concentration.
208. A Year 9 lesson on film music had many of the features of good teaching. Musical vocabulary was developed building on prior knowledge and using classroom displays. Keywords were explained and students were used as 'props' to demonstrate how a tie works. Those having instrumental lessons were encouraged to perform and compose on their instruments, adding to the range of resources available to the group. The progress made and standard of work were very good.
209. Students in lower ability groups, including those with a special educational need, are well supported. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, visual aids and the careful selection of instruments were used to explain, demonstrate and explore chords. Good opportunities were provided for students to think for themselves, ask and answer questions and engage in practical activities.
210. Students studying A-level and GCSE are able to develop their musical understanding through presentations to others in the group. A good example was seen in a Year 11 lesson with a discussion and demonstration on the features of the whole tone scale whilst in Year 12, an in depth study of *The Dream of Gerontius* provided evidence of more detailed understanding.
211. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, over-lengthy explanations and lack of clarity as to what could reasonably be achieved contributed to students making slow progress.
212. The department has strong leadership and is well managed. The development plan identifies appropriate areas for development. Examination results are analysed and targets are set for each year group which are made known to the students.
213. Extra-curricular activities are a strength of the department. There is a good range of instrumental provision which supports a variety of instrumental groups and choirs. The pace of choir rehearsals is quick and very good teaching and vocal skills are evident. Concerts, both within school and at outside events, are a regular feature and the quality of performance is high.
214. The department has made good progress since the last inspection as is evident by the improved results at GCSE. It has done this in spite of poor accommodation which limits the development of the subject.

Points for further action

215. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
- developing schemes of work which make learning objectives explicit and provide criteria for assessment; and
 - the further development of information and communication technology.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

216. Overall, attainment in physical education (PE) is broadly in line with national expectations.
217. The GCSE results for the physical education option group in 1999 were well below national averages for grades A* to C, mainly because the attainment of boys was poor. Girls' attainment in GCSE was broadly in line with national averages. In order to improve results, the department now offers a narrower range of activities and concentrates more attention on students at the D/C border.
218. By the age of sixteen, attainment is in line with national expectation in the core lessons taken by all students. The time allocation for core PE of one lesson per week at Key Stage 4 has an impact on standards as there is insufficient time to develop activities in more depth.
219. The A-level results for the first cohort of students taking the examination in 1999 were outstanding with all students attaining a pass. The present A-level students know and understand the physiological effects of exercise on the heart and can analyse graphs comparing different people.
220. A small number of sixth form students are taking the CSLA (Community Sports Leader Award) and plan activities for the sixth form afternoon of recreational activities.
221. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is slightly below national expectations. By the end of the Key Stage, most students have not mastered basic skills in javelin and cricket but attainment in rounders is at the expected level. All lessons are 50 minutes long and the loss of time for changing and organisation of equipment leaves insufficient time to develop the depth of work needed.
222. Students achieve highly in local, regional and national competitive sports, especially in basketball, cricket, soccer, orienteering and athletics. There are annual dance and gymnastics performances of a high standard.
223. Standards of teaching and learning in the department are generally good. The teaching in seven out of ten lessons is good or better and one-third of teaching is very good or excellent. In A-level classes, teaching and the attitudes and behaviour of students are very good. In most lessons, teachers have secure knowledge, plan lessons with clear objectives, organise equipment and students well, use a range of teaching styles and give clear instructions and explanations. Teachers have good relationships with students, manage them well, and have high expectations for behaviour, kit and safety.

224. As a result of good teaching, students' attitudes and behaviour are good. They keep on task and are interested in their work. Students can work effectively in pairs and groups and take responsibility for their own learning when given the opportunity. However, only occasionally do teachers, for example, give students responsibility to lead warm-ups and stretches or to devise their own strategies.
225. Teachers sometimes cater for the less able students by planning suitably different tasks, but students would benefit from the use of more varied equipment that allows them to achieve at their own level.
226. On the very rare occasion that a lesson is not satisfactory, students are given insufficient time to practice skills, and the organisation of groups and time means that they are inactive for too long. As a result, they chatter through explanations and shout out spontaneously.
227. The head of department is developing leadership skills. The department has produced schemes of work for all activities with clear objectives and criteria for assessment. However, there is sometimes a mismatch between the plans, which are developmental and lead students to understanding principles, tactics and strategies, and the actual lessons which focuses on basic skills and techniques even at the end of Key Stage 3. The programme offered to boys at Key Stage 3 is unbalanced with an over-reliance on games, especially with four invasion games being taught.
228. At present, there is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning and systems need to be developed in order to focus on raising standards of attainment. An assessment policy and procedures are in place but there is no on-going assessment to inform planning and judgements made at the end of units. GCSE assessments are standardised and A-level and GCSE teachers meet regularly to discuss progress.
229. Resources are just about adequate. However, accommodation limits the range of activities that can be taught and changing rooms and staff accommodation are very poor. The department does not use ICT in core lessons but there is some use of video equipment and CD-ROMs in examination classes.
230. Extra-curricular activities are a strength of the department with activities open to all students. Relationships within the department are very good. There are good links with primary schools and with several local clubs.
231. Since the last inspection, a wider range of teaching styles has been introduced and the pace of lessons and students' participation has improved. Schemes of work have been updated, but need revising for the new national curriculum. The gymnasium is fully operational.

Points for further action

232. To take the subject further, consideration should be given to:
- improving results in GCSE PE;
 - increasing time available for PE to allow for activities to be developed in depth;
 - developing systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching to ensure that the scheme of work is fully implemented;
 - improving on-going assessment; and
 - improving accommodation.