

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE HARVEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

Folkestone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118805

Headteacher: Mr John Edwards

Reporting inspector: Mr Anthony Shield  
3569

Dates of inspection: 28 Feb – 3 March 2000

Inspection number: 184081

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Cheriton Road Folkestone Kent
Postcode:	CT19 5JY
Telephone number:	01303 252131
Fax number:	01303 220721
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T. Greening
Date of previous inspection:	December 1994

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Anthony Shield	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
Joy Buncher	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> <p>Accommodation</p>
Bernard Treacy	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Ray Jardine	Team inspector	Science	Assessment
Haydn Webb	Team inspector	Design technology Information technology	
Felicity Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	History Religious education	
Brenda Loydell	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	

Jo Peach	Team inspector	Modern Foreign languages	Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Roger Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education	Staffing Learning resources
John Ayerst	Team inspector	Art Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Harvey Grammar School is a selective boys' grammar school, educating pupils in the 11-18 range. There are 863 boys on roll, including 197 in the sixth form. Many pupils travel considerable distances to school. Most pupils come from socially advantaged backgrounds, although Shepway district is characterised by pockets of higher than average social deprivation. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below average. Five pupils have statements of SEN for physical disabilities. On entry, pupils' attainment overall is above average, although the school offers places to a wider ability range than is the case in other Kent grammar schools.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good and effective school. Well above average standards in most subjects are promoted by committed and hard-working teachers and good teaching throughout the school. Overall most pupils achieve as well as might be expected, despite pockets of underachievement in some subjects. Experienced and thoughtful leadership offers the school stability and a clear sense of purpose. Management at all levels is effective in promoting high standards and a good sense of personal responsibility and maturity amongst the pupils. The school offers good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Promotes very good standards through effective teaching
- Encourages pupils' enthusiasm, interest and involvement in school; a commitment to learning; and a sense of maturity and personal responsibility
- Provides very good opportunities for social development
- Encourages very good relationships between pupils themselves and between pupils and staff
- Provides a very wide and interesting range of extra-curricular activities, particularly within sport and team games
- Makes very effective links with the community and ensures they make a strong contribution to pupils' learning

#### **What could be improved**

- The quality of development planning which should be linked more closely to a review of standards and achievement
- The quality and consistency of the monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development by form tutors
- The consistent use of assessment and performance data to inform planning and set learning goals in different subjects
- The assessment and monitoring of the progress of non-examination pupils in information technology during Key Stage 4
- The quality and consistency of reports to parents

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in December 1994

Standards in tests at the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations have risen since the time of the last inspection, although no faster than the improving national trend. Over the last three years, Key Stage 3 results overall in National Curriculum tests, and the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE have been within the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. At A-level, standards have risen from the average points score of 17.3 in 1994 to 19.2 in 1999, well above the national average.

The quality of teaching has also improved. The percentage of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced from 10 per cent to 5 per cent while the percentage of good, very good and excellent teaching has increased from 55 per cent at the time of the previous inspection to 63 per cent now.

Good progress has been made in relation to the key issue identified last time concerning the delegation of responsibility to middle managers; Heads of department are now held accountable for the work of their teams, although the quality of their leadership and management is not consistently good; line management structures have been strengthened through regular meetings between senior and middle managers. Monitoring and review systems are now much more rigorous and effective.

Good progress has been made in improving the accommodation. Improvements have been made in physical education in particular, which was an issue at the last inspection. Building work to improve the accommodation for art and science was being carried out during the inspection.

Departments which have made good improvement since the last inspection include: mathematics, design technology, information technology, art and physical education.

## 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
Key Stage 3 tests	A*	A*	A*	C
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A	D
A-levels/AS-levels	C	A	A	

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

Standards in English, mathematics and science overall in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 have consistently been within the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, although in 1999 pupils' results in English were not quite as high as in mathematics and science. Standards in GCSE examinations have also been very high or well above average over the last three years. A-level results improved significantly in 1998 and the school sustained this well above average level in 1999.

In comparison with other grammar schools, the results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were average, while GCSE results were below average. However, available comparisons with all selective schools are of doubtful value given that selection procedures vary in different parts of the country, and the proportion of boys admitted at the Harvey Grammar School is between 25 and 30 per cent of the age cohort; a much wider ability range than in other grammar schools.

Inspectors found little evidence of underachievement in the current work of pupils at the school, although there is some underachievement amongst lower attaining pupils in science, higher attaining pupils in French and German during Key Stage 4 and most pupils in Key Stage 3 in music. There was some underachievement in science and geography in GCSE in 1999, which brought down the school's overall results. Given the wide ability range of pupils on entry to the school in Year 7, pupils' achievements at the end of Key Stage 3 are at least satisfactory and, in many, cases good.

The school's GCSE targets for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\*-C grades in 2000 are challenging, yet realistic. The school is on course to meet its targets.

In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 in all subjects except music were above expectations and in English, mathematics, science, design technology (DT), information



technology (IT) and religious education (RE) were well above expectations. In music, standards just meet expectations. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards are very high in mathematics, well above expectations in English, science, DT, IT and music, above expectations in history, geography, art, physical education (PE) and RE, and in line with expectations in modern foreign languages. In the sixth form, standards in work seen were above average in all A-level subjects and in geography and PE, they were well above.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school operates as a pleasant and orderly community.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school.
Attendance	Excellent. Attendance is very high in comparison with other schools, and the rate of unauthorised absence is well below the national average.

Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school, and show interest and involvement in their learning and in a range of other activities in school. They are considerate of each other and mostly sensitive to each other's needs; they obey school rules and support school values. Pupils develop a maturity and sense of responsibility. Much of this is because of the strong framework of very good relationships, which exists throughout the school, both between pupils themselves and, particularly, between staff and pupils. Pupils arrive promptly at school and exhibit an urgency to move to lessons on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	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.*

Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in just over ninety-four per cent of lessons observed during the inspection. In just under thirty per cent it was very good or excellent. Teaching is consistently good through the school, although there is more very good and excellent teaching in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Overall, just nine lessons (nearly six per cent) were judged to be unsatisfactory. However, seven of these were in just two subjects –French and music. No poor teaching was observed.

The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form and good in Key Stage 4. In mathematics teaching is good throughout the school, and in science teaching is satisfactory up to Year 11 and good in the sixth form. Teaching is particularly effective in design technology, information technology, history, geography, physical education and religious education, but there are weaknesses in music in Key Stage 3.

Strengths of the teaching include good subject knowledge and understanding, which contributes to high expectations and levels of challenge; the setting of clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils; the range of methods and activities used which ensure pupils engage enthusiastically with the tasks set; and some excellent opportunities provided for independent learning, particularly in

IT and PE. Weaknesses include lessons where the teacher talks too much and limits opportunities for pupils to learn and deepen their understanding through active participation; where the focus is on knowledge and skills rather than on understanding; and where assessment is not used sufficiently to check understanding before moving on.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Some aspects of literacy are being addressed in most subjects, particularly the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary. Most teachers correct spelling mistakes but there is limited emphasis upon re-drafting work so as to improve its quality. Teachers reinforce numeracy skills well in lessons.

In general, pupils' learning closely matches the effectiveness of the teaching, and progress during most lessons is good. Pupils' good attitudes to learning ensure that for the most part, they try hard and work productively at a good pace. Pupils demonstrate a good ability to concentrate and develop their capacity to work independently through the school, so that by the time pupils reach the sixth form, most exercise considerable self-reliance and are able to work without supervision.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum has satisfactory breadth and balance, although at Key Stage 3 there are some imbalances. It meets statutory requirements. The time available for religious education in Key Stage 3 is not sufficient to meet fully the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The sixth form curriculum offers a good range of A-level subjects. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, and links with the community make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good arrangements for supporting pupils with special needs are made
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides particularly well for pupils' social development, and provision for moral and cultural development is also a strength. The school needs a more considered and coherent approach to spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are effective. The school provides a caring and supportive environment in which pupils feel valued. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance are satisfactory although the use of assessment data to guide planning is less effective.

Overwhelmingly, parents are supportive of the work of the school and with the academic and personal progress their children are making. In particular, parents value the good quality of teaching, the expectations made of their children, and the quality of leadership and management. Some parents are critical of the quality of information provided about their child's progress and some feel that the school does not work closely with them.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher	Good. Experienced and effective leadership offers the school stability and a clear sense of purpose

and other key staff	
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound. The governing body brings a good range of experience and expertise to the school's governance. Individual governors are committed and hardworking.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has a clear sense of its strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Educational priorities and developments are well supported through the school's financial planning

Governors and senior staff have worked effectively to maintain and improve expectations in all key areas of academic standards, the quality of teaching and the school's ethos. The senior management team works well together and provides a good model of management practice. Heads of department and heads of year promote high achievement through good planning and monitoring procedures. Identifying what works and ensuring it is discussed and used more widely is a strength of several departments. Senior teachers observe teaching in the classroom on a regular basis, and most heads of department observe the work of their teams.

The school receives good support from the governing body. The chair of governors works closely in partnership with the school management, in planning, setting priorities and monitoring progress towards them. Discussions at governing body meetings are thorough and challenging. Many governors make regular visits to the school and report back formally to the governing body.

The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses in performance. A rigorous analysis of examination performance within each department is carried out annually, and action taken to improve performance when necessary. The school improvement plan is carefully drawn up following extensive consultation. The quality of departmental plans is satisfactory, although not consistently so. In many cases, success criteria and the resources required are not defined with any precision.

The school's budget is carefully and prudently managed. Financial planning is good. The school is careful to ensure the cost effectiveness of its spending plans, and applies best value principles to the use of the school's resources.

There are adequate numbers of specialist teachers and support staff, and the match between experience, qualifications and subjects taught is good. Resources are satisfactory overall, although variable between departments. The school is well resourced with computers, which are well used. Accommodation is adequate, and new building work will considerably enhance the facilities.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent leadership</li> <li>• The personal development, self esteem and maturity of the boys</li> <li>• The overall standards of behaviour and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consistency of homework and its marking</li> <li>• The standardisation of marking across different subjects</li> </ul>

school uniform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The enthusiasm of teachers, their expertise and quality of teaching</li> <li>• The professionalism of all staff, including the office staff</li> <li>• The facilities at the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with parents on progress</li> <li>• A sixth form common room</li> </ul>
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Inspectors agree with the views of parents to a very large extent, although they found homework to be regularly set and by and large well designed to consolidate and build on work done in class. The school could do more to ensure that marking is standardised and understood by parents. Reports to parents are not consistently of a good standard.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. On entry, pupils' attainment is above average, although the ability range is wider than is found in many grammar schools. Literacy skills on entry, although still above average, are below those of non-verbal skills. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well below the national average, and they tend to have medical, physical, emotional and behavioural problems, rather than learning difficulties.
2. Standards in English, mathematics and science overall in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 have consistently been within the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, although in 1999 pupils' results in English were not quite as high as in mathematics and science. The trend in the school's average points score for all core subjects has been for results to be consistently very high in comparison with national figures.
3. In 1999, the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE (96.1 per cent) was very high in comparison with the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A\*-G grades (100 per cent) was also very high. In relation to the average points score, results were well above the national average, but very high in comparison with boys' results nationally. The improving trend in GCSE results has been broadly in line with the improving trend nationally. Standards in GCSE examinations have been consistently very high or well above average over the last three years.
4. The percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C grades at GCSE in English and mathematics in 1999 was very high in comparison with the national average, and in science the percentage was well above average. In comparison with other grammar schools, results in English were above average, in mathematics, results were very high, but in science, were very low. The underachievement of pupils in science in GCSE in 1999 has been recognised by the school, and is out of line with results from earlier years. Evidence from the inspection suggests that results in this year will be higher. In most other subjects, pupils did well in 1999, although there was underachievement by some pupils in geography.
5. The school's GCSE targets for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\*-C grades in 2000 are challenging yet realistic. The school is on course to meet its targets.
6. In 1999, the average points score of candidates entered for two or more A-levels (19.2) was well above the national average. Results improved significantly in 1998 and the school sustained this well above average level in 1999. Subjects that did well include geography, English, history, physics and biology, where a substantial proportion of pupils achieved A or B grades. In mathematics at A-level, there was some underachievement in 1999, although results in previous years have been very good, and inspection evidence suggests that pupils will do well this year.
7. Given the wide ability range of pupils on entry to the school in Year 7, pupils' achievements at the end of Key Stage 3 and at GCSE and A-level are at least satisfactory, and in many cases good. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils in the school.
8. In comparison with other grammar schools, the results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were average, while GCSE results were below average. However, inspectors found little evidence of underachievement in the current work of pupils at the school, although there is some underachievement amongst lower attaining pupils in science, higher attaining pupils in French and German during Key Stage 4, and most pupils in Key Stage 3 in music. There was some underachievement in science and geography at GCSE in 1999, which brought down the school's overall results.
9. All pupils identified as having special educational needs have programmes of specific help or support to address their needs. The standards they achieve are equivalent to those of other

pupils of the same prior attainment, once their particular problems have been identified and dealt with. Pupils work as well as others with appropriate support or treatment, such as the two Year 8 pupils with hearing and sight impairment, who work together well in the same class with the effective guidance of a learning support assistant.

10. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics, science, design technology (DT), information technology (IT) and religious education (RE) were well above expectations. In all other subjects except music, standards were above expectations. In music, standards just meet expectations. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards are well above expectations in English, mathematics, science, DT, IT and music, above expectations in history, geography, art, physical education (PE) and RE, and in line with expectations in modern foreign languages. In the sixth form, standards in work seen were above average in all A-level subjects and in geography and PE, they were well above.
11. In English, standards in work seen were well above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 and 4, and just above national expectations in the sixth form. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is a strength, and overall standards of literacy are well above the national average. Pupils are articulate, read with fluency, good expression and understanding and write clearly. The school has recently devised a literacy strategy to improve standards further in all subjects of the curriculum. At present it covers Year 7, but it is intended that it will be extended to the whole school. Some aspects of literacy are being addressed in most subjects, particularly the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils assimilate new words quickly and use them correctly in whole-class and group discussion. Ample opportunities are provided for pupils to produce extended writing. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for allowing pupils to write for different audiences. In science, for example, pupils' writing is mainly limited to writing reports on experiments and teachers do not consistently set projects which include argument and explanation. Most teachers correct spelling mistakes but there is limited emphasis upon re-drafting work, particularly in Key Stage 3, so as to improve its quality.
12. In mathematics, attainment in work seen was well above the levels expected at the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4. The standard of numeracy throughout the school is well above average, and particularly so in Key Stage 4. Teachers reinforce numeracy skills well in lessons but the teaching of numeracy skills is less well co-ordinated across subjects. The calculator is used well at appropriate times, without the reliance on it for straightforward calculations. Mental and estimating skills are encouraged across all subjects, for example, in a science lesson on reflection and refraction pupils' discussed the effect of the thickness of glass and the likely errors of measurement. However, good examples of the confident application of numeracy by pupils were observed in design technology, economics, geography and information technology.
13. In science, standards are well above national expectations at the end of both Key Stage 3 and 4, and above expectations in the sixth form. In all aspects of science, pupils achieve well. Good scientific knowledge is supported by a good understanding of key concepts and the skills to experiment with accuracy and draw conclusions from the results. In the sixth form, pupils' attainment in physics in particular is high.
14. Standards in art are above national expectations at the end of both key stages and the sixth form. Drawing and painting skills are good, and pupils work successfully in a variety of media and styles. A good knowledge and understanding of the work of other artists enables pupils to develop their own style in response.
15. In design and technology, attainment is well above expectations at the end of both key stages. Design briefs are carefully considered and often show considerable creative and imaginative thought. Practical and making skills are good and the quality of the finished product is often high. Evaluative skills are good.
16. In geography, attainment is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. In the sixth form, standards are well above expectations. Most pupils have good geographical knowledge and are able to explain processes and features. Some excellent work in the sixth form on the issues around the growth of urban development shows a perceptive understanding of a complex issue.

17. Standards in history are above expectations at the end of both key stages and in the sixth form. Pupils have a good knowledge of the main events and people of the periods studied, and many also have good skills to interpret and understand these events. They use source materials well to research ideas and are aware that history may be seen from more than one perspective.
18. In information technology, standards are well above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. For those pupils studying IT at GCSE standards remain well above expectations at the end of Key Stage 4, but even for those not following a formal course in IT, attainment is satisfactory. In the sixth form standards for those pupils taking the GCSE short course and A-level course are good. Pupils use computers confidently. They use a range of applications in different subjects, are familiar with the Internet and e-mail.
19. In modern foreign languages, attainment is above expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 in French, German and Italian. Standards just meet expectations at the end of Key Stage 4, and are above expectations in the sixth form. Pupils mostly have a good vocabulary and can understand spoken and written language. However, many are much less confident in using the language themselves. Only a few high attaining pupils use complex language and express their opinions clearly by the end of Year 11. Sixth form pupils speak with reasonable fluency and write accurately.
20. In music, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 meet national expectations, but given the prior attainment of pupils, there is underachievement in Years 7 – 9. While pupils sing reasonably, their performing and composing skills are not well developed. Attainment for the small number of pupils who study music at GCSE and A-level is well above expectations. Many of these pupils are skilled instrumentalists and bring high levels of musicianship to their skills in composing and musical analysis.
21. In physical education, attainment is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, while it is well above at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils have good skills and awareness of health and fitness related issues. Many show good tactical understanding in games, and the school is successful at inter-school and county level.
22. Standards in religious education are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages, despite the limited time available for teaching RE. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of different faiths and are able to relate religious principles to contemporary social and moral issues. Work of some of the older pupils displays considerable depth of thought and reflection

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

23. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good, and the high standards mentioned in the previous report have been maintained. Pupils are very enthusiastic about coming to school, and show a keen interest and involvement in their learning and in a range of other activities in school. Many work hard and have good powers of concentration. Pupils are proud of their school, and parents report that their children like school and enjoy coming.
24. The behaviour of pupils both within the classroom and around the school is good and this has a positive effect on the quality of learning and standards of achievement. Most parents agree that behaviour is good. Seven pupils have been excluded temporarily during the last year. Inspectors noted no evidence of bullying and pupils and parents report that incidents are rare and dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are considerate of each other and mostly sensitive to each other's needs. The school operates as a pleasant and orderly community, and pupils obey school rules and support school values.
25. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school, and as pupils move through the school, they develop a maturity and sense of responsibility. Much of this is because of the strong framework of good relationships, which exists throughout the school, both between pupils themselves and particularly between staff and pupils. When working together, pupils demonstrate an understanding and willingness to listen to each other's viewpoints.

26. Attendance is very high in comparison with other schools, and the rate of unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Pupils arrive promptly at school and exhibit an urgency to move to lessons on time.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

27. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in just over ninety-four per cent of lessons observed during the inspection. In just under thirty per cent it was very good or excellent. Teaching is consistently good through the school, although there is more very good and excellent teaching in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Overall, nine lessons (nearly six per cent) were judged to be unsatisfactory. However, seven of these were in just two subjects – French and music. No poor teaching was observed.
28. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form and good in Key Stage 4. In mathematics, teaching is good throughout the school, and in science, teaching is satisfactory up to Year 11 and good in the sixth form. Teaching is particularly effective in design technology, information technology, history, geography, physical education and religious education, but there are weaknesses in music in Key Stage 3.
29. Strengths of the teaching include good subject knowledge and understanding which contributes to high expectations and levels of challenge; the setting of clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils; the range of methods and activities used which ensure pupils engage enthusiastically with the tasks set; and some excellent opportunities provided for independent learning, particularly in IT and PE. Some interactive teaching methods motivate pupils and prompt them to think more deeply. Teachers often use questions effectively both to engage and deepen understanding as well as to check the progress of individual pupils.
30. Many examples of effective teaching and learning were observed. For example:
- In a very good Year 8 English lesson, pupils increased their capacity to read and understand poetry, through teaching which was demanding and maintained a good pace. Opportunities for pupils to participate through both speaking and listening were provided both in group work and with the whole class. The content was both relevant and challenging and the pupils' ability to analyse and use appropriate language was enhanced through very effective teaching.
  - In a very good mathematics lesson observed in Year 10 on standard deviation, pupils made very good progress as a consequence of teaching which established clear objectives and communicated these to the pupils. A review of previous learning established the context and enabled pupils to build effectively on what they already knew. Newly learnt skills were practised, and understanding consolidated through a range of well-chosen activities. The teacher assessed progress through good use of questions.
  - In a Year 11 GCSE practical lesson in physical education, pupils' football skills, tactical understanding and awareness of space, and their ability to analyse faults, were considerably developed through excellent teaching. Pupils were given the responsibility for taking the warm-up session themselves. The teacher's well planned lesson set high expectations, shared the lesson objectives and challenged all pupils to improve and be self analytical. Good opportunities were provided for pupils themselves to plan in small groups and to practise skills. The work rate was high throughout.
31. Very few lessons are unsatisfactory. However, some lessons are less effective than others in ensuring good learning and progress. Sometimes this is because the teacher talks too much and limits opportunities for pupils to learn and deepen their understanding through active participation; where the focus is on knowledge and skills rather than on understanding; and where assessment is not used sufficiently to check understanding before moving on. In some subjects, less effective teaching is characterised by a lack of opportunity for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and to pose questions. Although planning is generally of a good quality, where



learning in lessons was less marked, it was sometimes because the planning did not take account of the range of ability in the class. Extension work to challenge the more talented and able pupils is not always set. Marking is of an inconsistent quality, though satisfactory overall. The best was seen in some sixth form work and GCSE course work. Here marking is often detailed, gives the pupil a clear indication of the standard of work produced and what might be done to improve. However, some marking is superficial and offers no indication or guidance on what should be improved.

32. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Some aspects of literacy are being addressed in most subjects, particularly the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary. Most teachers correct spelling mistakes but there is limited emphasis upon re-drafting work so as to improve its quality. Teachers reinforce numeracy skills well in lessons.
33. In general, pupils' learning closely matches the effectiveness of the teaching, and progress during most lessons is good. Pupils' good attitudes to learning ensure that for the most part, they try hard and work productively at a good pace. Pupils demonstrate a good ability to concentrate and develop their capacity to work independently through the school, so that by the time pupils reach the sixth form, they exercise considerable self-reliance and are able to work without supervision.
34. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. All teachers are aware of the specific learning needs of pupils on the register. Individual education plans are readily available and used effectively to plan specific learning targets. Support and guidance is appropriately given in lessons.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

35. The school's curriculum meets requirements and has satisfactory breadth and balance at all key stages, although the time for religious education is insufficient to ensure that the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are fully met in depth. The taught week of 25 hours is in line with recommendations. National Curriculum requirements are met in all subjects. Satisfactory provision is made for the promotion of literacy and numeracy across the school.
36. The personal and social and health programme is well designed and taught effectively through the school. Arrangements for careers and work-related education are good.
37. At Key Stage 3, the allocation of time for subjects changes from year to year, which constrains pupils' progress in some subjects. The proportion of time for science increases in Year 9 so that separate sciences can be taught, while time for religious education and music is reduced. Time for modern foreign languages is above average because it is designed to provide for two languages from Year 8 onwards.
38. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, provision matches the needs of pupils well. Provision at Key Stage 4 for less academic boys is made through design and technology, a GCSE course in physical education and media studies. For those who wish to follow a less academic sixth form, course arrangements are made at partner institutions. At Harvey, sixth form provision is limited to A-level courses and a general studies course. Religious education for sixth form pupils is satisfactorily provided through termly religious education conventions held over a day, which pupils are obliged to attend.
39. Equality of access and opportunity is good. All pupils with special educational needs have the same access to the curriculum as others, including PE. One pupil who is wheelchair-bound is able to move around most parts of the school. No GCSE or A-level options are denied to pupils with special educational needs. Good, after school extra-curricular opportunities are offered to pupils identified with spelling problems, through the spelling and scrabble clubs. Learning support assistants are available to offer help or support before school and during the lunch-time.

40. Issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been satisfactorily dealt with, except for the amount of time available for religious education, although this is currently under consideration. Time for physical education has increased and is now good. A governors' curriculum committee meets twice a year to monitor the curriculum and standards.
41. The school provides very good opportunities for its pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities and pupils support most of the activities well. In sport there is excellent provision and most boys respond with enthusiasm. Pupils perform successfully at local, regional, national and international level and the school has won the Sports' Council 'Sportsmark' award. Most subjects hold clubs or activities that provide opportunities for pupils to develop their interests, to extend their work or to improve on shortcomings. There is a less strong response to musical activities, although about forty pupils have instrumental lessons.
42. The school has forged strong links in the local area and the community makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Through the 'Shepway Business partnership' teachers and pupils are given opportunities to work in local businesses to extend their experience. Occasionally, members of the business community come to work in school. The arrangements through this partnership and others form strong links which effectively support pupils' work experience.
43. Pupils make good use of the school's e-mail facilities to forge links with 'Pen friends' in Europe and America. The facility is used widely as a resource and for research. The school encourages pupils to use e-mail for other, more general, communication. For example, some pupils make arrangements for their work experience through electronic mail.
44. Links with the community are very good, and make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning opportunities. Cultural links are particularly strong. Visits to art galleries, concerts and theatres at home and abroad are frequently made. The work from the A-level art class is displayed each year, along with work from the girls' grammar school, in the local art gallery. Artists and writers in residence also work regularly in the school. Adults in the community support and are involved with the music department. The modern languages department arranges well-supported exchange visits and work experience with a number of schools and towns in Europe. The school's links also have a national and, in sport, an international dimension. Pupils from the school take part in regional and national competitions, such as 'Science Challenge' and 'Mathematics Challenge' and public speaking competitions. Pupils represent their county and their country in sports.
45. The school has good contacts with its primary partner schools, and each primary school is visited by a member of staff to discuss individual pupils before they arrive in Year 7. There are also good contacts with other local secondary schools and, if appropriate, pupils are encouraged to move to them for their sixth form education.
46. The school's provision for personal and social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to develop into responsible adults. They learn socially acceptable behaviour during tutor time and lessons, such as personal and social education, when they examine, for example, the rights and responsibilities of the individual. Pupils work co-operatively in many lessons, including physical education and design and technology where they work on joint projects and share ideas regularly. They are encouraged to take responsibility by becoming prefects and older pupils are linked with younger pupils in the tutor group system. Pupils show initiative through, for example, setting up web site design groups, although opportunities for this kind of independence in lessons are not always encouraged. Many pupils benefit from taking part in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities on offer, which include dramatic productions, public speaking competitions and a wide range of sporting activities. Their sense of self-esteem is further enhanced through the reward system and the public recognition of their achievements in assemblies.
47. The provision for moral development is good. Pupils clearly work within the framework of the school rules, which enshrine the values of right and wrong. This is particularly evident in physical education, which has a charter for fair play, that every pupil is expected to uphold. There are also planned opportunities in lessons such as English, history and religious education, to discuss the values of right and wrong when topics such as euthanasia and abortion arise.

48. The provision for cultural development is also good. Pupils are taught to appreciate the cultural traditions of their own and other European cultures in the work of great writers and artists and other historical figures and events that they study. Less emphasis is placed on preparing pupils for life in a multi-cultural society or on helping them to appreciate and celebrate other than western cultures, although some aspects of multi cultural and multi faith societies are taught in history, art, music and religious education. One taught history module explores the contributions of the Arab world to medicine and mathematics A Chinese evening organised by the parent teacher association was well supported. There are many trips and exchanges involving large numbers of pupils that contribute to their cultural understanding.
49. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There is little coherent planning of the opportunities for spiritual development, and provision is inconsistent. However, there are examples of where individual teachers and departments make good provision. The annual trip for Year 9 pupils to the war graves at Ypres makes a profound impression on many pupils. In lessons, provision in RE is good, but limited by the lack of time. In English discussions on topics such as the significance of death are planned. However, in other subjects, opportunities are missed, and suitable time for reflection in assemblies is not always provided, and is almost non-existent in tutor time. Although the school reviewed its policy following the last inspection, the school still does not meet the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

50. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good, and high standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The senior teacher (pastoral) works effectively with heads of year and form tutors to oversee pastoral issues. The school makes appropriate arrangements for child protection, although it is some years since any staff training took place. There is a detailed health and safety policy and regular checks are carried out by the two safety representatives. Staff know the pupils well and are committed to the welfare and care of all pupils. First aid is given by qualified staff and incidents appropriately entered in the accident book.
51. Procedures for monitoring academic and personal performance are satisfactory. While departments have a responsibility for progress within subjects, tutors have an essential role in supporting pupils' overall progress. However, the quality of support provided by form tutors, while satisfactory, is not consistently good. Many tutors know their pupils well, have good relationships with them and use tutor time effectively to monitor and guide their progress. Where assessment data is well used to inform this process, pupils benefit from the caring yet challenging approach of form tutors. However, tutor time is not always used effectively. Sometimes it is used for necessary administrative purposes, but in other instances observed by inspectors, the time was not well used. Inspectors agree with the views of some parents who say that the quality of tutors' work in supporting pupils is very variable. Personal, social and health education lessons are taught within a well planned framework and make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.
52. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Registers are marked carefully and in accordance with statutory requirements. Absences are followed up quickly, and parents informed immediately.
53. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good, and the procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are effective. The school's expectations are high and systems are consistently managed to ensure pupils understand how they should behave and relate to each other.
54. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is effective and has a good understanding of individual concerns. There are very good contacts with a range of outside agencies and organisations to provide extra support and help when needed, and regular meetings with the educational welfare officer and educational psychologist. The SENCO meets regularly with Heads of Year and other staff with Pastoral responsibilities, with regards to the care of particular

pupils.

55. The school's assessment policy provides sound principles for using assessment information to raise standards. The school utilises a range of effective and consistent assessment methods to assess pupils' academic progress, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. One important gap in the school's assessments is for Key Stage 4 pupils' standards in information technology, for those pupils not taking GCSE. Records of pupils' subject assessments are retained on a central database. Subject co-ordinators and form tutors have ready access to these assessments. However, the raw scores retained are of limited use when comparing across subjects. Records of homework, attendance and reports contribute to a broad picture about individual pupils' standards and progress. Teachers' use of this information to check pupils' achievements and to guide next steps is inconsistent and more guidance is required. The deputy headteacher, who designed this useful database and is leading its development, has a clear vision of how the use of a central database of assessments can improve further the school's monitoring and support for pupils in subjects, by year heads and their tutors. As yet, however, his broad vision has not been fully articulated to all staff through the whole school assessment policy, and so assessment data is not yet fully utilised to help raise standards.
56. Heads of department monitor standards across classes in their subjects. Individual achievement targets based on pupils' past performance are set in Year 12 for sixth form pupils, in Year 10 for GCSE and in Year 9 for Key Stage 3 national tests. While the school is justifiably proud of these rapid developments in using its assessment information, it recognises that there is potential for further development. Periodic reviews of pupils' academic performance, based on a range of recent assessments, are not yet used systematically and diagnostically to track pupils' progress towards academic targets and to provide early warning of possible underachievement. The school's practice is developing in this area, particularly for A-level pupils. Also, heads of department make insufficient use of patterns and trends in pupils' assessments to guide their curriculum planning.
57. The assessment of those pupils who have special educational needs leads to appropriate targets and actions in their education plans. These are brought to the attention of all staff who adjust their teaching appropriately. Good procedures and record-keeping systems are in place. At present insufficient use is made of assessment data to identify gifted and talented pupils and those with lower prior attainment.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

58. Most parents are very supportive of the school's work, although a minority expressed the view that they are not kept fully informed. The home/school agreement has been signed by all parents, and information about school events and about pupils' progress is regularly sent out to parents, and includes a pack of materials sent out in the summer holidays. Informative newsletters and specific information on sports activities are sent out regularly, and parental booklets are detailed and comprehensive. However the perception that the school does not do enough has been taken seriously by the school and current practice is being reviewed. This view was not expressed at the time of the previous inspection.
59. Reports to parents on pupils' progress are satisfactory, but the quality of individual subject reports varies. Many, but not all, give a clear indication of the pupil's standards and achievement, making reference to areas of work that need improving, and setting targets. Others are less helpful, with bland and only general comments on attainment and effort. Pupils themselves are rarely involved. This means that parents are not being given consistently good information on their child's progress.
60. Most parents say their children like school and are making good progress. They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.
61. Parents with appropriate qualifications help with coaching and refereeing sports matches, and

with providing transport to away games. Many support their children on the touchline.

62. The parent teacher association is active and very supportive, both socially and in successful fundraising. Financial contributions are made to different aspects of the school's work.
63. Parents are contacted as soon as a pupil is discussed as needing particular attention, with a view of placing them on the special needs register. Parents are very supportive of the school's work with pupils who have special needs, and willingly keep in regular contact with the SENCO.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

64. The quality of leadership and management in the school is good. The governors, headteacher and senior management team are giving the school a clear educational direction and sense of purpose. Governors and senior staff have worked effectively to maintain and improve expectations in all key areas of academic standards, the quality of teaching and the school's ethos. The school's action plan in response to the previous inspection has been thoroughly implemented, and the school has made good progress in dealing with most of the issues raised.
65. The headteacher provides the school with experienced and effective leadership. He is very well supported by his deputy, whose particular IT expertise has given the school the potential for very good systems for monitoring aspects of the schools' work, including pupils' attendance, progress and homework. Three senior teachers provide sound leadership within their areas of responsibility. The headteacher, his deputy and senior teachers form an effective senior management team. They provide a good model of management practice. They are active in promoting ideas, and their complementary strengths provide good support for teaching and learning throughout the school. Management roles and responsibilities are clear, and lines of accountability well defined. Regular, timetabled quality assurance meetings between members of the senior management team and middle managers ensure communication is effective, and help to ensure that consultation and decision-making processes are transparent.
66. Most heads of department and heads of year are effective in their roles. They promote high achievement through good planning and monitoring procedures. Identifying what works and ensuring it is discussed and used more widely is a strength of several departments. Senior teachers observe teaching in the classroom on a regular basis, and most heads of department observe the work of their teams. Some peer observation has taken place, and the practice is being used to improve practice and the overall quality of teaching and learning.
67. The school receives good support from the governing body. The chair of governors in particular works closely in partnership with the school management, in planning, setting priorities and monitoring progress towards them. Individual governors bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the school's work. Discussions at governing body meetings are thorough and challenging. Decisions are well informed, carefully thought through, and guided by senior staff. Many governors make regular visits to the school and report back formally to the governing body.
68. The school aims reflect its commitment to both the academic and personal development of pupils. The school works hard to challenge complacency in academic standards and provide a pastoral framework for developing pupils' independence and maturity. School policies and practice are consistent with these aims. Heads of department and heads of year work well to support the school's aims and help establish a positive school ethos, which is committed to raising standards, equality of opportunity and good relationships.
69. The management of special educational needs is good and governors are appropriately involved.
70. Most statutory requirements are met, although the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship remains outstanding from the previous inspection.
71. The school is committed to continuing improvement, and fosters initiatives to maintain and raise standards. It is aware of its strengths and weaknesses in performance. A rigorous analysis of examination performance within each department is carried out annually, and action taken to

improve performance when necessary. A systematic approach to self-evaluation across all areas of the school's work has not yet been adopted, but the school is well placed to adopt and implement such a scheme.

72. The school improvement plan is carefully drawn up following extensive consultation. It takes a one-year perspective, and uses the school aims as the framework for more detailed departmental plans. While providing coherence, this fails to give the school's work a firm steer. As a consequence, although most priorities chosen are appropriate, some are not. The quality of these plans is satisfactory, although not consistently so. In many cases, success criteria and the resources required are not defined with any precision. As a consequence, whether or not a target has been met is not always clear. Monitoring of progress is carried out by the senior management team, and departments are required to report progress through meetings with senior staff and on the school's intranet.
73. The school's budget is carefully and prudently managed. Financial planning is good. A small excess of expenditure over income in 1998/99 was comfortably met by the previous year's carry forward. Financial planning is carried out on the basis of realistic assumptions about income and an awareness of the educational priorities identified in the school's development plan.
74. The head of administration provides a clear and efficient direction for budget management and monitoring. Office staff deal efficiently on a day to day basis with routine administration of the budget. Funds are allocated to departments as a result of bids made in relation to the department's improvement plan. The school's considerable investment in IT is planned carefully over a three year cycle. The school is careful to ensure the cost effectiveness of its spending plans, and applies best value principles to the use of the school's resources.
75. The most recent audit report in April 1998 indicated 'satisfactory overall control in the operation of the school's financial systems.... The school has many good procedures in place to ensure that sound financial control is achieved; the regular monitoring and forecasting of the budget is especially thorough'. However, it was critical of the lack of detail in the financial reports to governors. This issue has been considered carefully by governors, who consider the current procedures adequate. Other minor issues raised by the audit have been satisfactorily addressed.
76. The school carefully budgets for pupils with special educational needs and provides considerable additional funds to support pupils with special needs. The school's use of standards fund grant and new opportunities funding is appropriately and effectively used.
77. The deployment of staff is efficient and the accommodation is used well throughout the week. The contact ratio is above average and the pupil teacher ratio is broadly in line with the average for grammar schools nationally. Inspectors found no evidence of underused resources in the school, and computers in particular are well used. Spending per pupil is below average, and given the good quality teaching and good progress made by pupils throughout the school, the good leadership and management of the school and the good progress made since the last inspection, the school gives very good value for money.
78. The match of the number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum, is good in most areas and a high proportion of teachers is deployed in their specialist subjects. Within departments there is a good balance of experienced teachers and those relatively new to the profession. Non-teaching staff make a valuable contribution to the work of departments, particularly in science and technology. The school is well-supported by the work of the administrative and clerical staff.
79. The special needs co-ordinator is well-qualified and there is an adequate provision of support staff to meet the special needs of all pupils. However, there is a lack of qualified teacher support. The department makes good use of professional help from outside the school.
80. Satisfactory systems exist for all aspects of staff support, and staff training and development are well managed. Teachers new to the school, particularly those new to the profession, have a clearly planned programme of support. Newly qualified teachers undertake an induction

programme that includes regular instructional meetings, observation and monitoring of their teaching and continuing support. The school is actively involved in initial teacher training and many departments accept students. Staff appraisal, based on the local authority scheme, has been a strength, but is currently under review in light of plans to introduce performance management. The school has applied for the Investors in People standard.

81. Since the last inspection the school has maintained its good quality of staffing and continued to improve staff support procedures. A high proportion of physical education lessons is now taken solely by specialists. Support in information technology is greatly improved due to the appointment of a full-time technician. In-service training needs are now systematically linked to priorities identified in most departmental plans.
82. The provision of learning resources varies considerably between departments, but is adequate overall. The good quality and range of resources in many departments, contribute to the very good standards achieved. The school is well resourced for computers and its ratio of one per seven pupils is in line with the national average. Technical support is excellent and IT facilities, including the sophisticated school intranet system, are well-used by classes and individuals.
83. The library and resources area has an adequate supply of books. It is well-used by pupils during break and lunchtimes and by sixth formers during the day. A librarian provides valuable supervision and help throughout the day. Pupils are increasingly using the available technology, particularly CD ROM material, to improve their knowledge.
84. Resources for pupils with special education needs are good and support the full range of needs, including material for the gifted. The use of outside resources is very good and helps pupils to learn in a practical way. There are many visits to museums, castles, battlefields, major sports occasions, theatres and galleries.
85. The issues raised during the last inspection have been well met. The recently appointed head of religious education is rapidly improving the poor departmental resources. The management and use of ICT resources are considerably improved. Procedures are now in place to evaluate the use of resources. Stock books are all updated - in some subjects, through the use of a computer system.
86. The school buildings are situated on one site with playing fields located separately. Although not all the rooms are ideally situated and a few are congested, accommodation is satisfactory and sufficient to deliver most parts of the curriculum. The multi-purpose sports hall provides excellent facilities. The new building, which is taking place currently, will provide opportunities for a further enhancement to the school's accommodation, including an improved sixth form centre.
87. The school has moved forward well since the last inspection, continuing to offer a very positive ethos for learning. Committed to further development, the school's ethos and management systems ensure that it is in a strong position to maintain its improvement.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to maintain and improve the school's high standards and quality of provision, the governors, headteacher and senior staff should:

1. Improve the quality of development planning by ensuring that:
  - whole school priorities are identified, following an evaluation of standards and achievement (paragraph 73)
  - departmental plans are costed more precisely (paragraph 73)
  - targets and evaluation criteria are clear (paragraph 73)
2. Ensure the work of form tutors is consistently effective in monitoring their pupils' academic and personal development by:
  - ensuring tutorial time is used consistently well (paragraph 51)

- providing training and support where appropriate
3. develop the use of assessment and performance data to:
    - inform curriculum planning (paragraph 56)
    - set individual learning targets in different subjects (paragraph 55/6)
    - use as diagnostic tool to identify possible underachievement (paragraph 57)
    - identify gifted and talented pupils and ensure appropriate provision (paragraph 57)
    - use as the main focus for self-evaluation and the starting point for school development planning (paragraph 55)
  4. ensure the assessment, monitoring and reporting of progress of information technology for all pupils across all subjects during Key Stage 4 (paragraph 55)
  5. Improve the quality of reports to parents by:
    - ensuring a more consistent approach to reporting on what pupils can do, know and understand (paragraph 60)
    - setting challenging targets for individual pupils in all subjects (paragraph 56)
    - involving pupils in self review (paragraph 60)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	152
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3.9	25.7	33.6	30.9	5.9	0.0	0.0

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 pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	666	197
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	34	

#### Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	59	12

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	9.0

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	1999	127	0	127

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	126(127)	127(126)	125(127)
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	126(127)	127(126)	125(127)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	99(99)	100(98)	98(99)
	National	63	62	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	89(88)	97(96)	86(90)
	National	28	38	23

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	127(128)	127(127)	126(128)
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	127(128)	127(127)	126(128)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100(100)	100(99)	99(100)
	National	64	64	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	91(85)	99(91)	84(90)
	National	31	37	28

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	1999	128	0	128

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	123(118)	128(121)	128(121)
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	123(118)	128(121)	128(121)
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	96(98)	100(100)	100(100)
	National	46.3(44.6)	90.7(89.8)	95.7

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	55(58)
	National	37.8(36.8)

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	115	0	115
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	19.2(19.8)	0	19.2(19.8)	3.3(2.0)	0	3.3(2.0)	
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.

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	849
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	10	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	49.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	354.5

#### Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.3
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#### Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	25.5
Key Stage 4	22.3

### Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	1957919
Total expenditure	1963308
Expenditure per pupil	2244
Balance brought forward from previous year	61332
Balance carried forward to next year	55943

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	863
Number of questionnaires returned	466

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	48	8	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	44	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	50	6	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	58	11	2	1
The teaching is good.	41	51	3	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	48	20	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	44	11	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	27	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	21	51	18	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	44	45	3	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	45	6	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	41	11	3	9

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

### **ENGLISH**

88. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests the proportions of pupils attaining Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were both very high in comparison with the national average. Results over the last three years have fluctuated, with results in 1998 being better than in 1997 and 1999. The average National Curriculum points score attained in 1999 was below that attained in mathematics and science, well above the national average, but below the grammar school average.
89. In 1999 the proportions of pupils attaining GCSE grades A\*-C in both English and English literature were both well above the national average and the proportions attaining grades A\*-G were above the national average. These results were near to the average for selective schools and near to the school's average for other subjects. The trend of results has been consistent over the past three years.
90. In 1999 results at A-level were well above the national average and in the previous two years they were in line with the national average.
91. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that attainment is well above national expectations at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 and just above national expectations in the sixth form. Achievement at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, taking into account that pupils' standard of attainment in literacy on entry is below that in non-verbal skills, that a significant proportion of pupils attain a score that is below the national average in standardised tests in verbal reasoning and that nationally boys' attainment in English is below that of girls. The comparison with grammar schools includes single sex girls' and mixed schools. Additionally, no significant under-achievement was observed during the inspection. Achievement at Key Stage 4 is good, while in the sixth form it is satisfactory, with results fluctuating somewhat from year to year depending upon the prior attainment of the cohort. Only one pupil speaks English as an additional language. There was insufficient evidence to comment on his progress.
92. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is a strength. By the age of 14, pupils confidently take part in whole class, group and paired discussions, expressing themselves fully and using a varied vocabulary. In drama lessons pupils develop their powers of non-verbal expression such as mime and facial expression. By the age of 16 pupils express themselves with increasing clarity and cogency and are able to draw upon evidence to support their case. This was seen, for example, in a Year 11 class when pupils engaged in a rigorous discussion with their teacher and each other on how First World War poets used "fractured" language to suggest a disorientated state of mind. By the age of 18, higher attaining pupils interact well with each other and their teachers to examine ideas closely. Lower attaining pupils tend to be somewhat reluctant to participate in class discussion and express themselves briefly. Listening skills are very well developed throughout the school. Pupils concentrate well and are prepared to ask questions. From Year 8, pupils are able to write their own notes competently.
93. By the age of 14 pupils read plays, novels and poems that are appropriate for their age and ability and by the age of 16 and 18, they go on to read more complex texts. Most read aloud with fluency and good expression, though a significant minority, particularly in Key Stage 4, do not project their voices effectively. Pupils have well-developed analytical skills. They understand how writers use literary devices and can identify them using the correct terms. For example, in one particularly impressive class on poetry in Year 8, pupils were able to refer accurately to "irony", "allusion", "parody" and "symbolic value". The majority of pupils enjoy reading for their own interest and can name favourite authors or genres. By the age of 18, pupils enjoy investigating given themes in literature, especially when they are able to select texts, and some high quality work was seen on "Totalitarianism". However, lower

attaining pupils do not explore the works of earlier classic writers to the extent that might be expected.

94. By the age of 14, pupils are familiar with different types of writing, including personal, description, narrative and reportage. In a Year 8 class pupils produced some very good empathetic writing based upon scenes from "Treasure Island", in which they not only faithfully reproduced the story line, but were able to incorporate elements of the style of the original effectively. Whilst higher attaining pupils are able to move from notes to final draft with relative ease, some lower attaining pupils do not focus sufficiently upon re-drafting to enable them to become more self-critical. By the age of 16 and 18, pupils further extend their capacity to write for different audiences and their understanding of how to manipulate language deepens.
95. The quality of both teaching and learning in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form is satisfactory, while in Key Stage 4 it is good. Some teaching and learning is very good at both Key Stages 3 and 4, although some unsatisfactory and less effective teaching was observed in Key Stage 3. When teaching is very good, teachers display very good subject knowledge, as was seen in the teaching of Shakespeare at all levels and the teaching of practical criticism in Key Stage 3. This results in pupils working with interest and enthusiasm and being willing to ask questions. Expectations are also high and this leads pupils to make a good creative effort, as was seen in a Year 7 drama class based upon scenes from "A Midsummer's Night's Dream". Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and this provides an appropriate challenge for the majority of pupils, who are high attainers. Where teaching is less good, resources are insufficient to stimulate pupils or to extend their understanding and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be active in developing their own learning. Whilst pupils with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as other pupils, consideration might be given to improving their progress through greater emphasis upon teaching basic skills, particularly re-drafting work, and by setting specific tasks which are relevant to the individual's special needs. Pupils respond well when they have the opportunity to work independently and to use their own initiative and consideration might be given to extending such opportunities. The quality of marking is inconsistent: when it is effective it is thorough and provides pupils with guidance on how they might improve; when it is least effective it is superficial and provides no guidance. Most pupils are well behaved and keen to learn.
96. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards of attainment have been maintained and teaching remains effective. Some additional support has been provided for pupils whose standards in literacy are relatively low, but it remains the case that a further degree of differentiation is needed to help them make more rapid progress. The department is committed to continuing development, and effectively monitors and evaluates its work in order to secure further improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

97. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportions of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 attaining Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were very high in comparison with the national average. The average National Curriculum points scores attained by pupils in 1999 are very high when compared with all schools and broadly in line when compared to other grammar schools. Since the last inspection, Key Stage 3 average points scores, which are significantly above national averages, have matched the improving national trend.
98. In 1999, one hundred per cent of pupils entered for GCSE attained grades A\* - C. Attainment is significantly above the national average and very high in comparison with other grammar schools. There has been continued improvement in average points scores over the last three years, better than that nationally.
99. In 1999, the average points scores for A-level compares poorly with the previous two years, although pupils' achievements in relation to GCSE attainment were satisfactory. However, results, including further mathematics and AS-level are broadly in line with the national averages.

100. Pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory throughout the school, and in some cases pupils achieve well. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are well above the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. Pupils effectively develop strategies for solving problems and conducting investigations. Pupils use and apply mathematics with confidence, and extend a concept and articulate their thinking through set tasks. For example, all pupils in Year 8 successfully completed a 'matchstick' investigation interpreting their individual findings according to an initial hypothesis. Pupils' numerical skills are good and the use of the calculator is discouraged in Year 7 where mental skills can be applied. Good use is made of information and communication technology to firm up and refine pupils' understanding of numeracy in Year 7. Pupils with special educational needs match the progress of their peers. Pupils use their knowledge of negative number when working on co-ordinate geometry in Year 8, demonstrating key routines at the whiteboard. Pupils have a good understanding of shape, space and measure. The standard of presentation in exercise books is good with neat and accurate diagrams supporting learning. Pupils understand the difference between representative values when handling data and apply a variety of statistical methods, which provides good reinforcement of the use of number. In Year 9, pupils use the correct terminology to explain the addition principle for mutually exclusive events when dealing with probability.
101. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 are well above the level expected nationally. Pupils' work on open-ended tasks is good. Literacy skills are effectively reinforced through written accounts of taught topics such as the relationship between the coefficient of  $x$  and the intercept for straight-line graphs. The confident use of information technology provides Year 11 pupils with the opportunity to continue the investigation to parabolic and hyperbolic functions consolidating the theory of related functions. High attainers use algebra well as a tool, from formulating expressions to solving simultaneous and quadratic equations, applying all the appropriate skills for checking and interpreting results correctly. Intermediate attainers draw straight-line graphs from given functions and complete the inverse successfully. Pupils continue to develop a good understanding of space shape and measure with high attainers solving complex trigonometrical problems with answers left in surd form. The level of attainment when handling data is very good and high attainers compare information using standard deviation well. Intermediate attainers can distinguish between discrete and continuous data applied to cumulative frequency providing a correct interpretation of expected outcomes.
102. Of the work seen during the inspection in the sixth form, the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 13 are broadly in line with the standards expected nationally. There are good examples of students' conceptual development and understanding of topics based on first principles, consolidating existing skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, introducing the binomial distribution to Year 12 students and Year 13 students proving identities to hyperbolic functions.
103. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, leading to good quality learning by pupils. Specialist teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good and a strength of the department, leading to confident interactive teaching styles, which motivates the pupils, prompting them to think and explain. Relationships between the teachers and pupils are good. Teachers made good use of both open and closed questions, engaging and deepening pupils' understanding. Individual teacher support is good and lessons maintain a brisk pace throughout. There are clear expectations of both high standards and good behaviour and the focus is on work throughout the lesson. Control and management is effective, particularly at Key Stage 4 and at sixth form level. Teachers' lesson plans are thorough and learning objectives usually fully met with homework consistently applied to support the classwork. The frequency and use of information technology to support teaching and learning across the whole department is good with planned opportunities for all pupils starting with Year 7.
104. There are good opportunities for pupils' personal development through group work, open-ended tasks, and class discussions. However, opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning, work at the whiteboard, establish and test hypotheses

and pose questions in lessons, are few. Where teaching is less effective, the over reliance on the textbook, results in some rigid and unimaginative teaching. In addition, the lack of differentiation and extension work for higher attainers in some lessons in Years 7 and 8, results in some underachievement. Lessons where teaching and learning are very good include a variety of teaching methodologies, make good use of time and prepared resources, enlist pupils' interest, concentration and independence, monitor pupils' response and summarise learning.

105. The mathematics department devotes time to improving pupils' numerical skills in Years 7 and 8, discouraging the use of the calculator in the first half of Year 7. Pupils have regular access to a mental arithmetic package using information technology, although no records of improvement are kept. The introduction of 'numeracy bites' for Years 7 and 8 is included in the department development plan. Pupils with special educational needs match the overall performance of the rest and numeracy targets are included in individual education plans where it is thought necessary. Individual Key Stage 2 data is unavailable from primary schools, although cognitive ability test scores for Years 7 and 8 are used by the school to measure base line performance.
106. There is no adjoining suite of rooms to accommodate the mathematics department. This factor, however, does not inhibit the sharing of good practice and organisational strategies. Resources that are available are used well and staffing is appropriate for teaching the curriculum. Good use is made of 'Common Test' assessment data and national data to establish examination target grades although day to day marking has little impact on curriculum planning, classroom practice and identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
107. The subject has continued to make good progress since the last report. The department is led and managed well, providing supportive guidance through effective monitoring practices. There has been an improvement in standards at both Key Stage 3 and GCSE level since the last inspection. The revised scheme of work and recent educational initiatives to support the high attainers has provided for improved standards across the mathematics curriculum as a whole. The department continues to make a good contribution to standards of numeracy in the school.

## SCIENCE

108. In 1999, the Key Stage 3 standard national test results were well above national averages, but broadly in line with standards in other grammar schools, continuing a similar pattern over the past three years. At Key Stage 4 in 1999, GCSE results for the double award science were well above national averages, but well below those for other grammar schools. These results are substantially below those of the previous two years and below those seen during the inspection, partly because some lower attaining pupils in 1999 attempted a higher tier final examination that was beyond their capabilities. At A-Level in 1999, results for physics, chemistry and biology were all high, particularly for physics, where there were larger numbers of pupils. A good proportion of pupils achieved higher grades and these results continue a pattern of rising standards across all the A-level sciences.
109. Inspection findings for both Key Stages 3 and 4 confirm standards are well above national expectations in all the elements of science. At A-level, standards are above those nationally in all the sciences and in physics they are high, continuing current trends. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the achievements of the great majority of pupils are at least satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils achieve well in their understanding of key science concepts, especially where teachers challenge pupils to think, speculate, make decisions, research and summarise their learning for themselves. A few lower attaining pupils underachieve where their progress is insufficiently checked and problems addressed at an early stage. This tends to occur where teachers place too much reliance on verbal responses to questions of the class to check pupils' understanding before moving on. Pupils who are insecure in their understanding are sometimes overlooked. At A-level in all the sciences, many pupils achieve well, particularly in physics where standards for many pupils are high. Pupils' practical and enquiry skills are well developed in all key stages.



110. Pupils have good skills in numeracy which they apply with confidence in calculating, estimating, measuring and in representing data. They use scientific vocabulary confidently and accurately because teachers make this aspect of literacy skills a feature of their teaching. However, pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 have too few opportunities for extended writing and speaking for a range of purposes, for example, to present an argument or to summarise and present the key points.
111. Most pupils' attitudes to science are good throughout the school. They enjoy very good relationships and collaborate well with their peers and with teachers. The department promotes the school's values well. In one Year 9 lesson, pupils researched information about drugs, disease and immunisation using books and the internet. Groups of pupils designed their own presentation using computers with great skill. The best examples included the underlying science, a historical dimension, and thoughtful evaluations of the impact on individuals and on the community. Pupils made good progress and enjoyed their work because their teacher encouraged them to utilise their good research and computer skills and to make their own decisions.
112. Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages with some good features. At A-level it is good in all the sciences with some excellent features in physics. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their clear exposition and good use of open questions at the start of lessons helps pupils consolidate key ideas. In one excellent A-level lesson about properties of materials, pupils achieved a very good understanding of a variety of key scientific terms and principles because their teacher provided challenging and well-structured contexts for enquiry. Pupils were expected to make decisions, solve problems and explain observations as they progressed, summarising their learning. Lower attaining pupils were well supported and challenged through discussion with their teacher. Occasionally, where teachers direct pupils too much in their practical work, provide notes and encourage copying, pupils are insufficiently challenged, lose interest and make slower progress. Lower attaining pupils sometimes struggle to understand new ideas presented where teachers do not illustrate their exposition with well conducted demonstrations, for example when describing the principles of dynamic equilibrium in GCSE chemistry. Homework is used well to extend pupils' learning but teachers' marking varies considerably. The best provides correction and useful feedback on ways of improving, but some is confined to ticking with comments only of praise.
113. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Its use of information technology is much improved, helping pupils to research and present information, but data-logging is still under-developed. Standards in A-level have risen. While the department's monitors its work, the analysis of its standards does not sufficiently influence actions in its development plan.

## **ART**

114. The proportion of pupils achieving Grades A\*-C in GCSE examinations in 1999, and the percentage of pupils achieving grades A-B at A-level, were above the national average. In work seen during the inspection, attainment is above the national expectations at the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4, and the sixth form. Achievement is satisfactory, and pupils' learning and progress is at least satisfactory at all stages.
115. By the end of Key Stage 3, drawing and painting skills are good and most pupils observe with a careful attention to detail. Concepts of form, perspective and scale are well established. Pupils work successfully in a variety of media and styles but the main focus is on two-dimensional work. There is, however, some three-dimensional work of good quality on display in the school. Pupils have a good knowledge of the work and styles of a variety of artists and incorporate those styles into their own work. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, pupils were successfully exploring expressionist techniques for portraying mood in background.
116. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, pupils demonstrate a good level of skills and all-round competence. The work produced is often confident and imaginative. In the sixth form, pupils

work in depth and in a good variety of scale, producing thoughtful work of high quality. Some of the work produced by pupils from still life is of a particularly good quality.

117. At all levels, pupils make good use of information technology and use a variety of software programmes confidently. Sixth form pupils, for example, use well the photography editing facilities to enhance photographs taken with the department's digital camera.
118. Pupils' response to art is almost always good at all stages and is very good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Behaviour is good and pupils are engaged by their tasks. They always have opportunities to make artistic decisions in lessons.
119. At all levels, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, and with some good features. Teachers have good skills and a high level of subject knowledge and understanding. Expectations are high and are made clear to pupils. Pupils respond positively to the expectations and effectively adopt the technical advice given. Lessons are well planned with clear aims. The aims are not targeted towards different levels of attainment in the classes, but different needs are met through good quality individual support during the lessons. Teachers use a good mix of strategies; most lessons begin with an exposition or demonstration, when expectations are set and tasks explained. Pace is mostly satisfactory, but is often left for pupils to determine when they are working individually. Relationships are good and teachers help to develop confidence by their positive responses to pupils' work. In some lessons, however, too much chatter leads to a loss of concentration and interrupts progress. On these occasions control is not sufficiently rigorous.
120. A strength of the teaching is the focus, at all levels, on the development of the technical skills of line, tone, colour and composition. Assessments are an integral part of the lesson and help teachers to direct pupils in the process of acquiring skills. Homework is set when appropriate, and marked effectively.
121. The subject is well managed by the acting head of department who is relatively new to the post. Policies and schemes of work are of good quality and form a useful framework for the good planning. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and there is a richness of provision in the subject. For example, as well as regular extra-curricular opportunities through the art club, the department arranges visits to galleries and exhibitions. At the time of the inspection pupils were preparing to visit galleries in Paris. There are also regular visits of artists to the school to work with pupils.
122. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. High standards have been maintained, and the department regularly reviews its work and practice. Accommodation remains unsatisfactory, but new art rooms are at present under construction.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

123. In recent teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A\*-C in design and technology (resistant materials) is twice the national average. All pupils passed in the range A\* - G. This is better than the national average. Results in this subject are better than the average for the school. Pupils taking the short course leading to a GSCE qualification also achieve good grades. In A-level examinations in 1999 in pupils achieved an average point score that was above the national average.
124. From the evidence of the inspection at the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils achieve a standard of work which is well above national expectations. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work establishes that the standard of work is also well above national expectations at Key Stage 4. Pupils' achievements are very good at all levels, and the work of some of the younger pupils is outstanding when compared to that which can be expected for their age.
125. In Year 9, pupils very successfully make a 'steady hand' toy to an advanced and challenging design incorporating a circuit board with a thyristor as an electronic switch. Their

personalised designs show originality. They can use the skills of soldering, tapping threads and joining with a level of precision normally expected of older pupils. Their toys are manufactured to a very good standard and quality of finish. The toy is effectively evaluated in use to identify ways to improve it.

126. In Year 11 pupils reflect their creativity when they design and make a wide variety of projects to meet identified needs. For example, designing and making a bedside support for an infirm person, an early learning child's toy and an improved type of nesting box for wild birds. They produce design briefs that identify a wide range of considerations and restraints. Their final specification includes orthographic projections, cutting lists and a construction schedule. Good skills of construction enable the pupils to assemble the project accurately and to a good quality finish. They evaluate the product in detail against the original specification considering its function and cost effectiveness.
127. In all lessons pupils have a very positive attitude to their work. Many are enthusiastic and they clearly enjoy their studies. Many take pride in the quality of their practical and written work. In all classes pupils co-operate, sharing and using equipment sensibly and safely. Pupils are keen to demonstrate and explain the things that they have designed and made. Many pupils take the opportunity to continue with their projects during lunch times and after school. This makes a significant contribution to maintaining interest and standards of achievement.
128. The quality of learning is very good and often outstanding at both key stages. Pupils make very good progress with their studies throughout the school. This is a consequence of a very good scheme of work that ensures a learning experience of quality carefully matched to the National Curriculum. A team of enthusiastic and experienced teachers set high expectations for learning. They have outstanding teaching skills to enable the pupils to achieve high standards. This has resulted in a considerable improvement in standards and the quality of learning since the last inspection.
129. All pupils make outstanding progress when developing their skills in using tools and equipment with increasing precision. They successfully advance their skills in designing and evaluating the things they have made, taking into consideration the views and preferences of the users of their products. Older pupils make very good progress in the development of their thinking to turn creative ideas into three-dimensional plans and specifications for a product. Pupils of all levels of attainment make very good progress. This is because they receive good support and attention from their teachers when engaged on individual tasks.
130. Throughout the school the quality of teaching is very good, and at times it is outstanding. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject. They organise their pupils and manage practical work to a good standard. Teachers set high expectations for learning to which their pupils readily respond. They know their pupils very well and support and encourage pupils of all abilities enabling them to experience success. An example of very good teaching was observed in Year 8 when pupils were studying computer control technology. They had to programme a computer to control an electric motor to switch on and off and to run in reverse following a control algorithm. The teacher set high expectations for learning and the principles were explained with clarity and enthusiasm. A good pace and variety of tasks ensured that all pupils were sufficiently challenged. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are good. Progress is carefully monitored and recorded as pupils move through the school. Homework is set regularly and assignments are often discussed with the class in advance. Work is marked regularly, although the absence of detailed comments does not give pupils sufficient feedback to help their learning.
131. High quality study guides provide a range of learning experiences designed to challenge high attaining pupils and to support pupils with more basic learning needs. The time available for pupils to study design technology varies from class to class in Years 8 and 9. This impacts on progress and can influence pupils' choice of courses for GCSE. Although National Curriculum requirements are fully met, pupils are not given a choice of subjects in which to specialise at Key Stage 4, and are unable for example, to study graphics or electronics.
132. The school has been very successful in a national competition to build a single seat motor

car. The enthusiasm engendered by this competition and the advanced design and production skills demanded have contributed to the high standards seen in the pupils' course work. The pupils' standard of literacy is developed through the use of appropriate technical language. Pupils use information technology for the presentation of their written work, to process and compare data and to find information on the Internet for their design projects. They study computer control technology, design and machining. Skills in numeracy are developed in graphical communications.

133. Leadership of the department is good, and improvements since the last inspection have been very good. Monitoring and evaluation of the department's work is satisfactory. There is an improved scheme of work and high quality study guides that support learning and encourage high achievement at all levels.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

134. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above national expectations, and in line with that of other grammar schools. The trend has been rising in recent years. At the end of Key Stage 4 the percentage of A\* - C grades at GCSE is well above the national average, but well below that for other grammar schools. Results at GCSE have been declining over the last three years, although the proportion of A\* and A grades was higher in 1999. At age 18, A-level results have been improving. In 1999, all pupils passed and just over half achieved A or B grades, well above the national average and above the average for grammar schools.
135. Attainment seen in lessons and in the analysis of work is above national expectations for each age group. In the sixth form, standards are well above expectations. Pupils' achievements are good in Years 7 – 11 and very good in the sixth form. Pupils have a good knowledge of geographical features. During Key Stage 3 pupils develop literacy skills by describing and explaining the physical and human processes and features studied. For example, Year 7 pupils gained a good understanding of shopping hierarchies, through their detailed analysis of their local environment. Numeracy skills are good, and pupils confidently interpret graphs, as observed in a Year 9 lesson on the growth of tourism. In Key Stage 4, some very good work on individual case studies was seen, where pupils used geographical skills, integrating their knowledge and understanding about places and themes. Year 10 pupils' work on Barton-on-Sea coastal management, demonstrates very good learning about coastal features and processes with insights into the nature of dynamic equilibrium, and the human management of the environment. Excellent standards of achievement were seen in a sixth-form lesson on the challenge of urbanisation using Bangkok as an example, with excellent displays of recent studies of Berlin as a 'City of Change'.
136. Most pupils display interest and enthusiasm for their geography lessons, arriving promptly, settling down quickly and being attentive throughout the lesson. They are on the whole keen and eager to learn, and usually respond well to their teacher's questions, with thorough and perceptive answers. Pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 enjoy 'brainstorming' sessions, and when given the opportunity sixth-formers prepare presentations willingly. Most pupils work very well together, when asked to collaborate in discussion. Behaviour is very good; pupils are courteous and form constructive relationships with each other and with their teachers. Lessons are characterised by mutual respect and effective use of humour.
137. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and 4 and very good in the sixth form. However, not all teaching is of a consistently good standard, although none is unsatisfactory. All teachers have very good knowledge and understanding, and use up-to-date global, national or local references relevant to the subject, which helps to maintain interest. Planning is good, with clear objectives set and shared with pupils in the more successful lessons. Where a fast pace is set, with a variety of timed activities, pupils work extremely hard and learn quickly. However, where lessons are less effective, teacher's planning does not match pupils' needs and prior attainment. Teachers effectively reinforce geographical terminology, through frequent use and re-use in different contexts. The use of annotated maps and diagrams is a very effective procedure for learning and revising. Teachers appropriately use case studies to illustrate learning points, and integrate the teaching of geographical skills with human and physical processes and features. Resources are good, and each pupil has his

own text book. Atlases and maps are plentiful, but are not always utilised as fully as possible.

138. In lessons where there are some shortcomings, it is often because lessons are too teacher-directed, with pupils too passive, insufficiently contributing or involved. Pupils are not always encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, and opportunities for group-work, presentations, independent research are rare. Opportunities for fieldwork have improved since the last inspection, and information technology is well used to support learning. Assessment procedures are good. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The priority for the head of department must now be to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, through more consistent monitoring of the department's work.

## HISTORY

139. Teachers' assessments at the end of the Key Stage are well above the national average and have been so over the past three years. Test results are in line with those of other grammar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining grades A\*-C at GCSE in 1999 was well above the national average and in line with results for grammar schools. Although standards are high, there has been a slight downward drift in the highest grades over the last three years, while results nationally have continued to rise. Results at A-level were well above the national average in 1999, and are above that of other grammar schools. The proportion of students gaining the higher grades, A/B, has risen steadily over the last three years.
140. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in Years 7-11, and good in the sixth form. In work seen, the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is above national expectations. Pupils make hypotheses about historical events, as in Year 8 regarding the battle of Marston Moor, and in doing so they demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between cause and event. Pupils can select and extract information from source material and have an understanding of the differences between primary and secondary sources. They display a good knowledge of the main events and people of the periods studied and can recall, select and organise historical information in extended prose, as shown in work by Year 7 after their visit to Rochester. Pupils can empathise with people from the past, such as the child workers in factories, and can view change from more than one perspective, aware that history may be seen from more than one valid viewpoint.
141. Attainment in work seen at the end of Key Stage 4 is above expectations. Where pupils are actively involved in their learning it is well above. Pupils have good recall and can use information provided to identify links between events and to recognise the repercussions of events on others, for example the Wall Street Crash. Pupils have a good grasp of the features of the period covered, they recognise the inter-action between countries and can make links between the ambitions and actions of individual countries, for example, in their study of the Cuban Missile crisis.
142. The attainment of pupils in the sixth form is above expectations. Pupils acquire a detailed store of information and their extended writing demonstrates a secure understanding of events. They can consider various viewpoints in their essays, identifying strengths and weaknesses in the arguments, and come to a judgement that is supported with evidence. Their use of original thought and ideas is less confident however; handling of source material lacks original analysis and pupils appear over dependant on the teacher. Their examination technique is very good.
143. Pupils' attitudes to history are very good at all levels. They display interest and enthusiasm and are generally quick to respond to questioning. Pupils are generally courteous to staff, who are good role models in this respect. A good rapport exists between the staff and their pupils. Boys are well motivated and concerned to complete tasks set. In some areas there is a lack of curiosity and enquiry, and pupils are willing to be silent partners in their learning. The majority of boys take pride in their work and have a sense of responsibility for their own studies.
144. The quality of teaching is good overall, very good at Key Stage 3. Teachers have a high level of expertise and skilful use of anecdote and detail supports pupils' concentration and

interest. Lessons move at a good pace and are well planned to ensure a balance of activities and no loss of time. Class control is very good and the teachers' enthusiasm for their subject is communicated to their pupils. Teachers' use of open-ended questions encourages pupils to develop their answers, though this willingness to develop responses is less apparent in their written work at Key Stage 3. In some lessons, over didactic teaching stifles enquiry and there is little evidence of independent learning at Key Stage 4, where school-produced information, though useful, limits opportunities for research or selection of information. Work is marked in line with departmental policy, although there is little use of National Curriculum levels to measure progress. Good use is made of encouragement, especially in Key Stage 3, though there is little evidence of pupils amending their work in the light of comment or grade. There is good use of diagnostic comment particularly in the sixth form. Teachers are generally good listeners, encouraging pupils to respond and to evaluate. As a result of this, pupils particularly in Key Stage 3 are willing to speculate on possible outcomes of events, and exhibit a greater sense of enquiry. Pupils are confident that their teachers are ready to assist so that although there is generally no attempt to cater for pupils of differing abilities, pupils of lower abilities make satisfactory progress. There is good support for the development of literacy skills in the use of extended writing and in the interpretation of essay questions, although there is no evidence of re-drafting and limited evidence of essay planning.

145. The department has designed a well-balanced curriculum which not only imparts historical information, but provides good opportunities for consideration of moral issues, such as the Holocaust. Pupils gain much from the experiences of the visit to Rochester Castle and are able to access additional information with the help of Information Technology, with confidence. The visit to Ypres provides not only historical data, but also good opportunities for reflection, which the boys use well. There are no opportunities for field-work during Key Stage 4.
146. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. Standards of attainment at GCSE have been maintained and at A-level have improved. Teaching is now more consistently good and is taught by specialist teachers.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

147. In teacher assessments in 1999, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 was well above the national average. In GCSE examinations, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\* - C was well above the national average. Pupils taking the short course also achieve well. Pupils are given the opportunity to take a GCSE short course at the end of Year 12, where their results also indicate a good standard. There have been no A-level results up to now, but pupils currently taking A-level are working to a good standard.
148. Pupils' achievements at all levels are very good. In work seen at the end of both Key Stage 3 and 4, where IT is taught as a separate subject, attainment is well above national expectations. Approximately half of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not have formal lessons in IT included in their studies. Their progress in this subject is not assessed separately. However, their standard of work is sound and their work meets National Curriculum requirements. By Year 9 pupils can discuss the social and economic implications of IT, including robotics. They can explain the advantages of Internet shopping and banking and the use of e-mail, but are also aware of the disadvantages, such as fraud, the invasion of privacy and computer viruses. They can effectively use a fully featured business productivity application including word processing, desktop publishing, data handling and spreadsheet modelling. By the end of Year 11 pupils can create interesting and purposeful web pages with imaginative backgrounds. They creatively set out text, graphics and use animation. They understand the purpose of hyper-links and they can use these to enable viewers of their web site to move between pages and to link to their own school e-mail address.
149. Many pupils enjoy this subject and work for long periods of time with good concentration on the tasks set. Pupils are highly motivated and work on their own when required to do so. They are confident in their skills and are prepared to explore new ideas and work creatively. Computer rooms are available out of lesson times, and many pupils take the opportunity to extend their skills during these times. In particular, they can use the Internet facilities for

independent research.

150. In Key Stage 3 the quality of learning is very good and the majority of pupils make very good progress with their studies. Those taking GCSE at Key Stage 4 also make very good progress. The quality of learning was particularly high in a Year 12 class observed. Pupils confidently used an application to produce slides for an audience. They used IT to maximise the effectiveness of the presentation and to hold attention by conveying the information clearly and vividly. They were encouraged to discuss their ideas and to be creative in the presentation of information. Effective learning is the consequence of very good teaching in IT lessons. Technical skills are explained well. The teachers bring additional interest to the subject by illustrating the subject, using real life examples. A Year 11 class was taught to a very good standard through using a spreadsheet application to analyse the heights and weights of the pupils in the class. There was a lively pace and high expectations for learning as the pupils were taught how to use formulae to display height to weight ratio and to produce data in the form of reports. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and are given a clear understanding of what they are to do and what is expected of them. Appropriate and challenging work is set. The pupils are well supported when they require help and the pace of the lessons is good.
151. For pupils in Key Stage 3 there is a good scheme of work which ensures high standards. Many pupils benefit from the good access to the Internet. This helps them to improve their skills through the exploration of many special educational facilities available on the World Wide Web. Their research is used very productively in their studies in many subjects. They have produced their own web-site that includes regularly updated news items.
152. In several other subjects, computers are well used to support learning. Word processing is widely used to present work in a number of subjects. Very good use is made in mathematics, for example in developing an understanding of symmetry and algebra. In art pupils are able to use computers as another medium to explore and develop their creative skills. In science Year 9 pupils use a desktop publishing application to present information they have researched on the school's network. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to see how a computer can be used to directly collect information from experiments through sensors. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' skills in modern foreign languages, for example, through regular use of e-mail to communicate with pupils in schools in Europe.
153. Assessment matched to National Curriculum levels is carried out regularly in Key Stage 3. Assessment is also thorough at Key Stage 4, but only for those taking examination courses. For others, their work in IT is not assessed against National Curriculum levels and their progress is not carefully monitored. These pupils receive no formal recognition of their achievements. IT is co-ordinated very effectively by the subject leader. A full time network manager makes a valued contribution by keeping the computers running to maximise their use.
154. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards have significantly improved and the quality of teaching and learning is much better. Monitoring and evaluation of the department's work is effective. In particular pupils now benefit from access to the Internet and a much-improved network of computers.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

155. In teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, pupils reached well above average levels in French, German and Italian in both their first and second language. A significant minority of pupils is working at higher levels. At GCSE in 1999 more pupils achieved A\*-C grades than average, although in comparison with other grammar schools, standards were below average. In particular, the number of pupils achieving the higher grades was significantly lower than average. Although the number of A\* and A grades in French has improved recently, results in German and Italian have been less consistent. The pattern continues into the sixth form, where there were fewer higher grades in 1999 than would normally be expected in selective schools, but where almost all pupils achieved a pass grade. Over the past three years, the trend has remained static at A-level.

156. In work seen at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment in French, German and Italian is above expectations. Pupils achieve well. They are able to recall vocabulary in many topics with some degree of confidence. The more able can understand and talk about what they have done at the weekend with a fair degree of accuracy. Less able pupils generally do less well in writing and only produce short, simple answers, which contain errors particularly in genders and agreements.
157. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils achieve less well than they do at Key Stage 3, and attainment just meets expectations. There is a marked difference in students' ability to understand spoken and written language compared to their ability to use it themselves, the latter being much weaker. Pupils' reading and listening skills are better developed and they can understand a range of texts, including those expressing opinions and having some complex language. Pupils understand instructions given by teachers in class in French, German or Italian but their ability to listen to tapes and extract meanings is less good. Writing is the weakest of all the skills. Only a few of the very high attaining pupils use complex language and express their opinions clearly. Lower attaining students produce work that has many inaccuracies in grammar, spelling and punctuation. Much writing is very short and lacks conjunctions or idiomatic expressions, although some of the highest attainers do compose longer paragraphs and use the several tenses correctly; their work is mostly accurate.
158. By the age of 18, pupils' attainment is above expectation and pupils achieve well. They are able to write at length on a range of topics, they understand a wide variety of texts, including literature, which cover topics, such as the influence of television and the causes of global warming. They speak with satisfactory fluency and accuracy and generally express their opinions confidently. They write with reasonable accuracy in a variety of styles, including creative, discursive and letter formats, and in some topic areas have a wide vocabulary, although the weaker pupils still produce work which has many grammatical errors. They read beyond the confines of the classroom and use the library and Internet regularly for research.
159. During Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, pupils have good attitudes to their work. They work diligently and with enthusiasm and are keen to improve. They work well in pairs and groups when given the opportunity and are keen to participate. In Key Stage 4 there is a significant minority of pupils who are reluctant to complete tasks quickly and lack the motivation to improve their work or produce extended answers. They are particularly reluctant to practise their speaking. In the sixth form, pupils are enthusiastic and committed. They show a degree of independence in that they research topics on the Internet and sometimes use the library resources, but in lessons many are often still heavily dependent on the teacher for ideas on how to organise their work and structure their answers to questions.
160. Teaching and learning are good in Key Stages 3 and in the sixth form and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. There are several strengths in the teaching, especially during Key Stage 3, such as well-prepared activities to support clear objectives. An example of this was seen during a Year 8 lesson when pupils used authentic magazines to label items of furniture in a room. Tasks are varied and interesting and consequently pupils make good progress during most lessons in Key Stage 3. Teachers mark work regularly but feedback during lessons does not always focus on encouraging pupils to improve the accuracy of their work and, consequently, many mistakes recur. Generally lessons in Key Stage 3 are pitched at the right level and there is sufficient to challenge the more able who are encouraged to do as much as possible from memory. The pace of lessons, however, sometimes slips and pupils' attention wanes during very long teacher led sessions. This was particularly noted during long lessons in Key Stage 4 and resulted in pupils failing to remember even the most basic of vocabulary and paying little attention to accuracy. During several Key Stage 4 lessons pupils were given insufficient opportunities to work in pairs and groups and very few opportunities to learn independently of the teacher or to have a choice of activities. Pupils make significantly less progress in Key Stage 4 than they do in Key Stage 3, especially in speaking and writing, because they do not have the time to practise what they have been taught. Teachers use a range of resources, but those for French in Key Stage 4 are becoming dated and do not always interest the pupils. In German and Italian, resources are more up to date and pupils get the opportunity to give opinions on topics such as drug taking. Homework is regularly



marked and provides informative feedback, but pupils rarely use this information to improve future performance through, for example, redrafting. In Years 12 and 13 pupils are encouraged to work more independently, and this leads to thoughtful analysis and relevant factual content. Pupils are also given opportunities to improve their style and do creative writing, which leads to improved performance.

161. Curriculum provision is good as there are up to eight modern languages on offer in the school. However, long lessons adversely affect the progress and motivation of pupils. Since the last inspection progress has been satisfactory. The department monitors its work carefully, but standards remain below those for selective schools. Pupils' attitudes in Key Stage 4 are not as good as they were in the last inspection but remain good in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form.

## **MUSIC**

162. In 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving A\* - C grades at GCSE was well above the national average. At A-level, the proportion achieving A and B grades was well above average. Group sizes were, however, too small to make meaningful comparisons at both levels. In work seen, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is generally in line with the national expectation. However, in relation to their prior attainment and ability, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory by the end of Year 9. At the end of Key Stage 4 and at sixth form level, attainment is generally well above expectations, and pupils' achievements are very good in Key Stage 4 and good in the sixth form.
163. At Key Stage 3, pupils listen attentively, sing in time and mostly in tune. However, other performance and compositional skills are not well developed, and many pupils have unsatisfactory rhythmic control in their playing. Pupils' knowledge of the historical context of music and their listening skills are in line with expectations. They listen carefully and have an appropriate vocabulary with which to discuss what they have heard. However, appraisal skills are less well developed. No composing lessons were seen during the inspection, and the department has an inadequate stock of instruments to encourage extended activity in this aspect.
164. Pupils who study music at GCSE have well-developed instrumental and musical skills, particularly in performance. Standards of performance are very high and pupils arrange and compose for their own performances. There is a good level of understanding of harmonic progression and musical structures. At A-level, pupils demonstrate well developed musical skills in composition and analysis and they have a very good knowledge base to support their study. A number of sixth form pupils have highly developed instrumental skills.
165. Pupils' response to music is mostly good in lessons at Key Stage 3. They behave well and keep well to task. Pupils are interested in the general knowledge that is provided in many lessons, but few choose to take the subject beyond Year 9. Similarly few pupils participate in extra-curricular activities in the subject. Those who do, show interest and commitment.
166. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. The teacher has good subject knowledge and understanding and a high level of personal musical skills. While the content of lessons is well planned, lesson aims, in terms of musical skills and concepts to be developed, are not identified, neither is there provision for different levels of attainment in the class. Assessment is weak and is not used well for lesson planning. The department does not plan for progress and cannot, therefore, assess progress. As a result, pupils do not develop the confidence that comes from achieving success. Much of the teaching is expository and pupils have very limited opportunity to contribute to the lesson. While practising singing, few opportunities are taken to improve the performance or to help pupils to become independent in their performing. Class singing is led from the piano, which takes too dominant a part to allow the pupils themselves to influence the performance. There are very few opportunities for pupils to make musical decisions. Relationships are mostly good and lessons are well controlled at all times. The pace of lessons is sound, but generally lessons lack rigour and intellectual challenge. At Key Stage 4 teaching is good, while in the sixth form it is satisfactory overall, though with some shortcomings. Most of the teaching for

examination groups is well planned and challenging. Pupils are keen to exercise their well-developed musical skills and the teaching supports them well. During the inspection two Year 11 pupils were preparing a 'cello duet of their own arrangement for an assessed performance. They were well supported and challenged to improve their work.

167. Overall, the curriculum at Key Stage 3 meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, but there is insufficient planning for the progression of musical skills and concepts, either within lessons or over time. Time for music is insufficient in Year 9. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities with singing groups and an orchestra, but the number of pupils taking part is small. About forty pupils have instrumental lessons. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of acoustic instruments for pupils to use in group composition and the keyboards are outdated.
168. The department has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection, and the department is not rigorously monitoring its work to ensure improvements. Standards have remained unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

169. The percentage of pupils achieving an A\*- C grade in GCSE sports studies in 1999 was well above the national average, and about average when compared with other grammar schools. A small number of pupils take A-level. In 1999, the percentage achieving A or B grades was above the national average.
170. Pupils achieve well at all levels. In work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above nationally expected levels. Pupils plan work well and effectively judge performance. They understand the basic principles of attack and defence and in games, most pupils use well-developed skills to outmanoeuvre opponents. All pupils have a good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. High attaining pupils can identify ways of improving performance. They understand the physiological effects on the body of intense exercise and are tactically aware in games. Lower attaining pupils lack the necessary level of individual skills to be effective under the pressure of a game situation. A very small proportion of pupils has below average levels of personal fitness.
171. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 in the core physical education lessons are well above nationally expected levels. Most pupils can plan and perform tactics to beat opponents. Their willingness to make critical comments on performance and ability to judge and adjust accordingly, ensures improvement. High attaining pupils use space effectively and show refined decision making. A small proportion of lower attainers experiences problems in developing their basic skills and tactics, into more complex ones. Year 11 GCSE pupils are on target to achieve well beyond national expectations at the end of Key Stage 4. Their practical skills are very good. They understand the physiological effects of exercise on the body, can plan fitness programmes and know the factors that influence participation in sport. Higher attaining pupils show high standards of performance in games, they are confident in discussion work and accurately summarise findings in research work. Greater use of information technology in the presentation of written assignments, will further enhance learning. A-level pupils are on target to achieve above the national average in the higher grades. Their knowledge of the historical aspects, the psychological and physiological effects on performance, is well-developed. Poor concentration and an inability to submit written assignments on time are hampering the progress of a small minority of pupils.
172. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They listen to instructions, communicate well in group-work and confidently try new skills. They are courteous and considerate to others. In a Year 11 GCSE theory lesson, pupils showed respect for others' viewpoints in discussion work, based on the social factors, which affect participation in sport.
173. Teaching and learning are very good at all levels. The progress of high attaining pupils is accelerated through the extension provided by an outstanding extra-curricular programme. As pupils move through the school they refine techniques, and develop a better

understanding of tactics, rules, fitness and safety. Teachers manage pupils extremely well and create a very good learning environment through their excellent relationships with them. Their expectations are very high, particularly with regard to performance, behaviour, kit and safety. Systematic progress is aided by well-planned and challenging teaching. Opportunities for independent learning are provided in a high proportion of lessons. In a Year 7 health related fitness lesson, the teacher created a stimulating learning environment through the use of a variety of measuring equipment, including stopwatches, forehead 'strip' thermometers and recording sheets. Tasks were modified for lower attaining pupils and a knowledgeable and enthusiastic specialist taught the lesson. Pupils of all ability levels made effective use of the many opportunities to plan and judge performance and they progressed beyond expectations. Low attaining pupils learnt beyond expected levels, due to teaching being planned to suit their individual requirements, through tasks being modified and groupings carefully set. Teaching is less effective in the small proportion of lessons where there is too much direction by the teacher and fewer opportunities for pupils to think for themselves.

174. In Key Stage 4, pupils consolidate prior learning, refine individual skills and develop their knowledge, including about teamwork and tactics. Most pupils in Year 10 table tennis are developing sufficient technique to consistently return the ball. Higher attainers are developing a variety of serves and attacking shots to consistently outmanoeuvre opponents. In a Year 11 GCSE practical football lesson, a high attaining class made excellent progress due to teaching characterised by outstanding technical knowledge, high quality personal demonstrations and numerous opportunities for planning and evaluation of performance. Pupils refined their all-round heading skills, improved coaching skills and developed even further, tactical and spatial awareness. Sixth form pupils effectively build on previously learnt skills and knowledge. Most develop high standards of performance and improve their ability to officiate and coach. A-level pupils are developing their research skills and ability to summarise findings and correct performance. A small minority have not fully developed appropriate skills in discussion and written assignments. Teachers' use of assessment in lessons is very good. Instant feedback to pupils is leading to a distinct improvement in standards and this is further enhanced by the opportunities afforded to pupils to comment orally and through writing, on their own performance.
175. The head of department provides very clear educational leadership; the teachers are highly committed and work well together. Since the last inspection improvement has been very good. There is now very little non-specialist teaching, and a high proportion of lessons now features opportunities for independent learning. Schemes of work are more detailed and include assessment details. Indoor accommodation is now excellent and includes a superb multi-purpose sports hall and the splendid Les Ames Memorial cricket pavilion. Facilities generally are very good and make a major contribution to the sporting success of the school. The provision for extra-curricular sport is outstanding and the pupils' excellent participation rate is recognised by a Sportsmark Award. A high percentage of staff is involved in taking activities. Pupils and teams compete successfully at inter-school, area, county and national levels.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

176. The attainment of pupils in religious education at the end of Key Stage 3, in work seen, is higher than expected levels in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils build a considerable body of knowledge relating to Christianity and the other major faiths. They identify key events in the Christian calendar and link them to the life of Christ. They explore the identity of the historical Jesus and consider his teachings. Pupils are able to relate these teachings to contemporary issues, for example, relating to prejudice and discrimination. Pupils consider abstract concepts such as 'belief' and are able to express their ideas and feelings in free writing and in poetry. They understand the teachings of other faiths with regard to responsibility and caring, and investigate the effects of belief on the individual.
177. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is above expectations. Pupils achieve well, considering the severely restricted time allocation available. All pupils follow a short GCSE course, and in order to complete the course within the limited time, some modules are

taught in Year 9. Although no pupils have been entered for GCSE short course in the last three years, over fifty pupils have been identified as likely to be entered this year. No lessons were observed as most pupils were following personal, social and education modules during the inspection week. In work seen in books, pupils consider moral dilemmas, such as euthanasia, in the light of religious teachings, and demonstrate thought and reason. They are encouraged to reflect on their own values and to consider the effects of religious teaching on the way people think. Pupils can relate religious teaching to the consideration of ultimate questions, such as the origins of life, and they can recognise the role of ritual in the major rites of passage.

178. The attainment of pupils who choose to study the full course in religious studies at GCSE is above expectations. They make detailed investigations into the teachings of the Christian and Jewish faiths and they have a sound understanding of the link between faith and action. They have an extensive knowledge of specialist vocabulary and can write at length in response to questioning. Written work displays thought and reflection, for example, when considering the concept of forgiveness and redemption. They can respond to questions of debate, displaying an awareness that there may be different valid opinions, whilst forming their own judgement which they support with reason.
179. A small group follow the A-level course in Year 12. The attainment of this group, in work seen is above expectations. There has been no A-level group in the previous three years. Pupils undertake a detailed study of St. John's Gospel and in doing so explore the theology of the early Christian Church. They have a growing understanding of the development of the early church and of its roots within the Judaic Tradition. They use a wide specialist vocabulary with confidence and accuracy. They study various arguments for the existence of God and are able to present these arguments with evidence.
180. The statutory requirement to provide all pupils in the sixth form with religious education is met in the termly, day conferences which provide valuable opportunities for discussion and to hear expert visiting speakers. These were not observed during the inspection, but planned programmes were included in the departmental handbook.
181. The attitudes of pupils are good in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Despite being small groups, pupils participate well and are involved in their learning. They are quick to respond and are confident that their response will be well received by all. They display good concentration skills which enable them to tackle unfamiliar concepts and language successfully. In Key Stage 3 attitudes are satisfactory overall. Pupils are generally well-mannered and apply themselves to their tasks. In some groups however, pupils' work demonstrates little depth of consideration and their oral responses suggest an absence of reflection. Occasionally, a lack of respect for the opinions and practices of others can be observed. In the majority of lessons, pupils respect each other's opinions and listen supportively to each other.
182. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned to offer a balance of activities and to maximise the limited time available. Resources are well prepared and are designed to question and stimulate interest, not merely to provide information. The teacher has a good rapport with the pupils and a manner that instils confidence when considering sensitive topics. The teacher is a good listener, clearly valuing pupils' responses and encouraging them to do likewise. New concepts are grounded in the pupils' own experiences enabling them to progress from the known to the unknown. There are high expectations and the course is delivered with regard to ensuring rigour and challenge. Imaginative use of the syllabus enables the GCSE course to be delivered from Year 9, but pressure of time results in too much information being delivered without the opportunity to consolidate and re-enforce learning. An over-emphasis on new vocabulary in advance of learning, results in a lack of pupil interest at times. There is a good use of questioning to encourage pupils to reconsider their opinions without feeling that their responses are wrong, building up the confidence to consider other opinions.
183. The head of department has been recently appointed, and in a short time has achieved much. The department plays a valuable role, not only by educating pupils about the beliefs

and values that underpin our society, but by giving pupils the opportunity to reflect on their own values and to consider ultimate questions regarding life and death. The extent to which this takes place is severely limited by the unrealistic time allowance at present. Lack of continuity restricts the development of skills and understanding .

184. There has been little improvement overall since the last report, although more recently, the department has made considerable strides forward. GCSE and A-level examinations have re-started and the department is beginning to build up its collection of artefacts. However, the time allocated to RE remains insufficient to ensure topics are covered in depth.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS**

### **Business Studies**

185. Results in GCSE business studies at the higher grades A\*- C are significantly above the national average and above average when compared with other grammar schools. A-level results at the higher grades A-B were above the national average in 1999, but in the previous two years were well-above. Results achieved since the last inspection, except for last year, are in line with other school subjects. Although it was not possible to observe any lessons in Key Stage 4, a scrutiny of GCSE portfolios indicates that standards are well above expectations. Written assignments are excellently presented, often using very good IT skills to present findings from research work.
186. In A-level, pupils towards the end of Year 13 are on target to achieve well above average passes at the higher grades. They show good skills in financial analysis work and often use correct business terminology. In a Year 13 lesson involving small groups discussing profit and loss accounts and balance sheets of two manufacturing companies, pupils referred to asset utilisation and liquidity. Observations of files show good IT, literacy and numeracy skills. A small proportion of pupils is too reliant in lessons on the use of calculators and as a result their mental arithmetic skills are below expectations. High attaining pupils can analyse data using various IT packages and they show mature management of their files.
187. Teaching in the sixth form is very good. It is knowledgeable, well-planned and high expectations are set. Pupils' learning is very good. Their revision preparation is greatly enhanced by the teacher's commitment in organising a four-day holidays revision course. Scrutiny of pupils' files show a good balance between note-taking and research tasks. Good relationships between the teacher and pupils create a good learning environment. Groups are managed well, and a brisk pace is maintained in lessons. Well-planned and structured coursework, including placement with an appropriate business, considerably develops pupils' knowledge of the financial intricacies of running a business. Lower attaining pupils often make slower progress because they lack the background of GCSE business studies.

### **Economics**

188. Economics is taught to A-level, and results have been consistently good. In 1999, one hundred per cent of candidates passed, and one half achieved A - C grades. Attainment in work seen is well above expected levels nationally. Pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of debt in Third World Countries in Year 13. In Year 12, pupils took part in a 'Fantasy Budget' competition, which demonstrated some innovative ideas on new taxes. The quality of teaching is good. Planning and preparation of the A-level work is meticulous, demonstrating excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject. Pupils do much independent research, frequently using the Internet, with web-sites recommended by the teacher, and prepare interesting presentations for the rest of the class, often in pairs or small groups.

### **Government and Politics.**

189. The attainment of pupils following the government and politics A-level course is good. There are no published national averages for comparison, but results in 1999 were broadly in line with county averages. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades has risen steadily over the last three years. Pupils are studying 'Political institutions and concepts' which requires much discussion of current developments and an awareness of the political thought. They demonstrate an interest and enthusiasm for the subject and a willingness to challenge statements made and to offer alternative opinion. They use the Internet with confidence to obtain up-to-date information and to access political web-sites and data. The department is led by a highly qualified teacher, whose enthusiasm for the subject, and his interest in his pupils is apparent.

### **Media Studies**

190. Standards in Media Studies at both GCSE and A-level have been broadly in line with course expectation for the past three years. The subject is effectively taught and the quality of learning is sound. Pupils see the relevance of the work to their own lives as, for example, when a Year 11 group evaluated the extent to which "boy bands" were the creation by the media, or when Year 13 pupils analysed the opening sequence of a popular film. Interest in the subject extends beyond the classroom with, for example, a club having been formed in order to produce web-sites.