

INSPECTION REPORT

Teignmouth Community College
Teignmouth

LEA area: Devon

Unique Reference Number: 113529

Headteacher: D W Clarke

Reporting inspector: W J Powell

Dates of inspection: 6 – 10 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708085

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Potter
Date of previous inspection:	January 1995

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N Ball, Lay Inspector		Staffing Accommodation
C Griffin	English (including English as an additional language)	
R Woodhouse	Mathematics	
D Benstock	Science	
T Davies	Design technology	
	Information technology	
A Looney	Modern languages	
A King	Modern languages	
F Shuffle-Botham	History	
	Religious education	
M Snowdon	Geography	Assessment
A Lemon	Art	
	Special educational needs	
	Equality of opportunity	
J Davis	Music	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
D Innes	Physical education	Curriculum

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Overall, the school adds value to the pupils' attainments over time. Their results at all levels are rising, and are higher than would be expected from the pupils' earlier test and examination scores.
- The overall quality of teaching at all levels is good, promoting good progress.
- The personal development of the pupils is good, and the school is marked by good relationships.
- There are good systems for promoting the pupils' welfare.
- There are very good links between the school and the wider community that it serves.
- The school's extra-curricular programmes are excellent.
- The school is well run. The headteacher, other senior staff and governors provide very good educational leadership.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The arrangements for information technology at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form do not promote sufficient progress in the subject.
- II. The present staffing and timetabling of GNVQ in the sixth form contain shortcomings that lead to unsatisfactory progress being made.
- III. Too much teaching time is lost through the movement of pupils around the site.
- IV. Some pupils at Key Stage 4 are not taught religious education; nor does work in the sixth form fully meet requirements for the subject.
- V. The school's buildings are poor and have a negative effect on progress in most subjects.

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

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1995. Results at all levels of the school have risen, particularly recently. As a result of training, staff are now more confident users of computers. External and internal communication arrangements are now good. Some progress has been made on stretching higher attainers, but this is not yet done consistently in all subjects. The school's assessment and recording systems are now good, and form the basis of increasingly effective target setting systems that promote higher standards. The daily tutorial periods are still not well used by all tutors. Spiritual development is now sound overall, whilst cultural development is now good. The health and safety concerns identified in 1995 have been dealt with. The school's effective management, and its increasing use of performance data, mean that it has a sound capacity to continue to improve further.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1999 (1998):

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		Key
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B

Key Stage 3 Tests	B (C)	A (A)	<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
GCSE Examinations	C (C)	B (C)	<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
A/AS – levels	D (D)	n/a	<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

In the 1999 national tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3, the average points score is well above the national average in English, and also in relation to similar schools, an improvement on the 1998 figure. In mathematics, results are above the national average, and well above that for similar schools, an improvement on the 1998 position. Science results are in line with both averages, and similar to those in 1998. In the GCSE examinations taken at the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils gaining at least five passes at grade C or better in 1999 is similar to the 1998 figure and is in line with the national average, but above that for similar schools. The figure for five or more passes at grade G or above is below average in both cases, and therefore a slightly lower result than in 1998. In 1999, the school's own analyses show that pupils tended to do significantly better in geography than in the other subjects that they took; they tended to do less well in English literature, French, Spanish and music. In the case of the first three, this reflects a change in the examination entry policy, with most candidates now being entered, whilst the number of candidates for music also rose markedly. In relation to their Key Stage 3 results in 1997, the pupils achieved well above average GCSE results overall in 1999. At the end of the sixth form, the average points gained per candidate improved from 1998 to 1999, but is still below the national average. However, pupils gained markedly better A-level results than would have been expected from their prior GCSE grades.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	English, drama, geography and physical education.	Science, design and technology, information technology and modern languages*
Years 10-11	Good	English, drama, geography, physical education and vocational subjects.	Science, information technology, modern languages and music*
Sixth form	Good	English, drama, art and geography	Information technology and GNVQ subjects*
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

* All of these subjects show broadly satisfactory teaching at all levels. However, these subjects show areas of relative weakness in some aspects.

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons; it is very good or better in 21 per cent of cases. Four per cent of lessons are less than satisfactory. In information technology, although teaching is sound overall, many teachers are non-specialists and rely too closely on course materials provided. In sixth form GNVQ subjects, pupils have insufficient contact with specialist teachers, especially in business.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Satisfactory overall, both in lessons and around the school. However, a few pupils, particularly in Years 7 and 8, behave less well in lessons.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance and unauthorised absence rates are average. Lessons are often late in starting because pupils arrive late.
Ethos*	Good. There is a clear focus on raising standards across the ability range, and on promoting the personal development of all pupils
Leadership and management	Good overall. The headteacher, senior managers and governors provide very good educational leadership; middle management is more variable, particularly in monitoring the work of teachers, but is still good overall.
Curriculum	Sound overall. The curriculum in Years 7 to 10 is better than that in Year 11. There are timetabling and grouping problems at all levels. Statutory requirements are not fully met for religious education and information technology.
Pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory provisions lead to the pupils making sound progress, particularly when they receive appropriate support in lessons.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Spiritual development is sound; moral, social and cultural areas are good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing is satisfactory, although there is more teaching by non-specialists than usual. Accommodation is poor, and has an adverse effect on teaching and learning. Learning resources are sound, and improving.
Value for money	Good. The school gains better test and examination results than would be expected from its intake. The personal development of pupils, including behaviour, also improves over time.

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

The parents' views of the school

These comments are based upon the school's own surveys. The governors did not use the OFSTED survey of parents.

What most parents like about the school

VI. The quality of most of the teaching.

VII. The information that they receive about the school, including that in reports.

VIII. The school's lunchtime and uniform policies.

IX. Overall, most parents feel that the school is doing a good job in raising standards.

What some parents are not happy about

X. Insufficient homework.

XI. Insufficient opportunities to be involved in the life

XII. The effectiveness of the contact book system.

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive views above, although reports could give a better picture of attainment against National Curriculum requirements. Inspectors agree that the contact book system could be better used, particularly amongst older pupils, but they feel that homework arrangements are suitable. There are also more opportunities than usual for parents to become involved in the school's life and work if they wish to do so.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The governors should note the following key points for action arising from the inspection:

1. Continue to improve the arrangements for information technology for all pupils, with particular reference to:
 - a.the overall philosophy and management arrangements for the subject;
 - b.the need to develop more fully the higher order competences in the subject at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, including key skills work on vocational courses;
 - c.the need to audit present provisions across all subjects of the curriculum;
 - d.the need to ensure that all subjects of the curriculum provide integrated and suitably demanding opportunities for pupils to use computers as part of their studies;
 - e.the need to monitor regularly these arrangements so that they meet National Curriculum requirements for all pupils at Key Stage 4; and
 - f.improving the quality and reliability of computer equipment. (10, 24, 61, 69, 100-105)

1. Improve the provisions for GNVQ courses in the sixth form, bearing in mind the increased opportunities that will be available from September 2000, in order to:
 - a.reduce the level of joint subject teaching;
 - b.increase the proportion of lessons that are taught by specialist staff; and
 - c.improve the integration of key skills work into vocational studies, including application of number. (24, 31, 161-167)

1. Reduce the effects on teaching time caused by the late arrival of pupils to lessons as a result of movement around the site. (22, 32)

2. Meet the statutory requirement for all pupils to follow courses that meet the needs of the Devon Agreed Syllabus in religious education in Year 11 and in the sixth form. (11, 37, 61, 108, 111)

3. Continue to seek substantial improvements to the school's buildings. (65-66, 73)

In addition to the above key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- The effectiveness of the daily tutor periods. (46, 48, 60)
- ◆ The consistency with which the school's positive behaviour management policies are implemented by all teachers, including ensuring that they have the necessary skills and confidence to carry them out. (18, 23, 25)
- ◆ The unsatisfactory practice of bolting shut one door of a pair, which results in congestion. (19)

The numbers after each issue above relate to the relevant paragraphs in the report.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. The school is located near the centre of Teignmouth, a town on the south Devon coast. With 993 boys and girls aged 11 to 18, this is an average-sized comprehensive school. The area served by the school is a mixed one in socio-economic terms. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. However, overall, the home circumstances of pupils are less advantaged than average. The pupils are drawn from six primary schools in the town and surrounding urban and rural areas. The nature of the school's intake is affected somewhat by the existence of grammar schools in neighbouring Torbay; some pupils within the school's catchment move to these schools, but there is also inward movement from the Torbay area. The last entry to Year 7, which was over-subscribed, contained pupils from 16 primary schools outside the usual catchment area. There is a significant level of population movement in the catchment area, which affects the school's work. Typically, approximately 11 per cent of the number on roll moves during the academic year. Pupils who join the school late include a higher than usual proportion with behaviour problems. Overall, the attainments of the pupils at entry to the school are below average in terms of their test scores at the end of their primary schooling. Other tests used by the school when pupils enter the school also point to a below average level of attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy. There are 249 pupils (25 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, an above average figure. Of these, 26 (2.6 per cent), have Statements of Special Educational Needs, a broadly average figure.

2. The school's stated aims are:

- To provide high quality learning experiences, appropriate to the abilities and aptitudes of individuals, in order to enable all pupils to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- To offer the widest possible range of academic, social, sporting, cultural and recreational opportunities which enable all members of the community to extend their skills and participate in society.
- To provide a safe, caring and supportive environment in which pupils of all abilities can thrive.
- To prepare full-time pupils well for adult life and for their futures in further and higher education, and in employment.
- To involve parents of full-time pupils as much as possible in the education of their sons and daughters.
- To enable the educational, cultural and recreational needs of the whole community to be met and to foster community spirit.
- To provide for the personal and professional care and development of all members of the school staff.

3. In the recent past, the school's priorities have been to:

- Continue to improve the educational standards of the pupils.
- Continue to improve the behaviour of the pupils.
- Build on the Investor in People Award to improve further staff training and development.
- Improve the learning environment for pupils, especially through a building development plan with Devon County Council.
- Strengthen links with parents and the wider community.

· **Key indicators**

Attainment at Key Stage 3²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	70	78	148
	(1998)	(69)	(71)	(140)

· National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	52 (54)	55 (43)	49 (40)
	Girls	67 (63)	58 (41)	42 (39)
	Total	119 (117)	113 (84)	91 (79)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	79 (85)	68 (61)	58 (57)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	33 (48)	41 (33)	15 (19)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

· Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	49 (43)	48 (47)	49 (53)
	Girls	66 (55)	60 (44)	42 (46)
	Total	115 (98)	108 (91)	91 (99)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	77 (71)	72 (64)	58 (72)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	32 (25)	36 (25)	37 (42)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

Attainment at Key Stage 4³

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	94	80	174
	(1998)	(85)	(81)	(166)

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	38 (36)	83 (78)	89 (81)
	Girls	42 (36)	72 (71)	77 (77)
	Total	80 (72)	155 (149)	166 (158)
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	46 (43)	89 (90)	95 (95)
	National	46 (45)	91 (90)	96 (95)

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and percentage of <i>such pupils</i> who achieved all those they studied:		Number	% Success rate
	School	26	100
	National		n/a

.....

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

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

Attainment in the Sixth Form ⁴

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

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	12	25	37
(1998)	(9)	(21)	(30)


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	13.4 (13.0)	17.3 (13.6)	15.4 (13.4)	5.5 (2.0)	4.0 (4.3)	4.7 (3.8)
National	n/a	n/a	(17.6)	n/a	n/a	(2.8)

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	29	59
National		70

.....

4

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

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
through absence for the latest complete	Authorised	School	7.9
reporting year:	Absence	National comparative data	7.9
	Unauthorised	School	1.2
	Absence	National comparative data	1.1

2

2 Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	27
	Permanent	3

2 Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	21
	Satisfactory or better	96
	Less than satisfactory	4

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

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

2 **Attainment and progress**

4. The attainments of the pupils when they enter the school are below average in terms of their national test scores obtained at the end of Key Stage 2 in primary schools. This picture is also mirrored in the results of other tests administered when the pupils join the school. In particular, pupils show markedly lower than usual attainments in literacy and numeracy. The relative attainments of boys and girls change markedly from year to year but, overall, girls tend to do less well than their peers nationally than do boys.
5. Over the period 1996 to 1998, the overall attainments of pupils in the national tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 have risen in line with the national trend, and have been broadly average for both boys and girls. In 1999, the overall results in these tests have risen, and are above the average for all maintained schools, and well above that for similar schools. The mean points score in the 1999 English tests is well above both the average for all schools and for similar schools. Girls performed better than their peers nationally by a wider margin than did the boys. The score in mathematics is above the average for all schools, and well above that for similar schools; this is a marked improvement on the 1998 result, and the main reason for the rise in the overall test score in 1999. Boys and girls perform at similar levels. In science, the 1999 mean points score is in line with the averages for all schools and for similar schools, with boys and girls performing at similar levels to their peers in the country as a whole.
6. At the end of Key Stage 4, the school's GCSE and other examination results have risen since the last inspection. In the 1999 examinations, the mean points score obtained per pupil is in line with the average for all schools, and above that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSE passes at grade C or better in 1999 is in line with the national average, but above that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining at least five passes at grade G or better is below both the national and similar school averages; this reflects absenteeism amongst lower attainers. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grade C or better in science in 1999 is above the national average and that for similar schools, whilst that for English language is also above the national average but well above that for similar schools. The proportion reaching grade C or better in mathematics in 1999 is in line with both the national and similar schools' averages. In other subjects, the proportions gaining at least grade C in 1999 are significantly above the national average in drama and information technology. Results are significantly below average in French and music; in all other subjects, results are broadly average. When the pattern of individual pupils' results is examined, the school's own analyses for 1999 show that pupils tended to do significantly better in geography than in the other subjects that they took. They tended to do significantly less well in English literature, French, Spanish and music; all four subjects had a substantial rise in the numbers entered for examination in 1999. In other subjects, results are broadly comparable. This picture shows markedly less variation between subjects than the 1998 position, and that seen in other schools.
7. In the A-level and other examinations taken at the end of the sixth form, the average points obtained per student has shown a steady rise since the last inspection. Although the 1999 figure is still below the national average, it represents a marked improvement on the 1998 figure. The numbers taking examinations in subjects are too small to allow valid statistical comparisons to be made.
8. In work seen during the inspection, attainments overall are broadly in line with expected

levels for the end of Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, and above expectations at the end of Key Stage 4. Attainments in work seen in English are above expectations for the ends of Key Stages 3 and 4, and in line with expectations at the end of the sixth form. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils achieve above expected standards in speaking and listening; they listen attentively and speak with an accurate use of vocabulary. Reading standards overall are also above expectations; only a few pupils have problems with recognising and understanding words. Writing is above expected levels for the end of Key Stage 3, although a few pupils of all abilities do not take sufficient care over how they present their work. Standards in all four strands of the subject develop further at Key Stage 4, and remain above expectation, with pupils understanding clearly the difference between spoken and written expression. Sixth form students write fluently, and are able to make perceptive comments about what they have read. There is no policy to guide the development of literacy across all subjects of the curriculum, although one is being prepared. Subjects have assessed how their work can promote literacy, and practice in using key words, for example, is having a positive effect on standards. However, practices vary between subjects in other respects, so that what works well in one subject is not yet being used to promote improvements in the pupils' literacy elsewhere. However, the school's positive work in developing literacy skills at Key Stage 3 is a significant factor in the value that is added over time in all subjects.

9. Attainments in work seen in mathematics are above expected levels at the ends of Key Stages 3 and 4, and the sixth form. Pupils in Year 7 receive regular practice in numeracy skills, with teachers emphasising the importance of accuracy. As a result, pupils are less reliant on calculators than is often the case. At present, there is no whole-school policy to promote and develop numeracy across all subjects of the curriculum. As a result, opportunities to use mathematics to enhance work in other subjects are limited. Standards seen in science are in line with expectations for the end of Key Stage 3, although higher attainers are not always working at appropriately high levels. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainments are above average, in part because of improvements amongst pupils in the middle ability groups. Standards in the sixth form are in line with expectations, and reflect positively on the high standards that are set by teachers.
10. Attainments in information technology are in line with expectations for the end of Key Stage 3, but are below expectations for the ends of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. By Year 9, pupils are confident users of standard software to present and to analyse their work in specialist information technology lessons, but they make relatively little use of computers in their work in other subjects. Standards at Key Stage 4 are below expectations because the structured course that pupils follow does not provide an adequate springboard to allow more complex work. Nor do pupils use computers widely or in a challenging way in other subjects. Statutory requirements for the subject are not met in Year 11, where a significant minority of pupils does not follow the structured programme in the subject. Again, the use of computers in other subjects is limited. Attainments in the sixth form are below expectations because work does not build sufficiently on that done lower down the school. In part, the limited use made of computers across the curriculum reflects reliability problems in the past with the school's computer networks; these are now being resolved by the purchase of new machines.
11. Attainments in religious education are in line with expectations for the end of Key Stage 3, with pupils showing a sound understanding of world religions and religious writings. However, standards on the non-examination courses at Key Stage 4 are below expectations because of the limited time that is given to the subject. Statutory requirements are not met because, as with information technology, a significant number of pupils have no teaching in the subject in Year 11. In the sixth form, there is little provision for the subject apart from two modules within the general studies course, and thus arrangements do not meet statutory requirements.
12. In other subjects, attainments are above expectations for the end of Key Stage 3 in physical education, the result of high expectations from teachers in all aspects of the subject.

Elsewhere at this key stage, attainments meet expectations. At Key Stage 4, attainments are above expected levels for the end of the key stage in geography, again as a result of careful teaching of principles and methods. Attainments are below expectation at this level in French and Spanish, since the cumulative effects of improvements now becoming evident in teaching at Key Stage 3 have yet to be felt at this level. Standards are also below expectations in music, because of the low musical knowledge base of many of the pupils; again, improvements now being seen at Key Stage 3 have yet to bear fruit in Years 10 and 11. In all other subjects, attainments at the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with expectations. By the end of sixth form courses, attainments are above expectations in modern languages, geography and design technology. Above expected standards in music at this level reflect good performing skills. Attainments are also above expectations in sociology and childhood studies, because of high expectations from specialist subject teachers, but below expectations in GNVQ subjects. Here, standards are affected adversely by the teaching arrangements, which result in a high level of non-specialists working with mixed subject groups. In history, sixth form standards are below expected levels because students rely too much on their teachers. Other sixth form subjects show expected levels of attainment.

13. The progress that pupils make is judged by the improvements that they make over time and the gains in knowledge, skills and understanding that occur within individual lessons. Over time, the school adds considerable value to the pupils' attainments, particularly at Key Stage 3. Pupils who, overall, have below average attainments at entry, go on to achieve results that are above the average for all schools nationally by the end of Key Stage 3, and well above those for similar schools. This progress is maintained at Key Stage 4, where pupils gain markedly higher GCSE grades than would have been expected from their Key Stage 3 national test results two years earlier. In 1999, results in English and science show well above average value being added from 1997; those in mathematics show above average gains.
14. In lessons, the overall progress that pupils make is good at all levels. Lesson observation shows that progress is at least sound in 92 per cent of lessons; it is good in 41 per cent, and very good in a further 13 per cent of cases. The progress that pupils make in Key Stage 4 lessons is better than that at Key Stage 3. This is because the careful development of working habits that takes place in the first three years at the school is reflected in more purposeful study amongst older pupils. Moreover, the careful development of literacy at Key Stage 3 benefits all subjects by Key Stage 4. There is a clear link between the good progress that pupils make and the good quality of the teaching that they receive. A Year 8 dance lesson provides a good example of this. Here, the teacher gave quick but clear explanations of what was to be done, and insisted on high standards, evident also in her own demonstrations. There was an ambitious setting of a clear framework for performance, supported by excellent interventions, evaluations and directions. As a result, the pupils made good progress because they had great confidence in the teacher and each other, and demonstrated high expectations of their own work. Confidence also lay at the heart of a successful Year 9 drama lesson. The work was carefully paced to clarify what was to be done, based on the teacher's excellent subject knowledge. The lesson was very carefully organised, so that pupils built up their confidence and competence in parallel, covering a great deal of ground by the end. In several subjects, teachers used question and answer work well at the start of the session to sharpen minds, to revise earlier work and to set the scene for what was to follow. In the best cases, this questioning continues throughout the lesson, checking informally on what is being learned, and modifying teaching as required to sustain progress for all abilities.
15. In the 14 lessons where progress was unsatisfactory or poor, the one common theme is the impact that the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small number of pupils has on the work of the majority. This occurs at both Key Stages 3 and 4, and across a range of subjects. However, half of modern languages lessons at Key Stage 4 show unsatisfactory progress. Some pupils continued to misbehave in spite of the best efforts of teachers. As a result, lessons were fragmented by the need to control pupils, and the threads of learning were often lost. Only in a very small number of lessons did unsatisfactory progress stem from weaknesses in teaching,

such as a slow pace or inappropriately matched activities for the pupils concerned, for example in many Spanish lessons. In lessons that, overall, show at least sound progress, some higher attainers are not being sufficiently stretched, for example in science and history, and at Key Stage 3 in design and technology, where the complex curriculum arrangements limit the pupils' ability to develop their designs. The structured information technology courses can also inhibit the progress of higher attainers of all ages. In contrast, good progress is evident amongst higher attainers in English. For example, they develop the independence to identify and evaluate the effectiveness with which writers such as Stoker, Mary Shelley and Dickens use language to create an atmosphere of mystery.

16. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall across the curriculum. Those who are selected to participate in specialist tuition for literacy often make good short-term progress in improving their ability to read. Unfortunately, the gains are not always consolidated in lessons in other subjects because a literacy strategy is not in place across the curriculum. In English, pupils make good progress in speaking and listening in Year 7; by Year 9 they are writing good essays. Satisfactory progress in several other subjects is attributed to the effective help provided by classroom support assistants, who know pupils well and are experienced in giving useful advice. The progress for pupils with special educational needs against literacy targets in individual education plans is often unsatisfactory because these are not sufficiently well known to teachers. There can be unsatisfactory progress when a pupil is too unsettled or does not attend regularly. Progress towards other targets such as personal organisation and attitudes to learning are satisfactory.

2 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

17. The pupils' responses in lessons are satisfactory overall. Response is at least satisfactory in 87 per cent of lessons and is good, very good or excellent in 64 per cent of them. Unsatisfactory or even poor response occurs most frequently in Years 7 and 8, and only infrequently in other years; the school is aware of the relatively higher numbers of pupils with behavioural problems in these two years, and is targeting them with a positive behaviour management programme. More cases of less than satisfactory response occur in modern languages, music and science than elsewhere, although these are not necessarily linked to shortcomings in teaching; unsatisfactory behaviour persists in spite of the teachers' best efforts to control the often small numbers of pupils concerned. Examples of good response occur across the ability range and are especially noticeable in drama, English, geography and physical education. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into lessons.
18. For the most part, pupils show satisfactory attitudes to their work. Many are able to work with interest and concentrate well, especially when engaged in challenging work with good pace. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson, pupils worked with enthusiasm discussing and making a first draft of a scene to extend the action in a play they had read. There was a good exchange of ideas in the group and all managed to produce a clear script to read back to the rest of the class. However, where lessons are not engaging, pupils find it difficult to be attentive for long and learning opportunities are lost. For example, in a Year 8 science class, about half the class paid little or no attention, and frequently tried to distract other pupils who were trying to work. Most pupils show pride in their work. Pupils work well in co-operative ways when given the opportunity to do so. Good examples of this were seen in drama, where pupils showed enthusiasm and maturity in both independent and group activities. Pupils generally use resources well and show care in handling instruments and equipment.
19. Behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory overall. In most lessons, pupils behave well, listen attentively and show respect to staff and to each other. They take turns in speaking and respond quickly to instructions. For example, a Year 7 mathematics lesson had pupils listening attentively to the teacher and then, in subsequent work, listening carefully to each other's contributions. However a number of classes were seen at both key stages where

behaviour was unsatisfactory or poor, pupils were rude or dismissive of staff, and were deliberately uncooperative. For example, in a Year 11 French lesson, pupils were deliberately obstructive and refused to co-operate with the teacher. The poor behaviour of a few difficult pupils often communicates itself to others, reducing the progress of all. Corridors and stairways can be very congested at lesson changes, but pupils show good-natured tolerance most of the time; however, some poor behaviour was seen. Problems tend to arise because pupils are crowded at doorways where only one door of a pair is open. Pupils are aware of the school's behaviour code, which is well displayed around the buildings. The school's behaviour policy is currently under review. The level of exclusions has risen since the last inspection, but remains broadly average. Several of the exclusions arose from incidents involving the same few pupils. Bullying, mostly of a verbal nature, does occur, but pupils report that it is well handled by staff when brought to their notice. Pupils show respect for personal property, and there are few incidents of vandalism or theft. Pupils behave well when on work experience placements.

20. Relationships in the school are good. In class and at leisure, most pupils relate well to each other and most are polite to staff and other adults. Pupils value the courtesy and care shown to them by staff. Many pupils come to the school with low self-esteem, and the staff seek to foster confidence. A range of opportunities is available to pupils to show their independence and sense of responsibility, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy project work and some good examples of this were seen, for example the Frankenstein diaries completed by Year 8 classes.
21. Personal development is good. There are many opportunities for pupils to join in a wide range of community linked activities and events, such as the many drama and music activities that take place. The recent introduction of peer mentors gives pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 an opportunity to support others in Years 7 and 8. Sixth formers help with paired reading and in supporting staff well with the management of pupils at key times of the day such as lunch times in the cafeteria. Senior and principal students are selected from Years 11 and 12, and provide excellent role models for other pupils as they represent the school on public occasions. Pupils also assume positions of responsibility in areas such as the samba band, which is led by a pupil, and which carries out an extensive range of engagements within the community. The school participates with enthusiasm in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme; pupils give valuable support when working with physically handicapped young people in the evenings.

2 **Attendance**

22. Overall attendance levels are satisfactory and are broadly in line with the national average; the rate of unauthorised absence is also average. Attendance rates have improved steadily since the previous inspection; this reflects the clear emphasis placed on regular and prompt attendance. However, attendance in Year 11 is sometimes below the 90 per cent level; the school has provided satisfactory reasons for this. Absence at this level contributed to the below average rate of GCSE success at grade G and above in 1999. Punctuality to school is satisfactory, although a few pupils are persistent latecomers; the school follows up such cases appropriately. Punctuality to lessons is unsatisfactory, and this erodes teaching time by as much as 15 minutes. In part, this reflects the dispersed nature of the site, but some pupils show little sense of urgency in reaching their next lesson.

2 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

2 **Teaching**

23. The overall quality of teaching is good at all levels, and has improved since the last

inspection. In particular, the over-directive style of teaching noted in 1995 is no longer a significant feature of lessons. This reflects the school's clear statement in its aims that learning is the principal focus of lessons; teaching is one of several means to that end. Teaching is at least sound in 96 per cent of lessons, and is good, very good or occasionally excellent in 61 per cent of cases. The proportion of teaching that is good or better rises steadily from Year 7 to Year 13. The relatively high proportion of teaching that is good or better is a characteristic of lessons in English, drama, geography, religious education and physical education. Excellent teaching was seen in Year 12 English and geography lessons. Only seven lessons were judged less than satisfactory, all resulting in unsatisfactory progress being made. Four of these were in modern languages, two at each key stage, with the rest all in different subjects and years. Unsatisfactory lessons all demonstrated inappropriately low expectations of work and behaviour; much time was wasted in trying to maintain order, whilst the activities chosen were not appropriately matched to the range of pupils' abilities at either end of the range. Low expectations also contributed to the generally slow pace of learning in these lessons.

24. In contrast to the very few unsatisfactory lessons, there are many strengths in the teaching, and these contribute to the good progress that pupils make overall. Overall, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach. The impact of good subject knowledge was seen in English, where its high quality makes a strong contribution to the progress that pupils make. Not only do teachers know the subject matter well; they also know what is required in examinations and tests, and know and understand the knowledge and skills that pupils need to have in order to develop in the subject. The evident personal skills of the art teachers are used to good effect in enthusing pupils. In design and technology, the well qualified teachers cover their specialist skills well. However, the use of non-specialists sometimes limits progress in information technology and in sixth form GNVQ work. In the former, some teachers have only a limited knowledge of the subject, and therefore depend too much on the structured course materials. This limits the progress that can be made by higher attainers. In sixth form GNVQ work, teaching mixed subject groups means that, whilst teachers have a good understanding of GNVQ methods, they sometimes lack detailed subject knowledge; this is particularly so at present in business, where there is no subject specialist.
25. For the most part, the teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are sound. High expectations of what can be done are a notable feature of work in physical education; pupils of all abilities are being stretched to do better than they first thought possible. In part, this also reflects the high expectations that teachers have of themselves. Most teachers expect pupils to behave well, and draw upon the school's positive behaviour management practices to tackle potential problems at an early stage. Some teachers are less demanding, for example tolerating relatively high levels of background chatter, or of not taking sufficiently firm action when faced with unsatisfactory behaviour. There is occasional under-expectation of higher attaining pupils, as in some work in history or science, whereas some lessons in modern languages demand too much of lower attainers in mixed ability groups.
26. The teachers' planning of lessons is good for the most part, both in terms of long- and medium-term plans and also planning for individual lessons. A Year 7 history lesson provides a good example of how careful planning ensures good progress. After an opening review of previous work, setting the current lesson in context, the teacher used photographs, books and worksheets effectively to stimulate individual research, and provided good support as they carried out the tasks. There were good opportunities for pupils to participate, and towards the end of the period, a plenary session brought the pupils together again. Finally, the pupils were told what would happen in the next lesson, when an assessment task would be tackled. In this example, the lesson was seen as part of a planned sequence of work, enabling pupils of all abilities to make good progress in knowledge and understanding. Occasionally, planning is less effective, resulting in unsatisfactory progress. For example, a Year 9 modern languages lesson lacked a clear introduction, so that the pupils were confused about what was required of them. The expectation that they would make extensive use of the foreign language

was not realised, partly because of excessive use of English by the teacher. The intended tasks had not been well prepared. In contrast, other language lessons demanded rigorous use of the target language, and took clear account of the need to build in frequent opportunities for recapitulation at the planning stage. Most teaching shows a sound use of time; where pace is lacking, it is usually associated with planning weaknesses, although a few lessons are adversely affected by the need to control repeatedly the behaviour of a few pupils.

27. The methods used by teachers, and their use of assessment and homework are all good. Geography provides good examples of how teachers use the accumulated information on pupils' attainments to set clear targets for them, particularly at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form; this effective work is now being extended to all years. Its effectiveness can be seen in the fact that pupils tend to get better results in geography than in the other subjects that they take at examination. Informal assessment through the use of question and answer work is also a feature of the best lessons, as in a Part One GNVQ session where the lesson began with a short but intense period of questioning to check what had been learned from the previous lesson. This was important in setting the scene, given the gaps between successive lessons. The best lessons contain a variety of tasks that are well-matched to the interests and abilities of all the pupils in the class. For example, a Year 7 lesson in religious education captured the pupils' interests when making masks as part of a display project, whilst role play was used to good effect in a Year 10 history lesson dealing with the development of antiseptics.
28. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in mainstream lessons. The specialist tuition provided for literacy is good. Learning support staff are expert in using a special reading scheme which helps many of those pupils participating make good progress. Teachers know which pupils in their groups have special educational needs, although they are often not fully aware of the targets in individual education plans. In several lessons, teachers made better arrangements for pupils with special educational needs. For example, in music, the teacher was careful to provide additional support. In English, work for the whole group was also designed to be suitable for the four statemented pupils, whilst in a Year 10 GNVQ lesson, the teacher ensured that pupils with special educational needs used the correct vocabulary and spellings, with help from a learning support assistant. Such assistants, where they are deployed, play an effective role in ensuring that pupils can manage the work. They know their pupils well and show confidence when managing small groups of pupils with special educational needs, under the guidance of the class teacher.

2 **The curriculum and assessment**

2 ***The curriculum***

29. The school's curriculum arrangements are sound overall. The balance, breadth and relevance of the curriculum are good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The provision has significant strengths, but also a number of weaknesses. At Key Stage 3, all pupils study all subjects of the National Curriculum plus religious education. They also receive lessons in drama throughout the key stage, a fortnightly tutorial period delivering personal and social education, and a course of information technology within the study skills programme. In Year 8, all pupils continue with French as their first foreign language, but all pupils also receive "taster" sessions in Spanish. More able linguists may take Spanish as a second language from Year 8; this results in a reduction of time for their work in French, which has an adverse effect on the progress that they make in both languages.
30. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is being given greater breadth and balance. Pupils in Year 10 study English, mathematics, science and a modern language, together with courses in physical education, religious education, information technology, and personal and social education. They also select three further courses from a range of suitable options, one of which must be a technological subject. As part of their options, pupils may follow a GNVQ Part One programme in either business or health and social care. The time allocated to these courses,

equivalent to two GCSEs, is half that usually seen; provision for key skills work is inadequate.

In Year 11, pupils are still following an earlier curriculum design which, whilst broadly similar to that in Year 10, means that some pupils do not follow courses in religious education or information technology. Statutory requirements are therefore not being met for these pupils. Some pupils follow a course of GNVQ units in business or health and social care, although these do not lead to a certificated award; as in Year 10, the time provided for these courses is shorter than usual.

31. Students in the sixth form are offered a good range of subjects to A-level for a school of this size. Very small groups, for example in music and Spanish, limit the range of learning opportunities for some students. Students also have opportunities to study GNVQ courses in business, health and social care, and leisure and tourism to Intermediate and Advanced levels of award. Students may also follow a BTEC programme in childhood studies. Overall, the costs of this provision match income only because GNVQ groups are being taught together, which is having a negative effect on progress. Students experience a good range of enrichment courses within general studies and have good opportunities to work within the community. However, they receive insufficient experience of religious education to meet fully the statutory requirements.
32. The planning of the curriculum is sound at Key Stage 3, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The length of the programmed teaching week matches the recommended total of 25 hours. However, the time taken to travel between lessons on a large site reduces substantially the actual teaching time for many pupils. Pupils attend only one assembly each week, and since the time each morning when pupils are not in assembly is not consistently used to good purpose, the school does not meet statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. There are shortcomings of timetabling that cause problems for the continuity of learning. For example, at Key Stage 3, some classes have more than one teacher for mathematics, history, science and physical education. The teaching of design technology in blocks of time reduces the efficiency and continuity of learning. The grouping arrangements at all levels are generally sound, although in Years 9 and 11, some pupils are inappropriately placed in classes for English according to their modern language groupings. The joint teaching of GNVQ Foundation and Intermediate work at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory because of the different course contents, and pupils are not receiving sufficient experience of integrated key skills. In the sixth form, similarly, the joint teaching of business, health and social care, and leisure and tourism Advanced GNVQ groups, and the inadequate provision for key skills, has a negative effect on standards, as does the use of non-specialist teachers.
33. Curriculum links with primary schools are good, as are those with providers of education at the ends of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. There is good awareness of the work currently undertaken in primary schools to improve standards of literacy and numeracy, and this is evident in developments within English and mathematics. Arrangements are made for pupils from primary schools to have some lessons at the school in art, drama, mathematics, technology and science. The physical education department helps to organise the area primary schools sports day on the school site each summer. There have also been joint training sessions, for example when teachers from the school and all local primary schools joined together to look at approaches to accelerated learning.
34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory; they are included in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils with severe literacy difficulties, mostly from Years 7 and 8, receive specialist support by being withdrawn from some lessons over a short period of time. This process is carefully timetabled to minimise its impingement on other lessons. There is not enough provision overall to ensure all pupils make sufficient gains in literacy, and any gains made in the specialist work are often not continued in mainstream lessons. Some pupils with special educational needs continue to find difficulty managing reading and writing tasks well into their school careers. Provision for the school's able pupils is good. Staff identify

pupils who would benefit from enrichment in the taught curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. A broad range of opportunities is available, for example, the inter-schools competitions involving practical projects and public speaking. Four pupils have participated in an engineering experience, whilst in sports, several pupils have represented county or country in athletics and soccer.

35. There is satisfactory provision of careers education which is delivered through the tutorial programme, and includes a good range of opportunities for work experience in Year 10. At both key stages, there are well planned courses in personal and social education, which include the required elements of sex education and education in drugs abuse. Arrangements for extra-curricular activities are excellent in terms of both the number and range of opportunities offered. There is a good range of provision of games, sporting opportunities and outdoor pursuits, and pupils have a wide choice of clubs, including some which are linked to subjects of the curriculum and can lead to additional qualifications. Pupils produce a half-termly newspaper of good quality. There are also appropriate short and residential visits within this country and abroad, including visits to theatres and cinemas.
36. The school has a clear policy for promoting equal opportunities, and it takes effective steps to implement it. The school values all of its pupils and has a clear and firm commitment to including them in the widest possible range of opportunities in academic, social, sporting and cultural spheres. The different interests, aspirations and abilities of pupils are recognised and catered for. For example, girls play football, and in areas of work where they are traditionally under-represented, such as in engineering, the school finds good projects that encourage their interest and confidence. The individual needs of pupils are assessed, and are generally met satisfactorily through specialist work and support for literacy. There is also a homework club to provide help. Pupils with exceptional abilities are given appropriate opportunities to use and develop their talents. The school uses its analyses of the pupils' academic performance to monitor its different groups, and where necessary, takes steps to remedy anomalies, for example, girls' low attainments in science at Key Stage 3. The school also seeks, through its personal and social education course, to raise the pupils' awareness of important equality issues concerning race, sex, religion, poverty and wealth. The pupils themselves express the importance of holding developed views on such issues.
37. Since the last inspection, most schemes of work for subjects have improved, and are now of good quality, but some require review and revision to improve the quality of planning to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Several subjects provide good opportunities for the highest attaining pupils to enrich and accelerate their learning. The arrangements for information technology at Key Stage 4 do not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although there have been improvements, religious education still does not fully meet requirements for all pupils in Year 11, and in the sixth form. The school continues to fail to meet the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

Assessment

38. Procedures for assessing the pupils' attainments are good; the school has continued to develop its assessment procedures since the last inspection report. There is a clear whole school policy statement on marking, including that of the written language. These documents, combined with the whole school policies on assessment and target setting, clearly demonstrate the school's aims to provide high quality learning experiences, appropriate to the aptitudes and abilities of all pupils. The policy statements provide an appropriate framework for subject departments to develop their own more detailed policies. The policy statements place appropriate emphasis on self-assessment and target setting. Subject assessment policies are clearly in line with the school policies in design and technology, geography, mathematics, modern languages and physical education. However, there are inconsistencies in the implementation of assessment and marking practices, both within and across departments. There are examples of good practice in many subjects, particularly in mathematics, geography, history, religious education, drama, GNVQ work, English, design and technology, drama and modern foreign languages. Most subjects give a grade and number for effort and attainment. These are not always consistent and are not always linked to National Curriculum levels, or to GCSE or A level grades. Self-assessment is less well developed, with learning targets based more on general study skills and organisation issues rather than subject learning outcomes, though these do provide a vehicle for pupils to reflect on their work.
39. Assessment data are used to guide curriculum planning in a satisfactory manner. The school subscribes to commercial value added schemes, and all departments are provided with these data, along with other test results. Some good analysis of value added data was seen in GNVQ assessment systems. The school places great importance on the use of target setting, and has recently seconded a head of faculty to the senior management team to assist with developing and monitoring target setting across the whole school. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, target grades are set, which then form the basis of whole school and departmental targets. Pupils are aware of these targets and find them useful. Data are not yet used in a consistent manner for setting teaching groups or for target setting at Key Stage 3.

Special needs assessment

40. Assessment of special educational needs is satisfactory. All Year 7 pupils are assessed on entry, and there is close liaison with primary schools. The special educational needs co-ordinator visits the primary schools and gathers essential information to help plan appropriate provision, and to ensure there is a smooth transition for these pupils. There is a clear link between this assessment and identification and the level of provision made for every pupil, including those already with Statements of Special Educational Need. Additional standardised tests are used to diagnose the nature of some pupils' literacy problems, and these assist in planning the specialist work to begin remedying literacy deficits. When pupils are enrolled during the school year, the systems in place are inadequate to check whether a pupil has a special educational need. The targets contained in individual education plans are too general to help teachers plan lessons and the curriculum. Pupils at stage 2 of provision have individual education plans for specialist work only, and no targets for guiding work in mainstream lessons. The annual reviews of statemented pupils' needs are managed satisfactorily, and when necessary, they include a good transition plan involving agreed action by the careers service.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

41. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, as at the time of the last inspection, some aspects of the provision for spiritual development are less strong.
42. The overall provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There are now more

opportunities for this in subject areas than at the last inspection, but provision remains inconsistent across the whole curriculum. There is no clear whole school policy statement on spiritual matters. However, there is strong spiritual provision in religious education, for example in a Year 10 lesson, where pupils experienced meditation in their study of Buddhism.

In English, history and music, pupils are encouraged to reflect on values and beliefs when studying texts, events or music from different cultures. In general, other subjects are still not providing sufficient opportunities for spiritual development; opportunities are neither created nor being taken. Although assemblies do contain a spiritual dimension, they take place too infrequently to satisfy the statutory requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. The school states as reasons the lack of suitable accommodation and the limited number of staff who feel able to conduct such sessions.

43. Provision for the pupils' moral education is good. Pupils are taught clearly to distinguish between right and wrong. Most pupils show respect for their teachers and their peers. However, a small minority of pupils in some classes still needs to develop greater moral values, and teachers need to ensure that codes of conduct are understood and put into practice. Many subjects, such as art, history, English, drama and religious education make good contributions to moral development through discussions on issues relating to good citizenship, responsibility and prejudice in all its forms. Some excellent work in a Year 11 drama lesson showed pupils maturely presenting dramatic realisations covering family values, loyalty, debts and drinking issues, whilst work in a Year 10 GNVQ lesson sought to balance environmental and economic interests.
44. Overall, social development is also good. When given the opportunity to do so, pupils work well together in lessons. There are some good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities. For example, pupils of all ages are nominated to become ambassadors for the school at major events. Pupils elect representatives to the college council, although one council meeting seen was of limited quality. The peer mentor system is proving a successful innovation; volunteers from Years 9, 10 and 11 are given training to prepare them for the role. Some sixth formers provide valuable support for handicapped young people from the area as part of their work towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Adults provide good role models for pupils.
45. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. There is an emphasis on the cultural context when studying religions, art, music, historical events, geographical locations and cuisine. Progress has been made since the last inspection on raising the pupils' awareness in many multi-cultural areas. For example, there is to be a multi-cultural awareness day next summer as part of the school's Millennium celebrations, with pupils joining with others from feeder schools, and with visiting artists and speakers, in a range of activities. Drama plays an important part in cultural development, with opportunities for public performance, often working with other departments. The music department is taking a party of musicians to Italy to perform in a series of concerts in February, whilst the art department arranges occasional visits to galleries, and an annual sixth form trip to galleries in Paris. These are just a few of the many opportunities given to pupils to extend their cultural experience. Overall, most subjects are providing pupils with an element of cultural enrichment within or outside the curriculum. For example, in design and technology, a Japanese voluntary assistant works with pupils to broaden their understanding of Japanese cuisine and the use of fabrics in clothes. History consciously aims to provide a multicultural perspective, for example in the study of Islamic medicine at Key Stage 4.

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

46. The school provides good care and guidance for all pupils. Staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils, and provide clearly targeted support. This contributes significantly to the quality of life in the school community and has an increasingly positive effect on standards. The school

has successfully improved on the good provision noted in the previous inspection report. However, there has been no significant improvement on the key issue of use of tutor time, which is still not effectively used in many tutor groups. The school has addressed the health and safety issues noted in the previous report, but other concerns have been raised during this inspection.

47. The monitoring of personal progress and development is satisfactory, and most staff keep a suitable range of information on each pupil's development. Pupils express confidence in confiding concerns to staff and feel assured of a helpful response. The role of the school counsellor is well integrated into the school, and provides a discreet and much valued extension to pastoral care. The school has a well-established and supportive induction programme for Year 7 pupils. Good links with support agencies are well used to supplement the care and guidance provided by the school. These good links were identified in the previous inspection report, and continue to contribute positively to the standards pupils achieve and to the pastoral provision of the school. There are regular liaison meetings with the support agencies to allow efficient exchanges of information and ensure a more co-ordinated approach to the care provided for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in specialist lessons, although the targets in their individual education plans are not always used sufficiently in mainstream lessons. Parents are involved appropriately in annual reviews of Statements of Special Educational Need.
48. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore areas valuable to their personal development through the sensibly structured personal and social education programme. No lessons could be observed during the inspection, but the programme of study is comprehensive and creates a sound framework for pupils to build skills for life. The course is also effectively linked to the careers programme in the school. There is a well-organised work experience scheme in Year 10, and many staff are involved in supporting and monitoring work placements. The daily tutor period still lacks structure and a clear purpose; in some, little effective work takes place.
49. The school has good measures to promote discipline and good behaviour. There is a clear code of behaviour that is well publicised around the school. Most pupils show understanding and respect for the code, and are aware of the standards of behaviour expected. There is also a clear anti-bullying policy. When reported, bullying is dealt with well by staff. The school has developed an effective reporting system to monitor poor behaviour, and this is used effectively by staff. Problems do arise in some classes, where staff are less skilled in behaviour management, and the school has appropriate support systems to back up teachers. The school places good emphasis on recognising and acknowledging effort, achievement and good behaviour.
50. The procedures to promote and monitor attendance and punctuality are good. The computerised registration system is well used to keep a close check on levels of attendance, and to identify any patterns of poor attendance or lateness that develop. There is a close and effective partnership between tutors and administrative staff to monitor and follow up any concerns relating to attendance, and also to make contact with parents where necessary. The school has a well-established and productive relationship with the education welfare officer. There are suitable rewards for good attendance, and also good support for pupils who have prolonged absence.
51. There are good procedures to ensure the health, safety and well being of pupils. There are clear guidelines for health and safety, both in school and off site during visits. Regular checks are made of the site and premises and satisfactory risk assessments have been carried out. Some health and safety concerns were noted during the inspection and these were reported to the school. Of particular concern was the number of double doors around the school that have one door bolted shut, restricting the movement of pupils and causing congestion. There are suitable arrangements for pupils who are unwell in school. Five staff have first aid

qualifications, and other staff have completed a one day course in first aid. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. Staff are aware of the policy and the correct procedures to follow.

2 **Partnership with parents and the community**

52. The very good links that the school has developed with the wider community contribute very positively to the pupils' learning, social development and understanding of the world beyond school. The effective links identified in the previous report have been further improved, especially those with the local community and the extensive range of information which the school provides for parents.
53. The quality of information provided to parents is very good, and gives them a full background picture of the work of the school and its activities. The half-termly newsletter is lively in style with a good range of information, reports of events, activities and achievements. Curriculum information is very good; for example there are helpful booklets about the curriculum, as well as leaflets about vocational and A-level courses for older pupils. There is also clear guidance and information about homework; although some parents did not feel there was sufficient homework, inspectors found that homework provision was satisfactory. The school prospectus and supporting documents are clear and helpful to new parents and well presented. However the annual report of the governors does not contain the full range of information that is currently required. Use of the pupils' planners is mostly satisfactory amongst younger pupils, but becomes less so as they move up the school. The school meets the statutory requirements for reporting to parents. Annual and interim reports are provided. These are always satisfactory and often good documents. Annual reports contain a brief outline of courses. However, there are inconsistencies across departments in the depth of information provided, sometimes with a greater emphasis on content than desirable learning outcomes. There are generic grades for effort and achievement. These do not match National Curriculum levels or examination grades. Pupils complete their own section with guidance from teachers.
54. The parents' involvement in the school and with their children's work at home is satisfactory. Parents are supportive of events involving their children, such as school productions and musical events in school and in the local area. The school canvasses parents' views on a regular basis to review and monitor the quality of home-school links. Parents concerns are taken seriously and staff make time available for parents to discuss problems and help with enquiries; parents are always involved in any academic or pastoral concerns, and in annual reviews for pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Some parents help in school on a regular basis, and others offer their expertise when needed, such as a mother who spoke about her work in interior design. A number of parents offer regular help in support of extra curricular activities and visits. The Friday night pupil discos are especially popular, and an area where parent support is very valuable. The school is well supported by the Parent Teacher Association, which provides help with fund raising events. Although some parents expressed the view that they would like to be more involved in the school, there seem to be ample opportunities for parent involvement if they want to help.
55. The school's excellent links with the wider community are a notable feature of its work. Local companies support technological and scientific work through the Young Engineers programme, whilst the Rotary Club is supportive of the school; members of the business community make regular and valuable contributions to a number of curriculum subjects. The school's provision for vocational education is especially enhanced through such links. Within the community, pupils are supportive of a range of charities and local initiatives and participate fully in community events such as the Teignmouth Jazz Festival. They are supportive of local elderly people, both within the community service initiatives in the school as well as at Christmas, when a party is organised for local elderly residents. Pupils make regular contributions to nurseries and play groups. Through the personal effectiveness

programme, pupils in Years 8 and 9 have helped to produce a local newspaper, whilst sixth form students provided a CD-ROM for a local hotel for the blind. Classroom studies are extended and enriched by a range of visits both locally as well as to places of geographical and historic interest. There are theatre visits to Plymouth and visits further afield to the France and Austria. The range of residential visits available to pupils is good, and such trips both support curriculum studies and develop and extend social skills for young people. Good curricular links are established with local primary schools, and also to providers of further and higher education, including a well-established technology link between a university and the school. The school premises are very widely used by local community groups.

2 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

2 Leadership and management

56. Overall, leadership and management are good. The headteacher, other senior managers and the governing body provide very good educational leadership for the school. There is less variation in the results of different subjects than usual; this shows that their vision is being put into effect across the school in an effective way. The ethos of the school is good. There is a clear focus on adding value, both in personal and academic areas, during a pupil's time in the school, and on the responsibility that the school has to the wider community. The governors have appropriate skills, and bring them to bear most effectively, particularly in the work that is carried out by governors' committees. The governors are certainly critical friends of the school. Whilst they receive detailed information from the headteacher at every meeting, they also receive comprehensive annual reports from each subject, and gain a first-hand picture of the school's work through their own visits. Governors have a higher than usual profile in the strategic planning of developments, in monitoring the progress of plans, and in evaluating the school's effectiveness. The overall quality of middle management is good, but with some variability. In most subjects, heads of department provide clear and coherent leadership, for example in modern languages, where there is a clear sense of where the subject is heading, and regular meetings to promote methodology. However, in information technology, the management structure for the subject is complex, and there is no clear and shared vision of how the subject should develop. For example, the structured courses emphasise the acquisition of skills rather than educating pupils to become autonomous and critical users of computers. The management of vocational education is affected adversely by the high teaching load that the co-ordinator is carrying at present; there is little time for planning, monitoring or evaluation.
57. The school's arrangements for the monitoring of teaching and curriculum development are sound, although few middle managers have sufficient time to monitor the work of their colleagues in the classroom on a regular basis. However, limited monitoring takes place in most subjects, as in English, where the head of department carries out review discussions with all members of the team, and in modern languages, where marking is monitored regularly. Senior managers carry out detailed internal reviews of departments every two years, which focus on lesson observations as well as discussions and examinations of documentation. There are clear management links between senior managers and subjects to help to identify potential problems, and to offer support and guidance, in the periods between the major reviews.
58. The implementation of the school's aims is sound. The aims are clear, focus sharply on attainment, yet reflect properly the personal needs of all members of the school community. As a community college, there is also a clear commitment to the wider community. The aims are translated into practice through a satisfactory range of policies; all those required are in place. In general, policies are better at setting out a clear rationale than giving detailed guidance on how they are to be implemented, although this is being looked at as policies are reviewed. For example, the marking policy is currently being redrafted; the present document gives rather more latitude to subjects than is usually the case. A whole-school literacy policy is now being prepared to ensure greater consistency of work across subjects; at present, there is no parallel policy for developing numeracy in all subjects. The implementation of policies is not always consistent. In some cases, such as marking, this stems from the latitude given to subjects by the school policy, although even so, there are variations even within subjects. In others, such as behaviour management, some teachers lack the necessary skills and confidence to apply them consistently.
59. The school's arrangements for planning future developments are good. The plan takes a longer-term view of developments, and includes a helpful statement of context. There is a

clear timetable for drawing up the plan, which is linked closely to financial planning. Subject development plans draw upon the over-arching priorities of the whole-school plan in an appropriate way, although targets in many of them could be more precisely quantified. Subject plans tend to take only a one year view of developments. At all levels, including the governing body, the progress being made towards meeting targets contained in plans is monitored regularly.

60. The school has made good progress in tackling the issues raised in the last inspection report. There has also been a significant improvement in the pupils' achievements. Most staff are now more confident users of computers, although the unreliability of the older parts of the system has sometimes led to problems in using information technology on a regular basis within teaching. Internal and external communications are now good; the quality of information provided to parents is now very good, and there are appropriate and well documented meetings at all levels of the school. Whilst there have been improvements in providing greater challenges for higher attainers, some teaching still fails to stretch them sufficiently. The school's assessment and recording procedures are now good, and the information gathered is now starting to be used to set clear targets for pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The present marking policy is being reviewed, as it still results in inconsistencies between and within subjects, and lacks sufficient linkage to National Curriculum levels or examination grades. The daily tutorial periods are still not well used by all tutors; little effective work occurs in some of them. Spiritual development is now sound, although subjects could both create and take more opportunities to promote spirituality. There is no policy to promote spiritual development; cultural development is now good. The various health and safety points identified during the last inspection have been tackled successfully, although others were raised with the school during this inspection. There are now clear procedures for undertaking risk assessments.
61. Most statutory requirements are met fully, but a few gaps remain. The present arrangements still do not meet the requirement for all pupils to attend an act of collective worship each day. Although there is some coverage of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education in the sixth form, this is insufficient to meet requirements in full. A significant minority of pupils in Year 11 is not taught religious education. The present arrangements for information technology exclude almost one-quarter of pupils in Year 11; nor do arrangements at this level provide sufficient coverage of the Programmes of Study for the subject across the curriculum as a whole. There are minor omissions from the governors' annual report. The school is judged to have a sound ability to continue to improve because of its effective management and, particularly, its use of performance data to set clear targets for improvement.

2 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

Staffing

62. Overall, the school's staffing arrangements are sound. The provision of teachers is broadly satisfactory. The school has fewer teachers than average for its size, and although teachers spend a greater proportion of their time in lessons than usual, class sizes have still increased across all key stages. A significant number of teachers do not have formal qualifications in the subjects they teach, particularly in geography in Key Stage 3, in information technology, in introductory Spanish lessons in Year 8, and in GNVQ business. This has an adverse effect on standards. However, staff are particularly well matched to the subjects taught in art, English, religious education and physical education, and at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form geography.
63. The school's provisions for support staff are satisfactory. The school has more education support staff than average, a reflection of the level of pupils who have special educational needs. The level of technical staff is in line with national figures. The school has a higher than average level of administrative staff, who support the teachers well by providing valuable

clerical support. They all make positive contributions to the life of the school. The support for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and effective, especially at Key Stage 3, but there is an uneven distribution across the timetable. Good practice and liaison with teachers occurs in design and technology, in history where support assistants have a preview of worksheets to be used in class, in English where they challenge pupils' understanding, and in mathematics where they use their initiative, and are sensitive but positive in dealing with pupils. Technicians in design and technology, information technology and science are well qualified; their work enhances educational provision, and assists in sound health and safety practices.

64. The school has been recognised for its good personnel practice by an Investor in People award, recently reviewed and re-accredited. There is an effective induction programme for newly qualified teachers, including a mentoring scheme, and the observation of lessons. Support for non-teaching staff, and for experienced teachers who are new to the school, can be less thorough. Arrangements for the regular appraisal of teaching staff are limited at present. Whilst the school still programmes appraisals in a proper manner, some staff do not participate in the process. Where appraisal has operated, it has been successful, and has been effectively linked to staff development. Staff development needs are also identified through the development planning process, but provision is uneven. Given the improving access to computers, further training to consolidate computer literacy is now taking place, particularly in the core subjects.

2 ***Accommodation***

65. Although the setting is an attractive and spacious one, the school's accommodation is poor, and has a limiting effect on the quality of education provided by the school. Formed by the merger of a grammar school and a secondary modern school, its many buildings are spread out across an extensive, steeply sloping site that is wholly unsuitable for people with mobility problems. The site is also affected by poor drainage; during the inspection, a period of heavy rain revealed many problems of water penetration inside the buildings, as well as making many pathways very slippery with mud. Sandbags have to be used to prevent more serious flooding of the buildings. The West Lawn buildings have numerous cracks resulting from site subsidence, whilst Everest, a converted house at the top of the site, is in poor condition. Taken together, the premises represent a dispiriting environment in which to work and to learn, in spite of efforts to brighten the walls with effective displays of work, and the stalwart efforts of the caretaking staff. Although there are plans to provide substantial new premises, a recent and well-supported bid by the school for funding was unsuccessful.
66. Rooms for English are cold and cramped for the size of classes using them, which restricts learning styles; there is insufficient office space. The library is inadequate for a school of this size. Work in drama is adversely affected by the poor accommodation, and the range of activities that can be undertaken is restricted by inadequate facilities such as lighting, blackout and audio equipment. The temporary classrooms used for some mathematics teaching have a negative effect on the quality of the work done; some teaching takes place in non-specialist rooms, limiting access to suitable learning resources. This is also a problem in English, geography, history and modern languages. Although there are sufficient suitably sized laboratories in science, the split site presents problems in covering certain parts of the courses, and services are misplaced and, in some cases, unsuitable for use. In design and technology, only the accommodation for food and textiles is suitable for purpose; workshops are old fashioned, whilst the graphics hut is totally inadequate for current needs. Accommodation for information technology has recently been upgraded, and this is having a positive effect on standards in the subject. In modern languages, some rooms are small for the size of groups using them, whilst standards in art are limited by the inadequate space available for ceramics and for sixth form study. Although most rooms for music are relatively spacious, their location in a remote building makes it necessary to keep more expensive equipment in a smaller, and unsuitable, upstairs room for security reasons; this limits the work that can be done. Practice rooms are spread around the building, making control of work a problem.

Outdoor areas are broadly suitable for physical education, but the two gymnasias are unsuited to modern course requirements, limiting the experiences that can be offered. Changing rooms are cramped. Vocational subjects benefit from having a specialist base, but this leads to problems of access to computers, which are located elsewhere in the school.

2

2 *Learning resources*

67. The overall provision for learning resources is satisfactory; spending is above average. The school has increased spending this year on computers and on texts for Year 7 classes. Departmental resources are satisfactory overall, although there are shortcomings in some subjects. There are too few text books in science, where books are not issued to pupils, even for examination classes. There are not enough books in art, where teachers supplement the provision with their own books. In design and technology, there is a shortage of suitable books, limiting opportunities for research and reading. In contrast, provision of books and other vocational resources is good for GNVQ courses, mathematics and English.

68. Library provision is unsatisfactory. The limitations imposed by space noted in the last report still exist. The provision of books per pupil is well below minimum recommendations, mainly because of recent weeding out of outdated texts. The proportion of non-fiction texts is too low to support the needs of a school of this size. Despite these weaknesses, the librarian works hard and effectively to promote the library's facilities, liaising with subject teachers to collect resources to support topics and schemes of work. She also makes use of the local schools library service to keep stock updated and to meet pupil's needs. The library is open throughout the school day and after school. Since the last inspection, the number of video resources has increased.

69. Provision for information technology is satisfactory. The overall ratio of pupils per computer matches the national average. The school has produced a high quality development plan to improve the provision, especially through updating and upgrading equipment and software. Upgrading of equipment is too recent to have had an effective impact as yet. For example, software in history is not compatible with the new systems that the school is introducing. The distance of computer facilities from some subjects such as GNVQ and history inhibits regular use. However, there is a good foundation laid for future provision and a clear development plan to enhance it further.

1. Use of the community to enhance the curriculum is very good and a strength of the school. There is a long tradition of effective liaison. The school has received the Schools Curriculum Award three times for its links with the community. Typical activities include the Neighbourhood Engineers' group, contributing to a practical design competition for Year 9 pupils, a sixth form management activity day and a residential activity for science and technology pupils. Contacts between local groups and the technology curriculum are very strong and active. There are many effective contacts in the area of vocational education, including Young Enterprise activities and work placements with a large number of local employers. Drama contacts are strong, with youth theatre groups at junior and senior levels. There are other effective contacts in geography, history, personal and social education, mathematics and modern languages.

70. **The efficiency of the school**

2. Overall, the efficiency with which the school uses resources is good. The quality of financial planning is very good, and is underpinned by a detailed timetable that ensures that budget preparation is linked closely with development planning. In this way, priorities for action can be reflected in budget allocations. When there have been pressures on the school's finances, the governors have sought to balance spending on teachers and other staff with that on essential learning resources. In the current year, when income has risen faster than inflation, spending has been targeted on further improvements to learning resources such as books and

information technology equipment, and on much-needed premises improvements.

72. The basic budget received by the school is broadly average for its size. This is supplemented by above average funding for pupils with special educational needs, as well as valuable income from community use of the school premises. Spending on teachers is slightly below the national average, and this is reflected in fewer teachers than average for a school of this size, who spend a greater than normal proportion of their time in the classroom. The spending on teachers is above that allocated by the funding formula at Key Stage 3, at the expense of Key Stage 4. However, given the nature of the school's intake, including pupils with disturbed patterns of education, this is a sound decision, as can be seen from the attainments of the pupils by the end of Key Stage 3. Firm educational foundations are laid at this level. The relative underspending at Key Stage 4 means that some potentially popular GCSE courses such as dance and physical education are not offered, in spite of the school's clear strengths in these areas. Some Key Stage 4 groups are also large. Sixth form spending matches income, but the price of having a relatively wide range of courses at this level, many with small numbers, is the unsatisfactory combining of GNVQ subject groups, which is educationally unsound. The relatively high utilisation of teachers results in some staff taking subjects for which they are not formally qualified, and this sometimes has a negative effect on standards. Overall, however, the school makes good use of its teachers' skills.
73. Spending on education support and administrative staff is above average. The former reflects the above average number of pupils with special educational needs at the school, whilst the latter helps to reduce the clerical load on teachers in an effective way, for example through excellent reprographics support. Education support staff are well deployed, and make a very positive contribution to the work of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. This year has seen a substantial rise in spending on learning resources, to above average levels. This reflects improvements being made to the school's dated and temperamental computer networks, and to the provision of books. The condition of the school buildings has led to a substantial rise on spending on improvements this year. The buildings remain inefficient in terms of energy costs, cleaning and maintenance requirements, and in physical education, because of the costs of hiring alternative facilities to enable a reasonable curriculum to be provided. The school makes good use of the facilities, and staff, including site staff, display considerable ingenuity on seeking to minimise the impact that the poor accommodation has on teaching and learning.
74. Routine administration and financial control are very good. The school's documentation is well organised, clearly written and provides a good basis for its work in most areas. There are very effective systems in place to control spending. The most recent audit report identified only minor weaknesses, which were tackled promptly.
- 71.
75. Overall, the school works with pupils who are disadvantaged in educational, economic and social terms when they enter the school. It adds more value than would be expected at all levels, and by the time that pupils finish compulsory education at the age of 16, they achieve results that are above the average for all maintained schools. There are considerable improvements in behaviour as pupils move through the school, thanks to its effective support arrangements. Although there are some areas of weakness, particularly in terms of the curriculum, given the difficult physical circumstances within which the school has to work, it is judged to provide good value for money.

71. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

71. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

71. English

76. The pupils' attainments on entry are below average according to end of Key Stage 2 national test results and other data provided by the school. In some years, the literacy skills are well below average. The mean score obtained by pupils in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 is well above both the national average and that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching at least Level 5 is well above the average for similar schools, whilst the proportion reaching at least level 6 is very high in relation to similar schools. Over time, attainment has improved since 1996. It has usually been above average, peaking in 1998. Girls' attainments are higher than those of their peers nationally than are those of boys. At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils gaining at least grade C in the 1999 GCSE English language examination is above the national average and well above that for similar schools. Since the last report, attainments have fluctuated, but the overall trend shows significant improvement. More girls pass at grade C or higher than boys; the gap between them is usually greater than the national average. However, boys' attainments usually match those of boys nationally, and in 1999 are above the corresponding national figure. In the 1999 GCSE English literature examination, the proportion passing at C or better is well below the national average, but the school enters a higher proportion of its pupils than is the case nationally. In 1998, the last year for which full national data were available, pupils tended to achieve higher results in English literature than in the other subjects that they took; English language results tended to be lower than their other subjects. The school's own analyses for 1999 show relative underperformance in English literature. Since the last inspection, results in English literature have fluctuated, and there has been a falling trend. However, the proportion of candidates entered for the examination has nearly doubled since the last report. At the end of the sixth form, the number of A-level candidates is too small for reliable statistical comparison with national data. In the 1999 A-level English language examination, the proportion passing at grades A or B fell from that in 1998, whilst that gaining at least grade E matched that of 1998. In the 1999 A-level English literature and language examination, all candidates attained a grade E or better, an improvement on the 1998 figure. The proportion passing at grades A or B increased markedly from 1998.
77. In work seen during the inspection, attainments at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 are above expectation; they are in line with expectations for the end of the sixth form. At the end of Key Stage 3, speaking and listening skills are above expectation. Most pupils listen attentively and with understanding. They participate fully in small group work and express opinions clearly, using vocabulary precisely, as Year 9 pupils showed when analysing the features of horror and mystery in works by Dickens, Stoker, Shelley and Coleridge. The pupils' response to this activity also showed the above average reading skills that are typical of reading standards at the end of Key Stage 3. Most pupils quickly identify the main features of a text and make sensible deductions about any implied meanings. For example, a Year 9 middle set showed a sensitive level of empathy and understanding towards the circumstances of Anne Frank as outlined in her diary, and towards the qualities of character she displayed. Only a few pupils are below expectation because of weaknesses in word recognition and comprehension. Writing skills are above expectation. Most use paragraphs well, and use accurate spelling and punctuation. The best writing is well above expectation because the pupils use a wide range of vocabulary and mature written expression to engage the reader's interest. A few pupils of all attainments have weaknesses in presentation and neatness in their exercise books. Information technology skills in English at this level are below expectation.
78. By the end of Key Stage 4, speaking and listening skills are above expectations. A particular strength is the pupils' ability to speculate on new concepts, as shown by the Year 11

pupils who were analysing the methods and directors' intentions in the films *If* and *Dead Poets' Society*. Pupils express themselves articulately in all lessons. Reading skills are above expectations. Pupils understand the main themes of what they read and refer to the text in detail to support their judgements. There were some examples of some extensive analytical work such as the wider reading assignment on the detective novel genre which included detailed comparisons of the writing of Conan Doyle, Poe, Chandler and Rendell. Lower attainers have weaknesses in recognising some words in common usage. Attainments in writing at Key Stage 4 are above expectation. Most pupils write well organised and coherent work, and understand the difference between written and spoken expression. Many pupils show good control of concise expression. The best writing is of the highest standard, and is particularly effective in establishing settings and character, such as a piece written by a Year 11 girl concerning a family coping with the consequences of a terminal illness. Information technology skills at Key Stage 4 are below expectation. In the sixth form, attainments in Year 13 match expectations. Students write fluently, with only the occasional inaccuracy. Higher attainers evaluate texts concisely, and make some perceptive comments about a writer's use of language. Most appreciate that analysing literature involves accepting the validity of sometimes conflicting interpretations.

79. The school aims to improve the pupils' literacy skills further in all areas of the curriculum, but there is no whole school literacy policy, although one is being developed. Departments have carried out assessments of the main features of literacy in their teaching; good progress has been made in promoting the pupils' use of key vocabulary in each subject. In some departments, there is frequent and effective use of methods such as "writing frames" to help pupils write more effectively and coherently. Speaking and listening skills are above expectations in physical education, where pupils listen closely, answer questions confidently and collaborate well in small groups to plan, evaluate, improve and perform dance sequences. Attainments of this level are not consistently apparent in other subjects. In design and technology, for example, girls' oral skills help them think through and identify what they need to do, but boys show less ability in talking through their ideas. In science, pupils do not have enough opportunity to explain their work and there are not enough chances for open discussion. For example, many find it difficult to describe the methods they have used in experiments. In geography, pupils provide short answers effectively, but only have limited opportunities for extended responses. Listening skills are good in French; for example, pupils in Year 7 listen closely and effectively to taped conversations. In general, there are too few opportunities in subjects other than English to demonstrate independent reading at Key Stages 3 and 4. For example, in science, there are too few textbooks to allow all pupils to take them home. There are some weaknesses of presentation in exercise books in many subjects. In mathematics, there are few opportunities for extended written work at Key Stage 3, but some good examples of writing in investigative work in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. In design and technology, teachers emphasise the importance of writing at Key Stage 4, and pupils' work is generally accurate. In information technology, pupils produce technically accurate work and the structure of the approach to writing helps lower attainers to make good progress. In science, standards are below expected levels at Key Stages 3 and 4. Descriptions are often short and do not use enough scientific vocabulary. There are some good exceptions to this in Key Stage 4. In geography writing is a strength at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
80. Progress in English is good at Key Stages 3 and 4, and satisfactory in the sixth form. The teachers' very good subject knowledge and expertise are significant factors in raising standards. Attainments in the Key Stage 3 tests in recent years have been higher than would be expected from pupils' attainments on entry, therefore showing good progress. Higher attaining pupils make good progress. On entry, their writing is restricted to mainly a narrative style, but by the end of Key Stage 3 they are writing effectively in a range of formats. Their use and range of vocabulary are also far wider than in Year 7. Middle attainers on entry are not paragraphing and punctuating consistently and accurately, but do so by the end of Key Stage 3. Lower attainers, including those with special educational needs, tend to write short and unplanned responses on entry. By the end of Key Stage 3, they are writing lengthy paragraphed

pieces and analysing characters from texts such as *Whispers in the Graveyard*. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress, and they achieve significantly higher GCSE grades in English language than would have been expected from their earlier Key Stage 3 results. Pupils of all attainments make good progress in deepening and extending their understanding of literature, and significantly more pupils pass GCSE English literature at all grades than is the case nationally. Pupils become more sensitive to the significance of language such as the middle attaining Year 11 pupil who pointed out that an Asian writer's use of language symbolised her sense of alienation from both Asian and British communities. Progress in the sixth form is satisfactory, although Year 12 students show evidence of good progress in their depth and range of understanding of *The Changeling* and *Measure for Measure*. Pupils of all ages make good progress because they are taught well, and they have positive attitudes to their work.

81. At all levels, the pupils' responses are good. Most show interest in their work and talk sensibly about what they are doing. Lengthy course work by pupils of all attainments provides evidence of perseverance and independent study. In many lessons, pupils participate in small group work with enthusiasm and work well with each other on these tasks. They enjoy and respond well to the chances they have in English for independent learning. Most behave well and have good, respectful relationships with their teachers. A few pupils of all attainments behave in an unsatisfactory way, showing immature classroom behaviour. This includes talking while the teacher or other pupils are talking to the class, and a general lack of attention.
82. Teaching is good at all key stages, and is often very good, particularly with higher attaining groups in Years 9 to 11. A significant strength is the teachers' knowledge of both the subject and examination requirements, resulting in the pupils being well prepared for examinations and tests. Teachers also pay close attention to, and have high expectations of, the pupils' accuracy. Lessons are well planned, with the provision of appropriate resources a significant strength. The best lessons use a wide range of methods and enthuse high attaining pupils, such as the Year 10 lesson in which pupils analysed characters in *Jane Eyre* and *The Virgin and the Gypsy* through an inventive "hot seating" activity. The teacher's use and knowledge of performance skills enhanced significantly Year 12 students' understanding of *The Changeling*. In lessons of this nature, there is very good pace and momentum. Day-to-day marking is good, although there are examples of comments being too bland to be helpful. Expectations of presentation in exercise books are not consistently high enough. Discipline is generally good, but a lack of assertiveness in some lessons means that some unsatisfactory behaviour is not managed effectively. Planning for the use of time is good in many lessons, but occasionally there was too much time given to some activities leading to a loss of concentration. Teachers set homework regularly and this makes a good contribution to pupils' progress.
83. The department has responded effectively to the last report, particularly regarding improvements in speaking and listening opportunities. The head of department provides good educational direction and has initiated several developments since her appointment, including the process of a better defined Key Stage 3 curriculum. Although not yet completed, this is having a positive effect on attainment. Arrangements for setting in Years 9 and 11 are unsatisfactory because they are based on the pupils' modern foreign language choices. Assessment procedures are improving at Key Stage 3, though they are not yet systematic enough. The department is making satisfactory progress in the use of information about pupils' prior attainments to identify potential, to monitor progress and to let pupils know how to improve, but is not yet fully making the most of this information. Although there is some monitoring of teaching and learning, it is not systematic enough to ensure that the best practices are being identified and shared. The accommodation is poor in terms of room size, standard of decoration and administrative space.

71.

71. **Drama**

84. Drama is a strength of the school. The 1999 GCSE results are well above average, representing an improvement from 1998. Pupils tend to do better in drama than in their other subjects. In the sixth form, there are too few candidates to make a reliable comparison of A-level theatre studies results, but most candidates achieved grades A or B in 1999. In work seen, attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 are above expectation. Pupils show strengths in characterisation, co-operation and conviction. At Key Stage 4, attainments are well above expectation for the end of the key stage. Pupils develop controlled and focused improvisations based on a range of stimuli. Characterisation is again a strength. Attainment in the sixth form is well above expectation, with students showing a particularly high level of skill in evaluation and refining their work. Progress is very good at all key stages. At Key Stage 3, pupils enter the school with little experience of formal drama teaching, but by the end of the key stage they work effectively as a whole class, in groups and individually. They have a clear awareness of their work as a piece of performance and its impact on an audience. By the end of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, very good progress leads to attainments that are well above expectation.

85. The pupils' responses to drama are consistently very good. They are enthused and energised by their work. It is a popular option, and during the inspection there was clear evidence of pupils of a wide range of attainments in other subjects working positively and successfully together. The subject matter and the process of drama teaching make effective contributions to the pupils' personal development. For example, in Year 11, pupils dealt with sensitive subject matter in a mature manner. The quality of teaching is very good at all levels, with many excellent features. Specialist knowledge of content and methods is a strength. The teachers are particularly skilled in helping the pupils develop their confidence in their own ability. There is strong educational leadership for the subject. The provision of a well-defined curriculum helps the pupils' progress. The accommodation for drama is poor, and the range of some activities is restricted by the lack of availability of facilities such as blackout, sound and lights.

71. **Mathematics**

86. On entry to the school, the pupils' attainments are variable from year to year, but in general are below the national average. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, the mean score obtained is above the national average, and well above that for similar schools. The teachers' own assessments of the pupils' attainments are secure at lower and middle levels, but there are some variations at higher levels. Over the last three years, there has been no consistent difference in the results obtained by boys and girls. Results in 1999 show a significant improvement on the previous year, but in both 1998 and 1999, overall pass rates suffered because of the relatively high level of pupil absence from the tests. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1999, the average points score obtained at GCSE is in line with both the national average and that for similar schools, as are the proportions of pupils gaining grade C or better, and grade G and above. During the last three years, there has been no significant or consistent difference in the results of boys and girls. Results in 1998 showed a significant improvement on the previous year, with a further improvement in 1999, giving the best results yet obtained by the school in mathematics. The total number of entries for GCSE statistics is much smaller, but these results have also shown considerable improvement; they were in line with the national average in 1998, but the number gaining grades in the range A*-C improved significantly in 1999. At the end of the sixth form, the total number of entries for A level mathematics in each of the last three years has been small, so comparisons with national pass rates are not reliable. There has been a 100 per cent pass rate, with the quality of grades improving year on year, but with no student obtaining an A grade during this time.

87. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainments at the ends of Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the sixth form, are above expectations for the end of the relevant stage. By the

end of Key Stage 3, pupils are able to plan and carry out simple mathematical investigations, including an analysis of results. They receive regular practice in numeracy, with special emphasis in Year 7. A strength of this practice is that teachers stress the importance of accuracy; pupils' ability to use basic number without the need for a calculator is also improved. Pupils use algebraic formulae with increasing confidence, for instance in applying Pythagoras' theorem, and in Year 9 in calculating the volume of prisms. There are occasions when pupils are fascinated by the patterns and logic of mathematics, and encouraged by their teachers to think deeply about the subject. A Year 8 group, for instance, debated at some length the definition of an angle. The use of information technology is increasing in mathematics lessons, and, by Year 9, pupils use a spreadsheet successfully to determine the maximum volume of a cuboid which can be made from a given piece of card. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils carry out more complicated and substantial mathematical tasks, including more detailed evaluations of their work. They show determination in rearranging algebraic formulae, including those containing powers and roots. In both Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils display a good understanding of shape and space, assisted by the construction of mathematical models. Pupils at all levels of attainment in Key Stage 4 apply the formula for the circumference of a circle; in Year 11 they show a high level of understanding to consolidate their knowledge of the difference between congruent and similar triangles, and also in tackling calculations on probability. Students in the sixth form receive regular practice with work at examination level, including timed questions. At this level, they show a growing confidence to ask questions, and an interest in the underlying theory of the subject. For instance, they compare the effectiveness of finding the gradients of curved lines by drawing tangents and by using differentiation, and discuss maturely the merits of each method.

88. A whole-school policy to promote numeracy across the curriculum has yet to be developed, and a valuable opportunity is therefore missed to encourage more uniformity in practice across subjects. Pupils' numerical skills are satisfactory, and improving. The development of numeracy receives priority in the mathematics department. There is particular emphasis in Year 7, where pupils are placed into ability sets for numeracy for one lesson each fortnight. In these lessons, teachers concentrate on the development of pupils' skills at manipulating number, including counting, measures and multiplication, and they practice handling data in a number of forms. In many mathematics lessons, pupils receive additional regular practice specifically in numeracy as they move through the school, but this is not yet common practice in all classes. Other subjects which make a significant contribution to the development of numeracy skills include business education, design and technology, geography, information technology and science. Calculators are used effectively, with only a minority of pupils seen to be too reliant on them for basic number work.

89. Progress overall at Key Stage 3 is good for pupils at all levels of attainment. In Year 7, they are mainly taught in mixed ability registration groups; within lessons, they are provided with work graded according to their prior attainment, in order that individuals can progress at the appropriate rate. Pupils at all levels of attainment therefore are provided with the opportunity to make good progress. Progress is also good overall in Years 8 and 9, where pupils are placed in sets by attainment, but there is more variation within individual classes. Progress at Key Stage 4 continues to be good overall. Comparison between the 1997 Key Stage 3 scores and the 1999 GCSE scores for the same group of pupils shows that they made above average progress. Progress in lessons at Key Stage 4 varies; this is mainly because of each pupil's approach to learning and power of concentration. Differences in progress also occur because of variation in each pupil's level of attendance, and in the effort made with homework. In the sixth form, students form positive working relationships with their teachers, and respond well to the challenge of A-level work, making good progress as a result. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, particularly when they are provided with additional support. There are, however, insufficient numeracy targets included in individual education plans. Those pupils with behaviour difficulties, and who lack concentration, make less progress, and may fall further behind the rest of their class. For example, most of a class containing a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs made sound progress when drawing the reflections of mathematical figures in plane mirrors, and were able to use co-

ordinates confidently. However, two pupils who were unable to work consistently, in spite of their teacher's encouragement, made little progress and fell behind.

90. The pupils' responses are good at all levels. Relationships between teachers and pupils are usually good, and in most classes a mutual respect is evident. Even pupils for whom mathematics is not a favourite subject realise its importance, and work hard in order to improve their standards. They concentrate well to the end of each lesson; most pupils become involved in their work and do not require reminders from teachers to keep working. Pupils behave well, and they are courteous and trustworthy. They work well in pairs, both when sharing equipment and when discussing mathematical problems. When provided with the opportunity to do so, they respond positively and show initiative. The take-up of places on A-level courses has increased, and is now satisfactory.
91. Teaching in mathematics is good at all levels. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory, with two-thirds good or very good. The teachers' knowledge and understanding are good at all levels. They have a high expectations of pupils, but the pace of lessons is occasionally too relaxed. The planning of lessons is good, and teachers often challenge pupils well. Teaching methods are largely effective. Teachers usually give the pupils an outline of the work to be covered at the beginning of the lesson, and a summary of what has been achieved at the end. Practical work such as model making is included where appropriate to increase interest and understanding. In the vast majority of lessons, discipline is good. This is because teachers establish sound working relationships, and pitch pupil tasks at the correct level, so that they are challenging yet within reach. Praise and pupil commendations are used effectively. Though many lessons start late, pupils work well to the end of each period. There is a clear policy for marking and many good examples of constructive comments to encourage pupils to improve. There are however inconsistencies in frequency and in the depth of marking and grading. The quality of A-level folders is variable. Homework is set regularly, with good examples seen of differentiated tasks in Key Stage 3.
92. There is a commitment to the continued improvement of provision and attainments. The leadership and management of the mathematics faculty are mostly good. The teachers work well as a team, and are forward-looking and positive about their role. The appraisal and monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently well established; although annual meetings are held to discuss formally each teacher's contribution to the success of the department, there is insufficient observation of lessons. The link between school and individual priorities for staff development also is often unclear. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The long-term assessment of pupils' work and progress is standardised, and thoroughly marked and recorded. The department is developing sound value added measurements across each key stage for each year group, and for each class, which focuses thinking well on progress. The use of computers is becoming a routine and integral part of many mathematics lessons, but some teachers still do not make sufficient plans to include computer work in lessons. There are suitable opportunities for extracurricular activities, including the involvement of primary school pupils, visits, master classes, and mathematics challenges; these help to promote progress. Reports to parents are regular, but do not contain sufficient information about the standards achieved in mathematics. The permanent classrooms are in good condition, but the three temporary rooms used by the faculty are poor, and have a negative impact on the quality of education. The provision of textbooks is good, but further access to high quality computer hardware is needed.
93. Since the last inspection, the department has made good progress, and attainment has improved at all key stages. A more structured approach with average attaining pupils, including record books, clear rewards for good work and pupil involvement in setting targets, have produced an all round improvement at this level. Teaching is now satisfactory in all classes. More stress is given to the development of numeracy skills, but there is as yet no whole-school policy for this important area. Teachers are more confident about the use of computers in class, but there is still a lack of consistency in their use across the department.

71. **Science**

71.

94. On entry to the school in 1999, the overall attainments of pupils are below average, although there are significant variations from year to year. At the end of Key Stage 3, the results of national test 1999, show a mean points score that is average in relation to all schools nationally and to similar schools. However, fewer pupils than average reached the higher levels in the tests. Boys' achievements were greater than those of girls by a margin similar to that found nationally. The 1998 results showed a similar pattern. In previous years, the mean points score has stayed in line with the national trend. At the end of Key Stage 4, the 1999 GCSE mean points score is in line with the national average for all schools and that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining at least grade C in 1999 is above both the national average and that for similar schools. This is an improvement on the 1998 figures; results have risen steadily since 1996. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls. At the end of the sixth form, the numbers of students taking examinations are too small to allow reliable statistical comparisons, but almost all achieved pass grades in 1999, with broadly similar grade patterns in all three sciences.

95. In work seen during the inspection, attainments at Key Stage 3 are in line with expectations for the end of the key stage. Most pupils achieve satisfactory standards in experimental and investigative science, making suitable observations, recording the data appropriately and offering simple explanations for what they see. However, only a few pupils use precision in their measurements, consider the reliability of the results, or draw careful conclusions based on their knowledge and understanding of the concepts. In work seen at Key Stage 4, attainments are above the expectations for the end of the key stage. By Year 11, most pupils have a basic knowledge and secure understanding of scientific processes. In experimental and investigative science, many extend their knowledge, for example to investigate the relationship between two variables with due regard to a reliable, accurate approach. Knowledge of physical processes and materials is particularly well established, with many pupils showing the depth of understanding needed for higher grades. By the end of the sixth form, attainments are in line with expectations. Students build on the secure knowledge base gained from Key Stage 4, and those studying chemistry show particularly high standards of knowledge and a mature understanding of the subject. Work in biology and physics is less well developed, but still secure.

96. Overall, progress at Key Stage 3 is good. Pupils have entered with below average knowledge of science concepts and poorly developed investigative skills, and have progressed to standards broadly in line with the national expectation. Pupils are clear about the objectives of lessons, build on previous knowledge or skills at a good pace, and respond eagerly to higher expectations and more demanding tasks. Progress at Key Stage 4 is sound overall; that of pupils of average attainments at Key Stage 3 is good. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, pupils achieved GCSE results that were well above average in relation to their attainments in the national tests two years earlier. Pupils at Key Stage 4 extend their knowledge and understanding of concepts and applications. A significant number of higher attaining pupils make insufficient progress, so that good achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is not being translated into higher grades at Key Stage 4. This is largely because of a lack of planning for appropriately challenging work, the adverse effects of unsatisfactory punctuality to lessons, and a tolerance by some teachers of poor behaviour. Furthermore, pupils are not able to take textbooks home to help their work. The progress of sixth form students studying A level is good. They build quickly on prior knowledge and develop a mature approach to experimental work. Their confidence shows through effective discussion, so that difficulties are easily resolved. Pupils with lower attainment and with special educational needs made satisfactory progress where the tasks match their attainment, or where extra support is provided in the classroom.

97. The attitudes of pupils to learning are mainly satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4; in the sixth form they are very good. Pupils listen to instructions and concentrate on the activities provided, particularly when the lesson is well planned and expectations are clear. The behaviour of a small minority of pupils is often restless and inclined towards being disruptive. Participation in discussion is frequently lacking, sometimes because insufficient opportunities being provided by the teacher. Insufficient use is made of libraries and additional resources to extend knowledge. In practical work, pupils carry out experiments safely and purposefully. They collaborate well and share ideas in investigative tasks. In the sixth form, students appreciate the purposeful and supportive environment, free of disruption, and exhibit high levels of motivation.
98. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at all levels. It is good in about one-third of lessons. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good. Where teaching contains unsatisfactory features, planning is insufficiently detailed. For example, tasks are inadequately matched to the abilities, especially higher attainers and those with special educational needs. Where teaching is effective, questioning is rigorous and is directed at individuals. Some lessons are late starting, partly because of the distance travelled across the site, but the pace in many lessons is inclined to be slow. Assessment is carried out according to department requirements, but insufficient use is made of this, or prior data, to predict and identify pupils needing support. Marking of exercise books contains suitable grading, but lacks clear targets for improving the quality of work. The setting of homework is hampered by the lack of sufficient textbooks.
99. The curriculum satisfies statutory requirements. Schemes of work are not sufficient to support short-term planning. Information technology is increasingly used in science, including data logging. Pupils undergo regular assessment, although this is infrequent in Key Stage 3. Analyses of data do not yet sufficiently help individuals identify weaknesses or set appropriate targets for improvement. The department is moving towards a clearer and more effective approach to assessment. Five of the eight science teachers, including the head of department, are relatively new to the school. Good support is provided for two newly qualified teachers. The level of technician support is normally adequate, but is sometimes difficult to maintain given their responsibilities in other areas. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, in spite of limited refurbishment. Although laboratories are large, they remain in need of repair and refurbishment. The department is on two separated sites and resources must be carried from one to the other; this is inefficient. There are insufficient textbooks to allow pupils to take them home. The new head of department has made a good impact in his short time in the school, with initiatives and strategies which will be effective in continuing to raise standards. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in the use of computers within science, but the range of applications is still below that usually seen. Chemical storage has been improved, but there are still inadequate funds to improve the quality of equipment, or to provide sufficient textbooks for all pupils.

71.

71. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

71. **Information technology**

100. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, the teachers' assessments of attainments, which are not subject to external verification, are broadly average overall. Girls' attainments are slightly higher than those of boys, but the difference is similar to that seen nationally. However, the proportion of pupils reaching at least Level 6 is well below average. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, results are well above average, with a high proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades of A* or A. There are no examination results for the sixth form. All pupils are taught information technology at Key Stage 3 which is an improvement from the last inspection, but nearly one-quarter of Year 11 pupils does not receive a full

entitlement to the subject. Pupils generally receive very few experiences of control technology and the social applications of information technology.

101. Work seen during the inspection is in line with expectations for the end of Key Stage 3. When using text-processing software in their structured course, all pupils are confident when using the keyboard. They use the computer as a natural tool for a specific range of applications. Some pupils choose to present text-processed work in a number of subjects, many using home computers. All pupils are able to use a range of formatting tools to create well presented documents for a range of purposes and audiences, and are able to create spreadsheets using simple formulae to analyse data sets in order to make predictions. Most pupils use spreadsheets to solve problems in mathematics. By Year 9, pupils are able to integrate text, simple graphics and number data into a single document for particular purposes. Girls and boys show similar attainments, but few pupils use the computer creatively to undertake in-depth investigations of personal or subject related activities. At Key Stage 4, almost all pupils benefit from a structured key skills course. However, attainments are below expectations for the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils are secure when using generic text-processing software and work with accuracy, methodically using a spell-checker. They refine and present information in different styles for different purposes. Pupils use data-management skills well in mathematics, but show limited capacity for independent study. Lines of enquiry adopted by higher attaining pupils lack complexity. Current use of the Internet is basic, but this is a new feature of information technology at the school. Pupils with special educational needs match the rest of the group in their ability to use computers at Key Stages 3 and 4. In the sixth form, attainments are below expectations. Students continue their development of key skills in text-processing and data-management, which enables them to meet the needs of tasks set in GNVQ courses, but in general, this does not represent an increase in attainment from Key Stage 4. Challenging use of computers is rare in other subjects.
102. Boys and girls make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3, gaining the basic skills when working with text and data of different types. Pupils with special educational needs build their self-esteem and confidence to work with others through the success they achieve, especially when supported by classroom assistants. Average and higher attaining pupils throughout the school are not encouraged to reflect on the fitness for purpose of different solutions to problems, or to refine their understanding of the use of information technology in different settings. This limits their progress in the same way that was raised in the last inspection. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, pupils make unsatisfactory progress. They make satisfactory progress developing the required skills in text-processing and data-management, but without applying them in ways that reflect progress in their understanding of appropriate computer use. Assessment and recording have improved since the last inspection. The use of a log book at Key Stage 4 and an effective self-evaluation procedure ensures that pupils know what skills they can and cannot perform. In the sixth form GNVQ courses, much of the use of information technology utilises skills that students already possess. Music A-level students make good progress with music technology, supported effectively by the information technology technician. Average and lower attainers appreciate the structured sixth form key skills courses and make broadly sound progress. However, higher attainers are insufficiently stimulated by the teaching and the opportunities that are currently available to make appropriately high progress.
103. Throughout the school, the response of pupils to the use of computers is satisfactory. Pupils know that being able to use computers is important, and apply themselves methodically to the tasks that are set. Machines are generally used with care, and pupils are attentive to their teacher in lessons. There have been difficulties for many pupils gaining regular access to computers when required, but this position is now improving.
104. Teaching overall is satisfactory at all levels, but is better when teachers have good knowledge, high expectations of their pupils and understand clearly how learning in information technology takes place. Teaching and learning are not monitored in a

coherent way to promote effective practice. The direction for the subject is currently unclear, and some information technology teachers lack confidence and understanding of how to teach the subject well, despite the hard work that has gone into the organisation of the key skills programmes. Teaching and learning are not monitored in a coherent way in order to improve the experiences for pupils. The over-intensive use of resource booklets limits the understanding and motivation for some pupils in study skills lessons. Teachers usually support individual pupils well, and give them good feedback, helping them to make progress. Reporting to parents is in keeping with statutory requirements. Teachers in other curriculum subjects have lost confidence when using computers in lessons due to the unreliability of the equipment, despite good training provision that represents a great improvement from the last inspection. Very good technician support improves staff and pupil confidence, and contributes to raising standards. A recently approved development plan includes a rolling programme for the continuous updating of equipment which is beginning to restore confidence. Geography teachers have begun to regularly use computers in their teaching and several other departments have agreed to take responsibility to teach and assess aspects of information technology.

105. The current curriculum throughout the school is carefully organised in such a way as to ensure that the majority of pupils receive some experience of a taught information technology programme. However, in Year 11, not all pupils receive adequate experience of the subject, and thus statutory requirements are not fully met. The direction of the subject is currently unclear, and its management is unduly complex. A recent development plan, however, includes a rolling programme for the continuous updating of equipment, and this is starting to restore confidence in the systems used. The recently refurbished teaching rooms have a positive effect on standards in the subject, allowing suitable space for group and individual work.

71. **Religious education**

106. At the end of Key Stage 4, the results in the 1998 GCSE examination are well above the national average for grade C and above. Only girls followed the GCSE course in 1998, and no external examinations were taken in 1999. Although the subject is offered at A-level, there are currently no students following this course.

107. In work seen during the inspection, attainments are in line with expectations for the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils increase their knowledge of world religions and apply this to abstract concepts, for example the idea of sacred places, in Year 7. They can identify the main features of places of worship and are aware of the role they play in the lives of believers, for example a study of the Sikh Gurdwara in Year 9. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the role of symbolic artefacts and their place in worship and ritual. Pupils have an understanding of the nature of prayer and religious writings. Through reference to individuals such as Mother Theresa, they consider faith in action. In work seen at the end of Key Stage 4, attainments in the non-examination course are below expectations. Lack of time and under-developed skills result in responses that are superficial and lacking detail. Pupils acquire a basic knowledge of Buddhism, and oral work indicates that higher attaining pupils can relate this knowledge to a comparison with western materialism. Lack of written work, however, contributes to an inability to build upon this understanding. Pupils consider contemporary issues from a religious standpoint and recognise that there may be differing but equally valid viewpoints. In the sixth form, only those students following the general studies course receive their entitlement to a religious education in two modules of the course. No lessons of these modules were running during the inspection, but limited written work seen indicates that although useful opportunities are provided to discuss philosophical questions, the lack of time allocated results in attainment that is below expectations nationally.

108. Progress at Key Stage 3 in lessons is good. With support, pupils can empathise with those of different faiths and cultures, and are developing an understanding of

the effect of belief on believers. They make progress in their recognition of the importance of rites of passage, and consider the place of religious festivals in their own lives. In their consideration of the beliefs and values of others, they are encouraged to question and to reflect on their own values; many pupils are seen to make good progress in their ability to reflect. In a Year 7 class, pupils of all ability levels were seen to make good progress in the preparation of a wall display which enabled them to consolidate their learning and understanding of the place of worship visited. Lower attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in class, but homework is not well done and is sometimes left unfinished. As a result, their overall progress is unsatisfactory. Progress at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory because of limited time for the subject and the restricted use of written work to extend learning opportunities. Although oral work in Year 10 demonstrates greater depth of thought than written work, the negative attitude of some pupils in Key Stage 4 has an adverse effect on their progress, which teachers work hard to counteract. Written work indicates that pupils make progress in their consideration of contemporary issues, and are willing to discuss their effects upon society today. There is no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls, but the disparity in class size in Year 11 affects the individual involvement of pupils. Pupils in the sixth form have too little teaching to make more than limited progress.

109. The pupils' attitudes in lessons are satisfactory overall at all levels, and good on many occasions. They display tolerance for the beliefs of others, and behaviour in class is generally positive. Staff are good role models for the pupils and listen to the opinions of all with the courtesy and respect that they expect from their pupils. Pupils at all key stages display good concentration, and are quick to respond to questions, or to offer information or opinion. Where attitudes in Key Stage 4 are less positive, most pupils remain generally polite and well behaved, responding quickly to the teachers' discipline.

110. The quality of teaching is good at all levels. The teachers' knowledge and understanding are good, and this enables them to add detail and colour to their lessons, and to respond to pupils' questions on difficult and often abstract issues with clarity and confidence. Lessons are well planned, and imaginative teaching activities are used to reinforce learning, as can be seen by the display of masks created during a study of symbolism. Pupils are well managed, and reluctant participants find themselves involved, caught up by the enthusiasm of the teacher. Teachers have high expectations of classwork, and lessons are effectively structured to meet the needs of pupils of differing prior attainments. Assessment is effective, particularly at Key Stage 3, where all work is marked to a clearly defined standard, well known to the pupils and focused on their attainment in knowledge and understanding. Regular assessment tasks monitor their progress in these elements and are used to build up a profile of the development of each pupil that is clearly reported in the annual report.

111. The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a good departmental ethos, and teachers are committed to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of their pupils. Since the last inspection, a new Key Stage 4 religious education course has been developed which will enable pupils to receive external accreditation. The time allocation for this course has been improved. Some religious education has been introduced through the sixth form general studies course, though this is insufficient to fulfil statutory requirements. Nor do all pupils in Year 11 follow a suitable course in the subject, as required, although this will be resolved in September 2000.

71.

Art

112. The teachers' own assessments of pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 are in line with those seen nationally. At the end of Key Stage 4, the 1999 GCSE results are average for both grade C and above, and for grade G and higher. These results are better than those in 1998; since the last inspection they have improved steadily. In 1998, girls tended to do less well in art than in their other subjects. At the end of the sixth form, the number of A-level

students is too small to compare reliably their results with those nationally. In 1999, all candidates achieved a pass grade, three at grades A or B.

113. In the work seen during the inspection, attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with the national expectations. Girls are frequently more knowledgeable and skilled than most boys, often producing better work. Pupils know how to draw from observation, and understand how elements such as line, tone, pattern and texture can be applied effectively in two- and three-dimensions. Higher attainment results from the greater analysis and detail achieved by a significant minority. Artists and designers often influence pupils' ideas; by making sketchbook notes, most pupils retain a basic knowledge of the artists studied. Standards are occasionally below expectations because some pupils have insufficient access to appropriate sources of information, for example, comic style graphics. Some pupils, especially boys, do not know how to use information effectively. Pupils with special educational needs attain appropriate standards which are, in some instances, above expectations. Attainments seen at the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with expectations. Most pupils are able to analyse the drawing and painting processes used by artists. One pupil, for example, achieved a bold interpretation of Manet's strong colour and free brushwork. The below expected attainments of a small minority relate to an insufficient use of research and experiment to refine ideas. Higher attainers are more systematic in gathering useful information. Most pupils have a good knowledge of clay, and construct competently using coiling and slab methods. At the end of the sixth form, standards are in line with expectations. In contrast to Key Stage 4, students use research and experiment well. Students take a careful interest in artists' work, and experiment with colour and painting processes thoroughly in order to develop their own work. One student has learned about the pointillist methods of Seurat, for example, and had applied this in his own work to good effect. Sketchbooks are used with considerable skill to modify and refine ideas. There are some excellent examples, in which students explore widely with materials, processes and diverse art forms.
114. Progress is good at all key stages. At Key Stage 3, projects are planned clearly to incorporate the knowledge and skills that are a foundation for understanding, and making a good range, of art. This is promoted by teaching that concentrates well on mark making and tone in drawing, for example by interrogating Van Gogh's self-portraits. Higher attainers, including some with special educational needs, discover the right proportions of the head and how tones express form. Pupils find out about colour, texture and pattern. In Year 8, pupils make excellent ceramic masks, showing a lively response to the rich visual characteristics found in African traditions. Through Key Stage 4, the knowledge of colour is broadened and the application of paints developed well. Year 10 pupils are challenged by a pointillist approach to painting, and respond with above average work that uses contrasts and textures well. They refine ceramics skills, building and modelling in clay competently. In the sixth form, students pay greater attention to the ideas of leading artists and express these in discursive writing. Research becomes increasingly detailed and wide-ranging. Students pay more attention to understanding and controlling media, for example, in Year 12 when using Cezanne's ideas on colour to produce still life paintings of a high standard.
115. Pupils' responses are largely good at all key stages. They are interested in making art and are enthused by lively teaching and stimulating activity. There are pupils who are not as well motivated, for example, in some Year 8 and Year 11 groups. They do not listen well and cause distractions for others at the start of lessons. These pupils are better doing practical tasks when they try hard and take care making pottery. Behaviour and relationships are mainly satisfactory although they are very good in the sixth form.
116. Teaching is good at all levels. Teachers use their strengths in drawing, painting, printing and ceramics effectively to meet the curriculum requirements at all levels. Teaching often enthuses pupils, and consequently they respond positively to challenging work and acquire a good range of knowledge and skills. Lesson planning expresses the right objectives for all pupils, and ensures that they systematically extend their understanding. For example, in Year

7 they are taught that colours can be warm or cool, and by Year 12 that cool colours are recessive and the richest colours best describe form. The essential knowledge and skills for each lesson are clearly explained and revisited over time. Teachers share their expertise through good demonstrations. The techniques of coiling and slab building with clay are well communicated and result in high standards. Very occasionally, the most effective organisation of resources is overlooked and, for example, Year 9 pupils do not have sufficient means to progress their comic book style imagery. Teachers relate to pupils in a friendly and sensitive manner. There is good classroom control, although the occasional lapse in pupils' attention and concentration is not always tackled sufficiently firmly. This leads to a little slow pace but most lessons are productive, particularly in Years 10 and 12. Teachers talk to pupils in helpful ways and show them how to make useful evaluations of their own work. They draw attention to successful work, give praise and this is very encouraging for pupils. Tutorial discussions with Year 13 students lead them to a clear understanding on writing a good art essay. Homework is not being set consistently within the department.

117. The strengths reported at the last inspection have been maintained, with some improvements having been made. Curriculum planning at Key Stage 3 is now more systematic in approaching what pupils learn. The process of assessment is carried out satisfactorily, although it is not formalised enough as a record. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are not always sufficiently informed and updated on their work. Formalised monitoring of teaching and curriculum is not extensive enough. There is considerable pressure upon space, and some overlapping of activities is disadvantageous, for example, the use of the ceramics room for general teaching limits the potential of the available expertise in this area. Standards in the sixth form are equally constrained because students have no space to allow their work to be left.

71. **Design and technology**

118. At the end of Key Stage 3, the proportion of pupils reaching at least the expected Level 5 in the 1999 teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments is average. Girls' attainments are substantially higher than those of boys. The proportion of pupils reaching at least Level 6 is below average. At the end of Key Stage 4, the 1999 GCSE results are average, and have improved significantly from those of 1998. Examination results are similar in each material area, except that graphic products is the only subject specialism to gain a higher than average proportion of A* and A grades. Textiles and food results have improved significantly since the last inspection. In the sixth form, A-level results have remained consistently good since the last inspection but for only small groups of students, making comparison with national data unreliable. In 1999, a significantly higher proportion of students achieved A and B grades than nationally.

119. Work seen during the inspection is broadly in line with national expectation for the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 and is above expected levels in the sixth form. At the time of the last inspection, the pupils' design work was weak throughout the school. This has been remedied at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, but remains a relative weakness at Key Stage 3. Girls are better oral communicators than boys, which helps them to become more proficient at designing as they move through the school. Written work has improved since the last inspection. Tools and equipment are used carefully and accurately at Key Stage 3 in the construction of products, even though the progress of some lower attaining girls is hampered by their nervousness at using equipment. Standards of finish are good in all material areas but there is a lack of imagination and creative problem-solving. Good formal drawing skills are developed well in Year 7. At Key Stage 4, coursework folders in food and textiles record high quality design development work where pupils are able to analyse a problem and evaluate the impact of a range of solutions. There has been little improvement since the last inspection in the use of computers, but they are used effectively for text processing to enhance the presentation of folders. But they are used in a limited way for other applications. Girls in textiles groups are thorough in their research, which leads to the production of good quality

ideas, and subsequently of products. In food, their knowledge of processes such as risk assessment in the food industry is reasonable, but they are unable to apply it to practical applications. Products are generally produced with care and are fit for their purpose, but pupils are not confident in making independent decisions and experimenting with novel ideas. In the sixth form, there is rigorous development of ideas. Careful attention to detail takes place with projects developed for clients, with needs varying from instructional clocks for primary children, to nail varnish dispensers for beauticians.

120. Satisfactory progress is made overall at Key Stage 3, but is restricted by unduly complex curricular organisation. Girls make steadier progress as they reflect on their work more carefully than do boys, and make less mistakes. The progress for pupils with special educational needs is good when learning support assistants work alongside the teacher. Higher attaining pupils lack the necessary challenge to enable them to integrate designing and making at a suitable level. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form progress is good, as teachers develop a greater understanding of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and are able to negotiate more appropriate targets for them as individuals. The progress of some lower attainers in food is restricted as they do not have the independent learning skills to respond to more theoretical demands of the teacher. In other subject areas, clear objectives set by teachers assist their progress. The Key Stage 4 Certificate of Achievement course is valued by pupils in food and textiles. High attaining pupils lack complexity in their thinking except in graphics where they are able to produce refined products. The motivation and commitment of sixth form students to the subject enhance their progress, as they question their teacher and use him effectively as a design consultant for their projects. This progress is reflected in the good results obtained at A-level relative to earlier GCSE attainments.

121. Throughout the school, responses are good, reflecting a good ethos and work ethic. At Key Stage 3 pupils are enthusiastic about practical work and show a concern for safety. Additionally, respect is shown for people and property, and they work effectively on the set tasks, even though there is little opportunity for higher attainers to take risks with their ideas. At Key Stage 4, pupils are motivated by the possibility of a good examination grade and the relevance of the subject to possible career paths. In the sixth form, students enjoy taking greater responsibility for their own learning and progress.

122. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, and is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. All teachers are well qualified and they teach their traditional specialist skills well. Lessons are generally well managed and planning is effective throughout the school, but it is sometimes over-restrictive, particularly in resistant materials. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of doing becomes more appropriate as they build closer relationships with them by Key Stage 4. At this stage, they begin to give pupils some confidence in their ability to apply their designing and manufacturing skills and knowledge to problems that they have defined themselves. In electronics, the needs of higher and lower attaining pupils are met effectively through matching the task to the pupils' abilities. Computer simulation software is used effectively to test electronic circuits and to build pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject at their own level. Sometimes, teachers spend too long talking to a class, and often in all material areas, the questioning techniques used by teachers do not provoke pupils to reflect deeply about their work. In textiles, a range of high quality examples of displayed pupils' work, and a colourful, well ordered, and stimulating environment helps to generate purposeful learning and good pupil progress in lessons. Progress at both Key Stages 3 and 4 is assisted by good meaningful marking of work in textiles and food and appropriate homework. Good oral feedback is given in all subjects areas at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

123. The assessment and recording of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection, and now forms an appropriate base for reporting to parents. Extensive support is gained through links with Neighbourhood Engineers. A range of projects including competitions and careers events enhance the curriculum. Small groups of pupils are also

involved in links with a charitable trust and a university. Textiles and food regularly involve outside support from a range of organisations and pupils regularly study design and technology in other cultures such as Japanese food and clothing. With the exception of the food and textiles rooms, accommodation is poor, with old-fashioned workshops and a crumbling graphics base that are depressing attainment through not allowing the subject to promote a modern image. Much of the machinery in the workshops is also dated, but is kept serviceable by good technical support. Management of the subject is good, but teaching and learning is not monitored effectively, even though examination data are thoroughly analysed and help curriculum development.

71. **Geography**

124. Teachers' assessments of attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 show average results at Level 5 or above for boys and girls alike, whilst at Level 6 or above, they are average for girls and below average for boys. The 1999 GCSE results are broadly average, and all pupils achieved grades A* to G. Pupils tend to do better in geography than in the other subjects they take. In 1999, all pupils entered for A-level achieved a pass grade. Since the last inspection, results overall have improved.

125. In work seen at Key Stage 3, attainments are in line with expectations for the end of the key stage. The higher and middle attainers have acquired knowledge from previous lessons and their own research to describe aspects of life in Japan, and compare successfully their own culture with that of the Japanese. They use this knowledge to interpret data from population pyramids in order to make simple predictions about the future. Lower attainers, including some with special educational needs, find out relevant information, sometimes helped by classroom assistants. From Year 7 onwards, map reading and atlas skills continue to develop, along with the ability to annotate maps, graphs and diagrams. The higher and middle attainers are able to produce more complex diagrams than the lower attainers and interpret bar graphs and pie charts accurately. The higher and middle attainers write longer and more detailed answers than the lower attainers, selecting answers appropriately from text books or worksheets. They usually articulate these answers well, although oral and listening skills are less well developed than writing skills. Some pupils have successfully used the Internet for research on Japan, enhancing geographical attainment. In work seen at Key Stage 4, attainment is above expectations for the end of the key stage. For example, the higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good understanding of weather maps and begin to predict the sequence of weather as a depression passes over Teignmouth. Lower attaining pupils interpret the symbols on a weather map to describe the weather. At the end of the sixth form course, attainment is generally above expectations. Students test models of the tourist industry successfully, with knowledge from maps and text to explain the reasons for tourism in a region.

126. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. In lessons it is good, particularly when a rapid pace and a wide range of clearly defined tasks enable pupils to achieve a great deal in a single lesson. Where pupils make less progress, it is often because the tasks set are not appropriate to the level of ability, or are not developing geographical knowledge, skills or understanding. Occasionally, pupils make less progress because they chatter or take time to settle to the tasks that are set. Support for less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, enables most to make satisfactory progress. Progress at Key Stage 4 is good. It is at least good in all lessons, and can be very good. Pupils make greater progress in lessons where there is a series of tasks suitably structured to enable pupils to make progress according to their needs, and where the teacher knows the prior attainments of all pupils, enabling suitable intervention at appropriate times and the preparation of suitable resources. A good example of this was seen in Year 11 lesson using a map of Victoria Falls, followed by three different tasks for different abilities. The pupils responded well to this challenge and made very good progress in their understanding of flood plains during the lesson. In the sixth form, students make good progress, particularly when provided with well-structured and relevant tasks. Sixth form

students achieve higher results than would be expected from their earlier GCSE grades.

127. The pupils' responses at Key Stage 3 are satisfactory overall. Pupils respond particularly well to a number of well-structured tasks which are not always focused on writing, as seen in two Year 7 lessons given the opportunity for working in groups and reaching a consensus. These lessons ensured a good response from all pupils and, with sensitive intervention by the teacher and a support assistant, the less able and more reticent were encouraged to take a full part. The pupils' responses at Key Stage 4 are very good. Pupils want to learn and they respond to good teaching and interesting and relevant tasks, for example, comparing the weather in different parts of the British Isles and finding the coldest, wettest and hottest areas. A number of lessons seen where there was a good response began with a very effective and rapid question and answer session, which was effective in reviewing previous work and reinforce the use of geographical terminology. In the sixth form, response is good. Students respond particularly well in lessons where there are structured and relevant tasks set, rather than listening and taking notes. Their response was very good to a piece of research set on global warming which began with the use of the Internet.
128. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is good overall, and is always at least satisfactory. All teachers use the departmental schemes of work for their planning. Where teaching is good or better, these have been extended and adapted to suit the individual teaching styles. In particular, the standard worksheets and exercises have been adapted to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. This has been particularly successful where the recently acquired Internet facility has been used by teachers to add to the effective use of library resources, for research on Brazil and Japan. Good teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, and where the aims and structure of lessons are shared with pupils. This enables a rapid series of questions to be put, each developing the previous answer and previously acquired knowledge with reinforcement of key terms. This was seen in a Year 8 lesson on Brazil, eliciting a good response from the pupils. Good teaching focuses on a series of timed activities to maintain a rapid pace, as seen in a Year 7 lessons on mapwork. Homework tasks extend the work in the classroom and, along with other work, are thoroughly marked, with targets for development. Good teaching is characterised by an orderly and prompt start to lessons, with good use of rewards and sanctions. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, teaching is consistently very good, with some excellent teaching seen. Teaching is well planned, with structured and varied tasks and good resources to ensure that pupils are thoroughly prepared for examinations. This was exemplified in a Year 13 lesson which gave opportunities for students to identify trends and patterns in tourism. Coursework is well planned.
129. Geography has made good progress since the last inspection. Attainment has improved at all levels. The department is well led. The departmental handbook clearly articulates the aims of the department, providing guidance on marking, target setting and self-assessment. The schemes of work for Key Stage 3 have many good features, and contain worksheets and suggested tasks. However tasks and assessment opportunities within the schemes of work are not always clearly linked to National Curriculum levels or learning outcomes. The department is already aware of this, and has plans to make improvements. There are insufficient opportunities for teachers to share the existing good practice in the department. The department collects much valuable data on pupils and uses some of this to set appropriate targets for Years 10 to 13. This, together with a review of marking and assessment, is being extended to cover all pupils. The department makes good use of its resources. There is only limited display space, but the list of key terms in all geography rooms is a very effective aid to teaching and learning. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. One member of staff does not always teach in a geography room and is unable to take advantage of these. Space limitations sometimes inhibit the use of group work.

71. **History**

130. The results of the teachers' assessments of attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 are above average. At the end of Key Stage 4, the results in the 1999 GCSE examination are in line with the national average overall, and above that for girls. In previous years, results have fluctuated, but the overall trend has been level. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls over the longer term. Numbers of students sitting A-level examinations in history are too low for reliable comparison of results with national figures.
131. In work seen during the inspection, attainments are in line with expectations for the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils demonstrate a factual knowledge of the period studied and select information from texts in response to questions. They extract information from written and non-written sources, and higher attaining pupils are beginning to evaluate its importance to the historian. Pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with expectations. Pupils are competent in handling different types of evidence, with higher attaining pupils able to analyse its significance and reliability. Pupils are beginning to make links between factors leading to developments, and to consider how conflicting views can be valid. The students' attainments in the sixth form are below expectations for the end of their course. A minority lacks confidence and relies heavily on the teacher for guidance. Other students are becoming more independent learners, and higher attaining students are able to consider alternative views in their written work and to make judgements supported by evidence. Pupils of all ages demonstrate good listening skills and the majority are reading with understanding and accuracy by the end of Key Stage 3. The use of role-play, for example in a discussion on the merits of the use of antiseptics by pupils in Year 10, encourages confidence and fluency. Charts and diagrams are well used to display information, but there was little evidence of the use of graphs, or of the use of information technology skills other than for word processing.
132. Progress is good at Key Stage 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. At Key Stage 3, pupils make gains in their understanding of the tensions in Tudor England and are beginning to realise that events from the past can be viewed from various, valid standpoints. They make good progress in their ability to associate cause and effect, and in recognising that there may be several factors leading to an event, for example in the Rebecca Riots studied in Year 8. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress in their understanding of the periods studied and build up a secure knowledge of the main features of the time, for example the Elizabethan Theatre. They contrast this knowledge with modern times and the more able pupils are able to make deductions from this comparison. They are gaining confidence in their ability to support their statements with evidence and the use of staged questions enables them to develop their skills of extended writing and essay planning. In the sixth form, students make good progress in the analysis of evidence, and confidence in the management of writing develops with class planning and discussion of required content. Their confidence in their skills of selection and research develops with the increased use of individual oral presentations, as in a Year 13 group investigating the early 20th Century Liberal government. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress; progress is good when support staff are provided. Where whole class written tasks are used, pupils of lower ability find difficulty in completing tasks in the time allocated, whereas the more able find a lack of real challenge. There is no obvious difference in the progress of boys and girls, although the presentation of work by girls is often of a higher standard.
133. The pupils' attitudes are good overall. At all levels, pupils are quick to respond to questions and generally enthusiastic about their work. A particularly high level of interest was shown in a Year 9 lesson on the rise of the civil rights movement in America. Good levels of concentration are displayed, and in most lessons pupils are self-motivated and anxious to complete their tasks. Pupils are generally courteous to staff, who are good role models, treating pupils with respect. When behaviour was less than good, pupils reacted positively when disciplined by their teacher.

134. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and 4, and satisfactory in the sixth form. The teachers' knowledge and understanding are good and enable them to add colour and detail to their lessons, and to respond confidently to pupils' questions. Lessons are well planned, involving a variety of activities, including role-play and discussion. There are clear objectives for the lessons, which are shared with the pupils, and all lessons begin with a review of previous work. Teachers' expectations of work are higher at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form than in Key Stage 3, where more able pupils are sometimes under-stretched. The department has developed worksheets appropriate for different ability levels, and where these are used, tasks are more challenging and provided better support for pupils with special educational needs. Regular assessment takes place using National Curriculum levels to build up a profile of each pupil. Teachers are beginning to develop an appropriate system of pupil self-assessment at Key Stage 3 and 4. The use of review encourages pupils to assess their own performance in specific skills, for example in class discussion. Good use of student self-assessment takes place in the sixth form. In some areas of Key Stage 3, there is insufficient evaluation of pupils' work to tell them of strengths and weaknesses, and of ways they can improve. Instead, teachers' comments are more encouraging than diagnostic. Teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching and this enthusiasm is conveyed to their pupils.

135. The department is well led and the ethos of the department supports the school's aim for high standards. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon the lives of the people in the periods studied, and there is a conscious awareness in the department of the importance of including the histories of non-European peoples. Thus the department makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the department's resources and the subject is now taught by specialists throughout the school.

71. **Modern foreign languages**

136. The teachers' assessments of attainments in French, the first foreign language, at the end of Key Stage 3 are well below average in 1999, and below average in 1998. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results in French in 1999 are well below the national average; results in 1998 were also below average. Results in Spanish are broadly in line with the national average for 1998 and 1999. Pupils tend to do less well in modern languages than in other subjects that they take. At A-level, numbers over the last two years have been too small to make reliable statistical comparisons. There have, however, been students in both languages obtaining A and B grades.

137. In work seen during the inspection, attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 in French are in line with the national expectation for 14-year-olds. All pupils understand a range of spoken classroom language. Both average and higher attaining pupils use the perfect tense, and higher attaining pupils also show a developing understanding of grammatical rules. In Spanish, the listening skills of some pupils are limited by the excessive amount of English spoken by the teacher. Skills of independent reading are underdeveloped. At the end of Key Stage 4 in French and Spanish, attainments are below expectations for pupils aged 16. The improvements that are bringing about progress in Key Stage 3, such as expectations of wider tense usage and of more extended writing and speaking, have not yet affected the pupils' response and progress at Key Stage 4. In both languages, the written work of the higher attaining pupils shows a range of vocabulary and some examples of fluency, but can be marred by an erratic use of tense and carelessness. In general, average attaining pupils do not write or speak in any extended fashion, or with sufficient accuracy. For many pupils, prompts are essential for oral work. Listening skills are satisfactory in French, but less so in Spanish. At the end of the sixth form, attainments in French are above average. Oral work is fluent, and there is a good understanding of a wide range of complex and rapid French.

138. Progress is broadly sound at Key Stage 3, but is unsatisfactory at Key

Stage 4, where half of lessons show unsatisfactory progress; in the sixth form, progress is good.

The progress of pupils with special educational needs is sound at all levels. At Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils in both French and Spanish make good progress in their listening skills after one term's work. For the higher attaining pupils in Spanish, progress in speaking is less pronounced because of lack of extended practice time. In Year 7, the progress of girls is better than boys in terms of accuracy. In lessons, progress is generally sound although there are pupils in both languages and of all abilities whose progress in a lesson is unsatisfactory because of low expectations by teachers. Conversely, very good progress was seen in one lesson where average attaining pupils were expected to complete a substantial amount of writing which was then performed in front of the class. At Key Stage 4, progress in French is just sound. There is a large number of average, and some higher attaining, pupils who are making unsatisfactory progress in Year 11 because of their poor response and negative attitudes. Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 are making good progress in their understanding of how to improve their work. Progress at Key Stage 4 in Spanish is unsatisfactory mainly because of inappropriate expectations of the pupils, a slow lesson pace and the negative effects of misbehaviour by some pupils. However, some higher attainers make good progress because they respond positively to teaching which offers a genuine challenge. In Spanish, students in Year 12 make sound progress from their GCSE course to cope with the increased range of topics, and the more open-ended linguistic demands of the A-level course. In the sixth form, progress in French is good, particularly in the development of sophisticated listening skills.

139. Response at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is broadly sound and in the sixth form it is good. However, at both Key Stages 3 and 4, there is a minority of pupils in both languages whose response is unsatisfactory. These pupils are uncooperative or rude, chat throughout lessons and show minimal interest in their work. The response of the majority however is sound or better. These pupils behave well, listen to the teacher and their peers, respond well to whole class oral work and work well in collaborative situations. The most responsive show a confident readiness to talk at length and are developing research skills. In the sixth form in French, students are lively and confident and focused on their work.
140. Teaching is broadly sound at Key Stages 3 and 4; it is good in the sixth form. There is some unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4, but there is a higher proportion of good or very good teaching. Teachers speak their first foreign language at least competently, and most use it effectively in target language teaching to challenge the pupils. There are, however, some lessons where excessive and unnecessary use of English is impeding progress. Expectations are generally appropriate, but there are some lessons where teachers give low level tasks, such as posters, or do not expect any extended response. Planning caters for development in all four skills, and in the best lessons, teachers plan to ensure a good coverage of the Programme of Study of the National Curriculum, and to ensure that pupils are working at the highest level. Where teaching is good, pupils are provided with opportunities to work as a class, on their own, in pairs and in groups. The management of pupils is very varied and ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Where it is good, there is a range of strategies, good variety and pace and appropriate content. In the lessons where weaker pupil management is an issue, the content of the lessons is not suited to the pupils, and there is a lack of pace, allowing time for disruption. There are very good additional resources used by some teachers, as well as clear colourful overhead transparencies. In some teaching rooms, it is difficult to use the overhead projector effectively. Homework is used well and pupils' work is marked regularly, but the marking policy is not always consistently followed.
141. Since the arrival of the new head of department, good medium-term planning and good procedures for assessing and standardising pupils' work have been put in place. Pupils are encouraged to assess themselves, although the use of the results as a planning tool is less effective. There is an extensive and developing programme of extra curricular activities. Information technology is planned for, but not yet used, with all pupils to support the learning of languages. In Year 8, planning for the average and lower attaining pupils in Spanish, the second foreign language, is unsatisfactory because of the time needed to revise in each weekly

lesson before new material is started. Curriculum time for the higher attaining pupils in French is also below the time normally given to a first foreign language and has implications for the development of some skills such as that of independent reading. The leadership of the faculty is good. There is a commitment to raising standards and the head of department monitors and supports the teachers in their work. The accommodation for the subject is cramped, and one room is separated from the rest of the department, making access to specialist resources a problem. The department has addressed some of the issues identified at the last inspection, but has made less progress on others. Pupils are now beginning to accept the use of the target language in the classroom as the norm, although there is some way to go before it is used with initiative. There has been an increased focus on written work although its quality is still variable.

71. **Music**

142. In the 1999 teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils are below the expected levels of attainment. However, these results are not externally moderated and evidence from observations made during the inspection would suggest that many pupils are attaining in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 4, the 1999 GCSE results are below average. Pupils tend to do less well in music than in the other subjects that they take. There were insufficient A-level entries to make reliable comparisons with national figures.

143. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainments in work seen are in line with expectations. Pupils demonstrate a suitable range of skills which inter-relate composing and performing with listening and appraising. In two successful Year 7 lessons, pupils were engaged in singing, producing a good quality tone, then effectively using these skills to compose their own work songs in groups. Rhythmic skills are well developed, and some excellent work was seen in Year 9 where pupils worked on a six-part rhythmic score, and produced a whole-class performance on a selection of drums and other untuned percussion to a high standard. Information technology is now fully integrated into the curriculum and all pupils are systematically learning how to sequence their music using the computer. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainments in work seen are below expected levels. Some pupils at Key Stage 4 are demonstrating satisfactory vocal or instrumental skills, but the general level of much of their other work is below expectations. Many pupils have a fairly low musical knowledge base, and find difficulty structuring their composition work. Not all pupils are able to produce course work folders, and this rather casual approach to their work does not augur well for forthcoming examinations. Sixth form attainment is above expectations, shows some high quality performance skills and a good understanding of music technology.

144. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs are making good progress at Key Stage 3, with boys and girls making equal progress. Practical tasks are often modified to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Teaching strategies allow for the regular monitoring and support of individuals or groups during lessons. At Key Stage 4, progress is unsatisfactory; many pupils are not progressing at an appropriate rate. This is sometimes as a result of pupils not taking their work seriously enough, exacerbated by poor powers of recall. Good progress is being made in the sixth form, where individual tuition is carefully tailored to needs.

145. Pupils' attitudes to learning at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form are good overall, but they are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. Pupils in most classes can organise their learning efficiently and concentrate well in unsupervised group tasks. There is much good interaction between pupils, often with boys and girls working well together developing and refining musical ideas collaboratively. However a significant minority in a few classes is less well-focused and poor behaviour is affecting the quality of the learning in these lessons, particularly at Key Stage 4. The over-familiar and sometimes insolent behaviour of some Year 11 pupils does not make for a good learning environment; progress suffers as a result.

146. Teaching is good at Key Stage 3, sound at Key Stage 4 and very good in the sixth form. Good teaching results from well-planned and well-organised lessons, high expectations, good discipline strategies, tasks matched to pupils' needs and good subject knowledge. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, some of these factors were noticeably absent, leading to poor control and unsatisfactory progress. Teachers enjoy good working relationships with most pupils and provide good role models for the pupils. Assessment procedures are in place, but assessment criteria need to be more sharply defined if they are to be used to guide teaching. Some very good verbal evaluations take place at the end of many lessons, involving teachers and pupils in purposeful discussions about performing and composing outcomes. Accommodation continues to be a major constraint to the teaching although the teachers try hard to produce an attractive and effective learning environment.

147. Overall, leadership of the subject is sound, although development planning could be improved. The accommodation for the subject is poor, and this has a negative effect on standards, as well as limiting the work that can be undertaken. Although the number of pupils receiving instrumental or vocal tuition in school is well below that of other similar schools, there is a wealth of extended musical activities for pupils. The quality of performance in these activities is high and this greatly enhances the aesthetic experience of those who attend the various groups. Many of these bands or vocal groups perform publicly and are well received by the wider community. Since the last report technician time has been given to the department and this valuable human resource is being well used. Although the use of computers is now well integrated into the curriculum, a shortage of computers is still constraining the standards that pupils can achieve.

71. **Physical education**

148. The teachers' assessments of attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 show below average results, with girls reaching significantly lower standards than boys. However, these assessments are not subject to external moderation, and observation shows them to understate the attainments of the pupils concerned, who are now in Year 10. The school does not provide courses to GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4, nor at A-level. More than half the pupils in Year 12 who took the short course GCSE examination in 1999 gained grades A*- C, which is above the national average. Evidence of good attainment is provided by the successes of individuals and teams at national, county and district levels.

149. Inspection evidence indicates that at the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is above national expectation in the skills of planning, performance and evaluation. Girls attain less well than boys in games, but attain standards well above the national expectation in dance, where pupils successfully perform increasingly complex sequences of movement. They are often ambitious in planning. In rehearsal, they recognise the means of further improvement and develop good technical skills. Boys in a Year 8 hockey class showed very good skills of close stick control, passing and very good understanding of tactics and techniques. Most pupils have good levels of fitness and spatial awareness. They understand the laws of the games they play and the majority match and often exceed the national expectation for their age and experience. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils demonstrate levels of attainment appropriate to their age in the reduced range of activities offered. High attainment was observed in a Year 11 football class and a Year 10 dance class. In both cases, pupils showed above average individual skills of performance, quick understanding of challenging tasks and very good levels of the collaboration required for successful performance. Fortnightly lessons in leisure studies, which include practical work, encourage understanding of health-related fitness including exercise and diet and their relevance to individuals and society. Students in the sixth form are offered a range of options, mostly games-related, to develop existing skills and to identify leisure opportunities relevant to their present and future lives. Several contribute to the learning of younger pupils by joining with them in extra-curricular activities, to the benefit of

both age groups.

150. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3. At all levels of attainment, they have positive attitudes and high levels of interest in their work so that skills improve. They respond positively to challenging tasks, as is particularly evident in dance, netball and hockey. Pupils have very good relationships with teachers and respond positively to their high expectations of effort, behaviour and attainment. They demonstrate pleasure in their own successes and are supportive of the efforts of others. Although often highly competitive and ambitious, they have a sensible awareness of safety considerations. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are provided with too little time to develop the full range of skills established at Key Stage 3, and are not offered opportunities to take either physical education or dance to examination level. In lessons observed, however, they make good progress. They are well motivated by high levels of interest and enjoyment and the challenging tasks set for them by teachers they like and respect, so that progress is satisfactory. Students in the sixth form enjoy opportunities to play games for enjoyment, to develop skills or to engage in healthy exercise.
151. At each key stage, the pupils' responses to the subject are good. Pupils take responsibility by acting as referees, leading warm-up sessions and providing demonstrations, so that they gain understanding and confidence. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with poor physical co-ordination, make progress matching that of their fellows.
152. The quality of teaching is good at all levels. It is often very good and is never less than satisfactory. Teachers have good levels of personal skill and are versatile in each of the areas of physical activity which are taught. They recognise pupils' individual strengths and difficulties, and provide opportunities for all to develop their skills. They explain tasks clearly with effective demonstrations. They make good use of questions and, when appropriate, expect pupils to make decisions for themselves. Very good use is made of lesson time, which is particularly important when pupils have to travel significant distances from previous lessons. They establish good relationships with pupils, so that their high expectations of effort and behaviour are met. Lessons include a good balance of opportunities for pupils to develop each of the skills of planning, performance and evaluation. Assessment of attainment, however, relates too narrowly to skills of performance.
153. The work of the department benefits from the strong collaboration of all its members and good leadership. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 has good breadth and balance. Progress at Key Stage 4 is reduced by the considerable reduction in teaching time for all pupils and the lack of opportunity to follow examination courses. Steps have been taken since the previous report to ensure that pupils are more appropriately challenged in lessons. Pupils benefit from the quality of outdoor provision, but the gymnasias are poor and still do not meet modern needs. Fixed apparatus in one cannot be used. This limits the experience in gymnastics of some pupils. The school is able to deliver the National Curriculum by using the facilities of the local leisure centre, but this produces inefficiencies in the use of time.
71. **Vocational education at Key Stage 4**
154. In the past, the school has offered units from GNVQ programmes at Foundation and Intermediate levels in business and in health and social care. The pupils in the present Year 11 are the last group to follow this programme. From September 1999, pupils in Year 10 have begun the Part One GNVQ award in business and in health and social care at Intermediate level, with Foundation level being available if required.
155. Although pupils are not able to gain the full GNVQ award, the pass rate in the units that have been assessed at the end of Key Stage 4 has been above average. In 1999, all pupils achieved the pass standard in the units that they studied. To date, no pupil has been assessed for the

Part One GNVQ award.

156. In work seen, attainments overall are broadly in line with expectations for the end of the key stage. Attainments are above expectation for the vocational area amongst pupils following the GNVQ Part One programme in Year 10, and in line for those studying for accredited units in Year 11. As a result of careful teaching of concepts, pupils have a generally accurate knowledge and understanding of key ideas, and higher and middle attainers can apply these to wider contexts; lower attainers, including some pupils with special educational needs, find it hard to apply ideas beyond their own personal contexts. Higher attainers are developing sound abilities in analysing and evaluating information, as was seen in the Year 10 lesson where they were examining a controversial local quarrying proposal. Overall, the development of key skills is below expectation, mainly because the course has less time than usual for this aspect of the work. Communication skills are in line with expectations, with most pupils using technical terms accurately and with confidence. Written work is generally well presented, with most pupils using computers successfully to draft their work. Application of number skills are below expectation; although opportunities are built into assignments, there is insufficient linkage of concepts to vocational work. Information technology skills are good in terms of communicating information, but are below expected levels in terms of higher order skills such as data handling.
157. The pupils make sound progress on the unit accredited courses in Year 11, and good progress in the Part One course in Year 10. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in terms of understanding, and, when given suitable support, in literacy, for example when preparing advertisements using computers. Written work shows gains in presentation and depth over time. A Year 11 group showed good progress when one pupil realised that bingo cards needed to be checked for randomness, and guided others in carrying this out using frequency analysis.
158. The pupils' responses are good overall. In Year 11, there is some shouting out and excessive movement, although this is always linked to work. In Year 10, Part One pupils work very well in small groups, particularly where they have tasks that reflect their different abilities. Here, concentration and co-operation are impressive. Pupils clearly enjoy taking responsibility for their own work; most are very pleased that they are following GNVQ courses. Pupils with special educational needs concentrate well because their work is frequently checked by the teacher and learning support assistant, who then propose further lines of enquiry.
159. Teaching is good, and is a significant factor in the effective progress being made by pupils of all abilities. There is good knowledge of course requirements, and subject knowledge is secure, as seen in rapid question and answer sessions, or when giving further examples to help understanding. A key point in raising standards is the insistence on using correct technical vocabulary, and the secure computer literacy of both teacher and support assistant. Lessons are well planned, with a variety of activities and resources that are well matched to the pupils' abilities. Assignments have a suitably local flavour and identify suitable opportunities for key skills.
160. The school has made a good start to the new Part One courses, drawing upon its expertise with GNVQ in earlier years. The vocational areas chosen reflect the local area, and there are good links with local businesses. The time allocated to the Part One course in Year 10 is substantially below expected levels, even allowing for the school's key skills provision in information technology. This has a significant effect on the limited application of number work being done as part of the course, as well as making off-site visits harder to arrange.

71. **Vocational and other subjects in the sixth form**

161. The school offers sociology at A-level, together with a range of vocational courses. Overall, the numbers taking individual courses are low. Students may follow Advanced and Intermediate award GNVQ courses in business, leisure and tourism, and in health and social care. A course in childhood studies leading to the BTEC diploma is also available.
162. In the 1999 examinations, the results for individual courses cannot be compared reliably with national data because of the small numbers of candidates. However, all students taking sociology obtained a pass grade, with a majority reaching grades A or B; this is similar to the 1998 picture. All students entered for A-levels in economics and psychology also achieved pass grades in 1999. The results of the various Advanced GNVQ courses are broadly similar overall to national patterns in 1999, with the best results being obtained in business. However, results at Intermediate standard are below national patterns, particularly in terms of the proportions gaining higher levels of award. Results from the childhood studies course have been above national patterns in recent years.
163. In work seen, the attainments of students in sociology are above expectations. Here, students receive a firm grounding in the central concepts of the subject, and most are able to apply this knowledge to a wide range of situations. Technical vocabulary is used accurately, and essay work shows good use of exemplification, particularly amongst higher attainers. Students following the childhood studies course also show a good understanding of basic principles; they are able to apply this knowledge successfully to situations seen during their periods of work experience, for example to explain anti-social behaviour in a young child. Attainments in the various GNVQ courses are generally below expectation, but especially so in business. Here, students have only a vague idea of basic concepts, and their definitions lack precision. These shortcomings stem from the unsatisfactory curriculum arrangements for GNVQ work at present, and the lack of a specialist teacher in business. When given firm direction by teachers, students can apply ideas to new situations, for example those seen during field work. Examination of work completed last year suggests that standards have been higher in the past. The GNVQ students show broadly satisfactory communication skills, with writing that shows a wide range of styles and forms, for example when planning overhead transparencies for a talk. However, discussion and other speaking skills are more limited, relying too much on informal styles that lack technical vocabulary. Application of number skills are well below expectations, reflecting the unsatisfactory arrangements for integrating this work into vocational topics. Information technology skills are below expectations overall; although basic text processing is sound, there is little evidence of higher order skills such as modelling.
164. Students following sociology and childhood studies make good progress in relation to their earlier attainments. Over time, their work shows a growing depth of understanding, and higher attainers in particular become skilled at selecting suitable lines of argument and evaluating ideas in essays. In part, this reflects the fact that they are taught by specialists on a regular basis. In contrast, students following GNVQ courses make less progress than is usually seen. This is because they have only intermittent contact with specialist teachers, a problem made worse by the fact that subjects are taught together, producing large groups. Thus business students had completely failed to master the basic principles of break even analysis, but this went uncorrected for some time. Although many GNVQ students make some progress over time in relation to their earlier GCSE scores, the rate of progress is lower than is usually seen elsewhere.
165. In spite of the many problems, students are positive about their work. Those studying sociology and childhood studies engage energetically in discussions, and are developing good note making skills. Many GNVQ students remain very dependent on teachers to make progress, and show only limited skills of independent research. Where they have the opportunity to do so, students work well together; however, in much of what they do, they

work independently. Behaviour is always good, and lessons are characterised by good relationships between students and their teachers.

166. In the sixth form, teaching is sound in sociology and on the childhood studies courses. Here, specialist teachers who have regular contact with students convey their own enthusiasms for the work, and set appropriately high standards. Indeed, on occasions, expectations are too high, and reflect more closely undergraduate levels. Teaching on GNVQ courses is unsatisfactory. The need to teach subjects together in the same group means that in most lessons, most students are not being taught by a specialist teacher. In business, the recent departure of a teacher has left the school without a specialist, and this is reflected in the limited quality of the students' work, in spite of the best efforts of other teachers to cover the ground. The mixed groups mean that there are few opportunities for direct teaching of concepts; this is reflected in the insecure subject knowledge of many students at present. Although there are clear teaching plans for courses, these cannot be delivered at present; teachers are having to react as best they can to individual students' requests. At present, teaching is falling behind the planned timetable; some students are still completing work that should have been finished in the summer term. A strength of the school is that the marking of assignments is of high quality, with very detailed comments that guide students towards improvements. Internal verification arrangements are also good; the school has two experienced GNVQ verifiers, who understand course requirements and standards very well. Assignments contain an appropriate vocational dimension, and identify suitable opportunities for key skills to be incorporated into portfolios. However, the teaching of key skills is divorced from vocational areas, for example in information technology, where students follow a structured course that is common to all sixth formers.
167. Overall, the present arrangements are neither efficient nor effective, with too many small groups, and teaching arrangements in GNVQ that get in the way of satisfactory progress. The need to run combined subject groups is poor practice, even as a short-term measure, and has a markedly negative effect on progress. The GNVQ co-ordinator has only one free period per fortnight at present, as she is trying to support students left without specialist teaching. This prevents her from planning for the substantial changes in assessment and curriculum content that will begin in 2000, or from monitoring sufficiently closely the work of her colleagues. The last report suggested that the school should widen its range of vocational courses in conjunction with other providers. Whilst there are more courses, this has been achieved in an unsatisfactory way, and with overlap.

71.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

71. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

168. The school was inspected towards the end of the autumn term by a team of 13 inspectors, who spent a total of 53 inspector days in school. They spent a total of 195 hours in the direct observation of the work of pupils, visiting 185 lessons, which represents approximately one in six of those timetabled during the week. In addition, inspectors observed tutorial periods, assemblies and the general life of the school throughout the day, including extra-curricular sessions. Members of the team examined a structured sample of the work of 36 pupils, and subsequently held discussions with the pupils concerned; numerous other examples of written work were seen. They also held some 60 planned meetings with governors and members of the school staff, as well as having many other informal discussions. Prior to the meeting, 10 parents attended a meeting with the Registered Inspector. Whilst the school chose not to use the OFSTED parental survey, it made available findings from its own surveys. The Registered Inspector received a small number of written submissions from parents and members of the wider community.

71. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

71. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7-Y13	993	26	249	131

71. **Teachers and classes**

71. **Qualified teachers (Y7-Y13)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	55.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	17.9

71. **Education support staff (Y7-Y13)**

Total number of education support staff:	17
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	428

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	79.3
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Average teaching group size:	KS2	n/a
	KS3	25
	KS4	23

71.

Financial data

Financial year:	1998-1999
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	£
Total Income	2162673
Total Expenditure	2181349
Expenditure per pupil	2301
Balance brought forward from previous year	46185
Balance carried forward to next year	27509

71. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: Nil*
 Number of questionnaires returned: -

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school					
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)					
The school handles complaints from parents well					
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught					
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress					
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work					
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons					
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home					
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)					
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour					
My child(ren) like(s) school					

* NOTE: The school elected not to use the OFSTED parental survey. However, it did make available the detailed results of its own surveys.

71. **Other issues raised by parents**

The school's own survey shows high levels of parental support for the information in reports, the school's uniform and lunchtime policies, the tutorial system, the ease with which staff may be approached and feelings of partnership. Ninety-seven per cent of those who responded felt that this was a good school, with most teachers doing a good job. Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school, although reports lack sufficient reference to the National Curriculum. A significant number of parents had reservations in two particular areas. Almost three-quarters felt that too little homework was set, and just over half wished to be more involved in the life of the school. Inspectors judge that homework arrangements are appropriate, and that there are ample opportunities for parents to be involved with the school's life and work if they wish. About one parent in five also felt that the contact book system could be better used to communicate with them;

inspectors agree that this system could be better used, particularly amongst older pupils.