

INSPECTION REPORT

De La Salle School
St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique Reference Number: 104834

Headteacher: Mr P F Byron

Reporting inspector: Mr B Burke
IRN: 02722

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707974

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mill Brow, Eccleston St Helens Merseyside WA10 4QH
Telephone number:	01744 20511
Fax number:	01744 20543
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Brother Alban
Date of previous inspection:	March 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. B. Burke, RgI		Attainment and progress. Teaching. Leadership and management. Efficiency of the school. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Attendance. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare. Partnership with parents and the community.
Mrs. S. Drake, Lay Inspector		Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Curriculum and assessment. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mr. M. Flatman	Music	
Mrs. E. Metcalfe	English Equal opportunities	
Mrs. T. Aspin	Mathematics	
Mr. N. Pinkey	Science	
Mr. V. Gormally	Art	
Mr. R. Patterson	Design and technology and information technology	
Mrs. O. Harrison	History	
Mr. M. Gallagher	Geography	
Mr. I. Waters	Modern foreign languages	
Mr. E. Hughes	Physical education	
Mr. J. Challands	Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Cheshire
SK8 1BB

Tel. No: 0161 282 2982

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

- What the school does well**
- Where the school has weaknesses**
- How the school has improved since the last inspection**
- Standards in subjects**
- Quality of teaching**
- Other aspects of the school**
- The parents' views of the school**

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

1 - 7

- Characteristics of the school**
- Key indicators**

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

8 - 35

- Attainment and progress**
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
- Attendance**

Quality of education provided

36 - 74

- Teaching**
- The curriculum and assessment**
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
- Partnership with parents and the community**

The management and efficiency of the school

75 - 95

- Leadership and management**
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**
- The efficiency of the school**

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science 96 - 134

Other subjects or courses 135 - 205

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 206 - 208

Data and indicators Pages 59 - 61

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reflects the school's Catholic foundations and its very positive ethos in which pupils' personal and academic growth is fostered equally.
- GCSE results are well above the national average and well above those of similar schools.
- Results in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests are well above the national average and are very high in comparison with those of similar schools.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. In 96 per cent of lessons teaching is satisfactory or better. It is good or very good in 71 per cent of lessons.
- Pupils are very well behaved. They have very good attitudes to learning and establish very good relationships with each other and with teachers.
- Pupils receive good support and guidance for their personal and academic development.
- The headteacher provides purposeful and effective leadership. He receives very good support from the senior management team and the governing body.

• Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Standards in information technology in Key Stage 4 are poor. The curriculum is poorly planned and pupils do not receive their National Curriculum entitlement in this subject.
- II. The quality of teaching in information technology and music in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory.
- III. Arrangements for formally and systematically monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, including the quality of teaching are underdeveloped.

The school has many 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

Good progress has been made on most of the key issues identified at the previous inspection. Significant improvements have been achieved in the overall quality of teaching, which is now supported effectively with well documented procedures for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress. The curriculum makes suitable provision for pupils at all levels of attainment. Well-organised arrangements are in place for staff development and for the appraisal of teachers. With the exception of the statutory requirements to teach information technology in Key Stage 4, all other statutory requirements are now met. Development planning at all levels has improved significantly and a more consistent approach to the quality of management at departmental level has been achieved. However, further progress is required in order to establish formal arrangements for evaluating the implementation of development plans and for monitoring the quality of teaching. The school is in a good position to sustain the good examination and test results and to make further improvements where necessary.

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 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	Grade
Key Stage 3 Test English	A	A*	<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
GCSE Examinations	A	A	<i>below average</i>	D
A/AS – levels	N/a	N/a	<i>well below average</i>	E

Since the previous inspection, GCSE results have improved and have been consistently above the national average. In 1998, 53 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A* to C grades, which was well above the national average for all schools and also well above average in comparison with similar schools. Girls achieved significantly better results than boys. In 1998, the best GCSE results were in English, art, geography, history, French, physical education and drama. In these subjects the results were well above the national averages. In design and technology, and music the results were above the national averages. In English literature, science, mathematics and Spanish the results were in line with the national averages. In 1999, 51 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A* to C grades. The results for boys were similar to those in 1998, but those for girls were lower.

Results in the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were well above the national average for all schools and very high in comparison with the results for similar schools.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	Art, drama and modern foreign languages.	Information technology and music.
Years 10-11	Good	English, art and drama.	
Sixth form	N/a		
English	Very good		
Mathematics	Good		

The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons. It is good or very good in 71 per cent of lessons. Overall, in four per cent of lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. A significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching occurs in information technology and music in Key Stage 3. The good and very good teaching in most subjects is underpinned by teachers' good knowledge of their subject and the effective arrangements for assessing pupils' progress, which provide teachers with a detailed knowledge of their pupils and support good planning of lessons.

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	Very good: pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons and have very good relationships with each other and with teachers.
Attendance	Satisfactory: the overall level of pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is below that of most schools nationally.
Ethos*	Very good: the good relationships throughout the school and the school's commitment to the spiritual, social and academic growth of each pupil contribute significantly to the good quality of education pupils experience.
Leadership and management	Good: the headteacher provides purposeful and effective leadership. He receives very good support from the senior management and the governing body. With the exception of information technology all subjects are well managed. However, arrangements for formally and systematically monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, including the quality of teaching, are underdeveloped.
Curriculum	Satisfactory overall: The curriculum is well planned and makes suitable provision for pupils at all levels of attainment, but the school does not meet the statutory requirement to teach the National Curriculum in information technology in Key Stage 4.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils have access to all subjects. They are well supported and make good progress. However, some of their Individual Education Plans do not yet contain targets for achievement in specific subjects.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall: there are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers, but there is a shortage of technician support for design and technology. Learning resources in all subjects are satisfactory. Teaching accommodation is adequate, but toilet facilities for boys and girls are unsatisfactory.
Value for money	The school gives good value for money. Costs per pupil are lower than in the majority of similar schools. In a high percentage of lessons teaching is good. Pupils are very well behaved and examination and Key Stage 3 test results are well above the national average.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- IV. The good discipline, which ensures very good behaviour of pupils in and around the school
- V. The encouragement that pupils are given to produce good standards of work.
- VI. The co-operation they receive when they contact or visit the school.
- VII. The very good arrangements for pupils when they transfer from primary schools.

What some parents are not happy about

- VIII. The poor condition of the toilet facilities

Inspectors' judgements support the very positive views of parents. Pupils are very well behaved and they respond well to the encouragement that they are given to achieve high standards of work. Pupils receive good support from heads of year and form tutors, especially when they transfer from primary schools.

Inspectors agree with pupils and parents that the toilet facilities for boys and girls are in poor condition. However, according to the headteacher and governors, the building of new toilets and refurbishment of the existing toilets is scheduled for January 2000.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The governors, headteacher, the senior management and staff should now:

i) Improve standards in information technology in Key Stage 4 by: (Paragraphs 25; 43; 47; 53; 76 and 172 to 178)

- fulfilling statutory requirements to teach all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study for information technology to all pupils in Key Stage 4;
- ensuring that there are effective arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress in all aspects of information technology;
- producing a detailed scheme of work that covers the National Curriculum programmes of study and identifies the specific sections of the programmes of study to be taught by other subjects;
- ensuring that there is effective management and leadership of information technology;
- devising and implementing a staff development programme so that the scheme of work can be taught effectively and supported in the teaching of other subjects;
- producing a detailed development and financial plan to achieve the necessary level of IT resources to teach the National Curriculum effectively.

i) Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 in information technology and music by: (Paragraphs: 43; 44; 174; 177; 191 and 194)

- ensuring that in both subjects, lessons are well planned, the purpose of each lesson is clear and pupils know what they are expected to achieve in each lesson;
- ensuring that in information technology, the time in lessons is used effectively and that all pupils receive an appropriate level of support in their practical work so that they make sufficient progress in all lessons;
- ensuring that the current best practice in the very good teaching in some lessons in music is achieved in other lessons;
- ensuring that there is regular and formal monitoring of teaching in both subjects.

iii) Improve arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by: (Paragraphs: 46; 79; 80; 82)

- establishing rigorous procedures for formally monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching in all subjects;
- ensuring that targets and success criteria in the school development plan are more precise and focus on improvements to standards or other aspects of the school's performance;
- defining clear roles and responsibilities for governors, the senior management team and heads of department in order to monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively.

In addition to the key issues above, the less important weakness set out below should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are located in the paragraphs indicated.

- iv)** Provide sufficient technician support for design and technology subjects. (Paragraphs: 84; 94; 151)
- i)** Implement the plans to improve the toilet facilities for pupils. (Paragraphs: 70; 87)
- ii)** Develop the role of the named person for special educational needs in each department and also ensure that Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs contain subject specific targets. (Paragraphs: 16; 50; 67 and 85)
- iii)** Formalise arrangements for medium-to-long term financial planning. (Paragraph 93)

vii) INTRODUCTION

vii) Characteristics of the school

- 1 De La Salle School is an 11 to 16 Roman Catholic mixed comprehensive school situated on the western fringe of the borough of St Helens. The school is voluntary aided and is in the archdiocese of Liverpool. The school's immediate surroundings are mainly private housing, but it serves a wide catchment area covering the western side of the borough from Rainford to Rainhill, a distance of about 12 miles and includes large council housing estates as well as private housing.
- 2 The intake to the school covers the full range of social and economic backgrounds. About 13 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Although the full range of attainment is represented in the intake to the school, a substantial majority of pupils have average levels of prior attainment.
- 3 The school is very large in comparison with other schools of the same type. There are 1201 pupils on roll. In September 1999, the Year 7 intake was 249, which is above the school's standard number of 235. The school population is predominately white and no pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. A total of 160 pupils (13.3 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. Fifty-five pupils (4.6 per cent) have statements of special educational need, which is above the national average.
- 4 In 1998, of the pupils leaving school at the end of Year 11, a high percentage (72 per cent) went on to post 16 education, 20 per cent into training and 5 per cent into employment.
- 5 The school's main aims are set out in its mission statement, which states that the school exists to provide an educational community inspired by Gospel Values and that this community will encourage all its members to appreciate their own individual worth and achievements. The school also states its commitment to the Catholic faith and to following the values and guidance of St John Baptist De La Salle.
- 6 The main priorities for the school as expressed in its development plan are to:
 - develop the curriculum;
 - develop pupils as learners;
 - extend pupils' religious and moral development;
 - establish a system of rewards;
 - develop the provision for pupils with special educational needs;
 - extend the use of new technology;
 - consolidate staff development.
- 1 The governing body has set targets for GCSE results in the year 2000: 55 per cent of pupils to achieve five or more A* to C grades and 98 per cent to achieve one or more A* to G grades.

7 **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	123	113	236

7 National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	82 (98)	89 (78)	88 (86)
	Girls	94 (110)	82 (80)	77 (80)
	Total	176 (208)	171 (158)	165 (166)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	75 (88)	72 (67)	70 (70)
	National	N/a (65)	N/a (60)	N/a (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	34 (57)	48 (41)	29 (32)
	National	N/a (35)	N/a (36)	N/a (27)

7 Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	84 (84)	87 (80)	90 (87)
	Girls	91 (103)	79 (85)	81 (97)
	Total	175 (187)	166 (165)	171 (184)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	74 (80)	70 (71)	72 (78)
	National	N/a (60)	N/a (64)	N/a (61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	42 (46)	43 (42)	30 (28)
	National	N/a (28)	N/a (37)	N/a (29)

.....

2

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4³

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest Reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	91	129	220

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	Boys	44 (55)	89 (114)	91 (115)
Achieving	Girls	69 (66)	124 (109)	127 (109)
Standard specified	Total	113 (121)	213 (223)	218 (224)
Percentage achieving	School	51 (53)	97 (97)	99 (98)
Standard specified	National	N/a (45)	N/a (90)	N/a (95)

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or	Number	% Success rate
Units and percentage of <i>such pupils</i> who achieved all Those they studied:	School National	0 N/a

Attendance

	Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
		Authorised	School	7.8
		Absence	National comparative data	7.9
		Unauthorised	School	0.4
		Absence	National comparative data	1.1

7

7

7

Exclusions

	Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
		Fixed period	3
		Permanent	0

7

Quality of teaching

	Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
		Very good or better	28
		Satisfactory or better	96
		Less than satisfactory	4

7 PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

7 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

7 Attainment and progress

2 Since the previous inspection, GCSE results have improved and have been consistently above the national average. However, there has been some variation in the results. The widest variation was in 1996 when the best results were achieved, with 59 per cent of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades. However, in recent years pupils did as well as expected in relation to their prior attainment. In 1998, 53 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A* to C grades, which is well above the national average for all schools and also well above average in comparison with similar schools. Girls achieved significantly better results than boys. In 1999, 51 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A* to C grades. The results for boys were similar to those in 1998, but those for girls were lower. Based on the results for the five years prior to 1999, the average GCSE points score per pupil showed a rising trend at a slower rate than the national average.

3 The 1998 GCSE results in English were well above the national average for all schools. In mathematics and science they were in line with the national average. In comparison with the results of similar schools, they were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Girls achieved better results than boys in English, but in mathematics and science there was no significant difference.

4 In 1998, the best GCSE results were in English, art, geography, history, French, physical education and drama. In these subjects the results were well above the national averages. In design and technology, and music the results were above the national averages. In English literature, science, mathematics and Spanish the results were in line with the national averages.

5 In 1999, GCSE results in art, geography, music, physical education and drama are similar to those in 1998. There is a small improvement in the results for mathematics and design and technology. There is a substantial improvement in French and Spanish. In English and science the results are lower. In history the results are much lower than in 1998, when they were particularly high.

6 Overall results in the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are well above the national average for all schools and very high in comparison with the results for similar schools. In English, the results are better than in mathematics and science and are well above the national average for all schools and very high in comparison with the results for similar schools. The results in mathematics and science are similar and in both subjects they are above the national average for all schools and well above average in comparison with similar schools. In English and mathematics, the results for boys and girls are similar, but boys did much better than girls in science.

7 In 1999, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English, mathematics and science was 75 per cent, 72 per cent and 70 per cent respectively. The results in English are lower than in 1998. In mathematics they are higher and in science they are the same. Girls achieved much better results than boys in English, but there is no significant difference in mathematics and science.

- 8 The full range of attainment is represented in the intake to the school, but based on the Key Stage 2 test results and the work of pupils currently in Year 7, a substantial majority of pupils have average levels of prior attainment when they enter the school. Although the level of pupils' attainment on entry has fluctuated in the past, it has recently stabilised. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls when they enter the school.
- 9 In all subjects except information technology in Key Stage 4, all pupils make at least satisfactory progress relative to their prior attainment. The current rates of progress by boys and girls are similar. According to tests carried out by the school at the end of Year 9, which together with Key Stage 3 test results, are used to predict examination success rates, pupils did as well as expected in GCSE examinations in recent years.
- 10 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are helpful to teachers in identifying their learning difficulties. They are usually taught in small groups, where they receive good support from teachers and in some cases from special educational needs support staff. For example, in English the work is chosen carefully to help them to make progress in specific areas according to their individual needs. They follow a full course in English in both key stages and all are prepared for the GCSE examinations. In mathematics, teachers pay special attention to the small steps needed to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts, and to give pupils confidence in their ability to succeed. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Their IEPs are appropriately reviewed and updated, but some of the plans do not contain subject specific targets.
- 11 Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment in English. They make good progress in all aspects of English language and literature in both key stages. By the time pupils near the end of both key stages their overall attainment in English is above average. At the end of both key stages pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average. Pupils listen attentively and speak with confidence. They respond well to questions and make thoughtful answers. At the end of both key stages attainment in reading is above average. In Key Stage 3 reading is well promoted by the weekly uninterrupted, sustained, silent reading programme where pupils are given the opportunity and responsibility to extend their reading with their own choice of books. In Key Stage 4, pupils read widely to support analyses of the set literature. Pupils' writing is above average at the end of both key stages. They learn to write for a range of purposes and to examine the writing of others to recognise differences in writing techniques. Handwriting is neat and legible in almost all cases.
- 12 The literacy policy suitably promotes reading and the use of spoken and written English across the curriculum. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and speak clearly and audibly. There are opportunities for reading aloud in almost all lessons and appropriate emphasis is placed on the use of the correct subject vocabulary. Teachers usually identify the key words and place them on display. In the main, pupils successfully learn these words and use and spell them correctly. Pupils write well for a range of purposes. Teachers ensure that pupils pay due attention to spelling and punctuation and those who need help receive good support.

- 13 In mathematics, most pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment. Overall, pupils in both key stages make good progress especially in their knowledge and understanding of algebra, shape and space. In Key Stage 3, some pupils do not make sufficient progress in recalling multiplication tables or in carrying out mental calculations. However, by the time pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 their attainment is well above average. They carry out written calculation competently, although some still have difficulty in recalling multiplication tables. Pupils have a good understanding of shape, space, measure and data handling and apply their skills well in other subjects. Standards in algebra are high. Investigation skills are satisfactory, but they are not as well developed as other key skills and mathematical techniques. Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is average. The recently implemented policies and the new scheme of work have not yet fully impacted on standards at the end of Key Stage 4. Numerical skills are generally satisfactory but some pupils still have difficulty carrying out mental calculations and retaining some number facts, such as manipulating fractions. Standards in shape and space are good. Pupils measure with increasing accuracy and construct diagrams carefully. Standards in data handling are good and pupils perform complex analysis of data confidently. Problem solving and investigative skills in Key Stage 4 are satisfactory. Numerical skills and other mathematical skills are used satisfactorily to support the work in other subjects. They are used well and reinforced appropriately, especially in subjects such as science, art, design and technology and geography.
- 14 When they enter the school, pupils' levels of attainment in science are broadly average. They make good progress in Key Stage 3. Many establish good laboratory practice, handle a range of apparatus and materials with care, accuracy and with due regard to safety. The recently revised schemes of work successfully develop pupils' skills in designing and carrying out scientific investigations. By the time pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 their attainment is above average. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the science topics across the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. They express themselves well and use scientific terms accurately. Pupils satisfactorily handle various probes and data logging equipment to obtain and process experimental results using computers. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. They gain confidence in using their knowledge in new situations and have a growing confidence to discuss with understanding and clarity the work they are doing. Investigative skills develop well, and pupils become more critical of their work. Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is average. They use research skills well and apply their scientific knowledge satisfactorily to problems. They carry out experiments efficiently and analyse results carefully to form conclusions. Pupils in Year 11 have a good understanding of chemical formulae and equations. Written work is of a good standard.
- 15 In art, attainment by pupils near the end of both key stages is well above average. By the time pupils near the end of Key Stage 3, they display good skills in drawing from observation of set groups and of the school environment. Their drawings in many cases are developed into designs in colour that are rich and imaginative. Pupils are able to use art historical material effectively in their own creative work, and good quality preparatory work is evident in sketchbooks. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of three-dimensional work are variable, but overall, below the level attained in other art activities. In both key stages, pupils make very good progress. Their progress is enhanced by the exploratory work they undertake in sketchbooks and by the structure of projects, which link theory and practice very effectively in a sequential way. As they move through the key stages, pupils develop their ability to work independently and purposefully, and in Key Stage 4 especially, they develop more confidence in expressing their ideas. By the time they near the end of Key Stage 4, drawing skills are very good and there is a good level of understanding of the way colour functions in art. Art historical material is used very effectively as a source of ideas for project work. Personal research is good and is aided by the drafting of ideas in sketchbooks.

- 16 In design and technology, attainment by pupils near the end of both key stages is above average. Pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 have a good knowledge of the design process in the four specialist areas of resistant materials, food technology, electronics, and graphic products. Making and designing are equal strengths. Near the end of Key Stage 4, pupils design and manufacture good quality products. In food technology, pupils' secure knowledge of the needs of various special dietary requirements is confidently applied in the development of well-made and critically evaluated products. As a result of the very careful planning of design and making activities by teachers, pupils at all levels of attainment make good progress in both key stages. Their knowledge and skill increases rapidly as they move through a sequence of integrated activities in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, they improve their research skills, use formal graphics techniques such as single point perspective to communicate ideas, and build models to test out designs.
- 17 In geography, attainment by pupils near the end of both key stages is above average. Near the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have a good range of geographical vocabulary and a good knowledge and understanding of places and themes. They apply their geographical skills well to analyse the local surroundings. They discuss their conclusions confidently and write about them logically. They show an appreciation of the differing viewpoints of various sections of the community on changes brought about by geographical processes. Near the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have well developed skills, which enable them to research relevant geographical data that affects people and leads to changes, for example, population changes, and other indicators such as literacy levels, and birth and death rates. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. Early in Key Stage 3 there is a noticeable improvement in standards of mapping and diagrammatic representation. As they move through the key stages, pupils build on their previous knowledge and skills at a good rate. They develop confidence in asking questions and in offering explanations about geographical patterns and changes.
- 18 In history, attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is average. Pupils know about the key events, people and developments in the periods they have studied. They explain clearly how and why things changed, drawing information from documents and other evidence. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to evaluate and analyse sources. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. Well planned schemes of work ensure that pupils progress at an appropriate rate in their knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4. The emphasis on the study and evaluation of sources and the acquisition of a sound knowledge base in Key Stage 3 provide the secure foundation for work in Key Stage 4. Pupils analyse sources in a more structured way and they acquire skills in handling conflicting evidence. By the time pupils near the end of Key Stage 4, their attainment is above average. Most pupils give reasons for the causes of historical events and assess their significance. Higher attaining pupils use their good knowledge and understanding to evaluate different interpretations of historical events critically. Lower attaining pupils show good levels of knowledge and understanding when responding to direct questions, but are less able to apply what they know in a broader context.

- 19 In information technology, attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is average. Pupils use a variety of software packages competently and a good number do so independently. They make good use of spreadsheets for a variety of tasks and they use control equipment confidently. Pupils satisfactorily use information technology to model events and simulate situations, but some struggle to maximise the use of word-processing and desktop publishing software. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. They develop confidence using the equipment and many begin to investigate software applications independently. Their keyboard skills improve and some pupils use IT to complete homework and assignments for other subjects. However, in some lessons pupils do not make sufficient progress because teaching is unsatisfactory. In these lessons the teacher fails to check pupils' work and pupils spend too much time trying to correct mistakes without receiving sufficient help from the teacher. Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is poor. There is no coherent provision of information technology for pupils in Key Stage 4 and National Curriculum requirements are not met. There are no arrangements to assess and record pupils' progress. Consequently, throughout Key Stage 4, pupils make poor progress and they do not have the knowledge and skills to use IT at the level expected for their age or to support learning in other subjects.
- 20 Attainment in modern foreign languages by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. They have a good understanding of the foreign language, which is used extensively in the classroom by all teachers. Pupils participate well in role-play situations and pair work to develop good oral skills. Pronunciation is generally good. Written work shows pupils have a good knowledge of topic vocabulary, grammar and tenses in both French and Spanish. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3. Gains in knowledge occur in every lesson, and pupils are speaking or hearing the new material by the end of the lesson. Much of the consolidation of vocabulary and phrases takes place in chorus work, which also helps pupils to improve their pronunciation. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 4 in French and Spanish is satisfactory. The good progress from Key Stage 3 is consolidated. Pupils develop confidence in speaking in pairs or in role-play situations. Listening exercises in the language laboratory are particularly effective. Pupils' attainment in French and Spanish near the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. Pupils have a good knowledge of topic vocabulary: this is well developed by teachers in speaking, listening and in writing at appropriate levels. Not all pupils are confident speakers, but higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of vocabulary and tenses in their conversations and in their writing.
- 21 In music, attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. Most pupils perform, compose and appraise music with confidence and understand some of the more common musical forms, structures and historical periods. Overall attainment in singing is average, but more variable than other aspects of music. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of the elements of music such as pitch, pulse, timbre, texture, dynamics and use the knowledge creatively in their keyboard compositions. Pupils' listening skills are generally well developed. Most pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress due to the good teaching, which takes place in the co-operative and disciplined environment which is established in the majority of lessons. They progress at a good rate in their singing and improve the way they appraise their work. Some pupils make rapid progress in developing their keyboard skills. A significant minority of pupils in Key Stage 3 however, do not make sufficient progress. This is mainly because of unsatisfactory teaching in some lessons, which results in pupils being inattentive and poorly motivated. In Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress. Their knowledge of the theory of music is suitably extended and their knowledge and appreciation of composition and its form and structure increases greatly. Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. Their knowledge of musical styles and periods is good and they all have a thorough grounding in traditional notation and a well-developed musical vocabulary. Their knowledge and understanding of harmony and counterpoint is good because their class work is challenging and interesting. Many pupils are creative and imaginative and use musical resources competently.

- 22 In physical education, attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is average. Pupils achieve above average standards in hockey, rugby and gymnastics. The standards attained in basketball and netball are average. Pupils have at least satisfactory sending and receiving skills in invasion games. They successfully apply these skills in small-sided games and demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the principles of attack and defence. Pupils in both key stages make good progress. As they move through each key stage they consolidate their skills, apply previous knowledge to new situations and show a deeper understanding of the principles and tactics of various games. Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. Pupils repeat actions with good control and accuracy. The standards achieved in basketball are above average and in netball well above average. In both games, pupils are competent and versatile in their use of tactics and have a good understanding of the rules of the games. In basketball levels of skill are good and the majority of pupils can pass and deliver with accuracy. In GCSE netball attainment is well above average. Many girls display advanced techniques of ball control and passing; they have good vision and awareness of tactics.
- 23 Since the previous inspection the arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress have improved significantly. These, together with the effective procedures for setting targets for pupils to achieve in individual subjects and the mentoring of underachieving pupils in Key Stage 4, underpin the schools efforts to improve standards and examination results.
- 29 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
- 24 Throughout the school, pupils behave very well, form very good relationships with each other and their teachers, have very positive attitudes towards learning and grow in maturity. As they near the end of Key Stage 4, they conduct themselves as responsible young adults who are prepared to speak their minds, think of other people and are prepared to contribute towards the community.
- 25 Pupils are interested in learning. They come to lessons well prepared with the right equipment, homework completed, settle quickly and listen carefully to what their teachers have to say. Teachers, particularly form tutors, devote much time at the beginning of Year 7 to encouraging these positive attitudes, and pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of attention and performance. Pupils of all ages sustain their concentration very well and organise themselves sensibly when working together, respecting each others' contributions. Year 10 pupils undertaking research for their business studies project, allocated different tasks within their group very well, concentrated appropriately on their individual work, then brought the different parts together successfully to create the finished product. Pupils show pride in their work, take care with its presentation and are prepared to hone their skills in order to make it even better. These elements are very strong in drama and art. Pupils readily take part in discussions and are prepared to ask questions that will help to deepen their understanding. This is particularly evident in lessons in Key Stage 4.
- 26 Pupils' very good behaviour in the classroom and around school helps to create an orderly environment in which high quality learning can take place. Parents commented on the good atmosphere in the school and pupils confirm that there is very little bullying. Relationships throughout the school are very good with pupils of different ages and varying levels of attainment working and relaxing together well. There have been no permanent exclusions in the past twelve months and very few fixed period exclusions. The numbers involved are very low in comparison with similar schools and fewer than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils move around the corridors and on the stairs in a very sensible manner, generally showing patience and thoughtfulness for others, and they treat displays and the building with respect. Their behaviour in assemblies is particularly good. They enter quietly, pay close attention to

the speaker and performers, generously applaud others' achievements and contribute positively to the calm atmosphere of reflection that enhances the beginning of the day.

- 27 Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities and are capable of showing good initiative. Year 11 prefects carry out their tasks diligently. In physical education lessons and extra-curricular activities pupils are willing to lead others. When engaged in charitable fund raising or contributing to school productions and other performances, pupils show commitment and energy. In lessons pupils demonstrate a mature attitude towards debate and consideration of others' points of view. However, they have few chances to air their opinions in relation to the life of the school or to undertake community service to any great extent, and therefore miss out on the opportunity to develop their characters and personality even further.

33 **Attendance**

- 28 The overall level of pupils' attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is below that of most schools nationally. Attendance levels are similar for each year group and there are very few pupils who have poor attendance. Most pupils arrive in time for the start of the school day and, despite the long distances some pupils have to move between lessons, they are very punctual. Pupils' satisfactory levels of attendance contribute positively to the quality of their learning and the standards of work that they achieve.

- 29 Morning and afternoon registrations are completed in accordance with legal requirements. Suitable rewards are offered for good attendance.

35 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

35 **Teaching**

- 30 The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons. It is good in about 42 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 28 per cent. Overall, in four per cent of lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. A significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching occurs in information technology and music in Key Stage 3. The most effective teaching is in art, drama and modern foreign languages in Key Stage 3 and in English, art and drama in Key Stage 4.

- 31 There are examples of good and very good teaching in most subjects, which are underpinned by teachers' good knowledge of their subject and the effective arrangements for assessing pupils' progress, which provide teachers with a detailed knowledge of their pupils and support good planning of lessons. Most lessons include interesting and challenging activities to reinforce learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and the very good relationships throughout the school contribute significantly to the well-ordered and co-operative learning environment in lessons. Relevant homework is set regularly in most subjects.

- 32 Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for in all subjects. Teachers work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator and they have a good knowledge of individual pupils and their learning difficulties. However, some of their Individual Education Plans do not contain specific targets. These pupils are usually taught in small groups, where more individual attention and good support is provided.

- 33 The quality of teaching in art is very good and on occasion excellent. The good introductions to lessons, which set out clearly what pupils are expected to achieve, work well. A significant and very successful feature of the teaching is the use of display in studios as a teaching resource, illustrating the work of other artists. The imaginative planning of projects is a strong feature of the teaching and contributes significantly to the very good progress made by pupils in both key stages.
- 34 In drama, the high levels of pupils' participation in discussions and the well-structured activities they engage in are key features of the best teaching. The opportunities for pupils to work in small groups helps to build their confidence and to take on responsibilities. Assessment is an integral part of all lessons and is used effectively to involve pupils in self-assessment and in the assessment of the work of other pupils.
- 35 The extensive use of the foreign language in all lessons and the many opportunities for pupils to speak and to hear the language are some of the strengths in the teaching of French and Spanish. Pupils enjoy the imaginative and lively presentations involving music and mime, and some of the best lessons finish with a recapitulation and evaluation of lesson objectives.
- 36 In the best lessons in English, teaching is bright and lively. Pupils are given challenging work and are well supported so that they make good progress. The detailed critical analysis of poetry, prose and drama are examples of good teaching. Assessment of pupils' work is a strong feature of lessons and encourages pupils to achieve high standards. Writing assignments are well planned and marked thoroughly.
- 37 Teaching in information technology in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. Although teaching in this key stage is satisfactory in 30 per cent of lessons and good in just over 40 per cent, it is unsatisfactory in nearly 30 per cent of lessons. In the best lessons, pupils are engaged in well-designed practical activities using appropriate hardware and software. These lessons are conducted at a good pace; pupils are clear on what they have to do and are given good support so that they make good progress. In the unsatisfactory lessons, there is poor management of practical activities; pupils are not given sufficient help to identify mistakes. In these lessons, there is ineffective use of time and pupils do not make enough progress. In some of these lessons, teachers fail to set appropriate homework.
- 38 The quality of teaching in music varies considerably from excellent to poor. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 is very good and occasionally excellent. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3. In just over 70 per cent of lessons, teaching is good and very good, and occasionally excellent, but in just under 30 per cent of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory and poor. Where teaching is good, pupils are fully involved for the whole of the lesson in exciting and stimulating activities; resources are used well to promote learning and pupils make good progress. Where teaching is poor, the purpose of the lesson is unclear, even at the planning stage. There is insufficient variety of musical activities, which results in pupils becoming restless, bored and occasionally poorly behaved. In these lessons the teacher often fails to control the poor behaviour of some pupils and this sometimes affects the progress of other pupils.
- 39 The previous inspection report highlighted unsatisfactory and poor teaching in mathematics, geography, history and design and technology. Significant improvements have been made and the quality of teaching in these subjects is now good. The well organised schemes of work in these subjects and the effective arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress are major areas of improvement that contribute to the progress achieved in the quality of teaching.

40 In all subjects, as part of the appraisal process for teachers, lessons have been observed by heads of departments and by the senior management team. However, formal arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching regularly are underdeveloped.

46 **The curriculum and assessment**

41 Since the previous inspection the school has reviewed the curriculum and satisfactorily resolved all the issues raised in the report with the exception of the provision for information technology (IT) in Key Stage 4. In this key stage, the school does not meet the statutory requirement to teach the National Curriculum in IT; standards are poor and the school's plans to teach IT through other subjects of the curriculum are not implemented. With this exception, the curriculum in both key stages includes all the required subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education.

42 In Key Stage 4, there is a suitable range of optional courses leading to GCSE qualifications. An effective partnership with St Helens College, provides a range of appropriate vocational courses for some pupils in Key Stage 4. All Year 11 pupils are able to undertake two weeks of work experience, which is suitably organised in conjunction with Project Trident.

43 The recommended time of 25 hours is allocated for teaching the curriculum in both key stages. With the exception of information technology in Key Stage 4 the times allocated to teach the individual subjects of the National Curriculum and optional courses are now appropriate. The planning, organisation and content of the curriculum are good and provide a sound education for all pupils. Well organised procedures for assessing, recording and reviewing pupils' progress against individual targets ensure that the curriculum caters appropriately for pupils at all levels of attainment.

44 There is good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. They have access to all subjects of the curriculum and to examination courses. These pupils are usually taught in small groups, where good individual attention and support is provided. In some cases they are appropriately withdrawn from main stream classes for additional teaching in English and mathematics. A vocational course in Key Stage 4 provides a good alternative accreditation to GCSE for some pupils. Where appropriate, Individual Education Plans are in place and are generally helpful to teachers. They provide information for teachers about pupils' individual learning difficulties, but some of the plans do not contain targets for achievement in specific subjects.

45 The education for personal relationships programme (EPR) is well devised and well taught. It makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development and includes a programme of sex education, health education and drugs education. Careers education is well provided for, beginning in Year 9 and continuing through to Year 11. Careers education is well taught by a specialist teacher and there is good liaison with the careers adviser and with the special educational needs co-ordinator. The careers library is satisfactorily resourced, but information technology facilities to receive and retrieve careers information are under used.

46 The curriculum is enriched by good quality extra curricular activities, predominantly in drama, music and sport. Sporting activities include competitions within school and with other schools. All activities are very well supported by staff and pupils. The many educational visits and excursions make a valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils studying geography carry out fieldwork in Snowdonia, historians go to the battlefields in

Belgium, musicians go to Spain to perform and linguists go to France and Spain to develop their language skills. All pupils have an opportunity to go on annual spiritual retreats.

52 **Assessment**

47 Since the previous inspection the school has successfully developed very good procedures for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress. The procedures are set out in a well-written school policy, which is applied consistently in all subjects except in information technology in Key Stage 4 where there are no arrangements to assess and record pupils' progress.

48 Assessment now has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. For example, assessment data from primary schools, including Key Stage 2 test results, is now collated and distributed to pastoral staff and heads of department and used as a starting point for reviewing pupils' progress. As they move through the school, pupils' progress is systematically recorded and regularly reviewed against individual targets in all subjects to ensure that the curriculum and the planning of lessons caters appropriately for pupils at all levels of attainment. Most pupils are aware of their current levels of attainment and of their targets. In Key Stage 4, pupils who are not achieving to their potential are assigned to a mentor.

49 The marking of pupils' work has been improved and rationalised by a set of guidelines to ensure that all teachers mark to specific criteria. In most subjects marking is of a good quality, with helpful comments so that pupils are aware of what they should do to improve their work. Pupils are informed of how well they are doing in terms of National Curriculum levels, and where appropriate, GCSE targets. In most subjects, pupils are encouraged to mark and assess some of their work. However, this happens too often in mathematics and is not sufficiently supported by suitable teacher assessments. Marking is especially good in science and modern foreign languages, but occasionally in mathematics comments in books are trivial and unhelpful.

50 Reports to parents meet statutory requirements. All pupils receive an informative computer generated annual report, which outlines course details and pupils' achievements. In both key stages, additional monitoring reports are regularly sent home to parents about the progress that pupils are making in all their subjects. These also contain targets and predictions for pupils' GCSE grades. The annual reports covering both key stages, which have undergone a thorough review and evaluation process, now contain full and personalised details of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses in each subject.

51 Since the previous inspection, arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting the progress of pupils with special educational needs have been suitably revised and they meet statutory requirements. Effective procedures for identifying pupils with difficulties are in place. Assessment is used well to inform lesson planning, to inform pupils of their progress and to modify Individual Education Plans.

57

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

52 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is identified as a priority in the school development plan and the good provision evident at the previous inspection has been successfully extended.

53 There is a wide range of well organised activities to promote pupils' spiritual development. The school's commitment to its Catholic foundations is evident in its mission statement, and its Christian ethos. The gospel values are successfully promoted through school policies and by the very good role models exhibited by staff and governors. The school chaplain and Brothers from the De La Salle Order devote much time and energy to pupils' spiritual development. Liturgical celebrations take place frequently and pupils are often involved in the preparations and presentations. Services such as the Mass for Year 6 primary school pupils, the Christmas and Easter Vigils, the Lenten Mass and the annual Founder's Day Mass provide significant opportunities for pupils' spiritual growth. The chaplain plans many other liturgical events and prepares the chapel for services, meditations and a variety of religious events, as well as devoting time to meet and counsel pupils. This important ministry directly complements the work of the religious studies department. Very popular and meaningful spiritual retreats are organised for all tutor groups in Key Stage 3, and weekend residential retreats are organised for tutor groups in Key Stage 4. These are thoroughly planned and carefully focused on pupils' spiritual needs, maturity and interests.

54 Year group and other assemblies are meaningful and make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. They are well planned and seen as special occasions when staff and pupils come together to affirm their faith, to reflect on Christ's teaching and to pray for the school and members of the wider community. These special events afford pupils many opportunities to enjoy drama, music, readings, meditations and prayer within a secure and caring community. The short daily tutor group sessions generally make a satisfactory contribution to pupils spiritual, moral and social development, but the quality of these sessions relies too much on the individual teacher. In some cases they are not as effective as they should be because teachers do not use effectively the support materials available for these sessions and there is only minimum co-ordination of themes to be followed.

- 55 The provision for pupils' moral education is very good. Pupils are consistently taught right from wrong. They respond well to the guidance provided by heads of year and form tutors. They respect the school's anti-bullying policy, the code of conduct for good behaviour, punctuality and attendance. The rewards system successfully motivates pupils and appropriately recognises and celebrates their achievements through the presentation of certificates in year assemblies for good performances in such activities as sport, music, classwork, community service and attendance. Teachers set good examples and many take opportunities to discuss and dwell on moral issues when they arise in lessons. The well-planned education for personal relationships (EPR) programme makes a very good contribution to pupils' moral education by successfully encouraging them to think through a range of contemporary moral and social issues. Pupils give generously to local, regional and national charities such as Comic Relief and Red Nose Day, CAFOD and the NSPCC.
- 56 The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Over half of the school's population participates each week in sporting, drama and musical activities, which are organised at lunch times, after school and at weekends. The benefits of these social activities are reflected in positive working relationships both within the activities and also in the attitudes that pupils have to each other in lessons and daily routines. In many subjects, including, art, English, mathematics, science, music and design and technology, pupils are given opportunities to work together and to assume responsibility. The head boy and head girl, school prefects, team captains and library volunteers take on their supervisory activities willingly and confidently. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to make a formal contribution to the running of the school or to express their views. For example, there is no school council.
- 57 The school's provision for pupils' cultural education is very good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to gain an understanding of their own and other cultures. For example, in subjects such as art, drama, English, geography, history, music and religious education, teachers demonstrate and explain the variety of tastes, traditions, religions, customs and cultural pursuits of peoples as diverse as the oceanic peoples and North American peoples. Throughout the school there are high quality displays to stimulate pupils' interest in cultural activities and to record their involvement in recently organised events, such as visits to places of interest, school productions and performances by the school choir. The wide range of extra curricular activities makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. The musical and dramatic opportunities range from full-scale musicals such as Carousal and My Fair Lady, to Christmas, Lenten and Easter vigils. Pupils respond well to the variety of first rate opportunities to visit theatres and concert halls ranging from regular visits to Stratford Upon Avon, Chester, and to playhouses in both Liverpool and Manchester. Linguists are provided with exchange opportunities with French and Spanish pupils. The orchestra and choir have recently been on a performance tour in Spain. The physical education department is very active in taking pupils to local, national and international games. The religious education department arranges visits to both the Anglican and Catholic Cathedrals in Liverpool and some pupils have been on pilgrimages to Lourdes.
- 63 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
- 58 Pupils receive good support and guidance. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress, personal development and behaviour are good and contribute significantly to pupils' good behaviour, the good progress made by pupils in most subjects and to the school's good performance in terms of examination results. Since the previous inspection, staff have successfully maintained their good care of pupils while sharpening the focus of the support that they offer to them, especially by improving the procedures for assessing and monitoring academic attainment.

- 59 Whenever possible, form tutors and heads of year remain with pupils throughout their school life. Pupils feel secure and know who to turn to for help. The education social worker, school chaplain, the special educational needs co-ordinator and pastoral staff liaise well with each other and outside agencies, such as educational psychologists and social workers, in order to provide effective support to individuals. Where necessary, parents are consulted to assist in resolving any difficulties. The chaplain acts as a great source of pastoral, as well as spiritual support, offering pupils the opportunity to talk in confidence about any problems. There are good procedures in place to ensure child protection and to eliminate bullying.
- 60 The well organised EPR and careers education programmes provide pupils with effective guidance on the choice of careers and on a wide variety of other topics that make a good contribution to their personal development. Pupils receive good information at crucial stages, such as when making GCSE choices and when considering their options for post 16 education. Pupils and parents express their appreciation of the highly successful transition arrangements, which ensure that the move from primary school to secondary school goes as smoothly as possible.
- 61 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Effective procedures are in place to identify pupils' individual learning difficulties and to monitor their progress. Heads of year, form tutors and class teachers make good use of pupils' Individual Education plans and work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator to ensure pupils receive effective support. Since the previous inspection good progress has been made in generating Individual Education Plans and they are helpful to teachers in the way they identify pupils' learning difficulties. However, some of the plans do not contain subject specific targets.
- 62 Heads of year have a good knowledge of all the pupils in their care and keep working notes of their successes as well as any concerns. However, they tend to concentrate more on pastoral matters than on pupils' academic performance. Subject teachers work closely with pastoral staff to keep them informed of any problems relating to pupils' work or behaviour. Pupils that need extra support are identified at an early stage. Form tutors and class teachers carefully monitor and record pupils' progress and encourage pupils to improve their performance by identifying sensible targets. Pupils that need extra support are identified at an early stage. Those pupils who are not achieving to their potential are assigned mentors who urge them on to greater success. Records of achievement are used effectively to assist in the monitoring of pupils' progress and to encourage pupils to assess themselves and in some cases to identify their own targets.
- 63 Pupils' attendance is monitored satisfactorily. Registers are completed appropriately and, as of this term, a good system is in place to encourage and sustain punctuality from pupils. For the past few years good support has been provided by a highly efficient and effective education social worker who has successfully persuaded reluctant pupils to remain in or return to school. Although the computerised registration system has been in place for some years now, the school does not use fully its potential as a tool for the early identification of individual patterns of absence.

64 The school is alert to the demands of health and safety, and in most respects successfully promotes the health, safety and well-being of its pupils. It has developed a very good policy and guidelines for staff to follow, which identifies hazards that are specific to the school and the action that is necessary in order to control the risk. A sufficient number of staff are qualified in first aid, and appropriate procedures are in place for coping with pupils who have accidents or feel unwell. As identified by pupils and parents, lunchtime arrangements are rushed but the school has done its best to provide an attractive dining hall and facilities that allow all pupils to eat within a very short time. Inspectors agree with pupils and parents that the current toilet facilities are inadequate and in poor condition. This and a few other minor items relating to health and safety were drawn to the school's attention during the inspection. According to the headteacher and governors, the building of new toilets and refurbishment of the existing toilets is scheduled for January 2000.

70

Partnership with parents and the community

1 The school has developed a good partnership with parents and members of the wider community, which has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the standards that they achieve. For example, since the previous inspection, improvements have been made to the quality of reports to parents on pupils' progress and the links with primary schools now focus more sharply on the curriculum to ensure continuity of teaching.

2 The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are informative and meet statutory requirements. Monthly newsletters keep parents and members of the wider community well informed about school events. Most parents consider that the school's open door policy works well and they indicate that when they contact the school, matters are dealt with effectively. Heads of year keep in regular touch with parents about their children's successes as well as concerns, and the school now issues informative monitoring sheets that outline pupils' academic performance at various points during the year, as well as the more detailed reports at the end of the year. The reports give a clear indication of pupils' level of attainment and how it compares with that of other pupils in the year group. The reports also set out the action that individuals need to take in order to improve their performance. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs attend an annual review, which is appropriately supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator and pastoral staff, as well as representatives from external support agencies.

3 Parents' attendance at school events and at meetings to discuss their children's work is good. Most parents sign the pupils' weekly planners to confirm that they are keeping an eye on their children's work, and some use them as a handy means of communication with the school. The Parents, Teachers and Friends Association has only a small band of organisers, but other parents support its activities well and raise considerable funds in order to augment the school's resources and support activities such as educational exchanges and visits. A small number of parents give very good support to the school in terms of volunteering their professional expertise in areas such as assisting in the library and helping in some musical activities.

4 For a long time the school has had good pastoral links with primary schools and it is now developing stronger subject links as well. English teachers are working well with primary teachers on the National Literacy Project, and mathematics teachers are planning to do the same with regard to numeracy. Music and drama teachers together with pupils work successfully with primary schools on school productions. The school has a particularly close working relationship with Carmel College, to which many pupils from the school transfer for post 16 education. There is an effective partnership with St Helens College, which provides vocational courses for some pupils in Key Stage 4.

- 5 The careers department makes good use of members of the business community who carry out mock interviews with Year 11 pupils. Pupils also have opportunities to sample the world of work through the two weeks work experience programme that is organised with the help of Project Trident. Past pupils and employers comment very positively about this experience. Some departments, for example geography and design technology, also have fruitful partnerships with industry. The chaplain nurtures a strong link with the parishes and the diocese, which enhances the provision for pupils' spiritual and personal growth. The school's links with the wider community, through for instance voluntary service or visits to residential homes, are well established.

74

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

74 Leadership and management

- 6 The headteacher provides purposeful and effective leadership. He receives very good support from three experienced deputy headteachers who work well as a team and also carry out their individual roles and responsibilities effectively. Heads of year and form tutors carry out their roles effectively. Since the previous inspection a more consistent approach to the quality of management at departmental level has been achieved. With the exception of information technology all subjects are well managed.
- 7 The management of information technology is unsatisfactory. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory and fails to meet statutory requirements. Arrangements for assessing and reporting pupils' progress in Key Stage 4 are unsatisfactory. There are no detailed plans that set out which aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study that other subjects are expected to teach or how to record and assess pupils' progress. Since the previous inspection, insufficient progress has been made in meeting statutory requirements and in the development of IT across the curriculum.
- 8 Management and leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. Good progress has been made on most of the issues identified at the previous inspection. Statutory requirements for assessing pupils needs are met, Individual Education Plans are in place where appropriate and the Code of Practice for special educational needs is satisfactorily implemented. Although Individual Education Plans identify pupils' learning difficulties, some of the plans do not identify targets to be achieved in each subject. Resources are well managed. The development plan for special educational needs is a reasonably effective management tool, but insufficient attention is given to identifying the future training requirements for staff and to developing the role of the named teacher for special educational needs in each department.
- 9 The school's aims and values expressed in its mission statement successfully underpin the work of the school. It expresses the school's commitment to the Catholic faith and seeks to follow the values and guidance of St John Baptist De La Salle, which stress the importance of promoting equally, the spiritual, social and academic growth in individuals and the community. A suitable range of policies is in place to support the mission statement as well as clear procedures to guide the day-to-day management and organisation of the school.

- 10 Governors are well informed about the school and actively involved in the decision-making processes at a strategic level. They conduct business efficiently through an appropriate committee structure. Governors are involved in development planning at appropriate stages of the process and generally, through detailed reports by the headteacher and heads of department they have a satisfactory understanding of how well the school is performing. However, they do not monitor and evaluate sufficiently the impact of specific developments on the school's performance.
- 11 Good progress has been made on most of the key issues identified at the previous inspection. Development planning at all levels has improved significantly. The school development plan is generally a useful management tool and contains appropriate priorities. With the exception of the use of new technology to support teaching and learning, good progress has been made towards achieving most of the priorities. Good quality departmental development plans are in place for most subjects. However, arrangements for formally and systematically evaluating the effectiveness of the school development plan are underdeveloped. In some cases evaluation is difficult because the success indicators in the plan fail to identify clearly the expected improvements in terms of either the pupils' or the school's performance.
- 12 The careful monitoring and recording of pupils' progress enables the school to set realistic targets for their achievement in examinations. The targets set for GCSE results in the year 2000 are appropriate.
- 13 Significant improvements have been achieved in the overall quality of teaching, which is now supported effectively with well documented procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress. The curriculum makes suitable provision for pupils at all levels of attainment. However, further progress is required in order to establish formal arrangements for evaluating the quality of teaching. Well organised arrangements are in place for staff development and for the appraisal of teachers. With the exception of the statutory requirements to teach information technology in Key Stage 4, all other statutory requirements are now met.
- 14 The school is in a good position to make further improvements. Although refinements are needed to development plans and improvements required to evaluation procedures, resources and expertise are effectively directed towards sustaining the good examination and test results consistently achieved since the previous inspection.

83

83 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 15 There are sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to teach the curriculum effectively. There is a good blend of teachers who have a long-term commitment to the school with new and recently qualified teachers. There is a good match between teachers' initial qualifications and the subjects they teach. A satisfactory level of clerical and administrative staff support the work of the school effectively, but the library is inadequately staffed and consequently closed to pupils for most of the morning. Technician support for design and technology is poor. Although the quality of teaching in design and technology subjects is good, teachers receive too little support during lessons and they spend too much time between lessons on duties normally carried out by a technician, for example, preparing materials and organising equipment.

- 16 Arrangements for the induction, appraisal and professional development of all staff, including non-teaching staff are good. Significant improvements have been achieved since the previous inspection and the school has recently received the 'Investors In People' award. Arrangements are well managed with training needs identified as part of the appraisal process and generally appropriately linked to development planning. However, teachers' expertise and skills in information technology are not yet sufficiently developed to enable the recent significant investment in information technology resources to be used effectively throughout the school. Additionally, insufficient attention is given in the staff development programme to the training needs of the named person for special educational needs in each department.
- 17 There is an adequate number of general classrooms to teach the curriculum effectively, but as stated in the previous inspection report, there is limited flexibility because all classrooms are used intensively. Specialist accommodation is generally satisfactory, but one classroom which has been adapted to teach science provides only basic laboratory services, and is inadequate for teaching some of the large classes that are timetabled for this room. The main music room is far too small to accommodate the number of pupils in most of the teaching groups.
- 18 The dining room is small for the size of the school, but since the previous inspection improvements have been made to the seating arrangements, and the atmosphere is pleasant. Food is now pre-packaged and queues usually move quickly. The playing fields are poorly drained, and the all-weather area and some hard-play areas are poorly maintained. As mentioned in the previous report, there are still few areas for pupils to sit quietly and socialise, and litter remains a problem. Toilets for boys and girls are inadequate and in an unsatisfactory condition. However, according to the headteacher and governors, the building of new toilets and refurbishment of the existing toilets is scheduled for January 2000.
- 19 With a few exceptions, the accommodation provides a suitable learning environment that is clean and generally well maintained. There are excellent displays of pupils' work and other materials in classrooms and in the corridors to stimulate pupils' interests.
- 20 There is an adequate range of good quality learning resources to support the teaching in all subjects. Since the previous inspection, the first stage of the development plan to improve information technology resources has been satisfactorily implemented. A substantial investment in a powerful network and wiring of the site to provide workstations throughout the school eventually, has been completed. Three specialist information technology rooms and the library have been suitably equipped with good quality hardware and software. However, these resources are not yet used effectively. Standards in information technology in Key Stage 4 are well below average and pupils in Key Stage 4 are not receiving their National Curriculum entitlement.
- 21 The library is well used by pupils from 11.45 each day and after school for 45 minutes. Satisfactory improvements have been made to resources since the previous inspection. It is a pleasant area to work in, and the gallery is well resourced with computers and a good range of software. There has been substantial spending on books in the past year and there is a good ratio of books to pupils. However, there is still a shortage of books in the library to support learning in some subjects, including mathematics.
- 22 Good use is made of facilities and resources beyond the school, such as libraries, museums and the business community. The school, for example, has close links with an American university that sends students to this school.

91

The efficiency of the school

- 23 The resources available to the school are well managed and used efficiently. Income and expenditure per pupil are lower than in the majority of schools, but recently a large budget surplus has accumulated. Although generally, the approach to medium-to-long term financial planning is informal, in this case careful planning has enabled the school to build up a surplus in order to develop information technology resources and to contribute to the building of new toilets. These are appropriate priorities for the school. Taking account of expenditure on these, the budget forecast for this financial year indicates a reasonable budget surplus.
- 24 There is very good financial control by the bursar and a deputy head teacher. Governors are appropriately involved in financial decisions and regularly monitor the school's financial position through budget statements provided by the bursar. The minor recommendations in the latest auditor's report have been implemented. The process of allocating funds to departments and to costing priorities in development plans has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used to contribute to the cost of providing additional in-class support in some subjects and to enable pupils to be taught in small groups. These pupils make good progress and in response to the issues raised in the previous inspection report, their progress is closely monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator to ensure that the funding is used effectively. Although there are examples of forward financial planning, and rigorous processes are in place to ensure that immediate financial commitments are met, formal arrangements for medium-to-long term financial planning are not sufficiently developed.
- 25 In the main, teachers are efficiently and effectively deployed. However, there is no technician support for design and technology, and teachers of this subject spend too much time both in lessons and between lessons carrying out duties normally performed by a technician. The ratio of pupils to teachers is average and the average amount of time teachers spend teaching is much lower than in most similar schools. All teachers have clear job descriptions and appropriately defined non-teaching duties, which are usually carried out efficiently and effectively. Non-teaching staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and provide an appropriate range of good quality support services. Accommodation is generally used efficiently. Available learning resources are used efficiently and effectively to support teaching and learning.
- 26 The school gives good value for money. Costs per pupil are lower than in the majority of similar schools. In a high percentage of lessons teaching is good. Pupils are very well behaved and examination and Key Stage 3 test results are well above the national average.

95 **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

95 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

95 **English**

27 The 1998 GCSE results in English language were well above the national average for all schools and well above average in comparison with the results for similar schools. In English literature results were in line with the national average. GCSE results in 1999 are lower in English language and higher in English literature. Since the previous inspection, results have fluctuated, but have remained close to the national average. As at the time of the previous inspection, girls still achieve better results than boys.

28 The results of the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are well above the national average for all schools and also well above average in comparison with the results for similar schools. The results for boys and girls are similar. The results are significantly better than those in mathematics and science. The results in the 1999 tests are lower than those of the previous year and girls achieved much better results than boys.

29 Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment. At the end of both key stages, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average. Pupils listen attentively and speak with confidence. They respond well to questions and make thoughtful answers. They show initiative and ask questions to clarify points. In both key stages they can speak at length, when appropriate, in discussion. Year 7 pupils discussed at length the plight of wild animals that are hunted by pets. In GCSE studies pupils discussed the set texts in group-work and in classroom discussion. In Key Stage 4, pupils have a good knowledge of "Macbeth" and "The Merchant of Venice" and use their knowledge well to speak about character and plot.

30 At the end of both key stages attainment in reading is above average. In Key Stage 3 reading is well promoted by the weekly uninterrupted, sustained, silent reading programme where pupils are given the opportunity and responsibility to extend their reading with their own choice of books. They are encouraged to choose from a wide range of books and are given good written guidance on a range of texts. In Key Stage 4 pupils read widely to support analyses of the set literature.

31 Pupils' writing is above average at the end of both key stages. They learn to write for a range of purposes and to examine the writing of others to recognise differences in writing techniques. Handwriting is generally neat and legible. Pupils are aware of the rules of grammar and punctuation from Year 7 onwards and generally apply them in written work. They are given well designed support sheets to remind them of these rules. However, in short exercises, some pupils write carelessly, re-enforcing bad habits of spelling and punctuation mistakes, because they think these apply only to 'best' writing.

32 Progress is good in both key stages. Pupils at all levels of attainment progress at a good rate in all aspects of English language and literature. They make very good progress in understanding the use of literary devices in writing. They can identify the use of figures of speech from Year 7 onwards and say how they enhance writing. In GCSE studies, pupils gain a good knowledge of the novels they read as Shakespearean plays and quote impressively to support their answers. Pupils with special educational needs are taught in smaller groups and the work is chosen carefully to help them to make progress in specific areas according to their individual needs. They follow a full course in English in both key stages and all are prepared for the GCSE

examinations at the end of Key Stage 4. They make good progress in both key stages.

- 33 The literacy policy suitably promotes reading and the use of spoken and written English across the curriculum. In lessons pupils listen attentively and speak clearly and audibly. There are opportunities for reading aloud in almost all lessons. In all subjects, appropriate emphasis is placed on the use of the correct subject vocabulary and the key words are identified and placed on display. In the main, pupils successfully learn these words and use and spell them correctly. Pupils write well for a range of purposes. They have good research skills, particularly in Key Stage 4. They make good use of the library and information technology facilities when they carry out investigative work. At the end of each term pupils who work consistently hard at improving their literacy skills receive a literacy certificate for their record of achievement.
- 34 Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave very well in class, demonstrating a serious and conscientious approach to learning. The friendly, co-operative atmosphere in lessons encourages pupils to make good contributions to discussions and has a positive impact on their progress. Pupils have a good capacity for personal study and take pride in completing tasks. They respond well to the requirement for extended writing in Key Stage 3 and the research required for course-work in Key Stage 4.
- 35 The quality of teaching is very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. In 77 per cent of lessons in Key Stage 3 and in all lessons in Key Stage 4, teaching is good or very good. All teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and good class-management skills. Lessons are carefully planned to cater for the needs of all pupils. The very good behaviour by pupils and the good progress they make are achieved through the bright and lively teaching that characterises the best lessons. Pupils are given challenging work and are well supported so that in most lessons they make good progress. The approaches to detailed critical analysis of poetry, prose and drama are examples of good teaching. Assessment of pupils' work is a strong feature of most lessons and encourages pupils to achieve high standards. Writing assignments are well planned and marked thoroughly. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher failed to involve the pupils sufficiently in the lesson, for example in discussions, and missed opportunities to present challenges and to engage them in creative work. Good records are kept of pupils' progress and are used to inform teaching and lesson planning. Homework tasks are relevant and are used to extend the work done in class and to promote independent learning.
- 36 The department is well led. Teachers are suitably supported. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is well organised in both key stages. Schemes of work are very good, detailed and well structured and helpful to teachers. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to review the curriculum, but monitoring of the quality of teaching is informal and not yet systematic. Teaching accommodation is good, and classroom displays are of a high quality and include well-illustrated examples of figures of speech. There is an adequate range of good quality resources that are used well to support teaching.
- 37 Good progress has been made on most of the issues identified at the previous inspection. Good lesson planning and the good quality of teaching ensure all pupils are catered for. Discussion in lessons is now well structured and used to good effect. Although girls still do better than boys in examinations and national tests, some improvement has been achieved. The current rates of progress and levels of attainment by boys and girls are similar.
- 106 **Drama**
- 38 In recent years, GCSE results have been well above the national average. In 1998, all pupils entered achieved a pass at the higher grades of A* to C and in 1999, 86 per cent of pupils achieved A* to C grades.

- 39 Attainment by pupils near the end of both key stages is well above average. Pupils have a good knowledge of dramatic techniques. They listen attentively and respond with very good composure and control. They have confidence and perform in a lively and appropriate manner from Year 7 onwards. They use improvisation to explore given topics and present their studies to the whole class. They also use improvised drama appropriately to help script writing. Most pupils in both key stages use language well and deploy humour to good effect. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
- 40 All pupils make very good progress in drama. As they move through the key stages, pupils gain confidence and show initiative in organising their rehearsals and performances. They increase their understanding of the importance of listening and watching as they move from year to year. Work is carefully chosen for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress in both key stages. Many pupils on the special educational needs register achieve good standards.
- 41 Pupils respond well and demonstrate their enjoyment of the subject. They perform with enthusiasm, evaluate their work appropriately and work hard to improve their performances. They understand the nature of the strict discipline that is required in drama and respond accordingly.
- 42 Teaching is very good. In all lessons in Key Stage 3, teaching is good or very good and in Key Stage 4 it is very good or excellent in all lessons. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils. Ideas used in lessons are well thought out and help pupils to achieve maximum impact in their own presentations and to make very good progress in the way they improvise and engage in role-play. The high levels of pupils' participation in discussions and the well-structured activities they engage in are key features of the best teaching, and these make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers use their own skills, knowledge and expertise to infuse pupils with enthusiasm and confidence. Lessons are very well organised so that all pupils have opportunities to work in small groups, which helps to build their confidence and to take on responsibilities. Assessment is an integral part of all lessons and is used effectively to involve pupils in self-assessment and in the assessment of the work of other pupils.
- 43 There is excellent leadership in the department and drama has a high profile in the school and the wider community. The curriculum is well planned and there are very good take-up rates in GCSE courses. There is a major production annually involving over two hundred pupils and also other productions throughout the year. These, together with the very good teaching, make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory and resources are used effectively to support teaching.

112

Mathematics

- 44 In 1998, GCSE results were in line with the national average for all schools and above average in comparison with the results for similar schools. However no pupils achieved the highest grade. Since the previous inspection, GCSE results have remained close to the national average. The exception was in 1996 when the results were well above the national average and the school achieved its best examination results in recent years. Results for 1999 indicate a small improvement over those of the previous year. There are no significant differences in the results for boys and girls.

- 45 The results in the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are above the national average for all schools and well above average in comparison with the results for similar schools. The results for boys and girls are similar. The results are similar to those in science, but well below those achieved in English. The results in the 1999 tests are a significant improvement over those in 1998 and reflect the improvements to the curriculum and to the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. As in 1998, the results for boys and girls are similar.
- 46 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is well above average. In number, pupils carry out written calculation skills competently, but some pupils find it difficult to recall number facts such as multiplication tables, and this sometimes affects the speed at which they complete their work. Standards in algebra are high. Pupils also have a good understanding of shape, space, measure and data handling and apply their skills well in other subjects. They record information carefully and understand the need to check answers. Investigation skills are satisfactory, but not as well developed as other key skills and mathematical techniques.
- 47 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is average. The recently implemented policies and the new schemes of work have not yet fully impacted on standards at the end of Key Stage 4, but pupils are currently making good progress. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory but some pupils still have difficulty carrying out mental calculations and retaining some number facts. For example, in Year 11, some higher attaining pupils could not manipulate fractions with confidence, causing them problems when calculating probabilities. Standards in shape and space are good. Pupils measure with increasing accuracy and construct diagrams carefully. Standards in data handling are good and pupils perform complex analysis of data confidently. However the use of information technology to support this aspect is unsatisfactory. Problem solving and investigative skills are satisfactory.
- 48 Most pupils enter school with average levels of attainment. Overall, pupils in both key stages make good progress especially in their knowledge and understanding of algebra, shape and space. However, in Key Stage 3, some pupils do not make sufficient progress in recalling multiplication tables and carrying out mental calculations. Also in Key Stage 4, the progress of some pupils in developing problem solving and investigative skills is restricted by the limited opportunities provided for these activities in some classes. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are well taught in small groups and the work carefully pitched at an appropriate level. Teachers pay special attention to the small steps needed to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts, and to give pupils confidence in their ability to succeed.
- 49 Numerical skills and other mathematical skills are used satisfactorily to support work in other subjects. They are used well and reinforced in subjects such as geography where an introductory data-handling course makes a good contribution to pupils' progress in mathematics. Pupils in Key Stage 4 use construction skills well in geography fieldwork studies to produce cross sections of river valleys. In Year 7, pupils use note values and time signatures in music. In science lessons pupils use a range of instruments to a good degree of accuracy, and tabulation of data is constantly good. Pupils with average attainment in Key Stage 4 successfully find lines of best fit in graphical work. In design and technology, pupils use a wide range of mathematical skills confidently and competently. They measure accurately, use algebraic formula and successfully calculate gear and velocity ratios. Pupils use their understanding of transformations and symmetries particularly well in art.

- 50 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they concentrate well in lessons. They listen attentively to the teacher and follow instructions. Behaviour is very good and even when tasks are undemanding or teachers spend too long talking, pupils are patient and do not disrupt the lesson. In most lessons they work hard and complete a lot of work. Most pupils present their work neatly and are proud of their achievements. In a few classes, however, presentation of work is unsatisfactory. When given the opportunity to work collaboratively, pupils work well and concentrate on the task. They respond well to challenges, for example, when a teacher was looking at patterns generated by square numbers, they were very keen to find the next number in the sequence.
- 51 The quality of teaching is good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and has a considerable impact on pupils' good rates of progress in most lessons. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed in each key stage. In 73 per cent of lessons in Key Stage 3 and in 56 per cent in Key Stage 4, teaching is good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are carefully planned to meet specific targets that are known and understood by the pupils in the class. For example, at the beginning of a lesson, pupils knew what they were expected to achieve when they were given the target, to learn to use the formula for the circumference of a circle. Most teachers make good use of question and answer sessions at the start of lessons to assess pupils' understanding of previous work and to develop new subject specific language. Classroom control is almost always very good, and because pupils seldom need to be disciplined, they concentrate well and make good progress in most lessons. In the most effective lessons, there is a good balance between teaching, class discussions and opportunities for pupils to apply new knowledge to well chosen problems. Some of the best lessons include carefully designed practical investigations and demonstrations to help pupils to understand the topic. For example, in a lesson about loci, pupils were able to use circles and strips of paper to investigate how points moved, and the teacher used larger models to demonstrate the answers. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the work is too easy and higher attaining pupils in the group are not sufficiently challenged. In the unsatisfactory lessons, pupils are allowed to perform exercises without understanding what they are expected to achieve; in some cases they complete too many similar questions.
- 52 Homework is generally used effectively to support pupils' progress, but on occasions higher attaining pupils in some classes have no homework because have already completed the task. Pupils' work is always marked, but the quality of marking is variable. At best it is detailed with comments to help pupils to understand what has gone wrong and how to put it right. In a few classes, pupils mark their own work too often and this is not sufficiently supported by suitable teacher assessment. Occasionally comments in books are trivial and unhelpful, for example, 'finish this work', and sometimes are not followed up. Rigorous procedures for assessment and record keeping are in place, and pupils are appropriately involved in personal target setting.
- 53 The leadership and management of the department are very good. Suitably qualified teachers work well as a team and contribute to the smooth running and development of the department. The curriculum is well organised and meets statutory requirements. The recently developed scheme of work supports good quality lesson planning, which is having a positive impact on standards throughout the school. Weaknesses in provision are rigorously identified through careful auditing of the curriculum and monitoring of teaching. There is an ambitious, but achievable development plan that concentrates on improving standards. Good progress has been made in rectifying the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report, especially the improvements to the quality of teaching.
- 54 Teaching accommodation is satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of practical apparatus and a good range of carefully selected texts for pupils at all levels of attainment. The use of

information, technology, however, is unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to the lack of teachers' expertise and confidence and insufficient software for mathematics topics.

- 55 In 1998, GCSE results in double award science were in line with the national average for all schools and above average in comparison with the results for similar schools. In 1999, the results were lower than in 1998. There is no significant difference in the results for boys and girls. At the time of previous inspection GCSE results were above the national average and they have remained at least in line with the national averages.
- 56 The results in the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are above the national average for all schools and well above average in comparison with the results of similar schools. The results are similar to those in mathematics but well below those in English. The results for boys are much better than those achieved by girls. The results in 1999 are the same as those in 1998. Boys again did better than girls, but by a smaller margin than in 1998.
- 57 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the science topics across the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. They express themselves well and use scientific terms accurately. Pupils' take care in the presentation of their written work. They record observations accurately and present them well in tabulated form. Numerical skills in processing the results, such as taking averages and calculating percentages, are accurate. They present their results in neat and accurate graphical forms such as in bar charts, pie charts and line graphs. Pupils satisfactorily handle various probes and data logging equipment to obtain and process experimental results using computers.
- 58 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is average. They use research skills well and apply their scientific knowledge satisfactorily to problems. For example, Year 10 pupils used a variety of reference sources, including CD ROMs, to develop presentations on alternative energy sources. They carry out experiments efficiently and analyse results carefully to form conclusions. Pupils in Year 11 have a good understanding of chemical formulae and equations. Written work is of a good standard.
- 59 When they enter the school, pupils' levels of attainment in science are broadly average. They make good progress in Key Stage 3. Many establish good laboratory practice, handle a range of apparatus and materials with care, accuracy and with due regard to safety. The recently revised schemes of work successfully develop pupils' skills in designing and carrying out scientific investigations. Pupils in Year 7 demonstrated their understanding of electrical circuits to design and test a circuit with a number of bulbs in parallel operated by a series of switches. In Year 8, pupils devised a test to compare the effectiveness of proprietary brands of antacid tablets using a pH probe and data logging equipment, and produced accurate and interesting results, which they discussed and analysed. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress in Key Stage 3 due to the small class sizes and teachers' careful planning and support. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 7 worked hard with the teacher and support staff to design and carry out an investigation on the rate at which water heats up in a container placed at different distances from a heat source.
- 60 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. They gain confidence in using their knowledge in new situations and have a growing confidence to discuss with understanding and clarity the work they are doing. For example, pupils in Year 11 discussed their knowledge of plant cell structure and osmosis to develop an understanding of how water moves through plants. Investigative skills develop well, and pupils become more critical of their work. For example, they recognised the need for careful and repeated observations to ensure the reliability of their results in an investigation on the rate of photosynthesis. Pupils with special educational

needs make good progress in Key Stage 4. Work is carefully planned to meet their specific needs and they receive good support from teachers.

- 61 Pupils' response in both key stages is very good. They enjoy science and enter lessons with a positive attitude to work. They are attentive and respond well to teachers. They maintain very good concentration and settle quickly to the set tasks. They respect equipment and laboratory rules, and work well together on practical exercises or collecting information. They express themselves well, confidently putting across personal views as well as facts.
- 62 The quality of teaching is good. There has been a considerable improvement since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In about half the lessons in each key stage the teaching is good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in delivering information and scientific ideas. Their use of language is good. They structure and direct questions well to obtain clear information on the progress of pupils. Planning of lessons is good and teachers set high expectations of pupils, which are appropriate to their age and prior attainment. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 9 carefully and accurately carried out a complex exercise to detect areas of starch production in a variegated leaf. They were well supported by the teacher and support staff, and took pleasure in making good progress and achieving good results. Resources are used well and teachers are particularly skilled in setting out clearly what should be achieved during the lesson. In some lesson excellent use of video material generates interest and a good response from pupils. The pace of lessons is generally good and time is used effectively. An effective feature of the teaching in most lessons is the short final session where pupils and teacher summarise the lesson and assess the progress made. Homework is usually an integral part of the teaching. It is regularly set and clearly linked to the lesson content. The department has produced a good set of homework booklets for use in Key Stage 3 with exercises for pupils of differing levels of attainment. Marking of classwork and homework is evaluative and useful positive comments are given to pupils on how their work can be improved.
- 63 The curriculum is well planned in both key stages to meet statutory requirements and the needs of all pupils. In Key Stage 4 lower attaining pupils are able to study a modified curriculum, which leads to a certificate of achievement. These pupils are also entered for GCSE double award science and in the 1999 examinations all achieved a pass grade. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are very good in Key Stage 3. There is a comprehensive programme for assessing subject knowledge and investigation skills, which tracks pupils' attainment and progress very effectively. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are assessed at the end of each unit of work and predicted GCSE grades are given. Coursework is well monitored and assessed. The use of information and computer technology has increased since the last inspection. It is well integrated into the Key Stage 3 curriculum and is now developing in Key Stage 4.
- 64 Leadership and management of the department are very good. The development plan is realistic in its objectives and focuses appropriately on raising standards and improving examination results. Teamwork is a strong feature of the department. Regular departmental meetings constantly review the curriculum and teaching approaches, but there are no formal arrangements for the monitoring of teaching.
- 65 Overall, teaching accommodation is satisfactory, but because of the way teaching groups are organised and timetabled, too many lessons are taught outside laboratories, which restricts teaching approaches and requires frequent room changes. One classroom has been converted to provide benches and basic facilities, but it is inadequate for teaching some of the large groups timetabled for this room. Resources and equipment are adequate and used efficiently.

134 **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

134

134 **Art**

66 GCSE results in 1998 were well above the national average. Since the previous inspection, the results have been consistently above the national average. The results in 1999 were similar to those in 1998. Girls generally do better than boys in GCSE examinations.

67 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is well above average. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils display good skills in drawing from observation of set groups and of the school environment. Their drawings in many cases are developed into designs in colour that are rich and imaginative. Pupils are able to use art historical material effectively in their own creative work and good quality preparatory work is evident in sketchbooks. There is very good pattern work using geometric division of the design area in both black and white and colour. Attainment in three-dimensional work is patchy, as pupils' experience in this area is inconsistent and is not continuous through the key stage. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of three-dimensional work are, therefore, variable, but overall, below the level attained in other art activities. Some pupils gain experience of the use of computers in art and this represents an improvement in the situation since the previous inspection. However, in general, pupils' skills are still underdeveloped in the area of computer aided design.

68 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is well above average. Drawing skills are very good and there is a good level of understanding of the way colour functions in art. Art historical material is used very effectively as a source of ideas for project work. Personal research is good and is aided by the drafting of ideas in sketchbooks.

69 In both key stages, pupils make very good progress. Their progress in both key stages is enhanced by the exploratory work they undertake in sketchbooks and by the structure of projects, which link theory and practice very effectively in a sequential way. Objectives in both projects and lessons are very clear and present a satisfactory challenge to pupils of different attainment levels. The pace of work in lessons is good. As they move through the key stages, pupils develop their ability to work independently and purposefully, and in Key Stage 4 especially, they develop more confidence in expressing their ideas. In Key Stage 4, pupils develop their understanding of the language of the subject, a greater awareness of the nature of art and a wider command of English generally. In both key stages, pupils' progress in the use of computers in creative work is still very patchy and only slight progress has been made in this area since the previous inspection. Within the framework of well organised and appropriately resourced lessons, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They receive good support with the exploratory work in sketchbooks, gain confidence in discussing their ideas and produce work of a standard appropriate to their prior attainment and some achieve success in GCSE examinations.

70 Pupil's response is very good in both key stages. They show a high level of interest and enthusiasm. Commitment is high and is maintained throughout lessons. There is a concern for the environment in studios and pupils show a pride in their work and a proper respect for the work of others. Work areas are used with a care and kept tidy and pupils make proper use of materials and equipment. Behaviour is very good in both key stages; pupils respond politely to questioning and co-operate well when required to do so in pairs or groups.

- 71 Teaching in both key stages is very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In all lessons in Key Stage 3 teaching is good or very good and on occasion excellent. In Key Stage 4, teaching is good or very good in just over 70 per cent of lessons; in one lesson, teaching was excellent. At the outset of lessons, objectives are set out with clear explanations and, where appropriate, teachers carry out a demonstration, for example, in the preparation of clay for modelling. Class and individual discussions are used effectively in the course of lessons and teachers' expectations of pupils are high. Ongoing individual tuition is delivered from a very good base of teacher subject expertise with sensitivity to the needs of individual pupils. Control of pupils' behaviour is exercised with good humour, which gains the goodwill and co-operation of pupils. A significant and very successful feature of the teaching is the use of display in studios as a teaching resource, illustrating the work of other artists. The imaginative planning of projects is a strong feature of the teaching and contributes significantly to the very good progress made by pupils in both key stages. Homework is used very well as a basis for the development of work in school and monitored with care and regularity. Assessment of pupils' work is thorough and in accordance with whole school policy. At the end of each year, pupils are given a final grade and parents are reported to in accordance with legal requirements. The department has devised its own system of attainment levels in order to conform to the practice in other subjects and to prepare for revised National Curriculum requirements. The absence of cultural influences noted at the previous inspection is no longer a feature of the teaching, which now includes wide cultural diversity in the planning of projects and in areas of display.
- 72 The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is broad, suitably planned and meets National Curriculum requirements. Three dimensional design work, however, is not covered in sufficient depth in Key Stage 3. Opportunities for pupils to use information technology are also very limited. In Key Stage 4, the four art options offered build appropriately on the general nature of the curriculum in Key Stage 3. Extra curricular provision is very good, studios being open and staffed throughout breaks and lunchtimes and also after school.
- 73 The department is well managed. Teachers are suitably supported and they work well as a team. The curriculum is appropriately reviewed at departmental meetings, but formal arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching are not sufficiently developed. Departmental priorities as identified in the development plan are appropriate. The management of display in the school generally and within the department is a strong feature of the work of the department and this makes a valuable contribution to the learning environment throughout the school.
- 74 The quality of accommodation is good with purpose built rooms and specialist studios, for example, a pottery and a kiln room. Equipment and consumable resources are adequate for current courses but provision for information technology is minimal.

143

Design and Technology

- 75 GCSE results in 1998 were above the national average. In recent years the results have improved and are now better than at the time of the previous inspection. In 1999, the results were slightly better than in 1998. There are no significant differences in the results for boys and girls.

- 76 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. Pupils have a good knowledge of the design process in the four specialist areas of resistant materials, food technology, electronics, and graphic products. They produce a suitable variety of good designs, and write specifications using models to help clarify their ideas. Making and designing are equal strengths. Pupils are aware of the properties of materials. In a lesson evaluating convenience foods, they showed a good knowledge of the advantages of dried ingredients, and the relative costs of using fresh products. In a lesson where pupils were marking out a box lid they used tools and machines with precision and accuracy.
- 77 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. In resistant materials, pupils are able to discuss the merits of contemporary furniture. They design and manufacture good quality products, and apply their knowledge of a variety of hard, soft and man-made timber materials. They use techniques such as veneering and lamination with some skill. Knowledge of metals however is underdeveloped. In graphics, pupils design and generate attractive products. In food technology, pupils' secure knowledge of the needs of various special dietary requirements is confidently applied in the development of well-made and critically evaluated products.
- 78 As a result of the very careful planning of design and making activities by teachers, pupils at all levels of attainment make good progress in both key stages. Their knowledge and skill increase rapidly as they move through a sequence of integrated activities in Key Stage 3. They build up a good knowledge of food and cooking skills, whilst refining their designs of food products. Pupils also increase their knowledge of wood and plastic as well as electronic systems. In Key Stage 4, they improve their research skills, use formal graphics techniques such as single point perspective to communicate ideas, and build models to test out designs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, mainly because of the good support they receive from teachers who build up their confidence and are aware of their individual needs.
- 79 Pupils' attitudes are good. They listen carefully, and carry out instructions, using equipment and machines responsibly. They are interested in using tools correctly and readily apply new techniques in their designs. In a lesson where larger jigs were needed for gluing and forming, Year 11 pupils readily helped each other. In a Year 8 class, food of convenience, such as rice and noodle snacks, pupils maturely considered the cost and nutritional viewpoint put to them by the teacher. Pupils show a concern for high standards in their designing and making, and attempt creative solutions to design problems.
- 80 The overall quality of teaching is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In just over 50 per cent of lessons in Key Stage 3, teaching is very good. In Key Stage 4, teaching is good in 80 per cent of lessons. All teachers have a good knowledge of their specialist subject and plan lessons carefully so that the key skills required to design and make products are rigorously taught within activities that relate to pupils' personal interests. They provide very good individual support for pupils, especially when new materials and manufacturing processes are involved. Lessons usually begin with a sharply focussed discussion and an explanation of what pupils are expected to achieve. Occasionally in lessons, there is too much use of photo copied notes at the expense of investigative activities. The organisation and planning of practical activities is good. However, because there is no technician support for design and technology, teachers are sometimes distracted from teaching by having to hand out equipment and provide materials. Homework is usually set and marked well, and encourages pupils to research topics and undertake preparatory work for projects. Many lessons make good contributions to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, when they measure and mark out materials and when teachers insist on good speaking and listening skills during the evaluation of products in food technology.

- 81 Management and leadership of the department are very good. Over the last three years, the head of department has given clear educational direction to the team of technology teachers, in working to raise standards in the new courses, and refine the curriculum in both key stages. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is well organised; although in Key Stage 3, the short 50-minute lessons sometimes constrain activities in food technology. Schemes of work are good and support lesson planning. The schemes have some very good features, such as readily identifiable key marking points and guidance relating to pupils' involvement in evaluating each other's products. Target setting for pupils is improving, although it is still at an early stage. Procedures for monitoring and improving the curriculum are good, but monitoring of teaching is still informal and not on a regular basis.
- 82 The number of support staff is poor. There is no technician to help with food technology, graphics, electronics, or resistant materials. Preparation of materials and maintenance of equipment is carried out by teachers, which is an inefficient use of their time. Although the department attempts to set good standards of housekeeping, this is currently unsatisfactory. Workshops are untidy. In some areas, materials litter the floors and debris has built up around machinery. There is an acute lack of storage in the workshops for the ambitious projects in resistant materials made in Key Stage 4.
- 83 Learning resources are generally adequate, and there is a good range of written materials to support teaching. Consumable materials are adequate, but the department lacks CAD/CAM facilities and there are no computers within the teaching accommodation for technology. Some of the workshops, as well as one food technology room and the graphics studio are too small for the larger group sizes in Key Stage 3. Safety zones around machinery are not clearly marked.
- 84 Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable improvements in pupils' attainment and progress and the quality of teaching. Pupils' confidence, accuracy and presentation of work have improved. Technology is now available to all pupils in Key Stage 4 and it is now assessed according to statutory requirements.

153 **Geography**

- 85 In 1998, GCSE results were above the national average. The results in 1999 were in line with the previous year and all the pupils entered for the examination achieved a pass grade. In this year, girls outperformed boys by a wide margin, but this is not usually the case. Since the previous inspection, GCSE results have been consistently above the national average, with an increasing proportion of pupils achieving the highest A* grade.
- 86 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. They have a good range of geographical vocabulary and a good knowledge and understanding of places and themes. Pupils apply their geographical skills well to analyse the local surroundings. For example, they use outline plans of the school building to locate specific places and analyse and categorise positive and negative aspects of their environment. Pupils discuss their conclusions confidently and write about them logically. They have a very good knowledge of modern farming techniques such as the purpose of genetically modified foods and discuss sensibly the possible impact of such changes on people and the environment and show an appreciation of the differing viewpoints of various sections of the community. Pupils in Year 9 apply their map-reading skills well to investigate problems posed by a possible by-pass in the Snowdonia National Park.

- 87 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. They have well developed skills, which enable them to research relevant geographical data that affect people and leads to changes in places. For example, pupils use the internet to gather information and data on the population problems of Calcutta; Year 11 pupils analyse data on a wide range of indicators such as literacy levels, birth and death rates, to deduce the level of a country's development. Pupils demonstrate a thorough understanding of these indicators and how they interact.
- 88 Pupils make good progress in both key stages. Early in Year 7, the scheme of work includes a basic geography skills course, which impacts positively on pupils' progress. For example there is noticeable early improvement in standards of mapping and diagrammatic representation. High quality school-produced resources enhance progress in lessons. As they move through the key stages, pupils build on their previous knowledge and skills at a good rate. They develop confidence in asking questions and in offering explanations about geographical patterns and changes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages. Teachers know their pupils and the nature of their individual learning difficulties. They ensure pupils tackle appropriate tasks and provide good support.
- 89 Pupils' attitude to their work and their behaviour in lessons is good. They concentrate on the work in hand and maintain their efforts throughout the lesson. They collaborate well in group work and contribute sensibly to class discussions. Year 7 pupils concentrated well during a video about how farming machinery worked and later recounted it in detail. Pupils working independently whilst investigating the school environment showed exemplary behaviour and co-operated well with each other.
- 90 The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In 73 per cent of lessons in Key Stage 3 and in 80 per cent in Key Stage 4, teaching is good or very good. Lessons are now well planned with clear aims made explicit to pupils at the beginning of the lesson. Resources and time are well managed to maintain pace and to add variety and interest to lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and provide an appropriate challenge for all pupils with varied and interesting tasks. High quality worksheets are used well to support lessons. They present geographical information and data clearly and interestingly so that pupils can quickly get down to work and make good progress in achieving the main objectives of the lesson. Good quality video materials are used appropriately to stimulate pupils' interest and to set the scene for class discussions and individual tasks.
- 91 The curriculum meets all requirements of the National Curriculum. Schemes of work are well written and ensure appropriate coverage of thematic studies and places and the development of key skills. There is an emphasis on the development of skills through fieldwork, and information technology plays an appropriate part in the teaching and learning. Care for the environment is a strong theme running through much of the geography course and pupils' personal and social development is enhanced through the sensitive study of, for example, the impact of tourism on the countryside.
- 92 Assessment procedures are good and include opportunities for pupils to assess their own work. Pupils have targets for future achievement, though these are sometimes imprecise. In Years 8, 9 and 10, oral assessments, in which pupils make a short presentation to the class on the research they carried out on a topic, develop pupils' confidence, their speaking skills and geographical terminology. Pupils respond well to the reward system for good work.

93 The department is very well led. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. All the issues raised at the previous inspection have been rectified, especially those relating to the quality of teaching and learning. Development planning is good with clear priorities and costings, although success criteria sometimes lack precision. In many respects the work of the department is carefully monitored, but arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching are informal and not regular.

94 Teaching accommodation is good. There is a satisfactory range of good quality learning resources, which include excellent school-made resources that are used effectively to support teaching.

163 **History**

95 At the time of the previous inspection GCSE results were close to the national average. During the period that followed there was a significant improvement. In 1998, the results were well above the national average. Good results were achieved in 1999, but were much lower than in 1998. There are no significant differences in the results for boys and girls.

96 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is average. Pupils know about the key events, people and developments in the periods they have studied. They explain clearly how and why things changed, drawing information from documents and other evidence. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to evaluate and analyse sources. Lower attaining pupils explain their ideas better orally than in writing.

97 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. Most pupils give reasons for the causes of historical events and assess their significance. Higher attaining pupils use their good knowledge and understanding to evaluate different interpretations of historical events critically. Lower attaining pupils show good levels of knowledge and understanding when responding to direct questions, but are less able to apply what they know in a broader context.

98 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. Well planned schemes of work ensure that pupils progress at an appropriate rate in their knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum programme of study. A good variety of teaching and learning styles such as role-play and group discussion help to clarify difficult concepts. In a Year 7 lesson on the Roman Army, for example, pupils worked in pairs as Roman generals to organise the Roman legionnaires into an effective fighting force. They drew up realistic battle plans to attack the barbarian army. Since the previous inspection good work has been done to enable pupils to write about history with greater accuracy and confidence. Teachers have designed booklets and worksheets that are suitable for all pupils' needs and which help those with special educational needs to make progress. Pupils' number skills are enhanced, for example, by using population statistics and constructing graphs in Year 8. Some progress is made in using information technology in history but this aspect of provision is underdeveloped. This was a weakness at the previous inspection and has not been fully rectified.

- 99 Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4. The emphasis on the study and evaluation of sources and the acquisition of a sound knowledge base in Key Stage 3 provide the secure foundation for work in Key Stage 4. Pupils analyse sources in a more structured way. They acquire skills in handling conflicting evidence presented in a number sources as, for example, in an investigation of the Cuba crisis. Year 11 pupils drew on their previous knowledge of events and used specific terms appropriately. Their course work shows a more mature approach to independent study. Appropriate individual support from the teacher enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. These pupils are given appropriate tasks, which they usually complete successfully. With encouragement from the teacher, most pupils develop confidence in making contributions to class discussions.
- 100 Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They find the work interesting and concentrate on tasks for sustained periods. They handle opportunities for independent work well and display constructive attitudes when working with others. In a lesson on the dissolution of the monasteries, for example, pupils worked in pairs to discover reasons why Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries. Many pupils are willing to answer questions and share ideas in whole class discussions. They settle down to written work promptly and this allows teachers to support individual pupils and assess their level of understanding. Although there has been a low uptake for GCSE history in recent years most pupils enjoy their lessons. The history classrooms contain good quality displays of pupils' work, which stimulate interest in the subject.
- 101 The quality of teaching is good, especially in Key Stage 4. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In half the lessons in Key Stage 3, teaching is good and in all lessons in Key Stage 4 it is good or very good. Teachers are experienced and have good subject knowledge. They work well as a team and regularly share good practice. The quality of teaching is underpinned by good lesson planning, an imaginative variety of teaching strategies and brisk use of time so that pupils are moved on quickly from one activity to another. Clear targets are set at the beginning of each lesson with high but realistic expectations for pupils of different levels of attainment. Teachers have a good rapport with pupils, which inspires confidence and encourages a two-way process in learning. Since the previous inspection teachers have successfully developed teaching approaches so that lessons include a high level of pupil participation. Lessons are well supported by good quality materials in the form of units of study that challenge pupils of all levels of attainment. For example, a very good teaching unit, which enables Year 9 pupils to empathise with soldiers in the First World War. At present there is little use of information technology. Although the Year 10 curriculum is enhanced by a visit to Belgium and France, pupils in Key Stage 3 do not have sufficient opportunities to visit historical sites. There is now a good marking policy and assessment has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Assessments are regularly monitored to look for improvements both in pupils' learning and in the way topics are taught. Teachers successfully ensure consistency in their marking of assessment tasks throughout Key Stage 3, but further work is needed to ensure accuracy when awarding levels at the end of the key stage.
- 102 Under very good leadership the department has made good progress since the previous inspection. GCSE results and the quality of teaching have improved. However, there is hardly any use of information technology. The departmental development plan is well structured and includes appropriate priorities to further improve standards, by for example, identifying training needs and reviewing schemes of work. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to monitor and review the curriculum, but only informal procedures are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory and enhanced with good quality displays. The department is well equipped with textbooks and a suitable range of other learning resources.

Information technology

- 103 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is average. Pupils use a variety of software packages competently and a good number do so independently. In Year 9, pupils make good use of spreadsheets for a variety of tasks such as investigating diets. They skillfully build formulae and change the contents of cells in spreadsheets to work out daily food intakes. In Year 8, they use control equipment confidently and are starting to appreciate the need to carefully sequence instructions to program model toys. By the end of the key stage, pupils satisfactorily use information technology to model events and simulate situations. However, some pupils struggle to maximise the use of word processing and desktop publishing software to style documents and to combine and represent information from a range of sources. Generally, pupils' knowledge of the social, ethical and moral effects of information technology lacks depth.
- 104 By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is poor. There is no coherent provision of information technology for pupils in Key Stage 4. National Curriculum requirements are not met and the schools plans to teach information technology through other subjects of the curriculum are not implemented. There are no arrangements to assess and record pupils' progress. Consequently, throughout Key Stage 4, pupils do not have the knowledge and skills to use information technology at the level expected for their age or to support learning in other subjects. There are no examination courses in information technology.
- 105 Most pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. They develop confidence using the equipment and many begin to investigate software applications independently. Their keyboard skills improve and some pupils use information technology to complete homework and assignments for other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3, often through working with other pupils and sharing responsibility for completing a task. However, in some lessons pupils do not make sufficient progress because teaching is unsatisfactory. In these lessons the teacher fails to check pupils' work and they spend too much time trying to correct mistakes without receiving sufficient help from the teacher.
- 106 The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 4 is poor. In a few subjects, including English, graphic products and religious education, pupils are beginning to use information technology. However, despite the school's intentions to teach the National Curriculum in information technology through other subjects and to establish a climate in the school where information technology is regarded as a resource to support teaching and learning in all subjects, there are only limited opportunities for pupils to use information technology and to build on their experiences in Key Stage 3.
- 107 In Key Stage, 3 pupils have good concentration in lessons and behave well. They listen carefully to instructions and use equipment responsibly. They work well with each other, for example, when they need to share keyboards and collaborate on a task. Pupils in Key Stage 4, respond well when they have opportunities to use information technology, but are disadvantaged because the curriculum does not enable them to consolidate and build on the knowledge and skills acquired in Key Stage 3. Pupils in both key stages are beginning to use the recently installed information technology facilities in the library to present their work in other subjects.

108 Teaching in information technology is unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 3, teaching is satisfactory in just under 30 per cent of lessons and good in just over 40 per cent. However, in nearly 30 per cent of lessons in Key Stage 3, teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. In the best lessons, pupils are engaged in well-designed practical activities using appropriate hardware and software. These lessons are conducted at a good pace; pupils are clear on what they have to do and are given good support so that they make progress. For example, in a lesson using spreadsheets, the teacher moved the class forward at a good pace, using a class discussion and a demonstration to establish new knowledge and skills, before setting relevant individual tasks. Teachers generally have a satisfactory understanding of the recently acquired new software, but lack experience of some of the advanced features. In the unsatisfactory lessons, there is poor management of practical activities; pupils are not given sufficient help to identify mistakes. In these lessons, there is ineffective use of time and pupils do not make enough progress. In some of these lessons, teachers fail to set appropriate homework.

109 The management of information technology is unsatisfactory. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements and procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are satisfactory. However, the curriculum in Key stage 4 is unsatisfactory and fails to meet statutory requirements. Arrangements for assessing and reporting pupils' progress in Key Stage 4 are unsatisfactory. There are no detailed plans that set out which aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study other subjects are expected to teach or how to record and assess pupils' progress. Since the previous inspection there has been a substantial investment in the resources for information technology, including a powerful network. There is now strong technical support, but the head of department has not determined the hardware and software needs of subject areas in relation to their expected use of information technology and their training requirements. Since the previous inspection, insufficient progress has been made in meeting statutory requirements and in the development of information technology across the curriculum.

178

178 **Modern Foreign Languages**

110 In 1998, GCSE results in French were well above the national average and in Spanish they were in line with the national average. GCSE results have improved considerably since the previous inspection and the results in both French and Spanish showed a further improvement in 1999. Generally, girls achieve better results than boys in both languages.

111 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. Understanding of the foreign language, used extensively in the classroom by the teachers, is good. Listening tests are used effectively to consolidate topic vocabulary. Pupils participate well in role-play situations and pair work to develop good oral skills. Pronunciation is generally good. In a Year 8 Spanish lesson pupils participated successfully in a role-play about their daily routine. Written work shows good knowledge of topic vocabulary, with exercises to develop grammatical points and tenses in both languages, leading to extended writing at appropriate levels.

- 112 Pupils' progress in Key Stage 3 is good. Past work is revised and consolidated by teachers at the beginning of every lesson, before new words or phrases are introduced. Gains in knowledge occur in every lesson, and pupils are speaking or hearing the new material by the end of the lesson. Much of the consolidation of vocabulary and phrases takes place in chorus work, which also helps pupils to improve their pronunciation. Beginners in a Year 7 Spanish lesson asked for and gave directions to places very confidently - good progress after just a few weeks. One middle attainment group of Year 8 pupils demonstrated a very good knowledge of the perfect tense and countries in a French lesson; by the end of the lesson they had extended these sentences to include means of transport, learnt during the lesson. Their written work was also very accurate and above average. Higher attaining pupils in a Year 9 Spanish lesson confidently reserved a table at a restaurant and ordered food in presentations. Effective lesson planning and teaching strategies help pupils to make good progress.
- 113 Pupils' attainment in French and Spanish near the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. Pupils have a good knowledge of topic vocabulary: this is well developed by teachers in speaking, listening and in writing at appropriate levels. Not all pupils are confident speakers, but higher attaining pupils in a Year 11 French lesson demonstrated a good knowledge of topic vocabulary and tenses in short telephone conversations, and they coped well with interruptions from the teacher. Higher attaining pupils in a Year 10 Spanish lesson developed their knowledge of parts of the body in oral pair work. Pupils at all levels are accustomed to hearing the foreign language in every lesson. Written work is used effectively to support role-play and oral presentations. Many pupils in Year 11 demonstrate a good knowledge of tenses as well as of topic vocabulary in their writing. Pupils are well prepared in lessons for their examinations.
- 114 Pupils' progress in Key Stage 4 in French and Spanish is satisfactory. The good progress from Key Stage 3 is consolidated. Pupils have the opportunity to develop confidence in speaking in pairs or in role-play situations in every lesson. Listening exercises in the language laboratory are particularly effective, since pupils are able to work at their own speed and hear the cassette as often as necessary. Dual linguists in Year 11 have made very good progress over a short time in writing. Teachers' tasks are appropriate and are designed to help pupils with their examinations and with their coursework.
- 115 The progress of pupils with special educational needs in both key stages is always satisfactory, and in many instances it is good, although not always in all four language skills: sometimes it is better than might be expected, as in written work in a Year 9 French class. Teaching groups for the lower attaining pupils are small in number and this contributes to their progress. Teachers know their pupils well and are aware of their individual targets. They give their pupils good support. Many of their teaching approaches engage the interest of their pupils and aid concentration. In a Year 9 French lesson, pupils learnt parts of the body and then took part in a brief role-play. In a Year 10 Spanish lesson, a full range of teaching strategies resulted in good gains in knowledge. In a Year 8 Spanish lesson, the change of activity resulted in renewed concentration.
- 116 Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are attentive and well behaved in all lessons. They are good listeners. They work together very well in groups and pairs, or independently. Pupils respond well to such activities as chorus work, games and presentations, which are sometimes recorded on video. Working with puppets evoked an enthusiastic response in a Year 7 class. Concentration in lessons is good. Written work is generally well presented, but pupils sometimes fail to complete corrections to their written work.

117 The quality of teaching is very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In 73 per cent of lessons in Key Stage 3 it is good or very good and in one lesson it is excellent. In Key Stage 4, teaching is good in 65 per cent of lessons. All teachers are qualified linguists, and they make very effective and extensive use of the foreign language in the classroom. Lessons are well planned and include a variety of activities and language skills. They provide many opportunities for pupils to speak and to hear the language. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged, and all pupils are well supported. Classroom management is sound. Assessment is used well for listening tests but not as well for oral work in lessons. The best lessons finish with a recapitulation and evaluation of lesson objectives. Teachers make good use of time and of resources. Relationships are good. Some of the lessons have lively and imaginative presentations involving music and mime, which pupils enjoy. Homework is set regularly and is well marked. Pupils receive good feedback and are aware of how to improve their work. However, not all teachers ensure that pupils complete corrections.

118 Improvements since the last inspection have been very good. Under the excellent leadership of the head of department, who is well supported by a committed team of teachers, GCSE examination results have improved considerably. The introduction of the short GCSE course for lower attaining pupils has been very successful and in 1999, all pupils entered achieved at least a pass grade. Schemes of work have been reviewed and rewritten. Procedures for assessment have been developed well, and are used appropriately for planning lessons and reviewing the curriculum. Examination and test results are carefully analysed; underachieving pupils identified and targets set for improvements. Visits abroad and very good classroom displays make a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Overall, the work of the department is satisfactorily monitored but does not include formal observation of teachers' lessons. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory. Resources are used efficiently and effectively.

187

Music

119 GCSE results in 1998 were above the national average. Since the previous inspection, with the exception of 1997, GCSE results have improved and have remained above the national average. The results in 1999 were similar to those in 1998. There are no significant differences in the results for boys and girls.

120 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. Most pupils perform, compose and appraise music with confidence and understand some of the more common musical forms, structures and historical periods. Overall attainment in singing is average, but more variable than other aspects of music. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of the elements of music such as pitch, pulse, timbre, texture, dynamics and use the knowledge creatively in their keyboard compositions. Pupils' listening skills are generally well developed. Instrumentalists are encouraged to bring their instruments to class music lessons and thereby contribute to the raising of standards and the raising of other pupils' musical aspirations.

121 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. Many pupils benefit from high quality instrumental and choral tuition and their involvement in the school's instrumental and choral groups. Pupils enter their GCSE examinations with thoroughly prepared instrumental or choral performances, which they have practised and rehearsed in class and at home. Their knowledge of musical styles and periods is good and they all have a thorough grounding in traditional notation and a well-developed musical vocabulary. Their knowledge of harmony and counterpoint is good because their class work is challenging and interesting.

Many of the pupils are creative and imaginative and use musical resources competently.

- 122 Most pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress due to the good teaching, which takes place in the co-operative and disciplined environment established in just over 70 per cent of lessons in this key stage. They progress at a good rate in their singing and improve the way they appraise their work. Some pupils make rapid progress in developing their keyboard skills because of their disciplined and creative attitudes. A significant minority of pupils however, do not make sufficient progress. This is mainly because of unsatisfactory teaching in nearly 30 per cent of lessons in Key Stage 3. This results in pupils being inattentive and poorly motivated. These pupils fail to develop their composing and listening skills and musical vocabulary satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach appropriate standards because they often have specially provided activities that develop their musical skills.
- 123 In Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress. Their knowledge of the theory of music is suitably extended and their knowledge and appreciation of composition and its form and structure increases greatly. Pupils' understanding of the works of many world famous composers and conductors are enhanced by focussed and critical listening. All the pupils participate in extra curricular musical activities, which contribute significantly to the good progress they make.
- 124 The attitudes of most pupils in Key Stage 3 are good, but a minority of pupils show little interest in music and are inattentive in lessons and occasionally behave poorly. This occurs in lessons which are poorly taught. In Key Stage 4, the attitudes of pupils are excellent. They come to music lessons well prepared with their instruments, manuscript books and notebooks. Pupils are highly motivated and very supportive of each other. Pupils taking GCSE music, work well on their prepared pieces by rehearsing together conscientiously and developing their techniques in order to gain maximum marks. Pupils in the school's choir and orchestra enthusiastically turn up for midday rehearsals and give the conductor their undivided attention.
- 125 The quality of teaching varies considerably from excellent to poor. The teaching in Key Stage 4 is very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and in 75 per cent of lessons it is very good and excellent. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. In just over 70 per cent of lessons, teaching is good and very good, and occasionally excellent, but in just under 30 per cent of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory and poor. Where teaching is good, pupils are fully involved for the whole of the lesson in exciting and stimulating activities, such as clapping, clicking and stamping routines, which successfully promote and explain various rhythmic patterns. In these lessons there is a good use of resources to motivate pupils. For example, in one lesson, the teacher introduced a video clip from *The Rite of Spring* by Igor Stravinsky, which enthralled pupils and prompted them to make interesting observations about colour, movement, rhythm and pulse. Good teaching is underpinned by well planned lessons that give pupils a good grounding and a variety of experiences in composition, the theory of music, musical styles and performance. Aural skills are well taught, especially in Key Stage 4, and developed within a broad range of listening exercises. In Key Stage 4, teachers give pupils many opportunities for independent rehearsal and private study and give pupils good individual support and guidance. Particularly good use of video and tape recordings of modern composers was made in one Year 11 GCSE lesson. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress and set targets so that all pupils aspire to the highest possible grades. Where teaching is poor, the purpose of the lesson is unclear, even at the planning stage. There is insufficient variety of musical activities, which results in pupils becoming restless, bored and occasionally poorly behaved. In these lessons the teacher often fails to control the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils and this sometimes affects the progress of other pupils. In a poor singing lesson pupils were taken through two songs in a manner that failed to capture the context or humour of the songs and was unsuccessful in exploring the importance of diction, phrasing and tone quality.

- 126 The leadership of the department is good. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. There is an increase in the number of pupils taking GCSE music and results have continued to improve. Detailed schemes of work are in place and National Curriculum requirements are now met in Key Stage 3. Arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress are satisfactory. The head of department works with other teachers to share good practice and teaches some lessons jointly. However, arrangements to formally monitor the quality of teaching are not sufficiently developed and the inconsistency in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 affects the progress of some pupils.
- 127 Music makes an outstanding contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The department contributes much to the assemblies and to the liturgical life of the school and provides high quality extra curricular music making opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities. Many of these are planned in partnership with very committed visiting specialist musicians. Annual school musical productions are of a high calibre. The 'A Cappella' choir sings a wide repertoire of choral music to a very high standard. The large symphonic orchestra plays to a high standard and is well managed, coached and conducted. Other groups such as the brass, wind and string groups provide pupils with high quality musical and social experiences.
- 128 Resources for music are satisfactory, but the major disadvantage which the staff and pupils have to overcome is the lack of space in the main music room. It is built to accommodate 20 pupils and often has to accommodate 30.

Physical education

- 129 In 1998, GCSE results were well above the national average. Since the previous inspection, the results have improved, especially those of boys. The overall results in 1999 were similar to those in the previous year. However, the recent trend of girls achieving better results than boys was reversed due to the sustained improvement by boys and a decline in the results by girls.
- 130 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is average. Pupils achieve above average standards in hockey, rugby and gymnastics. The standards attained in basketball and netball are average. Pupils have at least satisfactory sending and receiving skills in invasion games. They successfully apply these skills in small-sided games and demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the principles of attack and defence. In gymnastics planning is good. In pair and group work pupils draw on their movement repertoire to plan and perform original sequences. Their movements show good body shape and control.
- 131 Attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. Pupils repeat actions with good control and accuracy. The standards achieved in basketball are above average and in netball well above average. In both games they are competent and versatile in the tactics and have a good understanding of the rules of the games. In basketball levels of skill are good pupils pass and deliver with accuracy and have a good range of dribbling skills. In GCSE netball attainment is well above average. Many girls display advanced techniques of ball control and passing; they have good vision and awareness of tactics. Movement around the court is very good and pupils are able to sustain a high work rate and performance. They show good ability to analyse both the game and their personal performance.

- 132 Pupils throughout the school including those with special needs make good progress in relation to their prior learning. As they move through each key stage they consolidate their skills, apply previous knowledge to new situations and show a deeper understanding of the principles and tactics of various games. In Years 7 and 8 they acquire the basic skills of games and apply these in small group practices. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils show a greater variety of techniques and take part in more complex routines and games. In Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress. They display a wide range of skills, are more tactically aware and select an appropriate response in a given situation. Analysis and evaluation of team and individual performance is well developed.
- 133 All pupils display a very positive attitude to learning. They enjoy the subject and participate enthusiastically in all activities. They are very well behaved and this makes a significant contribution to a safe learning environment. They listen attentively, concentrate and co-operate in various sized groups. Pupils can be trusted to work away from the direct supervision of the teacher. They readily share equipment and are careful when carrying a variety of equipment and gymnastics apparatus. In Key Stage 4, pupils assume more responsibility for the quality of their own performances and many arrange their own practise routines. In both key stages, pupils show a good level of knowledge and understanding of the beneficial effects of exercise. In some lessons pupils can successfully apply this knowledge to plan and lead the group warm up routine. They are confident and able to give clear instructions. Participation rates and standard of kit is very good.
- 134 The quality of teaching is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In 43 per cent of lessons in Key Stage 3 teaching is good and in 83 per cent in Key Stage 4 it is good or very good. Teachers know their pupils well and the good relationships they establish make a significant contribution to the good discipline and co-operative atmosphere in lessons. All lessons are well planned and activities are structured so that safety is assured. In the best lessons, teachers make especially good use of questions to challenge pupils and to help them in planning their routines and evaluating their performance. Well-timed changes of activities keeps pupils interested and the time in lessons is used well. Good demonstrations of new techniques are a feature of the best lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and often helped by other pupils.
- 135 The departments for boys and girls physical education are well led by two experienced heads of department. Good progress has been made on the issues raised in the previous inspection report. The curriculum in both key stages now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and is well organised for both boys and girls. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is regular and systematic. Procedures for assessment are appropriately linked to the curriculum and schemes of work identify opportunities for self-assessment by pupils. There is good documentation for departmental procedures and lesson planning is suitably supported by good schemes of work, which have been revised since the previous inspection. Development planning is satisfactory and includes appropriate priorities and targets. The monitoring of teaching within the department is at early stage of development and has not been formalised.
- 136 Indoor accommodation is good. The sports hall has been tastefully renovated and is now a good facility. The playing fields, however, are poorly drained. The surfaces of the all-weather area and some hard-play areas are poorly maintained and the protective caps for the sockets for tennis netting posts are not in place.

205 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

205 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 137 A team of 13 inspectors carried out the inspection. During the inspection, 187 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. All full-time and part-time teachers in the school during the week of the inspection were seen teaching at least once. Planned discussions were held with many teachers, including senior managers, heads of department, support staff and non-teaching staff. Additionally, there were informal discussions with many teachers. In the course of lesson observations, inspectors looked at the written work of a large number of pupils and the work of a representative sample of pupils from Years 7 to 11 was formally inspected. Inspectors held discussions with these pupils about their work and other aspects of school life.
- 138 Inspectors visited assemblies, registration and form periods, and extra curricular activities. They visited St Helens College, which provides vocational courses for some pupils. A substantial amount of documentation provided by the school and the governing body was analysed before and during the inspection.
- 139 Prior to the inspection, the registered inspector met with the governing body. Parents of pupils in the school were consulted through a questionnaire, to which 682 responses were received. In the week before the inspection, the registered inspector held a meeting at which the 62 parents who attended were able to express their views about the school.

208 **DATA AND INDICATORS**

208 **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y11	1201	55	160	161

208 **Teachers and classes**

208 **Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	70.29
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	17.09

208 **Education support staff (Y7 – Y11)**

Total number of education support staff:	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	220.0

[Secondary schools]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	73.6
--	------

Average teaching group size:	KS2	N/a
	KS3	23
	KS4	21

Financial year:	1998
	£
Total Income	2,576,100
Total Expenditure	2,558,550
Expenditure per pupil	2,177.49
Balance brought forward from previous year	369,489
Balance carried forward to next year	413,039

Number of questionnaires sent out: 1000
 Number of questionnaires returned: 862

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	16	63	14	6	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	29	60	5	5	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	14	49	29	6	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	25	62	8	5	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	33	56	6	6	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	31	62	5	2	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27	59	10	4	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	25	61	7	5	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	27	59	10	3	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	30	56	10	4	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	33	55	7	4	1

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%
 Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies.