

INSPECTION REPORT

Pool Hayes Community School
Willenhall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique Reference Number: 104251

Headteacher: Mr J P Clarke

Reporting inspector: Dr K C Thomas

Dates of inspection: 8 - 12 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708498

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 School Inspections Act 1996, the appropriate authority must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. Every registered parent of a registered pupil at the school should receive a free copy of the summary of the report within ten working days of receipt of the summary by the appropriate authority. A charge not exceeding the cost of supply may be made by the appropriate authority for any other copies of the report and/or its summary provided to any person who asks for one.

The appropriate authority should make a copy of the report and the summary available for inspection by members of the public at such times and at such a place as may be reasonable

Any enquiries about this legislation should be addressed to the OFSTED Compliance Helpline

Tel. 0171421 6567

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Castle Drive Willenhall West Midlands WV2 4QZ
Telephone number:	01902 368147
Fax number:	01902 609501
Appropriate authority:	Walsall LEA
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Staffiere
Date of previous inspection:	27 February - 3 March 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Kenneth Thomas, RgI	Business education Vocational courses	Attainment and progress Leadership and management Efficiency Sixth form
John Edmond, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Curriculum and assessment
Ian Clelland	History Geography	
Bob Hartman	Mathematics Information technology	
Alan McMurray	English Drama	
Andrew Timmins	Music Equal opportunities	Resources
Peter Clifton	Science Special educational needs	
Richard Lockley	Physical education	Staffing Extra-curricular activities
Jacqueline Pentlow	Religious education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural
David Saunders	Modern foreign languages	Careers
John Richards	Design and technology	Accommodation
Peter Austin	Art	Teaching

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd
51 St Andrew's Road
Chesterton
Cambridge
CB4 1EQ

01223 578500

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

1-9

- Characteristics of the school
- Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

10-25

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

Quality of education provided

26-66

- 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

67-88

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

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science	89-117
Other subjects or courses	118-203

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence	204-205
Data and indicators	206-209

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Effective sixth form partnership provides a good range of post-16 courses.
- Very good range of extra-curricular activities and high participation rates by pupils and students.
- Very good links with the community.
- Good induction arrangements for both newly qualified and newly appointed teachers, and good support for student teachers.
- Good careers education and good procedures for support, guidance and welfare.
- Good plan for co-ordinating information technology across the curriculum and for raising the skill levels of teachers and standards of attainment of pupils.
- Relationships, attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Good range of opportunities for personal development.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Standards of attainment.
- Provision in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for pupils with special educational needs at Stages 1 to 4 on the Code of Practice.
- Use of assessment to inform curriculum planning.
- The management structure, procedures for the monitoring of teaching and curriculum development and the implementation of school policies and plans.
- The length of the teaching week and the length of lessons.
- Provision for information technology at Key Stage 4.
- Fixed term exclusions and attendance.
- Provision for spiritual development and collective worship

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well, but will form the basis for the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made a number of improvements since its previous inspection in February 1995 and has made satisfactory progress in addressing most of the key issues. Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, as do students in the sixth form. As a consequence, standards of attainment which are well below average both at entry and at the end of Key Stage 3 show an improvement by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Through an effective partnership with Sneyd School the school has developed a good range of post-16 courses and a cost-effective sixth form. All staff are able to contribute to development planning and financial planning is sound. The range of teaching and learning styles has been extended and the overall quality of teaching has improved. A full-time librarian has been appointed to manage the development of the library into a learning resources centre that is more fully integrated with teaching and learning. Management in the school has been strengthened by the appointment of several new faculty heads most of whom are providing good professional leadership in their subject areas. The school has produced a good plan for co-ordinating information technology across the curriculum, which is about to be implemented. A site manager has been appointed and a rolling programme to improve the maintenance of the buildings and classrooms has been started. A whole school approach to the development of speaking and listening skills has been introduced and special educational needs provision is being improved through the appointment of a full-time special educational needs co-ordinator who takes up post in January 2000. The school has the capacity for further improvement.

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
Key Stage 3	E	E	<i>well above average</i> <i>above average</i> <i>average</i> <i>below average</i> <i>well below average</i>
GCSE Examinations	D	D	A B C D E
A/AS levels	D	N/A	

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Satisfactory	English, art, modern foreign languages, physical education	Personal and social education.
Years 10-11	Good	Art, history, music and religious education	Personal and social education, geography.
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		

The overall quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of the 223 lessons observed. Teaching was good in 44 per cent of lessons and very good in a further 8 per cent of lessons. Six per cent of lessons at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and four per cent of lessons in the sixth form were judged to be unsatisfactory.

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	Behaviour is generally good. There is a clear code of conduct but the challenging behaviour of some pupils inevitably leads to fixed term exclusions. As a consequence fixed term exclusions are above average and rising. Permanent exclusions are low. Incidents of bullying are few and well managed by the school.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory despite the best efforts of the school. Attendance has improved this term to be just below the 1998 national average.
Ethos*	Satisfactory. Most pupils have positive attitudes to work. Relationships are good. There is mutual respect and co-operation. Most pupils try hard to do well.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides calm and considerate leadership but

management structures are too complex. There are too many tiers of management with overlapping areas of responsibility. Most faculty heads and other middle managers provide good professional leadership. The sixth form partnership well managed.

Curriculum	Satisfactory: generally broad and balanced at Key Stage 3 but weaknesses in provision of information technology at Key Stage 4. Teaching time is below the national recommendation. The length of lessons is too long for some subjects. Good range of courses in the sixth form.
Pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory for pupils with statements of special need but unsatisfactory for pupils at Stages 1-4 on the Code of Practice at Key Stages 3 and 4. Good in the sixth form.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Overall provision for moral and social development is good and satisfactory for cultural development. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory; generally sufficient well qualified staff but some shortcomings in religious education, design and technology and special educational needs. Satisfactory accommodation: improved since last inspection but there is a lack of display in corridors and communal areas. Learning resources are generally satisfactory to support the curriculum and the range of pupils' needs and abilities but limited resources to support sixth form study.
Value for money	Satisfactory. Below average income and costs per pupil; satisfactory progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form; very good extra-curricular activities; sound financial planning.

**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

- Pupils and students like school.
- The good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Parents find it easy to approach the school.
- The school works hard to raise standards.

What some parents are not happy about

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views of the school. The inspectors observed behaviour in lessons, in the dining and play areas at break-times and the school entrances at the start and end of the school day. The standards of behaviour observed on all of these occasions were good. There have been occasional incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour outside the school gates at the end of the school day. The origins of these incidents almost invariably lie outside the school. Prompt action is always taken by the school to ensure the safety of its pupils. The school operates an open door policy and parents are always welcome in the school to discuss matters of concern. All matters raised by parents are treated seriously by the school.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to raise standards achieved and the quality of education provided, the governors, senior management and staff of Pool Hayes Community School, with the help of the local authority should:

- review the school management structure to ensure that:
 - members of the senior management team have clearly defined responsibilities for ensuring that all school plans are implemented fully and effectively in all faculties;
 - there are shorter lines of communication between the senior management team and middle managers;
 - the responsibilities of all staff with management roles are sharply focused and do not overlap;
 - there is consistency in the monitoring of policy implementation and work within faculties by all faculty heads.

(paragraphs: 16, 39, 41-42, 44, 52-54, 67-70, 109, 134, 156, 158, 164)

●improve standards of attainment in all subjects by ensuring that:

- all faculties make more effective use of assessment data to develop coherent strategies for raising standards;
- there is a whole school strategy for raising the standards of attainment of boys and that it is implemented consistently in all faculties and monitored by both faculty heads and members of the senior management team;
- all staff fully recognise their responsibilities with regard to the raising of standards of literacy and that the whole school literacy policy is fully implemented in all faculties;
- the school develops and implements a whole school numeracy policy;
- the marking of work provides good feedback on the standards being achieved and what pupils must do in order to improve the quality of their work.

(paragraphs: 10, 12, 15-17, 29, 30, 32, 42-44, 47, 61, 70, 92, 109, 116, 132, 144-145, 158, 160, 164)

●raise pupils' attainment in information communications technology by ensuring that:

- all pupils receive their entitlement to information technology at Key Stage 4;
- there is effective planning for the teaching of information technology in all subjects;
- there is systematic assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress and that assessment is clearly linked to National Curriculum Level descriptions.

(paragraphs: 18, 36, 98, 110, 117, 118, 121, 126, 156)

●improve provision for pupils with special educational needs on Stages 1-4 of the Code of Practice by ensuring that:

- there is effective co-ordination of special needs provision;
- all teachers take account of the content of pupils' individual education plans in their lesson planning.

(paragraphs: 27, 39, 41, 46, 54, 61, 71, 75, 167,

●review the management and organisation of the curriculum to ensure that:

- the length of the teaching week meets national recommendations;
- the length of the teaching periods and structure of the teaching week is better suited to the needs of all subjects.

(paragraphs: 20, 31, 35, 41, 85, 99, 112, 116, 129-30, 135, 145, 162, 169, 174)

●continue to work with parents and other agencies to reduce the number of fixed term exclusions and to improve attendance.

(paragraphs: 21,24)

●ensure compliance with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

(paragraph:12, 24)

In addition, paragraphs 21, 23-24, 29, 33, 42, 49-51, 59, 73,75-76, 79-80, 87, 111, 115, 133-134, 143, 147, 153, 163, 176, 180) include weaknesses which have not formed the basis of 'Key Issues' identified above: the school should consider including these in the governor's post-inspection plan.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1.Pool Hayes Community School is a comprehensive school educating pupils between the ages of 11 and 18. There are 1063 pupils and sixth form students at the school with about the same number of boys and girls. The school has entered into an effective sixth form partnership with Sneyd School in order to increase the range of post-16 courses. Pool Hayes serves part of the community of Willenhall, an area in the Northwest of Walsall. There are three other comprehensive schools in Willenhall and Walsall retains two selective schools, which recruit from the area. The school draws most of its pupils from seven primary schools. The areas from which the majority of pupils are drawn are characterised by high degrees of social disadvantage. The percentage of adults with higher education is well below average and the percentage of children in high social class households is below average. The percentage of minority ethnic children is above average as is the percentage of children living in overcrowded households. Twenty-one per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This percentage is broadly in line with the national average. However, this is largely as a consequence of pupils being in families where both parents are working in comparatively low paid industries. The number of pupils on roll has risen since the time of the last inspection.

2.Standards of attainment on entry to the school are well below the national average. This is confirmed by the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and by Cognitive Ability Tests administered by the school. The percentage of pupils with special educational need is below average, although the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is above the national average. Thirty-nine pupils have statements of special educational needs and 14 are on Stages 3 and 4 of the Code of Practice. A further 86 pupils on Stages 1 and 2 require additional support. Students entering the sixth form are expected to have five or more A* - C grade GCSE examination passes. However, most students satisfy this requirement at the lower end of the grade range. Additionally a small number of students may be admitted to the sixth form with four A* - C passes. These factors affect the standards being attained at A level. The standards of attainment of students following GNVQ courses are generally in line with those in schools with similar intakes to these courses.

3.The school aims to be an 'increasingly achieving school that meets the needs and realises the potential of its pupils and prepared them for adult life'. In order to achieve this the school makes a commitment to: 'offering a wide range of opportunities; demonstrating a commitment to raising standards; establishing a caring and disciplined environment in which pupils are valued and supported; encouraging pupils to develop personal responsibility and consideration for others; and strengthen the partnership between staff, pupils, parents and the wider community'.

4.The school was last inspected in February 1995. The school's action plan and subsequent development plans include its response to all of the key issues identified in the report. Priority areas for development identified in the 1999/2002 development plan include:

- Teaching and learning;
- The learning environment;
- Assessment;
- Literacy;
- School review;
- Communications;
- Site;
- Information communications technology;

Key indicators

1. 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	108	101	209

5. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	42	54	47
	Girls	47	47	21
	Total	89	101	68
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	43	48	33
	National	63	62	55
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	4	23	11
	National	28	38	23

5. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	53	48	58
	Girls	57	47	40
	Total	110	95	98
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	53	46	47
	National	64	64	60
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	12	19	12
	National	31	37	28

.....

2

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

2. Attainment at Key Stage 4³

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	103	99	202

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	20	95	100
	Girls	36	92	99
	Total	56	187	199
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	28	93	99
	National	(44.4)	(89.6)	(95.1)

3.Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	9.1
	Absence	National comparative data	7.9
	Unauthorised	School	1.9
	Absence	National comparative data	1.1

7.

8. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	122
	Permanent	1

9. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	52
	Satisfactory or better	94
	Less than satisfactory	6

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

9. Attainment and progress

4. Standards of attainment of pupils entering the school are well below national averages. The 1999 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test scores in English, mathematics and science show that the percentages of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and above in the three subjects are well below national averages. Much smaller percentages of pupils attain Level 5 than Level 3 and as a consequence the average levels attained in English, mathematics and science are only just above Level 3. Standardised tests administered by the school, show that on entry to the school pupils have distinct weaknesses in reading and verbal reasoning. In 1999, 25 per cent of pupils entering the school had reading ages that were three years lower than their chronological ages. The attainment levels of girls on entry are slightly higher than those of boys.

5. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 was well below the national average and this is reflected in the National Curriculum tests between 1996 and 1998 for 14 year olds in English, mathematics and science. When the subjects are taken together, the performance of pupils in 1998 was below the national average for their age group by the equivalent of 0.49 levels. This level of performance was also well below in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Between 1996 and 1998 the performance of girls was consistently slightly higher than that of boys in English, while the performance of boys was slightly higher than that of girls in mathematics and science. In comparison to the 1998 results, the 1999 results show an increase in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in mathematics and science, but a decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in English.

6. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998 was below average both in comparison with all schools and in comparison with similar schools. GCSE results for 1998 show that 28 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A* - C grades compared with the national average of 45 per cent and 87 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A* - G grades compared to 90 per cent nationally. Based on results for the three years 1996 to 1998, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* - C grades was below the national average, as was the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* - G grades. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils obtained five or more A* - C grades in 1999. This percentage is broadly in line with the results obtained in previous years. Ninety-five per cent of pupils obtained five or more A* - G grades in 1999. This percentage is above both the 1998 figure and the 1998 national average. Girls are achieving higher standards than boys. Comparisons of boys' and girls' GCSE results, using average points scores show that over the three years 1996 to 1998, girls' results were consistently above those of boys. The trend continued in 1999 with a higher percentage of girls obtaining five or more A* - C grades than boys. Taking the overall figures for both boys and girls over the three years 1996 to 1998, the average points score showed no trend, whilst the national trend was rising.

7. Attainment in the sixth form in 1998 was below average. The average point score of candidates entered for two or more A levels, or AS equivalents in 1998 was 13.6 compared to the national average of 17.2. The average points score of candidates in 1999 was 12.3. The results achieved by students in some subjects, such as business education, art and sociology are comparable with national figures. Standards of attainment in terms of average points scores show an upward trend over the past four years. These scores have risen from 9.3 in 1995, which was the start of the partnership with Sneyd School to 12.3. Nevertheless, the average point score of candidates over this period was well below the national average.

8. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is well below national expectations in mathematics and below expectations in English, science and most other subjects. However, attainment in art is above expectations and in line with expectations in information technology, modern foreign languages, religious education and physical education. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is well below expectations in mathematics and below expectations in English, science and most other subjects. However, attainment in business education is above expectations and in line with expectations in art, religious education, modern foreign languages and physical education. Attainment in the sixth form is in line with expectations in English, science, art, history, modern foreign languages, music, religious education, business education, physical education and GNVQ courses and below expectations in other subjects.

9. Standards of literacy on entry to the school are poor. For several years, approximately two pupils in three (68 per cent in 1999) entering the school at age 11 have had reading ages more than a year lower than their chronological ages, and one in three have reading ages more than two years lower. There is no present sign of this pattern improving. Also, for approximately 13 per cent of pupils, English is their second language. Consequently there are many pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 3 who experience difficulty in handling the techniques of spelling and syntax with any confidence, and only a relative few can produce sustained narrative writing. Standards improve as pupils progress through Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, so that by the end of Key Stage 4, good examples are seen of sustained writing, whether narrative, discursive or poetry and many students write with some maturity. However, overall standards of literacy remain weak throughout the school and have an adverse effect on standards of attainment. These weaknesses are more apparent in written work rather than in oral skills. Many pupils speak fluently and with a level of confidence that is consistent with expectations for their ages. The oral skills displayed in drama lessons are good and in both English and drama lessons pupils of all abilities and in all year groups, listen and talk well to each other in group and paired work.
10. The school has taken a number of initiatives to raise standards of literacy. When pupils join the school in Year 7, those with the greatest need of literacy support are placed in a target intervention group. The composition of the group is determined by Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results, reading tests and by information from primary schools. Other initiatives include a summer literacy school, book based projects such as a 'readathon' and support for the development of Year 7 pupils' reading skills by students from Year 12. However, the importance of developing literacy skills is not fully recognised as a priority in all subjects and there is a need to strengthen the literacy links with primary schools. The school has taken action to address this issue with the appointment of a literacy co-ordinator at the beginning of the current school year to work in conjunction with the head of English and senior staff with curricular responsibilities to develop a whole school literacy strategy.
11. Although standards of numeracy are below average there is little evidence that a lack of numeracy skills hinders pupils progress. The recall of multiplication facts is weak and mental arithmetic skills are not used in most lessons. However, there are examples of the use of numerical skills in some lessons. For example, in history at Key Stage 3, pupils were able to evaluate the effectiveness of various siege weapons using models and taking measurements. In religious education pupils successfully used time lines and were able to calculate the expense of a wedding. Pupils successfully used the mathematical names for various shapes and solids in design and technology and were able to recognise the different elevations of solids. In science, sixth form students were able to make effective use of calculators and to handle formulas with confidence. However, there is no whole school numeracy plan, which would help to make teachers of subjects, other than mathematics, aware of ways in which pupils' numerical skills can be reinforced and extended. In science, for example, there is no consistent approach to graph drawing and little evidence of the use of mental strategies to estimate answers.
12. Pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, but below at Key Stage 4. The standards of attainment of pupils and students following GCSE information studies and GNVQ courses at Key Stage 4 are in line with national expectations. Very little use is made of information technology within subjects across the curriculum at Key Stage 4. As a consequence pupils are provided with few opportunities to use and develop the skills acquired in Key Stage 3. In design and technology, for example, the use of information technology does not feature in schemes of work and the provision of both hardware and software is inadequate. This is also the case in other subjects, including history, geography, music and modern foreign languages. In English some pupils word process work for their folders and pupils are encouraged to use information technology, particularly to improve the presentation of coursework. However, the information technology skills used by pupils to produce work on computers in Key Stage 4 are not assessed. As a consequence, it is not possible for the school to state with accuracy the either the overall standards of attainment of all pupils or the progress they are making in information technology in Key Stage 4.
13. The overall progress of pupils and students, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory at all key stages. This is confirmed by inspection evidence and by value added analyses carried out by the school which indicate that attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is generally consistent with that predicted for the cohort from standards on entry, results in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests and the GCSE examination. Pupils make satisfactory progress as a consequence of mainly

well planned lessons with clear objectives and the effective use of homework to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress in art, information technology and physical education, and satisfactory progress in all other subjects. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress in art and business education and satisfactory progress in other subjects. In the sixth form, students make good progress in art and satisfactory progress in other subjects.

19.

19. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

14. The attitudes to learning of the majority of pupils are good. In English, pupils listen attentively, focus well on their tasks and provide one another with effective support when engaged in group activities. The positive attitudes of pupils also have a marked effect on attainment and progress in art. Good relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils enhance the learning process in religious education. Most pupils display positive attitudes to learning a foreign language and derive enjoyment from practising the language in lessons. However, a small number of Year 11 pupils, who are following the short modern languages course, display a certain amount of disaffection and are easily distracted. In mathematics, pupils demonstrate that when given the opportunity they are able to work independently, but opportunities to take responsibility are limited in most subjects. Most pupils show good levels of concentration in class and work well together. Many pupils demonstrate a clear desire to improve their work and take a pride in the finished product. Pupils with special educational needs work with a sense of purpose in lessons. However, lower attaining pupils in history, geography and modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3, have difficulty in maintaining concentration for the whole of the 70-minute period. Attitudes to learning in the sixth form are good and students show an appropriate level of commitment, concentration and interest. This has a positive effect on the progress that students make in Year 12 and Year 13.

15. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is generally good. As a consequence the school offers an orderly environment for learning. Most pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. There is little disruption to lessons and when given the opportunity pupils are able to work in pairs or small groups in a sensible manner. This has a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils are generally trustworthy. They show respect for the school grounds, buildings and furniture, and there are few signs of vandalism. Behaviour at lunchtimes and during breaks is good. In the dining room they are well mannered and show satisfactory social skills. However, many pupils tend to drop litter heedlessly and on one evening during the week of the inspection, inconsiderate Year 12 students left their refreshment area in an unacceptable state. Most pupils behave sensibly when arriving at and leaving school. Under the close supervision of teachers they walk quietly and purposefully between lessons. This is particularly important in view of the congestion that occurs on some narrow staircases at lesson changeover times when it is not always possible for teachers to be in close attendance. There have been few incidents of bullying. The school takes a serious view of any such incidents. Pupils interviewed during the week of inspection were confident that these incidents are dealt with effectively by the school. The school has a clear code of conduct with an escalating scale of sanctions, which leads eventually to exclusion from the school. The school works very hard to support pupils who find self-discipline difficult. However, the challenging behaviour of some pupils inevitably leads to the use of the sanction of the fixed term exclusion. As a consequence during the last school year there were 122 fixed term and one permanent exclusions. The overall quality of behaviour has improved since the time of the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. The number of temporary exclusions was then reported to be above average and this continues to be the case. However, the school has managed to reduce the number of permanent exclusions with only one pupil being permanently excluded during the last school year.

16. Relationships within the school are good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. The majority of pupils are friendly and generally respectful towards one another and to the adults around them. This contributes to the creation of a positive learning environment. Pupils find staff approachable and can share their ideas with confidence. When required to do so pupils work well together and share materials and equipment sensibly.

17. The personal development of pupils is good and pupils respond positively to the many opportunities that they are offered outside lessons to exercise personal responsibility and show initiative as they progress through the school. The prefect system allows Year 11 pupils to take on extra responsibilities, such as corridor duties

between lessons and these responsibilities are taken seriously. Pupils can give of themselves in community service, such as helping senior citizens and younger pupils. They can take part in dramatic performances and help run extra-curricular clubs. Volunteers for such duties as assisting in the learning resources centre, with information communication technology, or with litter picking are welcomed. Taking part in the many Community Association activities helps pupils to develop qualities of leadership and self-reliance. Sixth form students are provided with a wide range of activities including residential courses, community service, assisting in local primary schools and assisting weak readers in the lower part of the school, all of which help to promote their personal development. The majority of these activities are, however, organised by teachers and students are provided with too few opportunities to organise themselves. There is for example, no sixth form society and the head boy and head girl are appointed by the staff and have few responsibilities.

23. Attendance

18.The attendance of pupils is unsatisfactory as it falls below the national average. The school makes considerable effort to raise attendance levels and has good procedures to follow up any unexplained absences. However, the overall attendance rate is just below that noted in the previous inspection report. The efforts of the school to improve attendance are frustrated by the poor attendance of a small group of pupils. Their poor attendance has an adverse effect on the attainment and progress of all pupils as teachers have to spend time going over the work covered when they return to school.

19.Registers are taken regularly by form tutors at the start of sessions and by class teachers at the start of lessons. Teachers challenge any lateness and as a consequence, pupils are punctual both at the start of the day and when returning from breaks and lessons start on time.

25.

25. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

1.The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of the 223 lessons observed. Teaching was good in 44 per cent of lessons and very good in a further 8 per cent of lessons. Six per cent of lessons at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and 4 per cent of lessons in the sixth form were judged to be unsatisfactory. In satisfactory lessons, teaching promoted sound learning and in good and very good lessons it had a marked affect on the progress that pupils and students are making. Teaching is mostly good in English, art, modern foreign languages and physical education at Key Stage 3; and in English, religious education, art, business education and physical education at Key Stage 4. Teaching in the sixth form is mostly good in English, mathematics, art, physical education and business education. A few examples of very good teaching were observed in personal and social education, mathematics, art, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3; and in personal and social education, art, history and religious education at Key Stage 4. Some examples of very good teaching were also observed in art, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages and business education in the sixth form. Taken overall, however, there are few examples of very good teaching. Students in Year 12 and Year 13, make most progress when teaching is of a style that encourages independence in students' learning. Inspection evidence indicates that many students prefer to be passive recipients in lessons and this is often mirrored in preferred teaching styles, which tend to encourage over-dependence on the part of students. A small number of lessons are judged to be unsatisfactory in personal and social education, English, mathematics, science and music at Key Stage 3; in personal and social education, geography and modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4; and in history and geography in the sixth form and contribute to unsatisfactory progress in those lessons. More unsatisfactory teaching was seen in personal and social education in Key Stage 3, and in personal and social education and geography at Key Stage 4, than in other subjects. As a consequence teaching is judged to be less effective in these subjects at these key stages.

1.The quality of teaching of pupils with statements of special educational needs is satisfactory. There is an increased awareness of special needs issues since the previous inspection and the school has developed a whole school

policy and liaison with the learning support faculty is satisfactory. However, the process for the development of pupils' individual education plans is not fully understood by all teachers and as a consequence insufficient use is made of them in lesson planning in a some faculties.

2. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Specialist teaching with good subject knowledge in the sixth form for example makes a significant contribution to students' progress and standards of attainment. Teachers make satisfactory use of their subject knowledge in their lesson planning. However, there is only one specialist teacher of religious education and the lack of depth of knowledge of the non-specialist teachers leads to the use of a restricted range of teaching strategies.
3. Lesson planning at Key Stage 3 pays close attention to the requirements of the National Curriculum to ensure continuity and progression in learning. Lesson planning at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is closely linked to examination syllabuses. Where lesson planning is most effective, teachers make the lesson objectives clear, take account of the different needs of pupils and incorporate varied and stimulating methods of teaching in their lessons. For example, in English, effective use is made of role-play to enable pupils to discover more about characters in books. A feature of well-planned lessons in art is regular reviews of progress as lessons proceed and, when necessary, learning objectives are revised in the light of these reviews. In English, mathematics, religious education and physical education lessons are planned to ensure a high level of pupil involvement through the effective use of questioning and class discussion. There are, however, weaknesses in lesson planning in science at Key Stage 3 where insufficient use is made of prior assessment information in lesson planning.
4. In most lessons teachers have appropriate expectations of the pupils and use a variety of methods to ensure that concentration and interest are maintained. In art and physical education in all key stages, and in business education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, teachers have high expectations, which challenge and stimulate the pupils and help them to make faster progress. This is a feature of art lessons where teachers keep up the pace of the lesson and where tasks are set which place high levels of demand on pupils' ability to organise and manipulate materials. However, this is not the case in all subjects and there is considerable scope to increase the level of challenge offered to higher attaining pupils. Clear presentations and objectives with well-sequenced activities make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make. However, the criteria necessary to obtain higher grades are not always clearly communicated to pupils in design and technology. In history, learning objectives are not always linked to learning outcomes in lessons. Unclear learning objectives and an over-reliance on textbooks are associated with unsatisfactory teaching in geography.
5. Classroom management is generally satisfactory and in the majority of lessons pupils respond well to their teachers, and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Appropriate standards of discipline are maintained in order for learning to take place. Teachers diligently observe the start and finishing times of lessons. Lesson time is used effectively in most practical subjects. However, the 70-minute length of lessons is too long for the most effective use to be made of all of the available time in some other subjects. The use of time is particularly effective in drama where a varied pace is maintained in lessons. Effective use is made of visual resources in art and in religious education, where the use of video provides pupils with opportunities to reflect and to discuss spiritual and moral issues. The teacher, for example, sensitively developed the reactions of pupils to a film of the holocaust in religious education, so that a well-informed discussion of spiritual and moral issues took place. In the few lessons where the response of pupils is unsatisfactory the level of challenge is often too low and lesson tasks are unsuited to the learning needs of all pupils.
6. Many teachers mark work regularly and give pupils useful indications of how they can improve their work but this is not consistent across the curriculum. In English, for example, marking is regular, thorough and always provides constructive comments. There are also examples of marking that gives pupils good feedback on what they must do to improve the quality of their work in information and communication technology, business education, mathematics and science. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking in many subjects. The effectiveness of marking and the extent to which it is used to inform pupils of their progress vary both between and within departments, and there is insufficient monitoring by heads of department to ensure that this is done.
7. Homework tasks contain an appropriate range of activities to consolidate and extend classroom learning. However, an insufficient supply of books for pupils to take home interferes with the use of homework to consolidate and extend learning in modern foreign languages. The lack of a homework timetable for sixth form students

can mean that they are at times overloaded as a consequence of a lack of communication between teachers in the sixth form partnership over the setting of homework.

8. The school has made some progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection report. Nevertheless, there is considerable room for further improvement in all key stages. The senior management team has begun to engage in the process of faculty review in order to measure progress in the improvement of teaching.

34. **The curriculum and assessment**

Curriculum

1. The curriculum provision in the school is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements in most subjects. The school offers a generally broad and balanced curriculum at all key stages, which meets the needs of most pupils. The teaching time of 24 hours 35 minutes is below the DfEE recommendation but is generally used effectively. There is a comprehensive homework policy, which places appropriate emphasis on homework as part of the curriculum. The time allowed for registration and tutorial work is part of provision for personal, social and health education, which takes place on three mornings per week. A 'thought for the day' is included in the tutor period. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 includes all National Curriculum subjects together with personal, social and health education. Teaching groups are of mixed ability in Year 7, after which pupils are taught in half year blocks which allow departments the discretion to determine how teaching groups should be constructed in their own subjects. Modern foreign languages include both French and German, which are taught as the first language in alternate year groups. Information and communication technology is taught as a separate subject. The arrangement for teaching, apart from personal, social and health education, is divided into twenty 70-minute double period blocks. Practical subjects use this lesson time effectively. However, the effect of the arrangement is that some subjects, for example humanities subjects, have only one period allocated per week and so pupils have only one lesson in these subjects in a week. This restricted amount of contact interferes with pupils' progress, as the interval between lessons is too large. Also, the 70-minute length of lessons can lead to a loss of pace with some pupils, particularly lower attaining pupils, finding it difficult to sustain concentration for the whole of the lesson.

1. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is also broadly based. In addition to the core provision of English, mathematics, double science, a modern foreign language, physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education, it provides three option blocks for humanities, expressive arts and technology. This provides a broad and balanced curriculum but does not meet statutory requirements in religious education and information and communication technology. In Year 10 a special vocational programme, 'Club 2000', is being piloted for pupils for whom the full Key Stage 4 programme is considered inappropriate and for whom the National Curriculum has been disapplied. This programme is working effectively and there are signs that it can reduce pupils' disaffection with school. As a consequence of the timetable structure the time for English and mathematics involves the sharing of a period in Years 10 and 11. This is not appropriate for either subject.

2. Curricular provision in the sixth form is good. The school in partnership with a neighbouring school is able to offer an appropriate range of 21 advanced level subjects together with 5 intermediate GNVQ's, supported by a core studies programme. This programme includes such things as careers education, religious education, community service, Duke of Edinburgh Award, young enterprise and a range of recreational activities. Take up of courses is generally good and the response of students is positive.

3. There are good links with the primary schools and a shared commitment to ensuring curriculum continuity between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. The curriculum is planned effectively in most subjects to ensure continuity and progression and there is comprehensive support and guidance at the points of transition between the key stages. Schemes of work provide appropriate information for the delivering of the National Curriculum and examination syllabuses supported by departmental handbooks.

4. Curriculum provision for personal social and health education is good. The programme includes sex education, drugs awareness and health education and meets statutory requirements. It is taught by form tutors during three periods each week. There is an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities that enrich the

experience of pupils, who participate in the activities in large numbers. These activities include music, drama, theatre visits and extensive opportunities to travel abroad as well as a full programme of sporting activities. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and the requirements of the Code of Practice are met. However, links between the learning support faculty and other faculties vary in their effectiveness. Although individual education plans are provided they are inadequately monitored either by the learning support department or by faculty heads. Little obvious use is made of them in a number of subjects including history and geography.

5. Preparation for further study or employment is good. There are good links with the careers officer. Careers units are included in personal, social and health education in Years 9, Year 10 and Year 11, and sixth form students are supported within the general programme. All pupils have a week of work experience at the beginning of Year 11 which pupils find valuable.

6. The school has made some progress in addressing the curriculum issues raised at the time of the last inspection. Sixth form provision has been improved and the school now provides an appropriate range of sixth form courses. The timetable has been reviewed and the time allocations to mathematics and English have been increased. A whole school policy for special educational needs has been developed and strategies to improve the speaking and listening skills in all subjects have been implemented. However, the teaching time remains below the national recommendation; the timetable structure has weaknesses with regard to the length of teaching periods and the teaching arrangements for mathematics and English. The special educational needs policy is not being implemented consistently in all faculties.

41. Assessment

42. Assessment procedures and the arrangements for the monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory in all key stages. There is a clear whole school assessment policy that sets out guidelines for marking and the use of subject portfolios focused upon National Curriculum levels. However, the policy is not being fully implemented in all departments and there is considerable disparity in practice. The school uses a range of measures such as cognitive ability tests, end of key stage assessments and GCSE results to monitor pupils' progress and to set targets. The system works well in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. However, the effectiveness of the system in the sixth form is adversely affected by a lack of reliability in the predictive assessments made by teachers during Years 12 and 13. The margin of error in the assessments is such that they are of little value in guiding both mentors and students.

7. The school makes some use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning. The use of the certificate of achievement, the piloting of 'Project 2000' and the deleting of the short course in modern foreign languages are examples of this. Unfortunately, however, the removal of the short course in modern languages also resulted in the removal of the short course in religious education with which it is linked, even though pupils were achieving good standards in religious education. At an individual pupil level, the Year 11 mentoring programme is effectively based upon assessment information. However, the school has yet to adopt a strategy to address the issue of differences in performance between boys and girls, which are clearly shown in the assessment data.

8. The school is developing a good system for the collection of assessment information and is making satisfactory progress in the use of value added analysis. Information regarding performance is circulated to departments but there is considerable variation in the use to which it is put. Reports include space for individual pupils to comment upon their progress but there is a widespread lack of understanding by pupils regarding the assessment process. The relationship of assessment to National Curriculum subject levels is not widely understood by pupils and this is compounded when marking does not focus sufficiently on improvement. There is a wide disparity in the quality of marking which is too often focused upon presentation rather than attainment.

9. The school has extended the use of records of achievement to all key stages. These are valued by pupils and kept up to date during tutor periods. They become a very useful summative record of achievement when pupils eventually leave the school. The work experience element of the record is skills based and provides a useful overview of pupils' skills in a working context.

10. The procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. End of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test data, together with the results of cognitive abilities tests administered by the school in Year 7, are used to identify pupils with special educational needs who might require additional support. Individual education plans are prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice and used effectively in Year 7. However, their use by subject teachers in Years 8 to 11 tends to be inconsistent. All annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational need are properly documented.

11. Since the time of the last inspection the school has made satisfactory progress on most of the assessment issues raised which are generally ongoing. It has made good progress in the analysis of data and developed the mid-year review into reports to parents each term. The use of the record of achievement has been extended and greater use is made of pupil self-assessment. However, inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work remain.

47. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

12. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Assemblies are provided for different year groups on several days, some of these assemblies offer a spiritual experience to the pupils whilst others lack a spiritual dimension. This year a 'thought for the day' has been introduced which is intended to be included in tutor group work on days when the year group does not have an assembly. The use of the 'thought for the day' in tutor groups is, however, inconsistent. In some tutor groups teachers use the thought for the day in a sensitive way that leads to a period of reflection and the sharing of personal experiences. However, in some tutor groups the passage may not be used and in others it may simply be read out as a ritual with little or no time allowed for discussion and reflection. This is unsatisfactory and the programme is currently being reviewed by the school. No curriculum audit has been undertaken to ascertain the contribution made by different subjects to the spiritual development of the pupils. Some subjects do, however, make a positive contribution. In religious education lessons, for example, pupils are able to consider values and beliefs, and opportunities are provided for pupils to consider the nature of the world around them. In English, Year 11 pupils were observed to write their own poetry based on the theme of different aspects of love and the empathy shown whilst undertaking this made the lesson a moving spiritual experience for the pupils present. In art, consideration is given to the feelings of the artists in composing their work. The previous inspection report stated that the spiritual development of the pupils was weak and although there has been some improvement it is still unsatisfactory. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

1. Provision for the moral development of pupils is good. Pupils are expected to behave well, care for others and have a clear sense of right and wrong. The school aims include this aspect and the school has effective procedures to help pupils in their decision making. Moral issues are included in the personal, social and health education programme, in assemblies and the day-to-day work in classrooms. Although there is an unacceptable amount of litter in the playground and refreshment areas after breaks, the school makes strenuous efforts to make pupils aware of the need to take care of the environment and to respect each other and property. For example, pupil volunteers collect litter in the playgrounds at the end of breaks. Moral aspects of topics such as drug and alcohol abuse are included in the personal, social and health education programme, as are the effects of various forms of prejudice including sexism, disability and racism. In religious education the moral issues surrounding decision-making are included in many topics such as war, aggression, abortion and personal relationships. The conflicting interests of different groups of people and the moral issues surrounding such topics as the growth of tourism in countries such as Kenya are considered in geography. The school is a caring community where staff and other adults within the school provide good role models for the pupils. The majority of parents believe that the values and attitudes promoted by the school have a positive effect on their children.

1. Provision for the pupils' social development is good. There are many opportunities within lessons when teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively, in pairs and in small groups and these involve a range of activities. A wide range of extra-curricular activities provides very good opportunities for pupils to mix with others of different ages. Citizenship is included at various times in the personal and social development programme and opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility as librarians and prefects. Other opportunities for social development include Year 7 pupils visiting local primary schools to talk to Year 6 pupils to explain their experience of the transition from primary to secondary school. In Year 10 pupils undertake various forms of community service including such things as helping in local old people's homes and in helping to maintain a local park and Year 11 pupils have the opportunity of acting as school prefects. The social development of sixth form students is enhanced by the numerous opportunities that are

provided for them to engage in activities such as supporting the learning of younger pupils, various forms of community service and residential experiences. The very fact that the sixth form is in partnership with another school provides opportunities for social development, as students have to develop new relationships with students and teachers from the other school. However, most of the opportunities for social development offered to sixth form students are organised by staff. They are provided with insufficient opportunities to organise activities for themselves.

2.Provision for the cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils and students are provided with a number of opportunities to appreciate their own culture and that of others. Music from a variety of cultures is studied and history provides good coverage of the development of British culture through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A number of overseas trips are arranged to both France and Germany. In religious education pupils study world faiths and consider the cultural significance of such things as weddings, festivals and other celebrations, and different aspects of family life. Cultural issues arise through the texts used in English and in art, assignments are planned to take account of the different ethnic groups represented in the school. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, there is a lack of display work in corridors and public areas celebrating the work of pupils and the different cultures represented in the school and the local community.

51. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

3.The school is effective in its support and guidance to pupils and in providing for their welfare. This makes a positive contribution to educational standards and helps pupils to feel secure. The school has a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Form tutors know their pupils well and positive relationships between staff and pupils throughout the school result in pupils feeling confident that there is someone to whom they can take their problems. The work of form tutors is supported by heads and assistant heads of key stage rather than by heads of year. This system places a heavy reliance on the effectiveness of the form tutor as it can take an unduly long time for heads of key stage to get to know all of the several hundred pupils in the key stage for which they are responsible. Nevertheless pupils confidently turn to all staff for help. Parents appreciate the school's close liaison with the primary schools and the effective arrangements for introducing new pupils in Year 7. The arrangements for transfer to university, college or training for employment ensure that pupils move on to the next stage of education or training with confidence.

4.Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development are good. Form tutors retain pastoral care of their charges for at least three years, sometimes five, which ensures continuity. The head of Key Stage 3 has responsibility for ensuring the transfer of documentation from primary schools, but responsibility for primary school liaison rests with the member of staff responsible for marketing. This arrangement is not supportive of curriculum continuity at the time of transfer and is currently being reviewed. Staff keep a detailed track of pupils' progress and pupils are well supported in their learning and personal development. Pupils also have the opportunity to keep track of their own personal development through the individual year record books or the National Record of Achievement.

5.The school effectively supports pupils with special educational needs in Year 7 to meet the targets set in individual education plans and statements of special educational need. Although support for pupils with statements of special needs remains satisfactory in later years, the use of the individual education plans is too inconsistent in Years 8 to 11 for them to be really effective. The school recognises this deficiency and in order to improve special educational need provision has appointed a full-time special educational needs co-ordinator to take up post at the start of the year 2000 spring term. The school has also provided training to parents of pupils with special educational needs to help them support their children's reading.

6.Both work experience and careers education contribute substantially to pupils' personal development and awareness of the world around them. The school co-operates actively with parents in helping prepare pupils for examinations. Pupils benefit considerably from a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, and many take them up enthusiastically. Pupils are encouraged to give of themselves by collecting for charity and working with senior citizens, also students in the sixth form have a community service option.

- 7.Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behavior are effective. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour and promote an orderly and cheerful atmosphere throughout the school. Bullying is rare and both pupils interviewed during the week of inspection and most parents are satisfied that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with rapidly and effectively. The child protection arrangements are good and conform to legislation.
- 8.Although attendance is below the required 90 per cent minimum, the school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and in ensuring a high level of pupil punctuality are good. The school is doing all that it reasonably can to reduce unauthorised absence. The school works hard with the education welfare service to promote good attendance.
- 9.Provision for medical care and first aid is good. The school liaises effectively with outside agencies in supporting pupils with special educational needs or health worries.
- 10.The school complies with legal requirements with regard to health and safety procedures and has a rolling programme for improving the security of the premises and so the safety of pupils and staff. The school has been advised of some minor health and safety matters. However, a matter of concern is the fact that the main entrance to the school is very narrow and both pupils and vehicles have to funnel through it at the start and end of the school day. Although staff diligently supervise pupils entering and leaving the school at these times, the problem is compounded by the main gate remaining open for the 10-15 minutes when most pupils are leaving the site and some parents waiting to collect pupils park on the pavement inside the school gate.

59. Partnership with parents and the community

- 11.The school has established a good partnership with parents and the community. This is reflected in the encouraging and welcoming tone of the school's policies and documentation and in the documentation of the Community Association, which is based at the school. Most parents find it easy to approach the school with problems or questions relating to their children. There are good arrangements for them to visit prior to their children's entry into Year 7. The information to parents about the school is mostly of a high standard. The governors' annual report to parents is excellent and fully meets statutory requirements. A readable, but rather short, newsletter is published every term. Letters about specific school events and requirements keep parents up-to-date as necessary.
- 12.There are regular parents' meetings, and the school encourages informal contact from parents at any time. It also holds well-attended meetings for parents when option choices have to be made and to advise on ways to help their children with GCSE coursework and examination preparation. The annual written reports meet statutory requirements. However, they contain insufficient information on the progress pupils are making in terms of what they know, understand and can do. The targets reported are not tied closely enough to National Curriculum levels. The school has devised a good system of interim reports, which identify strengths and weaknesses at an early point in the academic year. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational need are fully involved in the annual reviews of their children's progress. However, there is an over-reliance on informal contact with parents whose children are on Stages 1 to 4 of the Code of Practice.
- 13.The overall involvement of parents in their children's learning is satisfactory. The prospectus sets out the school's approach to homework. Parents are kept well informed of their children's homework and day-to-day progress through the link book, and are encouraged to use it to maintain a dialogue with the school. Tutors check assiduously to ensure that parents sign it. Parents feel welcome in school and the school encourages them to play an active part in its life. Parents are invited to a range of musical and dramatic productions, sporting events and other activities. However, there has been no formal parent - teacher association for the last two years.
- 14.The enrichment of the curriculum through links provided by the Community Association is very good. The school offers a wide range of out-of-school activities for both children and adults. Adult education courses are held

at the school and many outside organisations, such as the playgroup and 'Stroke Club', benefit from the use of the school facilities. The school has developed an active marketing policy to promote its image externally. Visitors make a useful contribution to pupils' attainment and to their understanding of the world. The school provides a very comprehensive range of educational, cultural and social outings, both locally and further afield. The provisions made for careers education and work experience are good and pupils consider work experience to be beneficial. There are good links with local universities and student teachers are welcomed and provided with good support.

15. The school encourages the spirit of giving. In Year 10, many pupils undertake community service, which includes such things as working with senior citizens. In Year 12 many students have a further chance of engaging in community service on a regular basis on Wednesday afternoons.
16. Links with the other schools in the locality are close and effective. In particular the school has entered into an effective sixth form partnership with Sneyd School. The partnership is mutually beneficial and widens the range of opportunities for all students. Primary school pupils benefit from an early induction visit and from strong pastoral contacts. The Pool Hayes cluster group has been revived this year and is now actively working to improve curriculum, pastoral and training links between schools.
17. The last inspection report indicated that links with parents and the community were strong. The school has continued to build on its earlier achievement. The generally positive responses to the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting indicate that parents are appreciative of the school's efforts to involve parents and to strengthen links with the community.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

18. The overall management of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher provides calm and considerate leadership and is well supported by the senior management team, which is made up of the two deputy heads and two senior teachers. The headteacher has a view of the school as a continually improving centre for learning within the community as a whole. Both governors and staff share this view. However, the management structures are too complex to enable this view to drive the formulation and implementation of development plans. Since the time of the last inspection the number of deputy heads has been reduced from three to two and the size of the senior management team reduced from eight to five. In this process roles and responsibilities have been reallocated with a view to facilitating a wider involvement of staff in the decision making process. This has had some beneficial effects. For example, the school has made a purposeful move towards the establishment of effective monitoring procedures and the widening of responsibilities for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning through the introduction of faculty reviews, which involve both members of the senior management team and heads of faculty. However, amongst the unintended outcomes of the increased sharing of responsibilities has been the creation of additional tiers of management with overlapping areas of responsibility. As a consequence there is a lack of clarity both in decision making and in communication between the senior management team and middle managers. This has adverse effects on the consistent implementation of policy and in the clarity with which staff in faculties understand school policies.
19. The quality of middle management is good. Since the time of the last inspection the school has appointed new heads of English, science, design and technology, physical education, history, religious education, art, and business studies. Both these, and most other middle managers, provide good professional leadership in their areas of responsibility. Most subjects are well organised and curricular planning is good. Departmental handbooks and schemes of work are used as working documents and of direct benefit to teaching and learning in classrooms. Subject leadership and teamwork is excellent in physical education, very good in English, information and communication technology, business education and vocational education, and good in science, religious education, art, geography, history and modern foreign languages. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. Arrangements for the support and monitoring of teaching and learning are generally satisfactory, although there is an over-reliance on informal methods in mathematics. Monitoring and evaluation of work in religious education is hindered by the large number of staff involved in the teaching of

the subject. There is a commitment to raising standards in all subjects and some subjects, such as science, are now developing clear strategies for improving pupils' attainment. However, a slow response to changes in pupils' attainment in mathematics and a similarly slow response to possible causes of declining standards in design and technology inhibits the raising of standards. Also, the raising of standards in geography is inhibited by a lack of commitment by all staff to the full range of strategies deployed to raise standards. In history, the departmental development plan is insufficiently focused on the strategies and resources needed to raise standards.

68.

69. The quality of leadership and management provided by the head of the sixth form is good. It is evident from the attitudes and behaviour of students that the sixth form provides a purposeful working environment. The arrangements for supporting the partnership with Sneyd School are effective and communication between the two schools is facilitated by the provision of such things as mobile telephones to the respective heads of sixth form studies. However, there is a diffusion of responsibilities for various aspects of sixth form activity between the head of the sixth form, a senior teacher and several other members of staff. This can lead to a lack of clarity in communication and unnecessary delay in some aspects of decision taking.

20. The school mission statement conveys a clear commitment to the raising of standards and this is evident in the school ethos which is supportive of learning as is the generally well ordered learning environment that is apparent in the school. The school's general aim is reflected in a number of specific objectives, which inform development planning. The school made a positive response to the 1995 OFSTED report and subsequent development plans, including the current school development plan, show clearly the strategies that have been taken to address the issues raised. The school's development plan is prepared at the same time as the school budget and has defined objectives together with identified staff responsibilities, timescales for completion and success criteria. Departmental development plans are closely linked to whole school development planning. Staff are provided with appropriate opportunities to contribute to school development planning and staff development is linked to school and departmental development needs. The school has an appropriate range of policies, however there is no whole school numeracy plan and the whole school literacy strategy is not effective. The school has taken steps to address the literacy needs with the appointment of a literacy co-ordinator from September 1999 to take the whole school literacy initiative forward. The school has also taken a positive step to address the school's literacy and other needs with the appointment of a qualified librarian who has begun to transform the school library into a learning resources centre with extended opening hours to accommodate homework clubs, an expansion of information and communication technology to include Internet access and an updated book stock.

21. Budgetary constraints have caused the school to be slow to react to the need to improve provision for pupils with special needs, identified as a key issue in the previous report. A whole school policy has been developed and its implementation with regard to pupils with statements of special education need is satisfactory. However, the school has high levels of need, particularly in Key Stage 3 where substantial proportions of pupils enter the school with reading ages at least three years below their chronological ages, for example the proportion of the current Year 7 is 25 per cent, and provision for these pupils is unsatisfactory. Although provision for pupils in Year 7 is adequate the provision is unsatisfactory in Years 8 to 11, largely as a result of inconsistent implementation of the policy across subjects and insufficient reference to pupils' individual education plans in lesson planning. The school has taken steps to address this weakness with the appointment of a full-time special educational needs co-ordinator with effect from January 2000. The link special educational needs governor is very supportive, and the governing body has ensured that all statutory requirements with regard to special educational needs have been met.

22. The school benefits from the close and attentive support of the governing body. The governors have a satisfactory understanding of their roles in strategic planning and management. These roles are performed through a number of sub-committees. The effectiveness of the governing body is particularly evident in financial management and in maintaining close links with parents and the community. The governors have a strong commitment to the school and positive relationships and mutual trust exist between the governing body and the senior management team. The governors regularly receive reports from the headteacher and other senior members of staff. They readily question policies and proposals that are put before them with the intention of ensuring that all such proposals are well considered and clearly aimed at improving the quality of education provided at the school. Governors are linked with subject departments and are well informed on curriculum matters. The annual report to parents is excellent and includes much useful information on such things as the school curriculum, provision for pupils with special educational needs and attainment at Key Stage 3 and Key

Stage 4 and in the sixth form. With the exceptions of provision for information and communication technology and religious education at Key Stage 4, and a daily act of collective worship, statutory requirements are met.

23. The day-to-day administration of the school is efficient and lines of communication on routine administrative matters are clear. A number of school reference documents, such as the staff handbook and guides for new staff, provide comprehensive and useful information on school policies, procedures and practices. These help to ensure consistency in the running of the school. The school clerical staff together with the other non-teaching staff play important roles and make significant contributions to the effective running of the school.

24. Overall, the management systems and processes are making a positive contribution to the quality of education and progress being made by pupils. The school made a positive response to the issues identified in the last inspection report and overall progress in addressing these issues has been satisfactory since that time. The school is capable of further improvement.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

74.

Staffing

25. There is a satisfactory match between the number, qualifications and experience of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum in most subjects. However, there are some shortcomings. Most religious education teaching is by non-specialist teachers. Continuity in teaching can be affected by a large amount of teaching being done by part-time members of staff and there is insufficient staffing to support the numbers of pupils on the register of special educational needs. Each of these factors is having, to varying degrees, an adverse effect on standards. However, staffing for special educational needs will be strengthened in January 2000 by the appointment of a full-time special educational needs co-ordinator. There is a good mix of experience with approximately one fifth of the staff have given long service to the school, whilst a similar number, including a good proportion of postholders, are relatively new to the school. The senior management team, described as 'temporary' at the time of the previous inspection has been consolidated with the appointments of two new deputy heads. The effects of the new appointments have been to strengthen educational provision in the school.

26. There is a satisfactory match between the number, qualifications and experience of support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. The administrative and technical staff, site manager and cleaning staff all make valuable contributions to the daily running of the school. Roles in the school office are clearly defined and extra hours have been accorded to help with school financial management. However there is a lack of technician support for the popular food option in design and technology. The school makes good use of contributions from outside agencies such as educational welfare, health, careers service and the police.

27. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are satisfactory. Professional development opportunities are appropriately linked to the school development plan. In responding to school priorities, curriculum areas are required to include staff development needs in their development plans. Approval for staff development is set in the context of its contribution to school improvement. This is a good response to an issue identified in the previous inspection report. There are clear procedures for disseminating and evaluating training. Formal appraisal has been replaced by an annual cycle of professional review. Where staff are seeking career development opportunities which are outside the identified whole school priorities, then these are most often met through cost-effective internal arrangements such as job shadowing, attending relevant meetings and involvement in whole school projects. The school has a good 3-year plan for the training of all staff in information technology. The initial training has begun and there is every indication that the plan will be implemented fully and effectively. Newly qualified teachers receive very good support from the experienced induction manager and their line manager mentors. New statutory requirements are being well met and documented. The school makes very good provision for the effective support of student teachers in initial training.

77. Accommodation

28. Overall the school's accommodation is satisfactory for the number of pupils and for the effective delivery of the curriculum. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a site manager who has devised a rolling programme of refurbishment and maintenance. This has done much to improve the standard of accommodation. The majority of subject areas have been redecorated, and now provide an acceptable learning environment. However, some areas of the school are still urgently in need of refurbishment, notably the design and technology department, and the swimming pool, and there are major shortcomings in the layout of the design and technology, and music departments.

29. The quality of display is very good in the art rooms, but very little is displayed in corridors and communal areas. The school pathways and the exterior of the school buildings are in need of repair and redecoration and there is an unacceptable amount of litter in and around the school.

79. Resources

30. Learning resources are generally satisfactory to support the curriculum and the range of pupils needs and abilities. For most subjects resources are satisfactory although there are deficiencies in design and technology, English, humanities, music and modern foreign languages. Resources for learning have been considerably enhanced with the development of the school library into a learning resource centre, supported by the appointment of a full-time librarian. The school has initiated a number of strategies, linked to the school development plan, to integrate the use of the learning resource centre more widely in teaching and learning. These have been successful and it is now used more frequently and effectively by both teachers and pupils. Stock has been updated in many areas with new books chosen by departments and pupils. However, the present allowance for the purchase of new stock is low and the book to pupil ratio remains below the national average. The book stock is inadequate to support sixth form studies.
31. There is good access to eight working computers in the learning resource centre at the present time. These are used extensively by pupils at lunchtimes and by some departments in lesson times. Access to computers in other areas of the school is more limited and some subject areas including humanities, art and music have little or no opportunity to make use of information technology. Computer access for sixth form students for independent study is unsatisfactory. However, the school has firm plans to improve facilities for computing, supported by a dedicated percentage of the annual school budget.

The efficiency of the school

32. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory. Governors are actively involved with the headteacher and senior management team in financial planning and monitoring. The annual income per pupil is below the national average for schools of similar size. The school aims to balance the budget on a yearly basis. As at the time of the previous inspection the budget is tight with a carry over of less than one per cent. Sixth form provision was judged to be not cost-effective in the last inspection report and the proposed joint provision with Sneyd School identified as a strategy to both improve the range of courses and reduce staffing costs. This arrangement is now well established and, as a consequence, sixth form provision is now cost-effective.
33. The school development plan and the budget are prepared at the same time, so that decisions on spending are informed by the school's development needs. However, the very tight nature of the budget imposes serious restrictions on the scope for new developments. Nevertheless, careful financial planning has allowed a number of initiatives intended to raise standards across the school, such as the appointments of a literacy co-ordinator, a full-time manager of the learning resources centre and improved and upgraded information communications technology resources, to be undertaken. The school operates an open budgeting process that involves all faculties. Capitation to faculties is based on pupil numbers with weighting to reflect the need for consumable materials in practical subjects. A small proportion of the budget is held back to fund curriculum development within departments on a competitive basis. This system is regarded as fair by staff.
34. The school's financial management system is effective and provides very good financial control. Governors are kept fully informed on financial matters as the year progresses. Under the oversight of one of the deputy heads, the school finance clerk carefully monitors all spending and provides regular reports to the senior management team and governing body. All of the issues raised in the most recent audit report have been fully resolved. Administrative procedures are well organised, enabling the school to function smoothly.
35. Efficient use is made of the school staff with most subjects being taught by specialist teachers. Staffing costs, identified as being above average in the last inspection report, are now just below the national average. One of the contributory factors in bringing about this change has been a restructuring of the senior management with a reduction from three to two deputy headteachers and a redistribution of responsibilities amongst the senior staff of the school. One of the outcomes of this process has been the creation an additional tiers of school management, some of whom have overlapping responsibilities, with a consequent inefficiency in the use of management time. There are also some inefficiencies in the use of teaching time, as not all teachers are able to fully use the 70-minute teaching period with the consequence that at the end of some lessons there is little or no teaching and learning taking place. Both the amount of time that teachers spend in contact with classes and the pupil:teacher ratio are broadly in line with national averages. Efficient use is made of support

staff to support pupils with statements of special educational need. Staff commit a good deal of additional time on matters of administration and in organising and supervising extra-curricular activities.

36. The teaching staff is relatively stable. However, as a result of retirements and promotions the school has been able to appoint eleven new members of staff over the past two years which has had the positive effect of reducing the age profile of the teaching staff. The allocation of resources to the sixth form is equitable in relation to the numbers of students in the sixth form and pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Since the last inspection the range of sixth form subjects has increased and the school makes increasingly effective use of links with Sneyd School to broaden the range of opportunities for sixth form students.

37. Good use is made of specialist accommodation and learning resources and the information technology facilities are well used during lessons, at lunchtimes and after school, but the number of computers is below the national average and many of those that are available are out of date. As a consequence, although the school has plans to address this issues, at present several subjects do not have sufficient access to computers in lessons and others make insufficient use of those that are available. The number of books in the school library is inadequate to meet pupils' needs.

38. Taking into account: the income and costs per pupil; the satisfactory progress made since the last inspection report; the overall quality of education being provided and satisfactory progress in all key stages, it is judged that the school gives satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

88. English

39. Standards of attainment in English as reflected in Key Stage 3 Standard Attainment Tests and in GCSE grades in English and in English literature in 1999, are well below the national average. They are also below the level of schools of similar schools and somewhat lower than they were in 1998. Boys do not achieve as well as girls. A level results are closer to the national average, and in drama at GCSE they broadly match national figures.

40. These figures must be put in context, however. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are well below both the national average and that of similar schools. For several years, approximately 60 per cent entering the school at the age of 11 have had reading ages more than a year lower than their chronological ages and approximately 30 per cent has a reading age more than two years below. Although there are indications that as a consequence of the various literacy initiatives that standards on entry are rising slightly, there is no indication of the pattern improving significantly in the near future. In addition, 13 per cent of pupils are from families where English is not the first language. These problems were compounded during the 1998-99 academic year when the department experienced significant staffing difficulties, which adversely affected the quality of teaching and standards of attainment.

41. For the first year of Key Stage 3 pupils' levels of attainment are below average, many having failed to come to terms with some of the basic elements of spelling and syntax. By Year 9, however, there is some improvement in the technicalities of writing and some pupils are beginning to demonstrate an element of maturity, evident in some thoughtful writing on "Animal Farm", while in Years 7 and 8 good examples of pupils' poetry are to be seen. Nonetheless, attainment is still below average, although not as much, on the evidence of work seen in lessons, as Key Stage 3 National Curriculum Test results would indicate. Many pupils speak more confidently and fluently than they write, and listen attentively to what their peers have to say in group discussions. This is particularly evident in drama lessons, where standards of improvisation and mime are also generally good. Pupils for whom English is a second language have no evident difficulty with their work.

42. At Key Stage 4, poor writing skills continue to handicap low attaining pupils, particularly in Year 10. In Year 11, however, technical skills are generally sound and writing shows maturity: pupils write poetry, which shows sophisticated understanding of the rhythm of language and the use of extended metaphor. Here there is good evidence of sound knowledge of set texts, with perceptive commentaries on 'Macbeth', 'Lord of the Flies' and 'An Inspector Calls', and some good narrative writing. Here again oral work shows confidence and coherence. Sixth form students make good presentations on texts they are studying, and their written work generally matches this level of attainment. Presentation of work at both key stages is usually satisfactory, with some excellent examples of word processing and desktop publishing.

43. Most pupils, of all levels of attainment, work hard in English. As a consequence progress is never less than satisfactory at all key stages. As a result there is a slow but steady improvement in the quality of written work during the later stages of Key Stage 3 and particularly at Key Stage 4. By the end of this key stage the majority have acquired a working command of language that matches their age. Both here and in the sixth form pupils and students work hard at consolidating their knowledge of set texts.

44. Pupils' attitudes to work are usually satisfactory and at times they are good, settling quickly to their work and responding well to their teachers. They listen attentively and focus well on their tasks, while in group work they are co-operative and support each other effectively in their learning. Good proportions take a positive part in question and answer sessions. At Key Stage 4, however, some pupils allow themselves to be too easily drawn into idle chatter, impeding the progress of those who wish to get on with their work. This is also evident from a small minority of pupils in drama lessons at Key Stage 3, although the majority work with enthusiasm and commitment; work done in drama in the sixth form is of very high quality.

45.English teaching is consistently sound and much of it, especially at Key Stage 3, is good. Planning and management of lessons are good and teachers employ a good range of strategies, including paired and group work. In one lesson this was well structured to allow more able pupils to support their less able peers. Stimulus material is chosen from a wide range of sources and is relevant and interesting. Sixth form teachers show a sound knowledge of the texts and their contexts and here a stimulating lesson on the text of 'Hamlet', presented by two teachers working in tandem, was seen. Questioning techniques, whether to recapitulate previous work or to ensure understanding of a text, are effective. Homework is set regularly and marking is always thorough and constructive. Some lessons lack variety of pace: a key strategy in achieving higher levels of attainment will be for teachers to raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve and to do this by increasing their use of open questions to challenge pupils to extend the boundaries of their learning and understanding. Drama teaching is good, creating situations, which challenge pupils' imagination and allow them the freedom to develop within a controlled environment. Teachers work hard to enable pupils to improve their ability to handle language and enjoy literature.

46.At all key stages the curriculum conforms to the requirements of the National Curriculum or of the appropriate examination syllabus. Special educational needs are met by employing a range of strategies suited to the needs of lower attaining pupils but there is inadequate in-class support for pupils who do not have statements. A literacy co-ordinator has recently been appointed to set up a cross-curricular strategy for tackling literacy problems.

47.The department recognises both in principle and in practice the role it has to play in pupils' personal, social, spiritual and moral development within the curriculum. This is done effectively through the texts studied in literature, such as 'An Inspector Calls', by encouraging pupils to write their own poetry and through a programme of events which includes visits to theatres as well as visits to the school by touring theatre groups.

48.The department is very well led by an experienced and committed teacher, who is working with her colleagues to create a positive ethos of work and study and to raise levels of pupils' attainment. The teaching accommodation is satisfactory but much print material is in urgent need of replacement. What is seriously lacking is department based information technology hardware and software to enable pupils to develop skills in word processing and desk top publishing.

49.Although the staffing difficulties described in the previous inspection report have now been resolved by the appointment in September 1999, of three experienced teachers, including the head of faculty, other issues identified at that time concerning the timetable structure remain unchanged. The reduction of curriculum time to 10 per cent in Year 10 restricts English lessons to only two per week at a key stage in the course. The splitting of some classes between two teachers at Key Stage 3 continues, and this results in a significant disruption of continuity. While English classes are set by ability in all years except Years 7 and 8, at Key Stage 4 their composition is governed by the subject's conjunction on the timetable with French. These issues can be resolved only by a reconsideration of the nature and structure of the curriculum and by more efficient timetabling and need urgent attention.

99. Mathematics

50.Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and at the end of Key Stage 4 is well below national average at the ages of 14 and 16. Students' attainment at the end of Year 13 is close to national expectations.

51.Performance in the 1999 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 is well below the 1998 national average, and also well below in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. There has however been a slight increase in attainment relative to the national figures. The difference between the performance of girls and boys follows the national trend with boys achieving slightly higher levels. There are no significant variations between different ethnic groups. By the end of Key Stage 3, middle attaining pupils are able to calculate the areas of shapes such as parallelograms, triangles or trapeziums. Higher attaining pupils are able to generate and tabulate results systematically in a mathematical investigation and to recognise patterns in these results. A class of the lowest attaining Year 8 pupils were able to construct

a data base to draw bar charts showing the popularity of different crisp flavours from a collection of crisp packets.

52. In the 1999 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils achieving A* - C grades was well below the 1998 national average, though there has been a slight increase in attainment. Girls' and boys' relative performances follow the national trend. Apart from this there are no marked differences in attainment between different groups. Lower attaining Year 10 groups are able to calculate and explain how to find unknown angles by using basic angle 'facts' and to draw tiling patterns accurately. A middle attaining Year 10 group is able confidently to add and subtract simple fractions. Higher attaining Year 11 pupils can appreciate, using algebra that enlarging a shape by a certain factor increases the resulting area by the square of this number.
53. The number of students taking A level mathematics is relatively small. This makes comparisons precarious, but the mean number of points scored over the last few years strongly suggests that attainment is close to the national average. Year 12 students recognise and classify polynomials and display these with the aid of a graphical calculator. Year 13 students are able to use calculus to solve problems involving trigonometry functions.
54. Pupils make satisfactory progress over Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Apart from being similar to the national picture, which shows less progress by boys compared with girls, there are no appreciable differences in progress between different groups of pupils. A Year 9 group uses previous work on patterns observed with two-dimensional shapes to help them recognise patterns in the arrangements of solids formed by cubes. Year 12 students build on their previous knowledge of statistics in Key Stage 4 in order to use increasingly sophisticated measures of spread and variability of sets of data.
55. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. This is primarily due to setting in mathematics, which ensures that these pupils receive appropriate challenges and to the effective use of support teachers, although their availability is limited.
56. Pupils generally have a positive attitude to the subject and usually give their full attention to the task in hand. In the vast majority of lessons pupils are willing to listen to others and help each other when the need arises. A Year 8 group is able to carry out effectively a class survey of favourite television programmes and to discuss the findings in a mature way. They are also able to identify possible faults in each other's survey methods. A higher attaining Year 10 group is able to help one another and to discuss each other's methods of pencil and paper calculation. Members of a lower attaining Year 11 group are able to contribute to a discussion about marking and drawing points on various scales. Pupils treat property loaned to them, such as calculators and protractors, with respect. There is virtually no graffiti on desks or scribbling on exercise books or wall displays. When given the opportunity pupils are able to work independently, but insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility in this way.
57. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in all key stages. It is satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons, and good or better in half the lessons. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and these establish a firm base for work in lessons. All the teachers are specialist teachers and use their specialist knowledge well to support pupils' learning. They are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and modify their teaching strategies accordingly. Although effective use is made of support assistants, their availability is restricted and in several lessons teachers have difficulty in providing for the full range of ability in the classroom. Most of the satisfactory lessons could be improved by an increase in challenge, pace or variety. A Year 11 lesson involving volumes of prisms attained its objectives but pupils would have profited from a quicker pace which would have allowed the consideration of estimation to check calculated answers or the inclusion of a short investigation allowing pupils to practise their skills in a problem-solving situation. A very good Year 8 lesson on the design of questionnaires made a brisk start with the lesson's aims already displayed on the board together with a possible questionnaire. A quick discussion led by the teacher then ensured with all pupils involved. Pupils then designed, used and finally evaluated their own questionnaires. The lesson culminated in a discussion based on this work, a re-cap of the lesson's work and finally a quick mental arithmetic activity. Another feature of the more successful lessons was the use by teachers of challenging questions asking pupils to justify and explain their answers.

58. Homework is set regularly for all groups and is well used to consolidate and extend work covered in lessons. Work is marked regularly and usually accompanied by positive comments.
59. Management of the faculty is consultative and relationships within it are good. Marking is formally monitored at least twice a year by the head of faculty but there is insufficient formal monitoring of teaching and learning. Although formal assessment of pupils is carried out twice a year and less formal assessments every half-term there need for more regular and formal assessments with the results stored electronically for ease of retrieval. This would allow the faculty to make a more rapid to worrying changes in pupils' performance levels. The use of information technology would allow the performance of individual pupils and groups of pupils to be monitored more effectively. Teachers are committed to raising standards of achievement and have taken a number of initiatives such as the holding of revision classes after school in order to provide pupils with additional support
60. The faculty has no computers of its own and, as a consequence, insufficient use is made of information technology in Key Stage 4. As a consequence, the skills gained in Key Stage 3, particularly in Year 9, are not fully developed through Key Stage 4.
61. The faculty has recently purchased several sets of textbooks for use in Key Stage 3. The next priority for texts should be Key Stage 4, where some of the texts are in a poor state, largely through over-use. The stock of mathematics books in the learning resource centre is inadequate.
62. Since the last inspection the time allocated to teaching mathematics has increased from two to three double lessons a week for each year apart from Year 11, which still has only two double lessons a week. This must have an adverse effect on standards in the GCSE examination. The variety of teaching methods has improved, as has the attention paid to the teaching and assessment of the use and application of mathematics. A positive attempt have been made to develop the efficient use of calculators at all ages and all levels of attainment, as suggested in the last inspection report.

112. Science

63. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is below the level expected nationally at the ages of 14 and 16. National Curriculum assessment results at the end of Key Stage 3 are well below national averages. At GCSE pupils results in the A* to C grades are well below national averages. Results in the A* to G range are broadly average. Numbers taking A level are small and the results indicate average attainment when compare with national figures. In Year 7 pupils can explain the basic structures of cells and talk about the functions of different parts. In Year 8 the pupils know about different planets in the solar system and explain the apparent movement of the sun in the sky. By Year 11 pupils can interpret graphs illustrating understanding of the effect of insulin on blood sugar levels and talk confidently about diabetes. A level students are able to carry out experiments to find out the effects of different concentrations of enzymes on the rate of decomposition of hydrogen peroxide. The results at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are similar to those achieved when the school was last inspected. There is a marked difference in the teacher assessment and National Curriculum assessment results at Key Stage 3 indicating unsatisfactory use of National Curriculum levels when judging attainment.
64. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Pupils acquire knowledge about scientific facts and carry out experiments that involve observation and measurement appropriately and with confidence. Pupils' developing understanding to work carefully and safely in the laboratory is good. They make sound and sometimes good progress in drawing conclusions from data given by the teacher or obtained experimentally as they move up the school. In contrast to these relative strengths, pupils are weaker at explaining concepts, planning experiments, suggesting ideas for investigations and estimating numerically. Graph drawing skills although generally satisfactory are variable between different classes. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
65. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students' attitudes to learning in the sixth form are good. Both pupils and students show interest in their work. For example, Year 7 pupils used

microscopes to learn more about the structure of cells working co-operatively together to identify the key parts. Behaviour is generally satisfactory; pupils show respect for materials and equipment when carrying out practical work and tidy away carefully at the end of lessons. Relationships between pupils and between the teachers and pupils are good. Teachers work hard to maintain a positive approach to pupils through their teaching and set a good example. Pupils respond to questions with confidence and are willing to learn from their mistakes. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own work, especially when involved in practical activities, and they find it difficult to contribute ideas which can be turned into investigations.

66.The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in all key stages. However, there is a higher proportion of good teaching at Key Stage 4 where teachers' planning is better geared to the needs of the pupils. All teachers have good subject knowledge are enthusiastic about imparting this knowledge and understanding to the pupils. They manage pupils well in the classroom and use resources effectively to illustrate and develop pupils' understanding. In one good lesson observed the teacher used questions to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding about hydrocarbons. The questioning was good, requiring the pupils to explain their understanding to the rest of the class and each other. Misconceptions were handled sensitively and pupils concentrated well for the full lesson. The use of National Curriculum levels to plan work in not always consistent and prior knowledge not always used effectively. Several lessons observed did not always use the full time effectively and the lesson content could have been covered in shorter time. In one ineffective lesson the pupils found the concepts being taught too difficult and they had not been sufficiently well prepared. The time was not well used and progress in their knowledge and understanding about animal groups was weak. The teachers work hard and mark work carefully. Targets are often set for pupils that are helpful and motivating. However, lower attaining pupils are too often set targets that relate to how work is presented rather than the development of scientific knowledge and understanding.

67.The department is well managed and ably led. There is an effective development plan and a positive ethos for improvement amongst the staff. Lessons are discussed and evaluated. Non-teaching staff work well together to support teaching. The laboratories are spacious and well organised although some of the furniture is old and worn. There are sufficient materials and equipment to deliver the National Curriculum effectively with the exception of computer hardware and software where provision is currently unsatisfactory. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection report and is now developing clear strategies for improving pupil attainment.

117.

OTHER

SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

- 1.Attainment in information technology generally matches the level expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 3. There is no whole school formally taught, or cross-curricular, information technology provision at Key Stage 4. As a consequence it is not possible to make reliable judgements on the standards of attainment of all pupils at the end of the key stage.
- 2.Within Key Stage 3 information technology is a taught course. Until 1998 several non-specialists were involved in teaching the course, which resulted in unreliable teacher assessment. Inspection evidence indicates that a large proportion of pupils have achieved level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 3, which is consistent with the national expectations. Pupils have good word processing skills. For example, low attaining pupils in Year 7 are able to word process their own poems and to add graphics in formatting to enhance their visual impact. The social effects of information technology are investigated in Year 8 and pupils are able to word process their findings and work in pairs to make presentations to the rest of the class. Pupils in Year 9 are able to word process and format a letter to a friend make use of the spell-check facility. Lower attaining pupils in Year 7 are also beginning to develop an understanding of the use of a formula in setting up a simple spreadsheet. Several pupils in Key Stage 3 work outside lesson times on information technology projects to be submitted for GCSE coursework in Key Stage 4.

3. There are no significant differences in attainment between girls and boys. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receive some learning support and this has a positive effect on their levels of attainment. The standards of attainment of these pupils are affected poor literacy levels.
4. The overall progress of pupils at Key Stage 3 is good. Given the lack of information technology provision for all pupils in Key Stage 4 it is not possible to make a judgement regarding progress over this key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in basic keyboard skills as a result of the accelerated learning scheme used by the faculty. The scheme has a tangible effect on the letter and word recognition abilities of those with poor levels of literacy.
5. Pupils enjoy using information technology and take a pride in the quality of their work. The occasional need to share machines ensures that pupils are given the opportunity for mutual support and collaboration. This they do effectively. Computers and peripherals are treated with care and respect. Many pupils demonstrate a good capacity for independent learning by making effective use of the information technology facilities out of lesson time. There are several instances of the lowest attaining pupils gaining confidence as a result of their competency in information technology. The odd lapse in otherwise good behaviour takes place as a result of frustration when machines breakdown.
6. The overall quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and in forty per cent of lessons it is good. Teaching is supported by a very good scheme of work, which is adapted in the light of teaching experiences and this ensures that effective use is made of lesson time. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and pupils experience all aspects of the information technology National Curriculum in Key Stage 3. Teaching is characterised by high expectations with some pupils in Key Stage 3 already having gained a GCSE in information technology. Homework is set after every lesson and does not 'count' on the pupils' record card unless a mark of at least 7 out of 10 is achieved. This has a positive motivational effect across the whole ability range. Work is marked regularly and pupils are provided with constructive comments and, where appropriate, a national curriculum level is indicated. The best lessons involve a variety of activities with appropriate challenges and a good lesson pace. For example, beginning the lesson with activities from the accelerated learning scheme for keyboarding followed by a whole class discussion, based on the previous lesson's homework, on changes in certain jobs that have been brought about by information technology. Finally, pupils work in pairs to draw their conclusions from the discussion and then enter them in a word processor file.
7. Teacher assessment at Key Stage 3 is now a strength and is soundly based on nationally standardised examples of pupils' work. All pupils have a well produced document showing them the National Curriculum and what is expected at each level. This allows pupils to participate fully in their own assessment and to know 'where they are going', which increases motivation.
8. The head of faculty manages the department dynamically, efficiently and effectively. The faculty has an excellent ethos. There is a very real commitment, by all members, to improving attainment and to give pupils the best start in the employment market. Substantial progress in the teaching of information technology in Key Stage 3 has been made since the last inspection as a result of the clear responsibility given to the faculty. Previously, lines of responsibility and sense of direction were unclear. The faculty provides information technology in-service training for staff and has 9 hours of timetabled time devoted to this. This increases staff confidence and provides staff in general with good opportunities for developing their information technology skills and for increasing their understanding of how information technology be used in the teaching of their subjects. Many staff are in the process of acquiring additional qualifications in information technology.
9. The faculty is staffed by subject specialists, greatly assisted by a full-time computer technician. There are three main computer rooms, only one of which has access to the internet. The equipment in two of the rooms is now getting old and breakdowns caused interruptions to several lessons during the week of the inspection. This has an adverse impact on teaching and learning, especially for lower attaining pupils. Good use is made of support staff who are a real asset given the low literacy levels of some pupils, but provision is insufficient to meet the needs of these pupils all of the time.
10. The use of information technology within subjects across the curriculum is poor. Little opportunity is given for pupils to use the skills gained in Key Stage 3, either to support work in other subjects or to enhance these information technology skills themselves. In design and technology, for example, there is no specific policy

regarding information technology and no mention of it in the scheme of work. The provision of both hardware and software is very poor. There is a similar state of affairs in other subjects including history, geography, music and modern foreign languages. In English some pupils word process work for their folders and pupils are encouraged to use information technology, particularly to improve the presentation of coursework. In Key Stage 3, in religious education, pupils are designing a website about the Dalai Lama and pupils are encouraged to word process their homework. Although the school's computer provision of 10 pupils per machine is close to the national average of 8 pupils per machine, several faculties cite computer availability as the barrier to their greater use of information technology

11. The school is fully aware of these weaknesses and that it is not fulfilling its statutory obligations with regard to the provision of whole school access to information technology, and the associated assessment and recording, in Key Stage 4. The school has taken steps to address these issues. A well-constructed development plan has been produced which, when implemented, should rectify these shortcomings. A new suite of computers is soon to be installed and the Governors have agreed to support information technology through a dedicated percentage of the school's annual budget, to keep up with demand. Teachers are being trained and all will be competent users of information technology by 2002. The information technology faculty is working with other faculty areas on a formal basis to develop their schemes of work and to formalise the information technology part of teaching and learning in their subjects. There is a curriculum review pending, after which it is proposed to develop information technology in all key stages and for all pupils.

128. Religious Education

1. Pupils' attainment of the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with expectations as outlined in the Walsall Local Authority Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4, as measured by success in the GCSE short course for religious studies, is also as expected by the Agreed Syllabus and almost in line with the national averages. Attainment in the full GCSE course was well below the national average in 1999 although the work of those currently studying the course would suggest that attainment is higher. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in the sixth form is generally in line with expectations, although the numbers following the course and taking A level in recent years have been too small to make comparisons with national averages meaningful. At Key Stage 3, pupils' recall of the basic facts of the various religions studied is sound. Many pupils are beginning to explore different religions and in the process forming balanced views on spiritual issues. The current Year 11 pupils are following either a full or short GCSE course for religious studies and standards of attainment in both courses are in line with expectations for this stage of the course. However the current Year 10 pupils have not been offered the same option and the amount of time allocated to the subject for those not following the full option course is reduced. As a consequence, the standards of attainment of Year 10 pupils are below that expected by the Agreed Syllabus. The attainment of girls is better than the attainment of boys at all key stages.
2. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. There is an increase in pupils' knowledge and an increase in the level at which pupils are able to discuss issues arising in the subject. Plans are currently being prepared to improve the progression and continuity of the subject and the skills used as pupils move through the key stage. The progress of higher attaining pupils is inhibited by a lack of resources for extension work and individual research. The progress of pupils following examination courses at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory but the reduction of time allocated to the subject for those not following the examination courses has an adverse effect on progress. There is insufficient time to cover the Agreed Syllabus and, as a consequence, the progress of pupils who are not following the examination courses is unsatisfactory. Sixth form students make satisfactory progress in the understanding of moral issues. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is consistent with that of other pupils at all key stages.
3. Pupil's attitudes to learning in lessons are generally good. Pupils are grouped by ability in most years and this arrangement has proved beneficial to teaching and learning. The majority of pupils are pleasant, polite and well behaved. They show a lively interest in lessons and show respect for the feelings and efforts of others. Pupils are able to work well both individually and in pairs and small groups. Relationships both between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. The good quality of these relationships enhances pupils' learning.

4. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form and good at Key Stage 4. Where the teaching is good, the momentum of lessons is well maintained and a variety of activities and source materials are provided which fully engage the pupils. Where teaching does not reach this standard, there is often insufficient challenge to ensure that pupils' and students' interest and concentration are maintained for the full duration of the lesson. The impact of having only one specialist teacher means that in some lessons the teachers' lack of depth of subject knowledge leads to a restricted range of teaching and learning styles which inhibits exploration and investigation. The number of teachers used and the variation from year to year leads to a lack of continuity, which inhibits pupils' progress. There are inconsistencies in the quality of marking of pupils' and students' work. There are some very good examples where constructive comments give clear guidance on how the work can be improved. However, there are other instances where work is just ticked or brief comments are made which provide little or no indication of what must be done in order to improve the quality of the work.
5. The resources in the department are satisfactory, although a greater variety would enhance the learning process and enable progress to proceed at a faster rate. For example, the extensive use of worksheets means that the literacy level of the work is suitable for pupils of different levels of attainment, but it also means that images of religious events are limited and resources suitable for in depth, independent investigations are also limited. Visits are well used to support the curriculum. For example, pupils visit a local church and the Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre, and further study visits are planned to take place later in the school year.
6. The department is well led by a relatively new and enthusiastic head of department. Departmental documentation is sound and provides good guidance to the work of the department. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department are hindered by the large number of staff involved in the teaching of the subject. In addition, the non-specialist staff who are teaching the subject have had little formal in-service training in the subject.
7. Since the last inspection time allocation at Key Stage 4 had been increased but with the abandoning of all short courses the time allocated to the subject remains insufficient. The department has made satisfactory progress in other areas and has established a good base from which to move forward.

135. **Art**

8. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 matches national expectations. At Key Stage 4 results for GCSE have been good. The number of pupils gaining grades A* to G has been above the national averages for schools of this type. There is no significant difference between results for boys and those for girls. Results in the 1999 examinations were slightly lower than in previous years but, when compared to other subjects in the school, GCSE results in art are above average. Where standards are good pupils are able to draw competently and they have good technical skills. They are able to model complex and imaginative sculptures and they produce exciting and assured work in textiles, graphics and painting. Numbers taking the subject in the sixth form are small but results are consistent with levels of ability. Pupils are able to research and develop ideas in order to produce carefully crafted and ambitious work. They make creative use of information technology in graphic design and show a greater awareness of the work of contemporary artists in their written and practical studies.
9. At all key stages, pupils of different attainment make good progress in the making of their work. For example, in a Year 7 textiles lesson where pupils achieved some exciting and colourful designs for ties and in a Year 12 lesson where pupils made gains in their understanding of drawing and composition techniques. In sculpture lessons pupils take on challenging modelling and construction tasks and progress quickly in their ability to use these with confidence. More able pupils can speak about their intentions using the subject vocabulary with understanding.
10. Pupils' attitudes in art are good. They respond well in lessons by concentrating and they use their time effectively. They are helpful to each other and they co-operate with their teachers. They show a responsible attitude to resources and they respect each other's work. In the lessons observed there was often a buzz of enthusiasm and an interest in the topics that had been set.
11. The overall quality of teaching is good and in some lessons it is very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good.

They have high expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve and they set challenging tasks which take account of the needs of all pupils. Lessons are well planned and organised, making good use of time and of varied teaching methods to include class discussion, individual assistance and demonstrations of techniques. Teachers are firm, patient and encouraging. Homework is set to reinforce what is learned in lessons and assessment is used to enable pupils to progress. Targets are used to identify priorities for individual pupils.

12. The art curriculum is planned carefully to ensure progression. It provides a broad range of experience in two and three-dimensional media and allows pupils to work in greater depth according to their individual needs and strengths. Assessment and record keeping procedures inform planning and ensure continuity. Within lessons the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural knowledge. Displays of exciting paintings, textiles, graphics and sculptures enliven what would otherwise be drab and uninspiring accommodation; they enrich the quality of experience which pupils receive when they come to lessons. There is little display elsewhere in the school to enable all pupils to share pride in their achievements.

13. Accommodation for the subject is, at present, adequate but the large take-up for GCSE courses means that space for examination work is limited. The department is well managed and led. Teachers work well as a team. They contribute to the development of the subject and they are effectively deployed to teach within their areas of expertise. This has a positive impact on the contribution the subject makes to standards within the school.

Business education

14. By the end of Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils taking the GCSE information studies examination and in 1999, attained A* - C grades that were above both the school average and the 1998 national average. The 1998 A* - C grade results were also above the national average. Both boys and girls' A* - C grade results show an upward trend since the time of the last inspection. The A* - G results are also above national averages with almost all pupils entered obtaining passes in the A* - G range in most years. Sixth form students following the A level GCE business studies attain standards that are just below the national average. In the three years 1996 to 1998 all pupils obtained a pass grade and in 1999 only one student failed to obtain a pass grade. Only a small number of Pool Hayes students follow the A level economics course, all of whom obtained pass grades. The completion rate of students following the GNVQ business course is satisfactory as are the grades attained.

15. Business education is a popular option both in Key Stage 4 in the sixth form. Pupils and students on all business courses make good progress with some making very good progress. Pupils in Key Stage 4, acquire a good knowledge and understanding of business through the discussion of key concepts. In the process they also improve their speaking and listening skills. They also make good use of information technology. The progress pupils make is enhanced by the level of challenge they are offered in lessons. In the sixth form, students gain confidence and are increasingly able to discuss and evaluate business ideas. The ability to apply new knowledge and the use of technical language develop well. The progress of sixth form students is enhanced by the challenge and pace of lessons and through numerous opportunities to work in groups to share ideas and solve business problems. However, the progress of a minority of Year 12 students is restricted by a degree of immaturity when engaging in class discussion. GNVQ students develop skills of peer assessment and critical judgement by evaluating presentations on consumer behaviour. Students on all sixth form business courses gain increasing confidence in their ability to carry out research and become more able to draw on a wider range of resource materials than those provided by the school. Students on the GNVQ course make particularly good use of information technology and their word processed coursework includes well presented spreadsheets, graphs and charts.

16. Pupils' and students' attitudes to learning are good. They behave very well, support each other's learning and cooperate fully with their teachers. Most boys and girls are very well motivated to succeed. Pupils enjoy their work. They listen very attentively and concentrate fully on the lesson tasks. Most pupils develop good skills of independent study. The majority of pupils pay a great deal of attention to the presentation of their work. A few, however, do not and because their work is not re-drafted it contains a number of uncorrected errors. Close links with business and participation in a variety of business linked projects provide pupils and students

with good opportunities for personal development and to exercise responsibility.

17. The quality of teaching in both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is never less than satisfactory and in a third of lessons it is good or very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject that is underpinned by extensive experience in business environments. This adds significantly to quality of teaching and is a significant factor in the progress that pupils and students are making. Teachers have high expectations of pupil attainment and behaviour and are able, through focused question and answer techniques, to improve pupils' skills of critical thinking. Time and resources are generally used well and the best lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. However, there is a tailing off in a few lessons where the lesson activities do not quite fill the 70-minute period. Teachers provide a high level of challenge in lessons. The effective use of homework and the assessment of pupils' work support this. However, the quality of feedback given to pupils and students through marking is inconsistent. There are some examples of exemplary practice with detailed advice being given on exactly what has to be done in order to improve the quality of a piece of work. But not all marking is of this quality and some is simply a series of ticks with brief comments.

18. Business education courses are well managed, with very good leadership. The faculty head provides thoughtful and purposeful direction to all of the work of the faculty. Teachers work as a committed and mutually supportive team. Development planning is good and this provides a clear sense of direction for the work of the faculty. This is supported by very good faculty documentation that both supports and encourages teaching and learning. The induction arrangements for new staff and for student teachers are very good. All staff are committed to high achievement and this is reflected in the strong positive ethos in the department. The management and planning of the sixth form partnership arrangement with Sneyd School is very good. The curriculum is evenly divided between the two schools and there are good arrangements to ensure that assessments across the business studies area are reliable across both schools. This is a contributory factor to the standards being attained.

19. The accommodation for teaching is very good. Suited rooms have been developed with a common display theme, which helps to create a corporate image that reflects a business environment. This makes a positive contribution to the ethos of the department. However, the faculty administrative base is too small to accommodate the number of staff who have to use it and the records and resources, which have to be stored there.

147. **Design and technology**

20. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are below national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results show considerable variation across the various aspects of the subject; food technology being the strongest aspect and graphics the weakest. Overall the A* to C grade passes are below the average for similar schools and have been since the last inspection. There has been an overall decline in standards, which matches the decline in standards of these year groups on entry to the school. Satisfactory results have been obtained at A level, although with small student numbers.

21. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are overall below expectations. Throughout the subject aspects, of food technology, resistant materials, systems and control, and graphics products there is a wide range of standards in both designing and making. Most pupils understand and use the design process reasonably well but evaluation is weak. Graphics generally show poor understanding of layout, consideration of lettering styles, and colour. Work in food, is better as procedures are carefully planned and documented. Work in resistant materials shows satisfactory use of a range of tools and materials in shaping, cutting, and joining components. Design sheets and homework are overall below expectations with poor productivity and incomplete work.

22. The work of Year 7 pupils shows better making skills than understanding of designing. For example, instructions are followed well to make a small electronic fuse tester. Soldering of components is overall good and the work of girls is generally more accurate than that of boys. However, when designing a box to contain the tester, few are able to communicate their ideas accurately through free-hand drawing. Through the designing and making of candleholders, Year 8 pupils largely achieve the stated learning objectives. They use

appropriate manufacturing processes with an understanding of the use of tools and a good knowledge of the properties of materials, such as copper, brass and wood. Year 9 pupils decorate cakes that they have made for a 'celebrations' theme. Their designs show a satisfactory understanding of colour selection, and the use of balanced and contrasting shapes, with knowledge of icing and piping techniques. However their lively designs show significant departure from their design brief and overall, together with their folder work, standards are below expectation.

23. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards of attainment are below national standards. Year 10 pupils, for example, understand the concept of developing a design brief, but most use ideas suggested by the teacher and few show really original approaches in laying out their design sheets. Most do not purposefully match the lettering style to the nature of the design idea and many apply colour to lettering in an indiscriminate way. Year 11 pupils appreciate how rack and pinion gears are used in a steering mechanism, but only one or two pupils are able to accurately calculate the distance travelled along the rack in one revolution of the pinion gear. Most are able to model the steering mechanism using a commercial kit of components, but few make really informative drawings to show how it works. Year 11 girls appraise children's toys. They evaluate health and safety considerations, but few make reference to the learning or educational merits of the toys. Folder work is overall below average both in content and presentation. Pupils in all areas of the subject make insufficient use of information technology either to extend their knowledge or enhance the presentation of their work.

24. Although the overall attainment of students at 18 years does not meet national standards, two students gained B grades at A level in design and technology in the 1999 examinations. Students work on individual projects, and show initiative in design ideas such as, automatic clips to hold boots to snowboards. Below average free-hand and geometrical drawing skills reduce the effectiveness of communicating ideas to others. However, students who take home economics at A level use information technology well to enhance presentation. Year 13 students following this course are developing a good understanding of the food available in the Second World War together with the nutritional problems that people faced. Students invited two senior citizens to the school, to discuss with them the recipes that they used during the war. They carefully prepared the room for their comfort and showed a sensitive concern for their feelings in the interview. The attainment of GNVQ health and social care students is below course expectations.

25. Although inspection evidence indicates that progress is largely satisfactory for most pupils at Key Stage 3, age related standards remain considerably below national expectations. However, from often very little experience of the subject prior to Year 7, pupils in Key Stage 3 develop an understanding of the design process, a knowledge of a good range of materials, and skills in design and make applications. Progress is also largely satisfactory in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, but it is constrained by poor core skills and inadequate private study. As a result the majority of pupils have not made the anticipated progress by the end of the course. Nevertheless, all pupils benefit from the individual help and the practical, creative nature of the subject. All groupings are well integrated in the mixed ability classes and pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress.

26. Pupils and students at all key stages have satisfactory attitudes to the subject and tasks set. They often show keen interest and the majority sustain concentration throughout lessons. However, the capacity of pupils to develop good working patterns of researching design principles, and developing ideas is variable and, taken overall, below average. Few pupils are sufficiently confident or committed to work independently for the high grades. Behaviour in lessons is good and rarely less than satisfactory. Almost all pupils have formed good working relationships with others, and mutual evaluation aids progress.

27. Across all areas of the subject, and at all key stages, over half the teaching observed is good, with a small amount of very good teaching in food technology. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of the aspect of the subjects they teach, however, the part-time nature of some appointments has led to some lack of co-ordination in teaching through the key stages. Teachers' expectations of pupils are satisfactory overall, but sometimes design work is insufficiently challenging. Most tasks are 'open-ended', but projects are not always suitable for every pupil's needs and demands are normally directed towards middle attaining pupils. Projects are adequately planned to cover curriculum requirements. Key Stage 4 and sixth form courses closely follow examination syllabuses, but subject emphasis is not always directed towards priority needs. All resources are well organised and schemes of work are well documented. In marking, the criteria necessary to gain the

higher grades is not always adequately communicated to pupils. For example, in basic design principles of layout and the use of colour and lettering in graphics. There is some lack of subject richness in most areas of graphics. In the best lessons varied teaching strategies are used with whole class, group and individual tuition. Question and answer sessions are insufficiently developed in some lessons and although there is a good balance and integration of project and skills based work, there is insufficient emphasis on free-hand drawing. Teachers demonstrate procedures and processes well in all areas of the subject and pupils are taught to use resources and tools efficiently and safely.

28. Management and leadership are satisfactory. In order to raise standards in design and technology, staff changes have been made and schemes of work have been improved. However, there is little correlation, between the resistant materials, compliant materials and graphics areas of the subject. Design principles for graphics are not unified, and the department has little corporate identity. Weaknesses in department procedures, and possible causes for declining standards of attainment have been identified; for example, the underdevelopment of information technology; the lack of a technician for the food technology area; and insufficient learning support staff, but as yet remedies are only at the planning stage.

29. The school has been advised of a number of health and safety issues identified during the inspection.

Geography

30. Standards attained by pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 have not improved since the time of last inspection, and at Key Stage 4 have declined in terms of GCSE performance. Standards in the sixth form are in line with national expectations. Overall the performance of girls is better than boys. In all key stages the attainment of pupils is generally consistent with their ability. However, in the lower ability sets in Key Stage 3 there is some underachievement and because departmental strategies to raise standards are not applied consistently there is also underachievement in a number of classes across all key stages.

31. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils can use appropriate subject vocabulary, use sketches and diagrams to show key learning and apply their skills to basic map reading and simple investigations, More able pupils recognise how people can improve or damage the environment and interpret a range of sources such as photographs. By the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils can present their work appropriately and plan and implement, with support, investigative field work. Sixth form students have a sound understanding of cause and consequence with regard to human interaction with the environment and of the complexities of development.

32. Most pupils, including those with statements of special educational need, make satisfactory progress. However, the progress of some lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 is inhibited due to a lack of clarity and rigour in the use of strategies to support these pupils in collaboration with the learning support department. The progress of boys requires more rigorous action to ensure that teaching is more sharply focused on their learning needs. Progress is restricted for some pupils in all key stages where teaching is textbook led and pupils have little opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.

33. Progress is satisfactory when effective teaching enables pupils to recall previous learning and a variety of techniques, such as spider diagrams, are used to structure and highlight key learning points. This was for example, observed in Year 7 where pupils developed a greater understanding the life style of South American Indians by making comparisons with our own, through the effective use of a video and the display of information in a diagram. In Year 8 pupils' progress was enhanced through the effective use of a table to summarise their existing knowledge of life in Southern Italy and then to develop this into new learning by contrasting it with life in Northern Italy. In Year 11, pupils developed a good understanding about the impact of tourism on communities and the environment in Kenya through the effective use of a video and structured prompt sheet. Pupils make most progress when they identify with the teaching approach and the issues are dealt with in ways that stimulate their interest. In these circumstances they make steady improvement not only in the subject skills but also in the confidence with which these skills are used.

34. Pupils' attitudes and response are positive in all key stages. They have good relationships with teachers and their peers and settle quickly to lesson tasks. Behaviour is usually good and pupils work well collaboratively. When given the opportunity they are able to take responsibility for their own learning. However, some pupils

find the 70-minute length of lessons too long and have difficulty in sustaining concentration for the full period. As a consequence learning can become less effective towards the end of some lessons. Pupils generally take pride in their work and respect the resources of the school and the property of fellow pupils.

35. Although teaching is generally satisfactory in all key stages, there is some unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Examples of good teaching were observed in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, where teachers make good use of their subject knowledge to bring an added variety and range to their teaching. Teaching strengths include good relationships with pupils and these have a positive impact on the progress pupils are making. Effective use is made of questioning techniques both to challenge pupils and to reinforce and extend learning. Good support for individuals and groups is complemented by effective marking which indicates how pupils' work can be improved. When teachers use a variety of teaching approaches and activities the needs of different groups of pupils are met effectively and pupils become well motivated. However, less effective and unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 4 is often associated with an over-reliance on textbooks, limited interaction with pupils, little opportunity for pupils to be involved in the management of their own learning and unclear learning objectives.
36. The department is well led and has a positive subject ethos. However, not all staff are equally committed to the full range of strategies the department deploys to raise standards of attainment. This reduces the overall effectiveness of these strategies. The department improvement plan is insufficiently focused upon subject specific needs that include the use of information technology, which is significantly underused in teaching and learning. There is also a need to ensure that assessment is more sharply focused upon learning outcomes and the levels or standards sought. Resources to support the department's strategies are inadequate and this restricts the ability of teachers to extend the skills approaches to which the department has expressed a commitment.
37. Since the last inspection the department has made considerable effort to raise standards and address the issues raised at the time. However, much progress remains to be made and in this respect there is a need to ensure that all staff in the department consistently implement strategies for improvement.

History

38. Standards attained by pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 have not improved since the time of the previous inspection. At Key Stage 4, standards have declined in terms of GCSE performance. Standards in the sixth form are in line with national expectations. Overall the performance of girls is better than boys. In all key stages the attainment of pupils is consistent with their ability although in the lower ability set in Key Stage 3 there is some underachievement.
39. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils can understand and use time-scale gain information from sources and represent it appropriately. Their ability to apply their skills to investigative projects is more limited. Higher attaining pupils can appreciate the need to question the reliability of sources. At Key Stage 4 performance in GCSE has declined but is now beginning to improve, and indications are that it should improve further. By the end of the key stage most pupils understand cause and effect and have developed the ability to apply empathy to situations and events. They can structure a range of information from a variety of sources and, having interpreted their meaning, use it to argue a case with their peers. Pupils are able to evaluate sources and deploy their historical skills through investigative projects. In the sixth form, students are confident and able to express their views based on the analysis of data with clarity and logic. These views are founded upon balanced judgements well supported by evidence.
40. Most pupils, including those with statements of special educational need, make satisfactory progress. However, the progress of pupils with special needs at Key Stage 3 is restricted because of a lack of rigour and clarity in the systems for working with the learning support department. The progress of boys in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and of some lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 3, is sometimes inhibited because teaching is insufficiently focused on their learning needs. In all key stages there is clear evidence that most pupils make satisfactory progress in the presentation of their work. The clarity of presentation is enhanced by the department's strategy of making use of diagrams to represent key learning points. In all key stages pupils

apply their skills with growing confidence. For example, in Year 7 pupils were able to use models to test the value of siege equipment and in Year 10, pupils were able to debate the most significant reasons for the defeat of Germany in World War 1. In Year 13, students showed good progress in collaborative working and were able to present an analysis of Britain's relationship with Germany in the 1920's. In all key stages progress is enhanced through the effective use of video, supported by prompt sheets, to provide both context and focus on important aspects of the programmes of study and examination syllabuses.

41. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive in all key stages and particularly good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Relationships with teachers and their peers are good and most lessons have a genuine feeling of collaborative effort to raise standards. Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils are generally motivated to succeed and respond with interest. They are usually quick to settle in lessons and maintain their concentration over a reasonable length of time, although the 70-minute length of periods contributes to some loss of concentration towards the end of lessons, particularly amongst lower attaining pupils. The department's use of paired and group working enables pupils to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Pupils generally respect the schools resources and the property of fellow pupils.

42. Teaching in the department is good, particularly at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, and there are some examples of very good teaching. The subject benefits from specialist staff whose commitment and depth of subject knowledge brings an additional variety and range to the work. Teaching strengths in all key stages reflect sound planning, a variety of approaches, good interaction with pupils based on good relationships and effective questioning used to reinforce, challenge and extend learning. There is a consistent focus upon knowledge building and the opportunity to build understanding through collaborative activity. There is generally good and sensitive support for pupils, which has a positive impact upon the learning environment, pupil motivation and the raising of standards. A general weakness is the lack of linkage between learning objectives as expressed in teaching plans and the specific learning outcomes sought in lessons. Also, in a small number of lessons pupils are not sufficiently involved and the work is not appropriate to the needs of all pupils.

43. Departmental leadership provides a positive ethos for the subject, which is shared by all staff. The department has a strong commitment to raising standards. There is, however a need to include a strategy for the use of information technology in teaching and learning in the departmental development plan. There is also a need to target the use of assessment more clearly and in particular to link assessment to the learning objectives and the standards to be achieved. The department's efforts to raise standards are inhibited by inadequate resources, a matter that cannot be properly rectified given current levels of capitation allowances to the department.

171.

171. Modern Foreign Languages

44. After some years of poor results, standards in both French and German are rising. The 1999 GCSE results were above the national averages. Inspection evidence confirms the upward trend. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. Pupils listen well and attentively to foreign language speech and produce good prepared speech of their own. Although some pupils find it difficult to express themselves, more talented linguists can readily combine phrases to produce complex sentences. Standards of presentation of written work are unusually high. Unusually also, boys do not lag behind girls to the extent common nationally. Nor are there any evident differences of attainment between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. At Key Stage 4 pupils continue to produce work of a good standard and the introduction of a new examination course has motivated pupils to work throughout the key stage. Only in the Year 11 short course are the standards of work below expectations. Year 12 and Year 13 students are achieving satisfactory standards. However, the numbers of students are too small to make comparisons with national data meaningful.

45. Pupils and students are making satisfactory progress at each key stage, as are pupils with special educational needs. Higher attaining pupils make very good progress. The lively and purposeful atmosphere created in many lessons for example in a Year 7 class comprising pupils with poor literacy skills, helps lower attaining pupils to make good progress. However, the poor retention of lower attaining pupils makes their progress to be less satisfactory over time.

46. The good disciplinary climate within the department promotes high standards. Pupils arrive on time, equipped and ready to work. They generally maintain interest during lessons. However, the 70-minute lesson is considerably longer than the ideal for language learning as it is difficult for pupils, and lower attaining pupils in particular, to sustain their concentration for the full duration of the lesson. Pupils show respect for their teachers and the subject and readily applaud the efforts of their peers.
47. Good teaching is a feature of the department. Staff show good knowledge both of the content and the methodology of their specialist subjects. They are, however, sometimes less confident when teaching their second language. Good humour and good relationships with pupils and students are a constant feature of lessons. National Curriculum requirements are fulfilled and the needs of pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils are well met. However, due to the school policy of only offering one language in Years 10 and 11, higher attaining pupils do not have the opportunity to take up a second foreign language.
48. A wide and well-supported range of visits abroad makes a major contribution both to the standards being achieved and to the cultural life of the school. Resources for teaching are, however, inadequate. There are insufficient books for pupils to take home and this interferes with the use of homework to consolidate and extend classroom learning. Also, the absence of permanently available overhead projectors is a hindrance to teaching and learning. The department is led effectively and there is a good air of teamwork and mutual support. The languages department is making an increasingly effective contribution to the work of the school.

176. Music

49. Overall standards of attainment are below national expectations, although with slight variations in the three key stages. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is below national expectations. However, inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment are higher in Year 7 where pupils sing in small groups and play keyboards to accompany themselves. Examples of work observed in Year 8 and Year 9 indicate standards are below expectations with pupils in Year 8 performing similar tasks to pupils in Year 7. However, pupils with special educational needs do well at Key Stage 3 and achieve standards that are very similar to those of other pupils. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 4 are well below average. Pupils are able to compose simple pieces, although with limited melodic shape. Composition work tends to lack style with for example, pupils composing simple melodies to the words of existing Christmas carols. Performance levels are more variable with examples of above average attainment observed in a Year 10 flute lesson and in vocal performance in Year 11. The 1999 GCSE results were well below average. Examination results at A level are also below the national average, although inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment in both Year 12 and Year 13 are closer to national expectations with Year 13 pupils in particular, showing some competence when completing a Bach Chorale.
50. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at all key stages. By Year 9 pupils are able to develop a simple 30 second ostinato idea for a film track, practise their idea and record the end result. Similarly by Year 11, pupils develop sufficient skills to be able to complete and practise compositions and sometimes record or perform the finished versions.
51. Pupils' response is good at all key stages. The majority show a genuine interest in their work and remain on task throughout lessons. At Key Stage 4 pupils sustain concentration when practising and recording compositions. All pupils show positive relations with each other and with teachers. They almost always show respect for the musical instruments and other equipment. In Year 13 pupils take an active role in the lesson by taking on the responsibility to lead the discussion on completion of a Bach Chorale.
52. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory at all key stages and teachers show a good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught. Lessons are well structured and effective use is made of time. Practical work is well organised and objectives are made clear at the outset of lessons. Teachers' expectations are also made clear. However at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, pupils are insufficiently stretched and more able pupils rarely encouraged to develop their work. Use of resources is limited to keyboards in almost all lessons and this restricts the potential development of creative ideas.

53. Curriculum time for music at Key Stage 3 has now been increased to one double period every week. This is a significant improvement on the previous arrangement. Schemes of work are presently being revised for Key Stage 3 and there is now a need to produce more detailed documentation for Key Stage 4 and A level courses as a collaborative activity amongst all staff in the department. Accommodation has been a serious problem for the department with half the music rooms out of use last year. The music rooms have now been renovated and redecorated. However, the main music block is still in need of decoration and further power points need to be installed to avoid trailing wires. Resources within the department are generally adequate although there is a need for more percussion instruments. At Key Stage 4, there is a particular need for greater access to computers in order to improve composition work. The absence of the head of department, due to ill health, for much of the previous year has had an adverse effect on the work of the department. Nevertheless, there remains a positive ethos within the department and there are plans for a music production at Christmas as well as a full stage production of 'Bugsy Malone' in the spring term.

181. Physical Education

54. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils' attainments match those expected nationally. A substantial number of pupils achieve higher standards. The degree of underachievement noted in the previous inspection is no longer observed. Most pupils' ball handling skills in major team games are developing well as is a sound understanding of positional play and rules. In gymnastics, Year 7 boys perform a range of balances, link them into simple sequences and understand how to enhance the quality of movement. Many boys and girls in Year 8 swim confidently, though only a minority have developed good technique in more than one stroke.

55. By the end of Key Stage 4, in core lessons most pupils' attainments match national expectations. Some pupils achieve higher standards. Lessons are taught according to schemes of work rather than being leisure and recreation based and this ensures sound skill development. Many pupils are also able to take on a range of different roles including officiating, coaching others and supervising small-scale practices.

56. GCSE results A*-C are below the national average but have improved significantly over the last three years. Results for A* -G are above the national average. Girls' attainments are higher than boys'. This is being addressed through early identification of underachievement and an increased emphasis on homework. In theory lessons there is a wide range of attainments in presentation and extended writing. Higher attaining pupils produce work at least and often above expectations. As in the previous inspection, many pupils achieve high standards in practical work. In basketball both boys and girls display good passing technique and most pupils perform the lay up shot technically correctly.

57. The A level course is delivered via partnership arrangements. All pupils to date have achieved passes with a third achieving higher grades. The numbers taking the course are increasing.

58. By the end of Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils including those with special educational need make good progress with practical skills in a wide range of activities. Higher attaining Year 9 girls show a good command of ball handling skills in the competitive situation. Boys and girls in Year 7 are making good progress, know the correct technical names for major muscle groups and understand the short and long-term effects of exercise.

59. At Key Stage 4 curriculum time is half that of Key Stage 3 but most pupils make satisfactory progress in knowing how to officiate, coach and organise others. Much of the good progress in GCSE lessons is as a result of the extra time allocated and good teaching making explicit links between theory and practical.

60. At all key stages, attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are well behaved, work hard, persevere in response to challenges and show a genuine desire to progress. Participation rates are high and all pupils dress appropriately. Pupils also respond well when given responsibility and collaboration between those of different gender, attainments and ethnic background is good.

61. The vast majority of teaching is good and never less than satisfactory. Weaker aspects of teaching identified in the last inspection have been addressed. Knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the curriculum are

very secure and lessons are well planned with clear objectives. An extensive range of strategies is used to provide challenge and retain pupil interest. Teachers regularly question and create problem-solving situations to deepen understanding. In so doing they contribute effectively to the development of pupils' listening and speaking skills. Occasionally however pupil opportunities to apply skills in the competitive game situation are limited. At Key Stage 3 good use of assessment enables all pupils to know how they are progressing in practical activities and GCSE marking indicates how pupils can improve.

62. Departmental leadership is excellent. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed and standards have improved. The development plan provides a clear sense of direction and teamwork is strength. All teachers make good use of generally good accommodation and resources and this extends to the many extra-curricular activities they provide. These make a significant contribution to the corporate life of the school.

190. Vocational courses

63. The school, in partnership with Sneyd School, offers GNVQ Intermediate courses in art and design, business, health and social care, leisure and tourism, and science. The results obtained in 1999 were satisfactory overall and in line with those in schools with similar intakes to these courses. Standards of attainment in lessons and coursework are consistent with the results being obtained in external examinations. The majority of students diligently complete the course requirements and present the evidence for the awards. Most of the students, who do not complete the award, leave because they have secured employment. Evidence indicates that there is satisfactory coverage of the key skills. Research and presentation skills are generally weak.

64. Students following the GNVQ courses make satisfactory progress. They respond well to the structured nature of the course and their attitudes to learning are good. They work well in small groups and are very supportive of each other when making presentations. Students respond well to opportunities for self and peer assessment and demonstrate an ability to make critical observations in a sensitive way. Students with special educational needs are making good progress. They are very well integrated with their fellow students who show a great deal of consideration and support when they are making presentations. The take-up rates for the business and health and social care courses are satisfactory, and although the take-up rates for the other courses are comparatively low, viable groups are formed through the partnership with Sneyd School.

65. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Teachers communicate high expectations to students and work is well planned to ensure that maximum support is provided for students' learning. Methods and organisational strategies are generally appropriate and many good quality, teaching materials have been produced to support teaching and learning.

66. Assessment procedures are rigorous and consistent with the school's assessment policy and GNVQ requirements. There are regular meetings to standardise assessments and the assessment and grading decisions that are made satisfy national criteria. Vocational partnership meetings are held with Sneyd School every half-term.

67. The management and administration of the vocational courses are good and staff are continuing to develop their expertise through in-service training. There are good links with employers and other institutions. All of the students who have completed the intermediate awards have the opportunity of taking the advanced award in the local college of further education. There are effective arrangements for monitoring the implementation of policy and procedures both within the school and within the partnership.

68. Good progress has been made in the vocational area since the time of the last inspection. GNVQ courses are proving to be popular and serve to increase the range of achievement opportunities available for students. This school intends to increase the range by offering advanced courses and by introducing GNVQ at Key Stage 4. Vocational courses make a positive contribution to the quality of education provided at the school.

196. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

196. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

69.The inspection of Pool Hayes Community School was undertaken by a team of 12 inspectors who spent a combined total of 53 days in the school over a five-day period. The evidence in the report is based upon a total of 157 hours and 32 minutes observation from lessons and part-lessons, distributed across Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and post-16.

70.The evidence also includes:-

- Inspection of a range of other school activities, including assemblies and registrations;
- Scrutiny of registers;
- Observation of lunchtimes, break-times and informal discussion with pupils at these times;
- Inspection of schemes of work;
- Inspection of development plans;
- Inspection of books and other work of three pupils from each age group, selected by teachers to represent the full range of attainment;
- Inspection of written reports to parents;
- Discussions with the headteacher;
- Discussions with school governors, including the chair of governors before and during the inspection;
- Discussions with heads of departments;
- Discussions with year managers;
- Discussions with pupils in each age group about aspects of their work;
- Discussions with members of teaching, learning support and non-teaching staff;
- Discussions at a meeting attended by 29 parents before the inspection;
- 162 responses to the parents' questionnaire.

INDICATORS

DATA AND

199. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1064	39	139	218

200. Teachers and classes

200. Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	60.65
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	17.5

200. Education support staff (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of education support staff:	10
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	256

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes: 74.0

Average teaching group size: KS3 24.5
KS4 25.6

201. Financial data

Financial year: 1998/99

£

Total Income 2,352,198

Total Expenditure 2,340,866

Expenditure per pupil 2238

Balance brought forward from previous year -5601

Balance carried forward to next year 5731

202. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 1051

Number of questionnaires returned: 162

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	65	14	4	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	31	60	5	2	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	15	57	21	3	4
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	18	62	14	5	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	25	56	11	5	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	27	58	13	2	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	59	12	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	24	62	6	5	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	18	62	17	2	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	17	55	19	7	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	27	65	6	1	1