

INSPECTION REPORT

Hobart High

Loddon

LEA Area: Norfolk

Unique Reference Number: 121153

Inspection Number: 184431

Head-Teacher: Mr John Robson

Reporting inspector: Mrs Yvonne Barclay
8918

Dates of inspection: 11/10/1999 - 15/10/1999

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Jary
Date of previous inspection:	23/01/1995 to 27/01/1995

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	Business Skills	Leadership and management
	Child Care	Equal opportunities
Sheila Long, Lay Inspector		Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Felicity Golding	Geography	Attainment and progress
	Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Tony Payne	English	
Robin Ings	Mathematics	
Lawrie Ryan	Science	The curriculum and assessment
Julia Stephens	Modern Foreign Languages	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
David Sheppard	Art	Special educational needs
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		The efficiency of the school
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The proportion of pupils gaining high grades (A*- C) in GCSE is well above the national average and that of similar schools.
- The standards of attitudes and behaviour are good. Relationships and personal development are very good.
- The school promotes a strong ethos for learning.
- 65% of the teaching is good or better and 26% is very good or excellent.
- Where pupils with special educational needs are supported by specialist assistants their progress is good.
- The development of pupils' moral and social awareness is very well supported.
- There is a very good extra-curricular provision.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Strategic management planning does not provide a clear framework for further school improvement.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the school require further development.
- Whole-school matters are not managed and implemented consistently across the school.
- Pertinent Key Issues for Action identified in the OFSTED inspection report in 1995 remain outstanding.
- The school does not meet statutory requirements for Religious Education at Key Stage 4 and for a daily act of Collective Worship.

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

How the school has improved since the last inspection

- 2 The school has improved, particularly in the quality of teaching and in the standards pupils achieve, since the last inspection. Individual departments have made some progress in addressing issues identified in the 1995 inspection. The school has successfully addressed some of the key issues identified in the previous inspection, including the implementation of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. The school has enabled pupils studying a second modern foreign language to have access to all aspects of physical education to meet National Curriculum requirements and has addressed the health and safety issues identified in the previous inspection.
- 3 However, the majority of key issues have not been fully addressed. These still need to be dealt with. They are :
 - the provision for personal and social education
 - the effective use of form tutor time
 - the timing of the school day
 - the requirement to meet the statutory requirements for the provision of religious education at Key Stage 4 and a daily act of Collective Worship.
- 4 With reference to the evidence from this inspection, to the plans articulated by the new headteacher and from subject areas, the school has the capacity to improve further.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds in national tests, GCSE examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
Key Stage 3 Test	B	B	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
GCSE Examinations	B	B	

- 5 In 1998, at the end of Key Stage 3, standards of attainment, taking English, mathematics and science together, were above national averages. However, in 1998 standards in English were below the national average. At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more higher grades in GCSE was 58 per cent, well above the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining at least five A* to G passes, 94 per cent at GCSE was above the national average. In 1998, the subjects in which good or very good results were gained were science, business studies, information studies, geography and food technology.
- 6 In 1999, Key Stage 3 standards rose significantly in English, in mathematics standards rose slightly and in science standards fell slightly. At GCSE, results were further improved with 66 per cent obtaining the higher A* to C grades in at least 5 subjects, 99 per cent obtaining five or more A* to G grades and 100 per cent of pupils gaining one or more A* to G grades.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	Science, modern foreign languages, history, geography, physical education.	No subjects identified.
Years 10-11	Good	Science, modern foreign languages, geography, physical education.	No subjects identified.
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		

- 7 The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. The teaching is satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons, is good or better in 65 per cent of lessons and is very good or excellent in 26 per cent of lessons. Good teaching is a feature of nearly all departments. There are no departments where the teaching is consistently unsatisfactory.
- 8 Very good relationships promote a good climate for learning. All teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach. A positive work ethos permeates almost every classroom. However, in a few lessons when the range of activities do not meet the needs of all pupils, progress is limited.

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 in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are hard working and courteous. There have been no permanent exclusions. Ten pupils have been excluded for a fixed time.
Attendance	Overall attendance is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Authorised absence is at the national average.
Ethos*	Strong ethos for learning: pupils are keen to do their best. The headteacher and staff are committed to high standards. Relationships are very good.
Leadership and management	The weaknesses in strategic management and in the management of whole school issues were inherited by the new headteacher. He has already taken action on these matters.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced at Key Stage 3. However, there is no religious education for all pupils at Key Stage 4. Assessment practice is not consistent across the school.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are mostly able to make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Social and moral development is very good. Spiritual development is good and cultural development is satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There are sufficient well-qualified teachers and resources. The resources for information and communications technology are excellent.
Value for money	The school gives good value for money.

**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	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school enables pupils to achieve high standards of good behaviour.• The school enables their children to achieve a good standard of work.• The school likes to know about pupils' problems.• Their children like their school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no aspects of the school which received adverse comment.

- 9 The inspectors' judgements support the parents' view of standards and behaviour. Some parents were concerned with the amount of homework the school expected their child(ren) to complete. Inspection evidence found that homework was set regularly and the amount was appropriate. Homework has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

- 10 In order to improve further the attainment and progress of all pupils, the governors, headteacher, senior management team and staff should:
- i) develop a strategic vision for the school to give a clear framework for school improvement, which is understood by all staff and reflected in departmental development priorities and plans (paragraphs 73, 76, 78, 89, 91);
 - ii) establish systematic procedures at all levels of management for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, policies, practices and financial expenditure to focus on further school improvement of attainment and progress (paragraphs 74, 75, 77, 78, 92, 93);
 - iii) ensure a consistent approach in the management and implementation of whole-school issues including the -
 - procedures for assessment, recording and marking (paragraphs 52, 53, 54);
 - provision for pupils with special educational needs (paragraphs 43, 47, 64, 79);
 - iv) address the pertinent key issues remaining from the previous inspection in 1995 namely -
 - “Review the provision for personal and social education” (paragraph 48);
 - “Make more effective use of form tutor time” (paragraph 48);
 - “Review the timing of the school day” (paragraph 50);
 - “Fulfil the statutory requirements for the provision of religious education at Key Stage 4 and a daily act of Collective Worship” (paragraphs 45, 57, 80, 178).
- 11 Other weaknesses, which have not formed the basis of the key issues given previously, are identified in the following paragraphs:
- Ensure teachers share learning outcomes with pupils (paragraph 41)
 - Ensure teachers’ plans meet the different abilities of pupils (paragraphs 41, 42)
 - Comply fully with other statutory requirements, including appraisal and the governors’ annual report to parents (paragraphs 81, 84)
 - Review staffing: make non-teaching time reflect that needed for teachers to undertake responsibilities which can only be done during the school day (paragraphs 74, 83, 94)
 - Develop a policy for professional development (paragraph 84)
 - Evaluate the impact of staff development on classroom practice and standards (paragraph 84)
 - Ensure resources are adequate for learning (paragraphs 87, 88)
 - Develop schemes of work in mathematics (paragraph 117)
 - Address the accommodation issues in art (paragraphs 85, 130)

- 12 The school should consider including these in the governors' post-inspection action plan.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

- 13 Hobart High School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils from 11 to 16 years of age, situated in the village of Loddon, nine miles south-east of the city of Norwich. It serves the village and the surrounding rural area, taking pupils from primary schools and the neighbouring middle school. It has a dual-age intake with three classes of pupils transferring at age 11 into Year 7 and a further three classes transferring at age 12 into Year 8.
- 14 The school has 556 pupils on roll. The school is much smaller than other schools of the same type nationally. The intake of the school covers the full range of attainment, but data shows that on entry pupils' attainment is slightly higher than average. There are 117 (21 per cent) pupils on the school's register of Special Educational Needs; 16 (2.9 per cent) pupils hold statements of special educational needs. This is above the national average. There is a very small number of pupils who come from families where English is not the first language, which is low in comparison with national figures but representative of the county of Norfolk.
- 15 The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (9.2 per cent) is well below the national average. The social context of the school is good. A significant proportion of parents of pupils at Hobart High School work in professional occupations.
- 16 The school aims to convey the message that achievement is available to all and that tolerance and cooperation comes from developing an understanding of ourselves. The ethos of the school is based on the value of 'Learning for Life'.
- 17 The headteacher had been in post for five weeks at the time of the inspection.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	65	59	124

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	30	43	48
	Girls	42	40	40
	Total	72	83	88
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	59	67	72
	National	65	60	56
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	29	36	37
	National	35	36	27

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	N/a	44	50
	Girls	N/a	42	48
	Total	0	86	98
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	N/a	71	81
	National	62	64	62
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	N/a	44	51
	National	31	37	31

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	56	58	114

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	27	52	53
	Girls	39	55	58
	Total	66	107	111
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	58%	94%	97%
	National	44.6%	89.8%	95.2%

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and percentage of *such pupils* who achieved all those they studied:

	Number	% Success rate
School	0	N/A
National		N/A

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.9%
	National comparative data	7.9%
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.0%
	National comparative data	1.1%

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	10
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	26%
Satisfactory or better	97%
Less than satisfactory	3%

² Percentage in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 18 The standards of attainment of pupils by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 4 are above average. The percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A* to C grades at GCSE are above the national average, with very high results in some subjects.
- 19 In 1998, at the end of Key Stage 3 standards of attainment were above national averages. The percentage of pupils gaining level 5 or above in the test results was below the national average in English, above in mathematics and well above the national average in science. In English, the percentage of pupils attaining level 6 or above was below the national average, in mathematics the percentage matched the national average and in science it was well above the national average. In the most recent tests in 1999, attainment rose significantly in English. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level for their age rose slightly and in science standards fell slightly. Overall, across all three subjects, pupils' performance was above average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The performance of boys and girls, taking all three core subjects together, was above the national average. The difference between girls' and boys' performance was less than is usually found nationally.
- 20 Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, in terms of the average level achieved in the Key Stage 3 tests, pupils achieved well above the national average in science, above in mathematics and close to the national average in English.
- 21 At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more higher grades in GCSE (A* to C) was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining at least five A* to G passes at GCSE was above the national average. In 1999, these results were improved further, with 66 per cent obtaining the higher A* to C grades in at least five subjects, 99 per cent obtaining five or more A* to G grades and 100 per cent of pupils gaining one or more A* to G grades.
- 22 Based on the last three years from 1996 to 1998, results have been well above the national average. This trend has been continued in 1999. In 1999, a significant percentage of boys gained more A* and A grades than girls. Nevertheless, overall there is less difference in the performance of boys and girls than in most schools. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, the percentage of pupils who obtained five or more A* to C grades in GCSE was well above the average for similar schools.
- 23 The 1998 GCSE results for double science were well above the national averages, with 85 percent of pupils achieving grades C or above. The GCSE results in optional subjects were good or very good in business studies (no longer taught), information studies, geography and food technology.

- 24 Inspection evidence indicates that in English at Key Stage 3, the overall attainment of pupils is high. Standards of speaking and listening are very good, as a result of pupils having good opportunities to explain and to hypothesise. Written work is well presented and standards of reading are good because of the extensive opportunities to undertake research. Pupils make very good progress at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, the overall attainment of pupils is good. In the school as a whole, standards of reading, writing, speaking and listening are good. Pupils' literacy skills make a significant contribution to standards overall.
- 25 In mathematics at Key Stages 3 and 4, the overall attainment of pupils is good. The standard of attainment in number is good. Most pupils are able to perform calculations, have a good sense of number and explain their numerical methods well. Attainment in shape, space and measure and in handling data is also high. Attainment in using and applying mathematics is sound.
- 26 In science at Key Stage 3, attainment is very good because of well-sequenced learning activities and enthusiastic teaching. At Key Stage 4, attainment is very good, with pupils well prepared for GCSE modular tests, resulting in them making very good progress.
- 27 In other subjects, at Key Stage 3 attainment is good in French, German, information technology, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education. Attainment in all other subjects is satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, attainment of pupils is very good in business studies (no longer taught), information technology, geography and food technology. Standards are good in all the other subjects. The attainment of pupils at both Year 7 and Year 8, as they enter the school is slightly higher than average.
- 28 Overall, the progress of pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good. In 1999, analysis of assessment data demonstrates that very good progress was made by the pupils who took GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4, when compared with their levels of attainment on entry. For example, in English at Key Stage 4, pupils extend their understanding of character and motivation by discussing their homework very effectively in small groups and subsequently use this to further their understanding of techniques for undertaking comparative studies.
- 29 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are effectively helped to gain examination success. They make particularly good progress in English and mathematics when supported by subject specialist teachers. In other lessons, their progress is mostly satisfactory but, in a few lessons where learning activities are not sufficiently matched to their needs, progress is unsatisfactory.
- 30 Parental opinions that standards are good are well founded.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 31 Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and tackle their work with sustained interest and enthusiasm. They are highly self-motivated. Many lessons are characterised by pupils' eagerness to answer questions or to offer opinions. The amount of work completed in lessons is good and pupils are keen to finish tasks as part of homework. They support and encourage each other well, for example, in synchronised swimming in Year 7, or when Year 11 pupils work as "Buddies" with Year 7 pupils, offering them advice on matters such as managing their homework. Very positive attitudes are also displayed in extra-curricular activities, where pupils often take the lead, for example, in rehearsing for the "Grease" production or leading a dance session. When learning activities are closely matched to their needs, pupils with special educational needs are committed to their learning and behave well. They integrate with other pupils well and take a full part in the life of the school.
- 32 Pupils' personal development is very good. Where a number of opportunities occur for pupils to exercise initiative and responsibility they respond in a mature manner. In geography, for example, pupils share responsibility for getting information from the Internet and, in design and technology, they show initiative in using a wide range of sources to support their design work. Pupils in Year 11 take responsibility for directing their play and for editing the school newspaper. In music, pupils book their own rehearsal time and manage this independently. At lunch times, pupils help each other to clear the tables in the dining hall and others work independently in the computer room, taking responsibility for their own learning.
- 33 The posts of school prefect and form representative are respected and pupils aspire to them. Younger pupils new to the school relate how helpful and supportive they find older peers. Parents and pupils report that there is little fear of bullying because incidents are rare and are dealt with effectively. In lessons, pupils accept different points of view in discussion, show patience with classmates and often spontaneously help each other. In religious education, for example, simple rules have been established to allow pupils to share beliefs without fear of prejudice. Pupils were heard in discussion, making intelligent comment on the effects of cultural differences.
- 34 Behaviour in and around the school is good. There is very little disruption in lessons and pupils readily work in pairs or small groups in a mature manner. Conduct is orderly and managed well.
- 35 There are very good relationships between staff and pupils and their peers, based on mutual respect and a willingness to cooperate. Pupils perceive that staff care about them, so they accept correction, where necessary, with good grace. They value the positive discipline, which is seen to be fair. Parental opinions that behaviour is generally good are well founded.

Attendance

- 36 The level of attendance is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Authorised absence is the same as the national average. Individual and whole-school targets have been set to improve attendance. The school uses a computerised system of recording attendance, which is appropriately monitored on a weekly basis and meets statutory requirements. Pupils consistently arrive on time for lessons. Overall, the regularity of attendance and punctuality has a beneficial effect on pupils' attainment and progress.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 37 The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons, is good and better in 65 per cent and is very good or excellent in 26 per cent of lessons. Teaching is unsatisfactory in four lessons. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when the teaching was judged to be good in about 50 per cent of the lessons.
- 38 Teachers promote very good relationships in lessons, effectively ensuring a good climate for learning. This leads to a positive work ethos permeating almost every classroom. The teachers have the respect of their pupils and behaviour is mostly good. Teachers have high expectations. These are significant features which contribute to the improving levels of pupils' attainment during their time at the school.
- 39 Good teaching is a feature of nearly all departments. All teachers have a very good understanding of the subjects they teach and plan effectively to promote learning. In geography, a very well prepared lesson enabled Year 7 higher-attaining pupils to focus on the issues surrounding traffic congestion, to develop their thinking skills and to become increasingly independent in their geographical enquiries, because they were required to research data for both themselves and their peers.
- 40 Very good lessons start with the teacher explaining clearly what pupils are going to learn. They use questions skilfully to probe pupils' understanding, involve them in the lesson and enable them to explain what they know. The pace is brisk, the work is challenging and well structured and teachers have high expectations of all pupils. In very good teaching a wide range of methodologies and techniques is used to maintain interest and engage pupils throughout the lesson. For example, the skilled use of a ripple tank in science to develop middle-attaining pupils' understanding about the interaction of waves resulted in them sustaining concentration for extended periods.
- 41 A relatively weak feature of teaching in many lessons is that teachers give insufficient attention to sharing learning aims at the start of the lesson, assessing individual progress throughout the lesson and checking learning at the end. Good practice occurs in geography where, for example, learning outcomes are shared, and stepped activities enable pupils of different abilities to make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of geographical terminology. By checking this understanding and assessing their progress, the teacher plans appropriately for the next lesson. Such good practice has yet to be identified and shared with other departments.

- 42 Weaknesses identified in the previous inspection remain in some aspects of teaching, for instance, in the planning to meet the different abilities of pupils. In some lessons, there is an over-reliance on a worksheet or text, the pace is too slow, time targets are not used to keep pupils effectively on task and, in consequence, pupils' concentration and learning declines as the double lesson progresses. Individual departments have made satisfactory progress in addressing this issue, but there has yet to be coherent development across school.
- 43 The teaching of English for pupils with special educational needs is consistently good. Teachers form good relationships with these pupils and have high expectations. Teachers know the pupils well and construct programmes of learning matched closely to pupils' needs. In mathematics, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound, although there are some gaps in their current subject knowledge. In other subjects, such as science, design and technology, geography, history and physical education, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound and often good. However, in certain lessons in some subjects, teachers do not make sufficient use of information from individual education plans when planning lessons and, in these lessons, the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is much more variable.
- 44 Homework is set systematically, effectively reinforces or extends learning in lessons, and has a significant effect on the standards pupils achieve. Evidence from the inspection did not confirm parental concerns regarding the amount of homework. An appropriate amount of homework is regularly set.

The curriculum and assessment

- 45 The curriculum is broad and balanced at Key Stage 3. It meets the requirement to deliver the subjects of the National Curriculum, as well as sex education through science. All pupils have equality of access to the subjects of the curriculum, which are taught for the appropriate amounts of time, with the exception of physical education for those studying two modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3. However, there is no provision for religious education at Key Stage 4. This Key Issue, raised in the last inspection, has not been addressed.
- 46 Subject departments plan the curriculum well, particularly in English at both key stages and in religious education at Key Stage 3. Additionally, planning is effective in ensuring that pupils arriving in either Year 7 or Year 8 make at least satisfactory progress. For example, the middle school follows the same science and geography courses as the high school in Year 7, and information from common tests informs setting decisions and promotes a smooth transition. This effective liaison with the middle school enables pupils to enter at Year 8 with similar experiences to those pupils already at the school.
- 47 Pupils with special educational needs have full access to a balanced curriculum, leading to examinations at GCSE. All pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans, which are reviewed appropriately. In some cases, the plans have insufficient detail to enable teachers to construct learning activities to meet pupils' needs. On other occasions, some teachers do not make full use of individual education plans when planning their lessons.

- 48 The previous inspection required the school to review its provision for personal and social education in Years 8 and 9 and to make more effective use of tutor time. A coordinator has just been appointed to develop personal, social and health education at Key Stage 3. The Health and Anti-Bullying Days for Key Stage 3 pupils do not provide for adequate personal and social education. However, at both key stages, aspects of health, including drugs and sex education, are effectively taught through science. Personal, social and health education in Year 7 promotes effective personal development and study skills. Evidence indicates that tutor time is not always used effectively to enhance standards in personal development. Insufficient progress has been made on these issues.
- 49 The programme of personal, social and health education at Key Stage 4 is diverse, effective and supported by several outside agencies, including the Careers Service. Careers education, including the school's provision to inform pupils of their "Education after 16" when they leave Hobart, is good. For example, a very informative sixth form advisory evening was held during the inspection week. All pupils leave Hobart with a comprehensive, externally accredited National Record of Achievement.
- 50 The previous inspection required the school to review the timing of the school day to meet DfEE guidelines. Whole-school discussion took place, but no action followed. Insufficient progress has been made on this key issue. However, there has been satisfactory progress on the issue of providing a balanced curriculum for physical education for those studying two modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3. Pupils now cover all statutory aspects of the programmes of study within a reduced time.
- 51 The breadth and quality of extra-curricular activities is very good. The school's value of 'Learning for Life' is effectively promoted through pupils having the opportunity to participate in a school production, play chess, walk for charity, take part in a canoe club, participate in a good range of competitive team games or play in musical ensembles. The provision for both girls and boys and their participation are equally good.
- 52 The use made of assessment data is inconsistent across the school. Some departments, for example English, make good use of the wide range of information available on attainment to monitor pupils' progress and set targets. In information technology lessons, pupils track their progress against National Curriculum statements and can explain their targets for learning. However, some teachers make insufficient use of assessment information about pupils' prior attainment when planning lessons. There are sound plans to involve Year 11 form tutors in target-setting with pupils. Assessment information is regularly used by specialist staff to plan programmes of work for pupils with special educational needs. Senior managers are aware of the need to make more effective and appropriate use of assessment data. The previous inspection identified aspects of assessment as a key issue. There is now an assessment policy, but this has yet to be applied consistently. Additionally, the school has yet to identify and spread the good practice evident in some departments.

- 53 Marking within and between some departments is inconsistent. Pupils value the useful guidance given to them, by some teachers, on what they must do to improve their written work. The monitoring and evaluation of marking requires a whole-school approach, so that purposes and conventions are clear, appropriate and consistent.
- 54 The previous inspection required a consistent approach to the management and implementation of assessment, recording and marking. Overall, there has been insufficient progress in addressing this issue.

Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 55 The school enables very good moral and social development, good spiritual development and satisfactory cultural development for its pupils. The school describes its ethos as being one which fosters a caring community, based on tolerance and cooperation, in which pupils achieve their highest potential. It is evident from the purposeful, calm and friendly atmosphere of the school that all who work in or attend Hobart High School contribute to this ethos.
- 56 The school makes a good contribution to the spiritual development of its pupils. There are opportunities for pupils to consider the plight of others and to participate in supporting various charities. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the spiritual awareness of pupils when, for example, they explore the attitudes of different faiths to social issues. There are opportunities in history for pupils to reflect on the fundamental questions of life such as birth, marriage and death during their study of 1571 census documents. In science, pupils responded with awe when celebrating the size of the universe and in design technology a Year 7 group, when working with plastics, showed wonder and curiosity at the thermo-plastic qualities of some materials. However, there is no specific policy or shared understanding of the spiritual dimension of the curriculum. The school has not traced, through its curriculum planning, opportunities for spiritual development.
- 57 The school has made some improvement to its provision for collective worship since the last inspection. It has increased the number of year-group assemblies. However, it still does not meet statutory requirements in providing a daily act of collective worship. Restriction of accommodation is the main reason. The quality of the collective worship during the inspection was satisfactory or better, with appropriate themes chosen. Some opportunities for pupils to participate and reflect featured in the best examples seen. There is no overall policy, planning or record keeping for collective worship and this is an area where the school could improve.
- 58 The moral development of pupils is very good. The school places a lot of trust in the pupils and they respond in a mature manner. The privilege of 'open access' to school accommodation and computers is not abused. Moral issues are addressed in a number of curriculum areas such as English, science, history, geography and religious education. Issues concerning human rights, prejudice and discrimination are addressed and, for example, in Year 9 explore concerns about endangered species in geography.

- 59 The social development of all pupils is also very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in activities which require cooperation with others, particularly in music and sporting activities, both within the curriculum and in extra-curricular events. In many lessons, pupils work together effectively in groups and share their ideas with one another. Pupils in Year 11 make a major contribution to the school community in their roles as prefects and through the support they give as 'Buddies' to the youngest pupils. There is a good range of educational visits such as geographical field trips, museum visits in history and exchanges to France and Germany in modern foreign languages.
- 60 There is good provision for all pupils to develop an appreciation of their own culture. However, multicultural awareness is underdeveloped. The school has encouraged some awareness of cultural diversity through subjects such as English, science, food technology, art, music, history, geography, modern foreign languages and religious education. Year 11 pupils in an English lesson consider the issue of characters reconciling two different cultures and in science pupils look at alternative energy sources in different parts of the world.

Support, guidance and pupils welfare

- 61 The supportive and caring environment within the school is a strength. Teachers take an interest in their pupils as individuals and the resulting very good relationships help pupils to feel valued and secure, which makes a positive contribution towards effective learning.
- 62 There are good systems to monitor and record behaviour and attendance and clear procedures ensure consistency in their implementation. There are effective systems to counter bullying. For example, in Year 7 as part of their personal and social education programme, pupils discuss definitions of the term bullying and how to cope with it as individuals.
- 63 An effective tutorial system ensures that pupils are well known to form tutors, heads of year and the senior management team. They use this knowledge, together with their assessments of pupils' achievements, to provide helpful advice and guidance on, for example, option choices at the end of Year 9. The Careers Service provides appropriate information on option choices and career paths for Year 9 pupils. Pupils receive helpful guidance regarding examination entry and progression to sixth form.
- 64 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by specialist staff. In lessons where there is no additional support available, some make insufficient progress. Many pupils contribute to the identification of the targets in their own individual education plans. However, some individual education plans have insufficient detail to enable subject teachers to adapt their work to meet the needs of these pupils. Support available from external agencies is used and managed well.
- 65 The school has recently asked Year 11 pupils to act as "Buddies" to Year 7 pupils. Pupils value the scheme and it is successful in giving older pupils an opportunity to exercise responsibility appropriately. There is a School Council and pupils understand the procedures and purpose for electing form representatives. Prefects have a range of in-school responsibilities, which they carry out in a mature manner. For example, during lunchtime they supervise other pupils working on computers.

- 66 There are very good procedures in place for child protection. Appropriate staff are adequately trained and further professional development is planned. The governor designated for child protection matters is kept appropriately informed.
- 67 A number of health and safety issues raised during the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The school is alert to health and safety issues and appropriate policies are in place. Staff are vigilant in keeping premises and equipment in safe and good order. The school has very good safety procedures in place, particularly with regard to the buses and the sponsored walk.

Partnership with parents and the community

- 68 The school values the opinions and involvement of parents; staff listen to their comments and take appropriate action. For instance, the headteacher took immediate action and put into place appropriate monitoring procedures when a behavioural concern was brought to his attention.
- 69 The new headteacher is appropriately reviewing the annual reports to parents, parents' evenings and communication with parents and the community. There is an excellent level of response from parents taking part in the annual reviews of pupils with special educational needs.
- 70 Parents make a good contribution to the life of the school through the well-established Parent Teacher Association, which supports the school through various fundraising and other activities. The "Education after 16" evening, to provide information on the range of choices and courses available after GCSE, was well attended by parents and pupils. The Parent Teacher Association makes considerable effort to involve the local community in school activities and endeavours to promote an awareness of the school's success.
- 71 The school has satisfactory links with the local community through its careers programme, with members of the business and working community taking pupils through mock interviews. Links include, for example, the James Paget Hospital, Blundeston Prison and a range of local businesses and professional groups. Good liaison with Norfolk Careers Service ensures the smooth running of work experience placements.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

- 72 The school has four aims which provide a sound insight into the purposes and values of the school. The school's achievement in relation to these aims is good, particularly in focusing on the achievement of high standards. There is a very good ethos for learning and equality of regard is effectively promoted.

- 73 The new headteacher, five weeks in post at the time of the inspection, is energetic and has an appropriate vision for the future development of the school. This has yet to be shared with all staff. The governing body must now fulfil its statutory responsibilities in working with the new headteacher to determine this vision. Governors are now clear about their role in appropriately holding the school to account for decision-making and standards. They acknowledge that they have not systematically addressed the Key Issues for action identified in the inspection in 1995. The chair of governors and the headteacher have already established an effective working relationship, quickly being strengthened by their regular meetings. The governors' knowledge of the school, gained through the annual departmental review meeting, is limited.
- 74 The headteacher has increased the number of staff in the senior management team. He has appropriate plans to develop clear line management responsibilities and aspects of school improvement for each senior colleague to lead on. A whole-school approach is now needed to secure on-going improvement. However, senior staff have insufficient non-teaching time to effectively fulfil the full range of their responsibilities.
- 75 Middle managers are mostly effective in carrying out the day-to-day management of their responsibilities. Heads of subject departments provide good professional leadership for their departments. The role of coordinators with responsibility across the school, for example, special educational needs and information communications technology, is less effective and relies on informal arrangements, rather than a whole-school coordinated approach.
- 76 Strategic management is underdeveloped. The school development plan is not a corporate document focused upon school improvement, with clearly articulated success criteria linked to raising standards. Departmental plans neither systematically reflect nor inform the whole-school plan. Priorities are not discussed as a whole school within a clear framework for improving standards still further. Insufficient analysis of the range of available data takes place to formulate a coherent plan for school improvement. Similar weaknesses were identified in the 1995 inspection.
- 77 The previous inspection report identified the need to "establish procedures for monitoring and evaluating school policies, practices and financial expenditure in order to inform school development planning". No consistent evaluation of departmental responses to the priorities identified in the previous inspection has taken place. This remains a weakness.
- 78 Departmental development planning in a few subjects is good, in most it is unsatisfactory and in a few, poor. Some departments, such as science and geography, have a number of appropriate objectives and actions within their plan based upon a review of previous work. However, in most departments, development planning has weaknesses; the costing and resource implications of objectives are often vague; very few success criteria refer to specific outcomes for pupils and monitoring arrangements are not specified. There is no systematic monitoring of teaching and learning or evaluation of the effectiveness of the different approaches to whole-school policies and practices. Good practice is neither regularly identified nor systematically shared across the school. The professional development of middle managers to fulfil their range of responsibilities has started and the new headteacher is right to see this as a priority.

- 79 The school is now complying with the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice. All pupils with special educational needs have an individual education plan. However, the lack of clear evaluation procedures and responsibilities, results in special educational needs provision lacking the consistency provided by a whole-school approach. The governing body gives appropriate consideration to special educational needs issues, but the role of the designated governor is still underdeveloped.
- 80 The school's arrangements for collective worship and the provision of religious education at Key Stage 4 fail to meet statutory requirements. These weaknesses were identified in the previous inspection and remain outstanding.
- 81 The governors' annual report to parents does not comply with statutory requirements in that parents have not been informed annually about the progress the school has made in addressing the issues identified in the inspection in 1995.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

- 82 The school has a high number of well-qualified teachers to enable it to meet the demands of its curriculum effectively. The quality and relevance of their expertise and experience make a significant contribution to the good standards achieved by the school. The training and experience of learning support and other non-teaching staff are generally well matched to their roles. Suitable support is provided to those teachers who are working towards qualified teacher status.
- 83 However, there are inadequacies in specific areas of staffing. The requirement for senior managers to hold a number of significant and different responsibilities produces a very heavy workload. Special educational needs teachers sometimes teach subjects in which they do not have sufficient expertise; there is a need for professional updating of special educational needs staff teaching mathematics. The technician support arrangement for information technology across the school is inadequate, resulting in equipment and recently acquired applications not being available for learning.
- 84 The school does not have a system of teacher appraisal nor a policy for the professional development of staff. Until recently there was no formal provision for the induction of new teachers to the school. Professional development reviews are offered to all staff, but these are voluntary and very few teachers have taken this opportunity. Teachers' professional development needs are discussed mostly at departmental level and opportunities for staff to participate in a range of professional development activities are effectively encouraged. However, there is no systematic means of identifying individual needs in relation to management responsibilities. The school has recently purchased a 'School Improvement' training package, which is helping to establish a more coherent, whole-school approach to the planning of professional development. There has been little progress since the last inspection in evaluating the impact of staff development on classroom practice and standards.

- 85 Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is good for information and communication technology, mathematics, music and for some aspects of physical education; but is unsatisfactory for religious education. In art, accommodation is inadequate and limitations of space and insufficient sink facilities sometimes place constraints on pupils' learning opportunities. Similar constraints arise in physical education, where there is no dedicated teaching base for theory lessons.
- 86 There are good examples of display space being used to create a stimulating and supportive learning environment in English, physical education, modern languages, science and mathematics. There are useful displays to support learners in their reading in the library. Other display areas of the school, including some corridors, are used less effectively; this confirms the concerns raised by parents.
- 87 Overall, learning resources are satisfactory. The computer resourcing for information and communication technology learning is excellent. Resources in geography and modern languages are very good. There is a good range of resource material to support pupils with special educational needs. However, there are unsatisfactory resources for art and there is a significant amount of old equipment used in design and technology, which significantly constrains learning.
- 88 The school library is a pleasant and light room, but is underdeveloped as a resource for learning. The library is used effectively to promote and support the Reading Awards Scheme. However, lack of investment in recent years, together with inadequate systems of borrowing, has led to a depletion of stock and to a relatively high amount of outdated books and reference materials. Cataloguing systems have not been modernised. The new headteacher has recognised the need to redevelop this facility and to make it a more appropriate resource for learning.

The efficiency of the school

- 89 The school has had a relatively high carry-forward of funding over the past three years, but some of this has been used to meet additional staffing costs and for the development of information and communication technology provision. The school cannot continue spending at this rate.
- 90 Governors are involved in scrutinising and agreeing the draft budget, which the senior managers have prepared. The governors' finance committee, supported by senior managers and the school's finance officer, monitor expenditure closely and ensure that the school's policies on financial matters are followed. This is reflected in the most recent satisfactory report from external auditors. Funding is allocated appropriately to support pupils with special educational needs and reported appropriately in the annual report to parents. Overall, administrative and financial procedures are good.

- 91 Strategic management planning is not effective and expenditure is not well focused on meeting identified whole-school priorities. Assessment of the cost-effectiveness of expenditure in relation to improvements in the quality of education for pupils is not well developed. Weaknesses in evaluation and financial planning within the school development plan, which is not accurately costed, contribute to this. Staff with management responsibilities are not consistently well informed about financial planning. Much of the departmental planning is unfocused, as there is no whole-school framework for heads of departments to work within. Clearer articulated success criteria would also allow the cost-effectiveness of expenditure to be judged more effectively. Insufficient progress has been made with regard to this issue since the previous inspection. The new headteacher is aware that this is a legacy from the previous regime. He has already formulated sound plans to rectify these weaknesses.
- 92 Governors and senior managers are now appropriately considering current financial data, projections and the level of unallocated reserve to match curriculum needs and further school improvement. The whole school does not yet have a clear shared view of its priorities. Appropriate alternative financial strategies are being considered, for example, for the maintenance of information and communication technology provision and technical support. It is too early to identify the effect of these.
- 93 Allocation of funds for learning resources is based on historic spending in departments, rather than on meeting newly identified curriculum needs. The recent large expenditure on improving information and communication technology provision has led to some deprivation in other areas, for example, the library, and in some departments such as design and technology.
- 94 Staff are generally appropriately deployed to meet the needs of the curriculum. There are some inconsistencies in the allocation of non-teaching time and the deputy headteachers have an unacceptably high teaching load, which prevents them from carrying out their strategic and monitoring responsibilities effectively or systematically. Staffing ratios are slightly above the national average necessary to ensure appropriate curriculum coverage. Staff are generally deployed effectively to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs.
- 95 When the attainment of pupils on entry to the school, the progress of pupils, the strong ethos and the quality of education which the school provides are considered in relation to the school's income, the school gives good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

- 96 Standards of attainment are well above average at both key stages. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are very good. The school provides good opportunities to develop speaking and research skills and, because of this, pupils are able to speak confidently to inspectors and use the Internet to support their learning.
- 97 In 1998, the percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 reaching level 5 or above was below the national average and performance was below that of pupils in similar schools. In the 1999 national tests, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 and above was well above the national average, and the percentage of pupils achieving level 6 or above was nearly twice the national average. In these tests, in 1999, the performance of boys and girls was similar. The attainment of boys has improved significantly from 1998.
- 98 In 1998, attainment at GCSE in English was above the national average, with pupils achieving a high number of A* and A grades. The attainment of girls was higher than that of boys. Boys performed well in relation to the national average. This represented a good improvement on the previous year's results. In 1999, the percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades increased again.
- 99 In 1997, attainment in English literature was well below the national average. In 1998, the attainment of both boys and girls had improved relative to the national average, yet was still below it. In 1999, the percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades improved.
- 100 Attainment in speaking and listening is very good. At the end of Key Stage 3, higher attainers listen to each other well and use talk to explore ideas. Lower attaining pupils answer questions clearly and with confidence, using talk well to convey opinions. Average attaining girls are more skilled than boys and, for example, moderate their talk more readily during drama improvisations. Higher attainers at the end of Key Stage 4 are very articulate. They make extended contributions to class discussion and make perceptive observations. They explore text in depth by talking through ideas. Lower attainers talk well in pairs when planning work, but lower attaining boys are unskilled at sustaining a role and moderating scripted talk appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs, both boys and girls, undertake poetry reading with a very good sense of audience.

- 101 Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 3 is good. Pupils use non-fiction texts effectively to find information and to prepare writing for presentation to an audience. More able pupils show a good range of strategies for recording information. They show a good understanding of literary devices and characterisation. Less able pupils understand how text produced by an organised charity can be presented both to inform and persuade. During Key Stage 4, more able pupils read with fluency and understanding. They show understanding of complex texts and demonstrate keen analytical skills, whether it be through a multi-layered media study, considering Macbeth as ‘a study in fear’ or examining how Priestley attacks the, “complacency of the middle class.” High average attainers identify key points in a text and discuss motivation of characters and comment appropriately on symbolism. They show an awareness of the cultural issues which motivate characters and make good use of textual references. Pupils with special educational needs have the confidence to analyse a poem in terms of ‘surface meaning’ and ‘deeper meaning’.
- 102 At Key Stage 3, pupils’ ability to produce an extensive range of writing in different styles for a variety of audiences and use, is good. They write with insight and maturity. Higher attainers adopt an appropriate style, for example, when producing an article or a brochure. Pupils with special educational needs write a sound media study based upon a review of a television programme. At Key Stage 4, higher attainers produce a good range of written work for audience and purpose. They produce interesting, sustained writing to argue a case and put forward a point of view. They clearly understand how language is used to prompt a response from the reader. Lower attainers, for example, craft a script suitable for the introduction of a radio programme. The quality of writing associated with the study of texts is very good. Spelling and handwriting are satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs are skilled at checking their own spelling by using electronic, hand-held spell checkers. Written work at both key stages, particularly drafting and spelling, is frequently improved by using a word processor.
- 103 Pupils make good progress in lessons and good progress through to end of Key Stage 4, where the quality of support in preparing coursework has a very positive impact on standards of attainment. Pupils at Key Stage 3, for example, make good progress in a lesson, which develops their understanding of figurative language. At Key Stage 4, pupils refine their understanding of character and motivation by discussing their homework very effectively in small groups, and subsequently using this to increase their understanding of techniques for undertaking comparative studies.
- 104 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of appropriate specialist support. By the end of Key Stage 4, they read and understand complex texts and write extended accurate and coherent essays. Much of their success is due to good, sustained support. Encouragement to use information and communication technology to enhance writing has a positive impact on the progress of boys of all abilities.
- 105 The response of pupils to learning is good and sometimes very good. At its best, boys and girls work well collaboratively, discuss their work in depth and make their own notes as the lessons progress. They plan their work well and show interest in demanding subject matter. Relationships and behaviour within lessons are good. Pupils demonstrate good, independent study skills generally through homework and when, for example, they use the Internet to research the cultural and political context in which plays were written.

- 106 The quality of teaching is almost always satisfactory or better. In one in five lessons it is very good or excellent, and in two out of five lessons teaching is good. Very good subject knowledge and high expectations have a very positive impact on attainment. Teaching is particularly effective when the teacher sets a very good pace assisted by clear, short deadlines and pupils work hard and complete good quality work very effectively in the timescale. The teachers work to ensure active participation by the majority of the class within an atmosphere in which it is acceptable 'not to know'. Feedback to boys is calculated to keep them participating and the lesson moves seamlessly between class, group and pair work, giving pupils time for reflection and for sharing ideas before committing them to the whole class.
- 107 Teaching is sometimes less effective when pupils work independently for too long while the teacher supports individuals. On other occasions, tasks are not broken down into manageable units. The former leads to some pupils waiting for advice on what to do next and they start to chatter; the latter leads to pupils taking too long over single activities. In the unsatisfactory lesson at Key Stage 3, the declared learning objectives were not effectively addressed and pupil progress was insufficient.
- 108 The English department, under strong leadership, has addressed the key issues raised in the last inspection and has made good progress in relation to each of these.

Mathematics

- 109 Attainment in mathematics is above the national average in both key stages.
- 110 In the 1998 end of Key Stage 3 tests, 67 per cent of pupils in the school achieved level 5 or above, compared with 60 per cent nationally and 36 per cent of pupils achieved level 6 or above, equal to the average for schools nationally. In 1999, 72 per cent of pupils in the school attained level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 3 compared with 62 per cent nationally and 44 per cent attained level 6 or above compared with 38 per cent nationally.
- 111 At GCSE in 1998, results were above the national average with 48 per cent achieving grade A* to C compared with 44 per cent nationally. In 1999, the percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades rose to 56 per cent.
- 112 In the majority of lessons in both key stages, pupils' attainment is in line with or exceeds national expectations. In lessons where attainment is below the national average, classes are sets for lower attaining pupils. Most pupils have good recall of number facts and perform a suitable range of calculations mentally accurately. They generally use calculators appropriately and most give reasonable estimates for calculations. They understand and use mathematical language correctly and talk confidently about the stages in working out answers.
- 113 Standards of numeracy are good. In science, calculators are used appropriately for calculations on a range of types of numbers including fractions, decimals, ratios and proportions. In geography, history, modern foreign languages and information and communications technology they have opportunities to collect, make sense of and present information graphically and in design and technology pupils measure to a reasonable degree of accuracy. Examples of the results and analysis of surveys presented graphically, using computers and also drawn by hand, are displayed in several other subject areas.

- 114 Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment above the national average and make satisfactory progress in mathematics through the school. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. The highest attaining pupils generally make satisfactory progress in sets for more able pupils. However, relatively higher attaining pupils in other sets are insufficiently challenged to extend their understanding when planning and learning activities take insufficient account of their abilities. At Key Stage 4, pupils' progress is at least satisfactory and often good, as pupils consolidate their previous learning in preparation for GCSE examinations. Lower attaining pupils receive good individual support from their teachers and make good progress in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when supported by specialist teachers. However, the lack of specific mathematics targets in many individual education plans makes it difficult to evaluate and support pupils' progress.
- 115 Pupils' attitudes to learning are nearly always good and sometimes very good. They usually work with sustained concentration, behave very well and have very good relationships with their teachers and peers. They often support each other informally when working on tasks and where collaborative learning activities are planned, such as playing a mathematical game, they work together very effectively. They work independently and most complete their homework tasks. However, opportunities for problem-solving and investigative activities that encourage them to take responsibility, are not well integrated in to the mathematics curriculum.
- 116 The quality of teaching is almost always satisfactory or better. In nearly half the lessons, teaching is good and, in one lesson, very good. Teachers use their subject knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to very good effect to provide clear and purposeful explanations and models of mathematical techniques. They set clear targets for learning, monitor and maintain a good pace and clearly summarise methods and ideas. Most lessons are planned effectively to provide an appropriate sequence of activities, but sometimes objectives for learning lack clarity and tasks are insufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils in a class. The unsatisfactory lesson, at Key Stage 3, did not have an appropriate variety of activities and much time was spent completing an exercise that was insufficiently challenging for the majority of pupils. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and classroom management is good. Homework is generally used well to consolidate learning.
- 117 The resources available to the department are administered and deployed effectively and efficiently by the head of department. A textbook scheme is used to provide a sound structure to the mathematics curriculum. Computers are used effectively, but using and applying mathematics is insufficiently integrated with other aspects of mathematics. Schemes of work for mathematics are not in place. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the department, and planning for future developments to raise standards further, have yet to be established. Tests are used regularly to assess attainment, but pupils rely mainly on marks in these tests to gauge their attainment and progress.
- 118 The department has made satisfactory progress in response to some issues raised in the previous inspection report, including extending resources and challenging pupils to explain their mathematical thinking. However, assessment, target setting, strategic planning and extending programmed opportunities to develop pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills, need further development.

Science

- 119 Attainment in science at the end of both key stages is very good. In 1998, at the end of Key Stage 3, 72 per cent of pupils attained level 5 or above, well above national averages. The number achieving level 6 or above, 37 per cent, was also well above national averages. These results are well above those achieved by similar schools. Results over the last three years have fallen slightly; nevertheless, standards of attainment remains well above national averages.
- 120 At Key Stage 4, the 1998 GCSE results for double science are well above the national averages, with 85 per cent of pupils achieving grades CC or above. The proportion of pupils achieving the top grade is twice the national figure. Pupils do well in both double and single science compared to their other subjects, with 74 per cent of pupils achieving one grade C or above. These high standards have been maintained over the last three years.
- 121 Scientific knowledge and understanding is developed well across attainment targets 2, 3 and 4 at both key stages. Experimental and investigative skills are taught well at the start of Year 7 and attainment matches that in other attainment targets.
- 122 Pupils at all levels of attainment make good or very good progress. For example, in a top set Year 11, pupils are confident and articulate in explaining their previous work on electrolysis, electromagnetism, transformers and diodes. Middle sets in Year 10 perform calculations involving energy, power and efficiency. Lower sets in Year 8 have a good understanding of basic astronomy and in Year 7 they can draw line graphs with help and construct their own bar charts. Pupils with special educational needs taught in the smaller bottom sets receive individual support and make good progress. For example, the Year 9 set has received a good balance of structured worksheets extending writing opportunities to develop their communication skills.
- 123 Pupils show a keen interest in science and respond well to the efforts made by teachers to provide stimulating experiences. Pupils remain attentive during introductions and explanations because of enthusiastic teaching and skilful questioning. Pupils in Year 9 show initiative and assess and monitor their own progress effectively in their project work.
- 124 The quality of teaching is almost always satisfactory or better. In over half the lessons, teaching is very good or excellent and in one in four it is good. Teachers show excellent subject knowledge in their specialist subjects and have used this to design well structured learning sequences in their schemes of work. Introductions are full of interesting relevant facts, such as information on the skeleton and the structure of bones, which hold pupils' attention. High expectations are established and lower sets respond well to some difficult concepts introduced at Key Stage 3, where teachers plan well, adapting a published scheme to meet the needs of their class.

- 125 Teachers generally use time effectively. However, in some practical lessons insufficient time is available to discuss findings and for the teachers to assess learning against objectives. In the poor lesson, pupils' progress was unsatisfactory because the change between activities was ineffectively managed, the pace was inappropriate and the end of the lesson weak. In the best practice, teachers maintain a brisk pace by setting strict time limits, then support pupils to adapt work to meet the deadline. For example, in a Year 8 lower set, the class was given a time to complete a table of interesting facts about the planets. The pupils responded well to the task and were able to abbreviate entries, with advice from their teacher, as the time left diminished.
- 126 The head of department has a significant effect on the high standards achieved. Teachers use a common marking policy linked to an agreed rewards system which is effectively motivating pupils. Some books are marked to the highest standard. Pupils are keen to learn science because of the very good teaching, good relationships between staff and pupils and the mutual respect. This makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

- 127 By the end of Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils produce work which meets national expectations. Most pupils demonstrate a good level of technical ability when they are drawing or painting. Their observation is good and they represent aspects of the environment in their own designs appropriately. More able pupils make careful selection from their own work of suitable points to develop. Pupils work imaginatively with a range of materials to produce effective collage work. Three-dimensional work is less well developed and pupils' imaginative response is more limited. At Key Stage 4, pupils research projects effectively and understand the importance of supporting documentation. GCSE results fluctuate according to the ability of those who choose to do art. In 1998, 47 per cent of candidates gained A* to C passes, below the national average. However, in 1999 GCSE results were considerably above the national average with 75 per cent gaining grades A* to C.
- 128 Pupils join the school with very different previous experience of art. Some Year 7 pupils have had little experience of using paint, whilst others have a good level of technical ability. By the end of Year 9, most pupils work effectively and have made good progress. Higher attaining pupils analyse images well and show a good awareness of styles of art. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, modify and refine pieces of work to achieve desired effects. A small number of low attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress because they find it difficult to sustain concentration during extended art projects.
- 129 Many pupils enjoy their art lessons and there is a good take-up for the art option at Key Stage 4. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils work well independently and take responsibility for tools and materials. With a few exceptions, pupils maintain concentration and work methodically through extended projects. However, because of a relaxed style of teaching pupils rarely display a sense of urgency with regard to completing projects and the pace of their work is often unsatisfactory.

- 130 The quality of teaching is always satisfactory. Teachers are able artists in their own right and use their skills well to give clear demonstrations. They refer regularly to examples of work by established artists and former pupils to give a clear idea of intended outcomes. When giving advice to individual pupils, they form good working relationships and contribute interesting ideas. When working with whole classes, the pace is often too slow and does not make sufficient demand on pupils.
- 131 The quality of work in larger classes is restricted by the accommodation. Teaching spaces are crowded and pupils moving along narrow spaces between tables have difficulty in avoiding others. Sink spaces are inadequate and storage space is limited. There are many examples of exciting artwork within the department, but relatively few contribute to the visual quality of the school as a whole. Recent development planning intends to address this by extending art display work in corridors.

Design and technology (including child development)

- 132 Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 shows that the percentage of pupils reaching level 5 or above, 83 per cent, was higher than other foundation subjects within the school and a significant improvement on the 1997 figures. In 1999 the percentage fell. The standard of work of many Year 9 pupils matches national expectations for the end of Key Stage 3.
- 133 At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results show improvement over the past three years. In 1998, the percentage of pupils gaining grades A* to C was above the national average in resistant materials and graphic products; and well above in food technology. A higher than national percentage of pupils gained the highest grades, particularly in food technology. All pupils who entered a design and technology examination gained a grade G or above. This is above the national figures. In 1998, 57 per cent achieved A* to C grades in child development and all pupils achieved grades A* to G. 1999 examination results show further improvement.
- 134 Pupils in Years 7 and 8 make rapid progress. Teachers appropriately improve pupils' knowledge and skills across all aspects of the design and technology curriculum, through their accurate identification of gaps in prior learning. During the key stage, pupils increase their technical vocabulary systematically and build up a wider range of practical skills using an increasing range of materials because of teachers' good subject knowledge, expertise and high expectations. The modular curriculum has been thought through carefully so that designing skills, such as research or evaluation, are developed in an appropriate sequence. The quality of pupils' drawings improves and they have a wider range of graphic skills to enable them to communicate their ideas effectively. Their knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties is developed and new areas of knowledge, such as computer control, are successfully introduced. Because teachers challenge pupils through questioning, allow ample opportunities for pupils to work independently and to evaluate their own and others' work, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

- 135 Pupils' progress at Key Stage 4 is good. Knowledge and skills develop appropriately in relation to GCSE course requirements. Good progress is evident in the development of an increased complexity of skill, better accuracy, increased quality of finished products more refined evaluation because of pupils' high levels of self-motivation and teachers' high expectations. Pupils produce some imaginative solutions to design problems. However, their attainment in computer control technology is limited because of resource inadequacies. Progress is enhanced at both key stages by the regular opportunities provided by teachers at break, lunch times and after school for pupils to prepare, or to continue with, their work.
- 136 Pupils at Key Stage 3 are keen to learn and their attitudes to learning are good. They listen carefully to instructions, willingly join in class discussions and share ideas. They concentrate well and persevere with more difficult tasks, sharing tools or materials sensibly when necessary. Behaviour is almost always good and often very good. Pupils show pleasure in their finished work and considerable initiative and creativity in the presentation of it. At Key Stage 4, pupils' attitudes are very good. They take the initiative in seeking out various sources of information to support their design work. They willingly try different ideas and help each other. Almost all pupils work safely with a more complex range of materials and tools, taking responsibility for their own safety and that of others.
- 137 The quality of teaching is always satisfactory. In two out of three lessons, teaching is good and, in one in four, very good. Teachers plan activities and resources well, but do not always plan what they want pupils to know, understand or be able to do with enough precision. Teachers have good subject knowledge enabling them to use a wide range of appropriate teaching methods effectively to improve pupils' understanding, challenge their thinking and relate class work to manufacturing in industrial situations or the development of small children. Relationships between teachers and pupils are friendly and mutually respectful. Classes are managed well, with very good discipline. Teachers use a good range of resources including equipment, tools, text, graphics, visiting speakers and visits, for example, to food processing companies. This has a positive influence on standards. Day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is generally effective in helping pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to do in order to improve their work. For example, in child development, pupils are aware of how to improve the quality of their work to gain marks at GCSE. Homework is regularly set and is effective in reinforcing and developing class learning and enabling progress with coursework.
- 138 Teachers make very good use of the resources they have, but have to work extra hard to counteract the deficiencies so that attainment remains high. Much of the equipment in food technology, for example, is very old and the numbers of some basic items of equipment are insufficient. Much of the workshop equipment is old and not all is suitable for current curriculum needs.

Geography

- 139 Standards of attainment in geography at the end of Key Stage 3 meet national expectations. The proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades at GCSE are high, both in comparison with national averages and with similar schools. There has been a steady improvement in the percentage of pupils obtaining A* to C over the last four years. In 1999, over 90 per cent of the pupils who took geography obtained A* to C grades and over half gained the highest A* and A grades.

- 140 By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have good knowledge of the places where their case studies are located. Pupils carry out geographical enquiries well and higher attaining pupils pose pertinent geographical questions, as a result of the range of opportunities presented to them in class and for homework. At Key Stage 4, pupils interpret maps well and select appropriate sections to illustrate the points they make. At both key stages they demonstrate an understanding of the geographical issues they have studied. For example, pupils in Year 9 know that changes to the environment have put some species in danger. In Year 11, high-attaining pupils explain well the complexities of urbanisation in Indonesia.
- 141 Pupils make good progress in knowing and using correct geographical terms. They become increasingly independent when investigating geographical case studies, because of the clarity with which the task is presented and the guidance about how to gather their own information. Pupils in Year 11 make good gains in their knowledge and understanding through a focused revision programme, which includes the use of computers at lunchtimes, practice in timed exam questions and examples of good answers. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at a good rate, due to the support given to them in lessons and to the range of resources provided.
- 142 Pupils have a positive attitude to their geography lessons. They show an interest in topical geographical events and many use their own time to research information in addition to that set in class. In lessons, they concentrate well and collaborate sensibly when working in groups.
- 143 In four out of five lessons, teaching is very good. The quality of teaching is always good and has a major impact on the high standards achieved and the good progress pupils make. Lessons are very well prepared with a clear structure presented to the pupils. For example, a Year 9 group, studying wildlife conservation, was provided with study packs containing the latest information, a time schedule for completion and feedback to help them refine the quality of their work. Teaching skilfully enables pupils to improve their learning by involving them in deciding how best to undertake tasks and by ensuring all pupils understand the purpose of the activity. Pupils are managed successfully to ensure they concentrate on their work and behave well. Expectations of what the pupils can achieve are high. Teaching exploits information and communication technology effectively as a means of learning geography. For example, a class of Year 11 pupils was required to undertake a challenging research task to find the reasons for the growth of Jakarta. They used both an up-to-date case study and relevant data accessed using the Internet by one pupil who acted as a researcher for the rest of the class. The teacher demonstrates good practice by using technical vocabulary and shows pupils how a geographical perspective helps them understand some of the major concerns relevant to their own lives, such as transport congestion in cities. A particular strength of the teaching is the way all skills and themes in the geography curriculum are integrated to provide a coherent programme for pupils, which is both challenging and relevant for their lives.

History

- 144 Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, in 1998, match that of pupils nationally. In 1999, teachers' assessments showed an improvement in attainment and this is reflected in the evidence gained from observing pupils' work in lessons and in their books.

- 145 By the end of Key Stage 3, nearly all the pupils have good historical knowledge and understanding and make relevant use of evidence to undertake enquiry work. An example of this is displayed in their use of sixteenth century Census material to investigate and use data. They have good skills in the interpretation of historical facts and events. For example, in Year 9, higher attainers interpret, establish linkages and evaluate the causes of World War Two, using a range of sources and justify their conclusions. Lower attaining pupils and those with special education needs use information from a range of sources to organise and explain the causes both orally and in response to set tasks. By the end of Key Stage 3, all pupils record history effectively in a range of genre, including poetry, letters and diaries.
- 146 Standards of attainment at GCSE in 1998 are well below the national average and those achieved in other subjects in the school. This set of results is against the trend for history. At the last inspection in 1995, “standards were in line with national attainment”. In two of the intervening years, history at least matched and, in 1999, was significantly above, the national average. Evidence from pupils’ work in lessons and in their books indicates attainment is at least in line with national standards.
- 147 At Key Stage 4, pupils have at least the basic skills of research, organisation and the ability to make preliminary judgements based upon historical evidence. Higher attaining pupils are able to establish links between, and discuss interpretations of, events. They take a more analytical approach to their enquiries and support their work with more relevant detail than average attainers.
- 148 Pupils of all abilities make good progress at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory or better progress at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3, knowledge, understanding and skills increase rapidly because of good and, at times, very good teaching and positive pupil attitude. Challenging and well selected resource materials lead to pupils gaining a thorough understanding of historical sources. This includes those pupils with special educational needs, where the skill of the teacher is used to clearly explain technical vocabulary and adapt materials to be used in a challenging and interesting way.
- 149 At Key Stage 4, progress is satisfactory overall. Where progress is good, for example, when studying the American West, more able pupils articulate clearly the causes, consequences and differing interpretations involved in their enquiry. Progress is less secure when pupils are not clear about time scales and expectations.
- 150 Pupils’ attitudes to learning are good at both key stages. Pupils at Key Stage 3 are positive, interested and enjoy their lessons. In oral work, most are keen to participate, respond well to teachers’ questions, provide their own views, hypothesise and discuss issues to reach conclusions, for example, in Year 9 when exploring reasons for the attitudes of the different countries represented at the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference. They display respect for each other and the different values and beliefs held by people in the past. At Key Stage 4, pupils are motivated to meet lesson objectives. They work well in all group activities and act independently and with responsibility.

- 151 The quality of teaching is always good and, in two out of five lessons, very good. As one pupil stated 'this is a good subject well taught'. The teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is first-class and is used effectively to support the good progress made by pupils. Individual lesson planning is good with clarity of focus, well timed activities and supported by appropriate and varied resources. Homework supports the pupils' learning by being integral within each topic. The quality of marking is sound, but day-to-day comments do not give sufficient focused advice on what pupils do well and what they can do to improve.
- 152 A key strength of the teaching, which answers a criticism in the last report, is the good balance between group, independent and teacher-directed work at both key stages. This supports high expectations, enables pupils to develop a wider view of issues and encourages pupils to investigate for themselves.

Information technology (including business studies –now no longer taught)

- 153 At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is well above national expectations. At Key Stage 4, attainment is only recorded formally for those pupils taking the GCSE business studies and information studies options. In 1998 and 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades was significantly above national averages in both subjects. The grades pupils achieved in both GCSE businesses studies and information studies were significantly better than their performance in other subjects.
- 154 At both key stages, pupils of all abilities are competent users of computers. They operate computers confidently and use information technology processes to support their learning in many of the subjects they study.
- 155 On entry to the school in both Year 7 and 8 pupils capabilities using computers match national expectations. Pupils make good progress because of the number of computers within designated suites and across the school, and the access most pupils have at home. This progress is significantly affected by their attitude to the use of computers. In information technology lessons and when working on computers at other times, pupils start up systems on arrival in class, responsibly following protocols, ready to start lessons straight away. In lessons, worksheets provide effective focused opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of the full range of applications, including the Internet. However, in some double lessons too long is spent on one task without the teacher's intervention or interaction to extend it. As a result, progress is restricted and pupils begin to chatter amongst themselves. For example, when searches using 'Ask Jeeves' on the Internet are not productive and the number in the class reduces the support the teacher can give to individuals at any one time, the incidence of chatter increases and progress decreases.
- 156 The integration of information technology into most subjects at both key stages provides pupils with appropriate challenge by applying information technology skills within different contexts. For example, in science, data loggers are used effectively to monitor the temperature changes when heating and cooling stearic acid. A musical composition software program is used well to extend pupils' composition work for backing tracks, assisting their technical musical understanding.

- 157 Information technology is used successfully to motivate pupils and to help them make progress in their learning. For example, lower-attaining Year 11 boys spoke of how the presentation and standard of their work has improved. They explained how they used computers as a 'tool to help thinking' in starting work, drafting and improving the standard of their English written work and their prospective grades. Additionally, a significant numbers of pupils work on computers during the lunch break, enabling them to carry out research tasks using the Internet, complete work not finished in class as well use the computer effectively to improve on their own performance.
- 158 All the teaching is satisfactory and, in three out of four lessons at Key Stage 3, is good. The excellent management of pupils and high expectations of discipline, including homework completion, promote a very positive work ethos. Teachers have good technical skills which they focus effectively in lessons and provide structured opportunities for pupils to develop skills as independent users of information technology. However, insufficient attention is given to sharing learning aims at the start of lessons and in checking these to enable, particularly middle and lower-attaining pupils, to understand the progress they are making and the skills they are acquiring. Pupils' progress is assisted by their opportunities to use computers frequently and by the positive attitudes that most teachers have to their application within subjects.
- 159 At Key Stage 3 and at GCSE, the attainment and progress of pupils is assessed and reported accurately through the specialist information technology lessons. The department has addressed this issue, identified in the previous inspection, appropriately. However, at both key stages, systems are not sufficiently well developed to enable pupils' progress and attainment to be measured when using information technology across the curriculum and too few subjects are involved in making judgements about standards of attainment. This recording of attainment is neither systematic nor coordinated. Additionally, the coordinator has yet to monitor information technology teaching and learning across the school and use this evaluative data in the development plan for information and communications technology.
- 160 The imbalance in the provision of the major strands of information technology, noted in the previous inspection, is being appropriately addressed by the significant appropriate use of computers and the development of control technology in design and technology.

Modern foreign languages

- 161 Over the last three years, attainment at Key Stage 3 has been consistently better than the national expectations. An increasing percentage of pupils achieve above national expectations. Attainment in lessons is in line with, or above, national figures. At Key Stage 3, pupils acquire and use a good range of vocabulary and develop reasonable confidence in speaking the foreign language. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. They consolidate their understanding and use of vocabulary, grammar and structure, including past and future tenses. This provides a good foundation for further learning.

- 162 The percentage achieving A* to C grades at GCSE in French in 1998 is 46 per cent, which is in line with national averages. The percentage achieving A* to C grades at GCSE in French in 1999 is 69 per cent. Boys' performance has been better than that nationally and has improved significantly. The short course GCSE results in 1999 also show improvement from 1998.
- 163 The percentage achieving A* to C grades at GCSE in German in 1998 is 46 per cent, which is in line with national averages. In 1999, the percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades for GCSE German improved considerably to 64 per cent. An increasing percentage of boys are achieving the highest grades.
- 164 At Key Stage 4 pupils achieve in line with their abilities and many attain very well in relation to national expectations. Higher-ability pupils produce extended pieces of written and oral work, such as comparing the characters and personalities of their friends and family for example in Year 10 French. Their work reflects good control of language, including German word order. Pupils of average or lower ability make good use of what they know to improve their understanding and to extend their knowledge.
- 165 At both key stages there is a trend of improvement, particularly in the relative performance of boys. Pupils' pronunciation and accent are generally good, reflecting teachers' own language skills and their high expectations. Pupils' listening skills are particularly well developed, because of sustained use of the French or German language from their teachers and from tape recordings of native speakers.
- 166 Although many pupils show considerable linguistic ability, currently no pupils study more than one language at Key Stage 4. The organisation of the curriculum does not enable some pupils to achieve their potential as dual linguists.
- 167 With few exceptions, pupils are well motivated and show interest and enjoyment in their learning. Many show a reflective curiosity about language rules and patterns. They work effectively and cooperatively in small groups. When using French or German to undertake class surveys of how people travel, for example in Year 8 French, or when using cue-cards to make, accept or decline invitations. In Year 9 German, they sustain their use of the foreign language, and rarely resort to English. However, they are less likely to use the language for informal communication during lessons.
- 168 The quality of teaching is a strength of the department. In more than one in three lessons, teaching is very good and excellent. It is good and better in almost four out of five lessons, and always satisfactory. Skilful teaching and positive attitudes of the pupils to learning combine to make a significant impact on the standards achieved in both French and German. Teachers use a wide range of resources confidently and effectively to present and practise French or German. Good planning and preparation lead to an efficient use of time, a variety of activities and a brisk pace. For example, a Year 8 class of lower-ability pupils practised a range of familiar German vocabulary and new phrases about hobbies through lively flashcard games and repetition. They undertook a class survey and a written exercise to reinforce their language. Reliable and regular assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are undertaken. However, pupils are not always sufficiently aware of how well they are doing, what they could do to improve and what the learning objectives for lessons are.

- 169 The head of department provides good guidance, support and leadership. Although some ways of providing for different abilities within a group have been developed since the last inspection, the range of strategies is not yet wide enough. Satisfactory progress has been made on the subject-specific issues that were raised in the previous inspection.

Music

- 170 Attainment in music is good. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils are producing work which meets national expectations. They perform melody lines with confidence and maintain their own parts in group playing, showing awareness of other musicians. They sing confidently and tunefully. When composing, they understand simple musical forms, and incorporate them into their own work. They listen carefully and are able to state clear opinions on the work of others. At Key Stage 4, pupils show good awareness of musical styles and traditions and perform work with close attention to musical dynamics. GCSE results fluctuate according to the ability of each year group, but are consistently close to national averages or above them. 1998 results were excellent, with all candidates achieving A* to C grades.
- 171 When pupils join the school in Year 7, some have a good level of knowledge and understanding of music, but many pupils have serious gaps in work that they should have covered in Key Stage 2 and lack confidence in their performing. Most pupils who join the school in Year 8 have a good level of previous musical experience, have a good understanding of musical structure and are able to perform pieces with two or more parts. By the end of Year 9, most pupils have a good level of musical understanding and some, particularly those who have instrumental lessons, make exceptional progress and are able to take the GCSE examination early. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and often achieve good results in music. Attainment has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- 172 Pupils find music lessons interesting. They behave well, concentrate on the work set and stay on task, even when they are not receiving direct attention from the teacher. They have a good awareness of the progress they are making and know what they have to do to improve. Many bring their own instruments to use in music lessons. Attendance at music activities outside lesson times is good. Pupils often take responsibility for organising their own rehearsals.
- 173 The quality of teaching is always satisfactory. In three out of five lessons it is good or very good. The teacher has a well-developed knowledge of music and good musical skills, which are used to demonstrate activities and motivate pupils. Expectations are high, and music lessons are filled with busy, purposeful activity. Pupils' work is regularly assessed, and information from assessments is used carefully to plan the next steps in their studies. Visiting instrumental teachers are organised well, and make an effective contribution to the high standards achieved. Accommodation and resources are good and have a positive effect on the standards achieved.

Physical education

- 174 The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard by the end of both key stages exceeds that found nationally and throughout the school pupils make good progress.
- 175 High standards are evident for boys and girls in Association football and basketball at both key stages. In these activities, pupils apply their skills and understanding effectively when playing the game or suitably modified versions of the game. Particularly good progress is noted in girls' football. Teachers plan well and their very good knowledge of the subject ensures activities are well matched to the abilities of their pupils. Teachers ensure the health and well-being of pupils. For example, in hockey and rugby, many pupils wear mouthguards and shinguards.
- 176 Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. These pupils receive very good support from their teachers. This is particularly evident in synchronised swimming in Year 7. In these lessons, pupils discuss and evaluate their work and plan the next stages of their sequences successfully.
- 177 Overall, the quality of teaching is good and very good features are often evident. All the teaching is satisfactory, in half the lessons it is good and in almost a third, very good. This, coupled with pupils' good attitudes to their learning, makes a significant contribution to the good progress pupils make. For example, in basketball at both key stages, pupils apply their individual skills well when playing the game. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are consistently good. This results in pupils showing a very positive approach to their work and working very hard in lessons. For example, in gymnastics at Key Stage 3 and in hockey at Key Stage 4, they celebrate each other's achievements and persevere to improve their skills.
- 178 The head of department provides strong leadership. This contributes significantly to the improving standards evident since the school was last inspected. Statutory requirements for the subject are now met in full. However, pupils who study a second modern foreign language still have a reduced time allocation for physical education during Key Stage 3. This is unsatisfactory.
- 179 A very good programme of extra-curricular activities and lunchtime clubs enhances the provision. These are very well attended by both boys and girls of all abilities.

Religious education

- 180 At Key Stage 3, attainment overall meets the standards expected by the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus for religious education. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the main world faiths. Those pupils in Years 10 and 11 who choose to take the full GCSE religious studies course obtain good results at the end of Key Stage 4. There has been a rising trend in the percentage of pupils attaining an A* to C grade over the last four years.

- 181 Pupils at Key Stage 3 make steady progress in their knowledge and understanding of religions. They often make good progress in understanding how beliefs affect religious practices and ways of life. For example pupils in Year 9 are able to consider appropriately the teachings of Christianity and the use of drugs and alcohol. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress. Their progress is good when teachers provide support for their learning by focusing on one step at a time, or by using aids such as a framework for their writing. One was used effectively when constructing an obituary for Martin Luther in Year 8.
- 182 Pupils generally show a positive attitude towards their learning in religious education. They are willing to listen to one another's views. As they arrive in Year 7, pupils are helped to develop a set of classroom rules in which they agree to respect the right of others to hold beliefs different from their own. Pupils respond well when there is a variety of activities or stimulating resources are available. Many pupils are keen to undertake their own research using both reference books and the Internet. On these occasions, they show a good capacity for personal study and for taking responsibility for their own learning.
- 183 The quality of teaching is almost always satisfactory or better. In three out of seven lessons, it is good. Teaching is most effective when teachers' subject expertise ensures that pupils are challenged to consider current issues from the point of view of different faiths. For example, biblical quotes are used well to illustrate Christian views about alcohol. Lessons are well planned, with a strong emphasis on the school's aims for religious education which help pupils to understand what it means to be religious and tolerant of people who hold views different from themselves. A very effective lesson enabled pupils to reflect on the issues of prejudice through the medium of drama, in which they experienced first-hand how minorities might feel. This led to a high level of attainment of empathy. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, teaching is less effective when the pace of learning across the hour and ten-minute lessons is allowed to drop or when the pupils are unclear about the purpose of the lesson and their attention wanes.
- 184 The school has made insufficient progress in addressing the issue raised in the previous inspection report. As stated then, the provision for religious education at Key Stage 4 does not comply with statutory requirements, both in terms of time allocation and syllabus. There is a short and inadequate religious education module in the personal and social education programme in Year 10, covering in the main moral and social issues, which does not meet the Agreed Syllabus requirements. No religious education is provided for pupils in Year 11.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 185 Eleven inspectors, including the lay inspector, spent a total of 42 inspector days in the school gathering first-hand evidence.
- 186 Interviews were held with all subject and aspect coordinators, senior managers, chairs of the governors' committees and chair of governors. Samples of pupils' work (six pupils from each year group covering the full ability range) were scrutinised in detail. Inspectors also scrutinised the work of many pupils within lessons and within departments.
- 187 In total, 103.33 hours of teaching were observed in 132 lessons. A further 28.47 hours were spent observing class and school activities, including assemblies, registrations, and scrutinising pupils' work. The work scrutinised covered the full range of attainment and formal discussions were held with those pupils whose work had been scrutinised in detail. Informal discussions were held with many other pupils. Inspectors made observations of pupils' work on display. Discussions were held with staff and parents.
- 188 Parents' responses from 181 questionnaires and comments, from the parents' evening and in writing, were taken into account by inspectors.
- 189 A wide range of documentation was analysed before and during the inspection, including the school development plan, school policies, documentation from subject departments, the school budget and the audit report.

DATA AND INDICATORS

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
1998	556	16	117	49

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (1998)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):

31.02

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

16.3

Education support staff (1998)

Total number of education support staff:

5

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

17.9

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:

79.6

Average teaching group size:

KS3

20.59

KS4

20.24

Financial data

Financial year:

1998 -1999

	£
Total Income	1,196,982
Total Expenditure	1,217,076
Expenditure per pupil	2,401
Balance brought forward from previous year	91,612
Balance carried forward to next year	71,518

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:
Number of questionnaires returned:

556

181

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	14	67	11	5	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	35	52	6	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	15	50	20	3	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	15	59	16	6	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	23	54	10	6	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30	60	6	1	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	29	54	14	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	13	65	9	8	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	21	59	13	2	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	25	58	10	2	0
My child(ren) like(s) their school	24	63	7	5	0

No significant issues were raised by parents

190 Only 24 parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector and supporting inspector. During the meeting parents expressed the views that :

- the school has high expectations for all pupils and standards are good;
- some parents were concerned with the amount of homework the school expected their child(ren) to complete;
- concern was raised about the poor standard of work on display;
- bullying was very rare and when it did occur, it was dealt with quickly and handled well. Parents praised the way the school dealt with the matter;
- behaviour is very good.