

INSPECTION REPORT

TADCASTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Tadcaster

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique Reference Number: 121693

Inspection Number: 184433

Headteacher: Mr G Mitchell

Reporting inspector: R Hedge

2932

Dates of inspection: 27 September – 1 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708210

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Toulston Tadcaster North Yorkshire LS24 9LB
Telephone number:	01937 833466
Fax number:	01937 836082
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Charlotte Bromet
Date of previous inspection:	March 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
R Hedge, RgI		Attainment and progress Teaching Curriculum and assessment Leadership and management Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Partnership with parents and the community Efficiency
W Barton, Lay Inspector		
D M Green	Mathematics	
J N Hedge	Equal opportunities	
P Sellwood	English Design and Technology (DT) Information Technology (ICT)	
D Harris	Modern foreign languages	Post-16
F Earle	History Religious Education (RE)	
B Greasely	Geography	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
A P McGough	Art	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and resources
A Lees	Music	
R Dickason	Science	
V Kerr	Special educational needs (SEN)	
P Wall	Physical education (PE)	

The inspection contractor was:

Kenwood Educational Associates
43 Kenwood Park Road
Sheffield
S7 1NE Telephone: 0114 2553803

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Paragraph
MAIN FINDINGS	1 - 7
What the school does well	
Where the school has weaknesses	
How the school has improved since the last inspection	
Standards in subjects	
Quality of teaching	
Other aspects of the school	
The parents' views of the school	
KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION	8
INTRODUCTION	
Characteristics of the school	9 - 11
Key indicators	12
PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL	
Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school	
Attainment and progress	13 - 19
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development	20 - 24
Attendance	25 - 27
Quality of education provided	
Teaching	28 - 32
The curriculum and assessment	33 - 43
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	44 - 49
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	50 - 58
Partnership with parents and the community	59 - 65
The management and efficiency of the school	

Leadership and management	66 - 70
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	71 - 77
The efficiency of the school	78 - 82

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science 83 - 120

Other subjects or courses 121 - 199

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 200

Data and indicators 201

MAIN FINDINGS

1 What the school does well

- Standards of attainment are well above average and students make good progress.
- Teaching is of good quality and a significant proportion is very good.
- Students' attitudes, standards of behaviour and attendance are very good.
- Leadership is very effective and is now focused on raising standards and the quality of provision even further.
- There is very good provision for students' social and moral development and for their general welfare and guidance.
- The school provides an impressive range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- Overall the school has a very productive ethos in which learning can flourish.

2 Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Changes in the organisation of support for students with special educational needs are incomplete. In particular, there is too little support for these students in class and for students with reading difficulties.
- II. In some departments there is too little management drive in support of raising standards and improving the quality of teaching.
- III. Accommodation for science is poor and limits students' opportunities.
- IV. Too little time is spent on RE after Key Stage 3.
- V. There are weaknesses in the co-ordination and planning of personal and social education.

This is a very good and still improving school whose strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of students at the school.

3 How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The key issues raised at that time have been remedied except for the inadequate time for teaching RE and the continuing lack of a daily act of worship for all. In particular, there has been a great improvement in the hardware, curriculum and quality of teaching for ICT. There has been considerable improvement in GCSE and A level results, especially in 1999. Management is now better focused on raising standards further, on including staff in decision-making and celebrating students' achievements. Planning is more far-sighted. The sixth form is bigger and students are much more successful.

4 **Standards in subjects**

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

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

The average standards reached by students on entry to the school are above the national average. Students make good progress throughout and in Key Stage 3 tests achieve results that are well above average. GCSE results are above average. Results in 1999 were better than in 1998. A level results were particularly impressive in 1999. In comparison with other schools with a similar proportion of students entitled to free school meals, GCSE results in 1998 were well below average. It is worth noting that although the school has relatively few students who are eligible for free school meals, it draws on areas in which there is relatively full, but low-waged employment.

5 **Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	ICT, music	-----
Years 10-11	Good	ICT, mathematics, DT, music	-----
Sixth form	Good	Mathematics, ICT, DT, music	-----
English	Good		
Mathematics	Very good		

The quality of teaching is a major strength and makes a considerable contribution to standards and students' progress. There is almost no unsatisfactory teaching. Three quarters of teaching is of good or better quality and over a third is very good.

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

6 **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Students' behaviour and their attitudes to work are very good. This is a strength of the school and contributes successfully to the standards reached.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are well above average. Students arrive punctually for school and for lessons.
Ethos*	The school enjoys a very productive ethos and a culture of celebrating achievement. This is an ambitious and caring school in which learning flourishes.
Leadership and management	Very strong and effective leadership from senior staff and governors. There are some shortcomings in departmental leadership.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced and meets National Curriculum requirements. Not enough time is spent on RE after Key Stage 3. Extra-curricular activities are very good.
Pupils with special educational needs	Students make good progress. Provision is being reorganised and at present has some shortcomings, especially in monitoring the progress of students with weak language skills.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision for moral, social and cultural development. Good provision for spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Sufficient well qualified and experienced teaching staff, who are effectively deployed, though too few non-teaching support staff to work with students with SEN. Resources are good, but some aspects of accommodation, particularly science provision, are poor and hinder students' progress.
Value for money	Good value. Resources are effectively deployed to secure good student progress in a civilised atmosphere.

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

· **7 The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school

VI. Students achieve well and make good progress

VII. Sound values and good attitudes are encouraged

VIII. Behaviour is good

IX. Parents feel welcome and appreciated

X. Reports are informative and helpful

What some parents are not happy about

The great majority of parents appreciate the work of the school. The inspectors support their positive views.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

8 In order to raise further the standards of students' attainments and the quality of the school's provision, the governors and senior managers should:

XI. Ensure that the measures planned by the school are put in place to support the recent change in arrangements for teaching students with special educational needs. These include:

1. ensuring adequate in-class support;
2. suitable curriculum arrangements, especially for students with weak language skills;
3. careful monitoring of their progress;
4. good definition of their individual subject needs in individual education plans (IEPs).

(paragraphs: 17, 38, 39, 40, 41, 56, 68, 71, 90, 91)

●. Ensure that all departmental heads manage their departments with an energetic focus on plans and strategies for raising standards and improving the quality of provision. This will involve:

1. training and support in monitoring the quality of provision;
2. co-ordination and monitoring by senior management to ensure that plans and strategies are implemented.

(paragraphs: 32, 35, 42, 66, 92, 174, 197, 199)

●. Continue, in collaboration with the LEA, to attempt to secure funding for the improvement of science facilities.

(paragraphs: 74, 120)

In addition to the key issues above, the following points should be considered for inclusion in the plan:

- . more time should be given to the teaching of RE after Key Stage 3; (paragraphs: 15, 35, 195)
- . the co-ordination and planning of personal and social education should be improved. (paragraph 36)

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

9 Tadcaster Grammar School has a mixed comprehensive population of 1,436 students aged from 11 to 18 years. The school now has 300 more students than at the time of the last inspection. Numbers of post-16 students have risen considerably. Students come from as many as 32 primary schools and over a half of them choose to come to the school from neighbouring LEAs.

10 The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. Many fewer students than average come from economically and socially disadvantaged homes. The area served by the school enjoys relatively full employment, though there are many low-waged jobs and many of the school's students come from homes where incomes are modest. Results obtained by students in national tests before entry to the school suggest that their levels of attainment at that time are above average. The school's tests administered on entry, however, while showing above average levels in some areas, reflect a pattern of attainment in verbal reasoning that is close to the national picture. The proportion of students of minority ethnic heritage is well below average. The proportion of students for whom the LEA maintains statements of SEN is below average. More than eight out of ten Year 11 students stay in full time education and 98% of Year 13 students move into higher education.

11 The school has set a target for 2000 of 61% of students gaining at least 5 GCSE grades at A* to C.

The school aims:

- to identify the curricular needs of all students and provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced, challenging, differentiated and relevant to those needs;
- to foster and encourage the fulfilment of the potential of every member of the school community in a secure and caring environment which reflects mutual values and respect;
- to provide equality of opportunity and encourage moral responsibility and respect for the rights of the individual, the collective rights of the community and its environment;
- to encourage and support all members of the school community in the pursuit of excellence and high expectation;
- to give students confidence and equip them with skills and qualifications as preparation for life-long learning.

12 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	113	109	222

National Curriculum Test		English	Mathematics	Science
Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	89	86	92
	Girls	100	80	80
	Total	189	166	172
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	85 (72)	75 (85)	78 (82)
	National	65	60	56
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	55 (36)	45 (58)	34 (46)
	National	35	36	27
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	76	89	99
	Girls	75	80	99
	Total	151	169	198
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	68 (75)	76 (86)	89 (86)
	National	62	64	62
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	28 (31)	54 (57)	44 (50)
	National	31	37	31

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1

Percentages 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	94	116	210

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils	Boys	52	89	92
Achieving	Girls	74	107	115
Standard specified	Total	126	196	207
Percentage achieving	School	60 (56)	93 (99)	99 (100)
Standard specified	National	44.6	89.8	95.2

Attainment in the Sixth Form³

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examination in the latest reporting year:	Year	Male	Female	Total
	1998	21	18	39

Average A/AS Points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	21.8 (20.9)	23.6 (22.5)	22.7 (21.7)	2.0 (N/A)	2.0 (N/A)	2.0 (N/A)
National	N/A	N/A	17.6	N/A	N/A	2.8

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and Percentage of <i>such students</i> who achieved these qualifications:	Number	% Success rate
	School	3.0 (N/A) 100 (N/A)
	National	79.1

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

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

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
Through absence for the latest complete	Authorised	School	4.9
Reporting year:	Absence	National comparative data	7.9
	Unauthorised	School	0.1
	Absence	National comparative data	1.1

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• Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during		Number
The previous year:	Fixed period	8
	Permanent	0

• Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	36
	Satisfactory or better	99
	Less than satisfactory	1

- **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**
- **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**
- **Attainment and progress**

13 Overall standards of attainment are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. In 1998, the most recent year for which comparative figures are available, results in national tests for students at the end of Key Stage 3 indicated that standards overall were well above average. When compared with other schools with a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals, standards were average overall, though in science they were below average and in mathematics well below. Science and mathematics results were substantially improved in 1999. Girls did better than boys overall, but both do much better than girls and boys nationally.

14 Most students make good progress through Key Stage 3 and overall performance is better at the end of the key stage than that of students on entry in Year 7, according to the results of Key Stage 2 and other tests. Progress is particularly good in ICT and science. In no area of the curriculum do students make unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 3. In some areas, though, progress is only satisfactory. In art, for example, some lack of challenge in teaching inhibits progress. The progress of some lower attaining students in Year 7 history classes is sometimes held back when they are unclear about instructions. Overall, though, progress is good through Key Stage 3.

15 In 1998, GCSE results were above average for both boys and girls, with girls gaining higher grades than boys, as is the case nationally. The proportion of students gaining at least 5 GCSE passes at grade C or better was 60%, against the national figure of 45%. The average points scores of both boys and girls were above average. Results in 1999 were better, with 66% of students gaining at least 5 GCSE grades of C or better. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals, results in 1998 were well below average. The low level of unemployment in the area affects this calculation. There are, however, many students who come from households dependent on low-income jobs. Inspectors' judgements, based on observation of standards and progress at first hand and the 1999 GCSE results indicate that the progress students make is good. In 1998, results were particularly impressive in DT (Electronic Products and Textile Technology), drama, geography, history and music. Standards and progress in RE after Key Stage 3 are held back by the limited time devoted to the subject.

16 Standards of attainment at A level and in post-16 vocational courses are impressive. In 1998, students' average points score was well above average. Results in 1999 were even better.

17 Most students have good literacy skills. They are able to read well and cope with the demands of most lessons. The standard of writing is good. Most students have a good command of spelling, punctuation and grammar and make good progress in developing the writing skills they need. Students become confident speakers as they move through the school and listen with skill and care. Some poor readers, identified by tests on entry to the school, make only modest progress. There is insufficient concentration on their needs and inadequate re-testing of their standard to devise an effective programme for them and estimate their progress.

18 Standards of numeracy are good. Most students are well able to meet the demands of mathematics and other lessons for calculation and understanding of number. There is good progress in ICT and students are able to use word-processing and other ICT applications to support their work across the curriculum.

19 From Year 8 onwards, setting allows the school to group students with learning difficulties into low attaining sets where they are provided with suitable work and make good progress. At the end of Key Stage 4, students with special needs achieve success in GCSE examinations and Certificates of Achievement. Over the last two years, students with statements of SEN have gained an average of 4 GCSE passes and 3 Certificates. Students with physical difficulties are supported in class by non-teaching staff and make progress that is in line with that of able-bodied peers. In Year 7, where classes include a range of attainment, progress is dependent on the provision of appropriate work. In most subjects, particularly those that include a practical element such as science and technology, the provision of suitable work is good.

· **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

20 Students' attitudes to their work are very positive. They are attentive and interested in their work. They apply themselves effectively, and maintain concentration throughout their lessons. Good teaching contributes to this good behaviour, but even in lessons that lack pace students behave well. Movement about the site, often difficult on narrow stairways, is conducted in a civilised way under minimal supervision. Students behave well outside, in the grounds and social areas. The quality of behaviour is a strength of the school and contributes successfully to the progress students make.

21 Relationships are cordial, relaxed and confident. Students relate well to their teachers and are generally mature and very well behaved. They are responsible and trustworthy, and co-operate well, assisting and supporting one another, sharing knowledge and understanding. There is respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others as demonstrated by students' response in many lessons

22 Students show pride in their work and their school. They are customarily polite and courteous towards other adults and at ease in their company. They respect property and value their environment and things about them. They habitually demonstrate care for the equipment, buildings and grounds of the school. The disciplinary code is well defined, effective and clearly understood. Rewards and sanctions are applied evenly, appropriately and effectively with parents kept fully informed.

23 Students manage their own affairs well and assume responsibility whenever the opportunity arises. Community awareness is shown both within the school and in the wider world. Charitable works are initiated and organised by students to support causes that they have espoused. A strong Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme promotes community service.

24 This all contributes to a very sound and stable learning environment. The evidence of this inspection endorses that of the last inspection in 1995. Overall, students' attitudes to learning and

their behaviour continue to be very good and contribute significantly to their achievements.

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Attendance

25 Attendance at the school is very good and contributes very effectively toward students' learning. On an average day almost 95% of students are in school – a figure well above the national average. Registers are maintained efficiently and absences are closely followed up. There is very little unauthorised absence.

26 Students generally arrive on time and are punctual to lessons, although occasionally buses are delayed. Attendance and punctuality to lessons contribute very effectively toward students' levels of attainment and their progress.

27 The very high attendance levels noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

28 The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and is better than at the time of the last inspection. High quality teaching makes a considerable contribution to the standards students reach and the progress they make. Of the lessons observed during the inspection, over three-quarters were well taught and of these, a third were very well taught. There is almost no unsatisfactory teaching. There is some very good teaching in almost every department. The teaching of lower attaining students, criticised in some departments by the previous report, is now good, and on a par with the quality of teaching of other students. There is little difference in the quality of teaching of students of different ages.

29 Teaching is consistently very good in ICT, DT and music and in mathematics at Key Stage 4 and post-16. In these lessons, students make rapid progress. In ICT lessons, for example, teachers bring their considerable expertise to bear, promoting good progress through careful planning and good pace in lessons. In mathematics lessons, teachers successfully promote good, professional relationships with students, know their subject well, plan carefully and promote learning through skilful questioning and exposition. Music teachers present challenging material and the department organises lively and rigorous instrumental tuition.

30 Throughout the curriculum, teachers are well informed about their subjects. Lessons are well planned and teachers devise interesting and challenging lessons. In science, for example, a variety of activities includes practical and investigative work. Modern language teachers are proficient in the languages they teach and frequently develop good pace and intellectual challenge in lessons.

31 Throughout the school, students are well managed in lessons. Teachers and students relate well together in an atmosphere of mutual co-operation and respect. There are good standards of order and discipline in class, so students can make progress in a supportive and caring ethos. In PE, for example, good class control and organisation promote learning. Homework is well used in almost all cases. Relevant and purposeful homework is regularly set and marked. In some art lessons, though, homework presents students with too little challenge.

32 Within this generally strong picture, there are some areas of relative weakness, though in no department is teaching unsatisfactory. In some English lessons, for example, tasks are undemanding, the pace is too slow, often because planning is not sufficiently rigorous to support a 70 minute lesson. There is much good history teaching, but in some Year 11 lessons, there is insufficient intellectual challenge to meet the needs of higher attainers. Some Year 7 and 8 art lessons also lack challenge.

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The curriculum and assessment

33 The school's curriculum arrangements provide students with a broad and balanced experience. All the required components of the National Curriculum are in place. During Key Stage 3 all students follow a free-standing ICT course in Year 7 which provides a very good basis for future work. Subject departments take responsibility for further applications of ICT during Years 8 and 9 and there is further specific ICT work in Year 9 as part of the modular arrangements for art and music. Students make good progress in ICT, though the overall time allocated to this area of study in Key Stage 3 is not generous. There has been an impressive improvement in the hardware available to students, the quality of the ICT curriculum and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. All students take a second foreign language in Years 8 and 9. Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, all students spend 10% of their time on technology.

34 Key Stage 4 and post-16 arrangements are carefully constructed to guarantee appropriate breadth while allowing for reasonable student choice. Most students at Key Stage 4 follow the double science course, with about 30 taking single science. There are opportunities at Key Stage 4 and post-16 for students to follow vocational courses in business. These courses are growing in popularity, are very well planned and taught.

35 These generally good arrangements include a number of weaker areas of provision. Insufficient time is allowed for RE after Key Stage 3 and students are unable to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus. In English, curriculum planning is too brief and imprecise to guarantee steady progress by students or comprehensive and balanced coverage of the curriculum in lessons. History lessons for Year 7 students in mixed attainment groups do not always include tasks suitable for the range of student abilities represented. In Key Stage 3 art lessons there is sometimes too little challenge in the work.

36 The programme for students' personal and social education meets the school's obligations to provide health and sex education. In Key Stage 4 it also covers careers. Although the quality of teaching on the programme, by form tutors and specialists is generally good, planning is disjointed, with insufficient overall co-ordination. By contrast, the post-16 general studies programme is very

strong. Lessons for post-16 students about study skills observed during the inspection were very good. Some very good advanced thinking and planning has gone into a key skills programme to be introduced in the future as part of a review of PSE provision.

37 There is sound provision for careers education to the end of Key Stage 4 and good post-16 provision. The PSE programme includes an appropriate careers course, under revision at Key Stage 3. The Key Stage 4 course is appropriate, is taught by a specialist and is supplemented in Year 10 with two successful “World of Work” days involving local employers. Post-16 students are offered a well co-ordinated programme that includes two understanding industry days and five visits to local universities. Impartial personal guidance is offered by the careers service who offer an interview to all students in Year 11 resulting in the production of a development plan for each student. All Year 11 students participate in a well-organised two-week work experience. Arrangements for their preparation and supervision are sound.

38 Until this academic year, most students with SEN were allocated to a “special needs” class, taught most of the time by the special needs teachers and therefore had little contact with their mainstream peers. These arrangements have now been substantially changed and improved and SEN students integrated into the mainstream grouping structure, with the exception of the Year 9 SEN group, which is operating as a discrete group for one further year. All students in the present Year 7 are fully integrated into mainstream classes giving special needs students full equality of opportunity. As yet, though, the school has not finished putting in place the necessary systems of support that will ensure that the additional help that such students need, is provided. In particular there are no school based arrangements for helping students to overcome problems with literacy through in-class support or withdrawal for intensive courses in reading and writing. A small number of students with statements of SEN are withdrawn for individual literacy tuition with LEA specialist teachers.

39 Identification of students with SEN is the responsibility of the head of Year 7 and the construction of the special needs register is largely based on the registers held by the contributory primary schools. Under the new system lines of responsibility for the identification of students with SEN is shared between the head of Year 7, the English department and the SEN co-ordinator who has overall responsibility. This unusual arrangement does not yet provide for the systematic and close monitoring of the progress and personal development of students with SEN. Students with reading difficulties, for example, are identified early in Year 7 through testing, but there is no systematic programme to guarantee their progress or subsequent re-testing to assess it. Meeting the needs of students with behavioural and emotional problems continues to be the responsibility of the pastoral staff who discharge this duty satisfactorily.

40 The SEN department now constructs individual education plans (IEPs) which are intended to enable subject teachers to meet special needs. The IEPs are not yet sufficiently detailed or precise.

41 The school provides a particularly strong programme of extra-curricular activities. The ambitious and effective Duke of Edinburgh’s Award programme is a highlight of this provision. There are many sports activities in which the majority of students take part, including competitive fixtures across the range of sports. Extra-curricular music is strong and there are many clubs and societies based on particular interests.

42 Assessment of students' standards of attainment and progress are accurately made in order to place them in appropriate learning groups after Year 7. Assessment data are used as a basis for a successful programme of mentoring of students in preparation for GCSE. The school has recently put together a system for noting and analysing whole-school assessment data based on National Curriculum and other test results which is beginning to be used successfully in some departments, such as mathematics, as part of efforts to raise standards further. In many other departments, however, this rich data is underexploited either as a basis for counselling and supporting students or calculating the effectiveness of provision. The English department, for example, makes too little use of testing to ensure an appropriate curriculum for younger students with difficulties in reading.

43 Monitoring of the progress of students in ICT is much better than at the time of the previous inspection, since when there has been considerable improvement in the construction and use of whole-school analysis of data.

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Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

44 The provision made by the school for students' personal development is very effective. There is a clear philosophy that permeates all aspects of school life and provides appropriate challenge for students to respond in a positive and mature way. Teachers are themselves good role models.

45 Good provision is made to encourage spiritual awareness and understanding. Thoughtful and well-planned assemblies provide occasions when students can reflect on a broad range of issues and engage in an appropriately focused act of worship. Stress is placed on promoting a sense of community within and outside the school and developing empathy with the beliefs, values and aspirations of other cultures. Good use is made of external speakers from various local churches and charitable organisations to broaden students' experience. Achievement in a wide range of endeavours is encouraged and celebrated and opportunities provided for students to reflect on the creative skills of others through exposure to the arts. Spiritual understanding is also fostered through curriculum content particularly in the multi-faith approach in RE, in the wide range of extra-curricular activity and the encouragement given to students to support charities.

46 Very good structures are in place to encourage an understanding of right and wrong. The clear code of conduct is well implemented and clearly respected by students. Emphasis is placed on the achievements of the individual within the school community and on the development of personal responsibility, well exemplified by the recent reorganisation of the traditional school library into an independent learning centre. Opportunities are provided for students to help others and contribute to the work of the school through such initiatives as peer counselling, the school council and care for the school environment. Moral issues are presented in a challenging way in assemblies, through curriculum content, for example in history, and where issues such as racism, prejudice, war and social conditions are addressed and through elements of PSE.

47 Excellent support is provided to extend students' social development. Good relationships are fostered throughout the school between students and with teachers. Students are encouraged in assemblies and through PSE to consider the needs and problems faced by different communities both at home and abroad. Practical support for the wider community is fostered through such

initiatives as the very strong commitment to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, involvement in Amnesty International, fund-raising for a link school in Mozambique and other charity work.

48 Good provision is also made to extend cultural awareness and understanding within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. Many aspects of the curriculum are enriched by visits to relevant venues both at home and abroad including World War 1 battlefields, Auschwitz, geography field trips, foreign exchange visits and visits to theatres, museums and galleries. Use is also made of visiting speakers and groups as, for instance, Young Engineers and the Impact Drama Group. Music provision encourages enjoyment in creative activity and a sense of community. Well-considered displays also contribute to students' aesthetic awareness, as does the well-maintained and attractive school environment.

49 The quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appreciated by parents and has been maintained and improved since the last inspection with a greater emphasis now on multi-cultural understanding. Though the school does not fully meet the requirements for a daily act of worship, very effective provision is made in all assemblies.

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Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

50 Students are supported throughout the school by a well-organised pastoral system. A team of form tutors is supported in each year by an experienced head of year. There is a head of school at each key stage to oversee this support. Teams meet regularly and the arrangements work very well. Tutors know students well and two thirds remain with the form throughout the first five years of the school to ensure continuity. Both parents and students report that they are pleased with the effectiveness of this system and the support it provides.

51 The pastoral and academic progress of students is carefully monitored each term throughout the school, and well-structured support is provided for individual students. Over 50 students in Year 11 are identified for additional mentoring by senior members of staff and this is successfully contributing to improving their GCSE grades. Arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Good progress, behaviour, attitude, and attendance are appropriately recognised and celebrated.

52 Very good support is provided for post-16 students by tutors co-ordinated by the head of sixth form. Students' progress is carefully monitored and additional support is available through a system of mentoring. They receive good advice on completion of university application forms and appropriate help for planning the next stage of education or for their careers.

53 There is a good programme for settling new students into the school. The personal and social education programme is taught to all students for one period each week and includes appropriate arrangements for sex education and health education. At Key Stage 3 the programme is taught by form tutors and at Key Stage 4 by specialist teachers. Additional time is available for form tutors when students do not attend assembly, but this is not always used effectively. The programme is organised by a different member of staff at each key stage and the overall co-ordination is weak. At post-16 the programme focuses on key skills and is well organised and

effective.

54 The procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are clear and are applied consistently and effectively. All students are aware of the school's code of conduct, a copy of which is printed in each student's personal planner and displayed in each classroom. The school takes a clear stance against bullying, which is reinforced through the PSE and drama programmes. Parents and students feels that the school deals well with the very few incidents which occur.

55 There are good opportunities for students to take responsibility. The school has an appropriate student school council which enables views from each form to be represented. Students act as librarians, and at post-16 are involved in local community work and the Young Enterprise scheme. Senior students help younger students with literacy in a paired reading scheme. One group of trained students from Year 11 offer a very successful peer counselling service for younger students.

56 The pastoral system provides good support for those students on the SEN register with particular behavioural difficulties. Most special needs students are now fully and, at an every day level, successfully integrated into the mainstream pastoral system of tutor groups and years. These arrangements have been introduced during the last year, replacing an arrangement whereby students with SEN were taught together for most of the time. As yet, the systems which should enable the SEN co-ordinator to work with the pastoral system to ensure that additional help and long term monitoring is provided for such students are not yet in place.

57 The school has effective working arrangements with all the external providers of help for special needs students. Medical and therapeutic assistance is provided according to need, specialist careers advice is available and the school is well supported by the LEA.

58 The arrangements for child protection are very good and well documented and good links are maintained with support services. There has been no recent training opportunity for staff in child protection although full guidelines are printed in the staff handbook. There is a very rigorous policy for health and safety and effective co-ordination. A committee whose members have responsibility for different areas of the school meet twice each year. There is a clear continuous record of health and safety concerns and the action taken or proposed. Arrangements in case of accident or illness are very good, with excellent medical room facilities and a full time school health officer. Risk assessment is being introduced. There are narrow staircases in several parts of the school, which are a potential hazard, though students' good behaviour minimises the risk. The computer rooms have no air conditioning and become very hot. Cramped conditions and poor services in science laboratories present a serious risk when students carry out experiments in groups or need to move around the room. Good behaviour and the skilful management of students minimise this risk too.

· **Partnership with parents and the community**

59 The school provides good, clear information to parents, including those of primary school

students who may wish to come to the school. The prospectus is a helpful and clear document. Letters home are appropriately written and informative, though some parents would wish to see better communication through the regular newsletter.

60 Parents are encouraged to participate in the school and feel involved. The students' planner provides for day to day parental oversight of work and a means of communication between parent and tutor. Parents are kept well informed by letter of any concerns staff may have. The Parent Association is active socially, in fundraising, and provides a useful sounding board for possible future developments within the school.

61 Annual students' reports are effective in setting out performance and progress and are supplemented through oral reports given by staff at parents' evenings. Parents like these arrangements and find them useful. Parents or staff can initiate additional reviews at any time if they have concerns about a student's progress and all reports can be discussed with staff by arrangement. Students join their parents at Key Stage 4 and post-16 parents evenings.

62 The local community makes good use of the school facilities, particularly the all-weather outdoor playing surface. Adult Education operates on site bringing the community into regular contact and there is good support for school productions and concerts and sporting activities. There are close links to local churches and clergy participate in assemblies.

63 Visiting speakers and performers from a broad range of agencies and organisations are used in many areas of the curriculum. Local agencies also provide effective support when needed and relationships are sound. Local employers, and some further afield, contribute very effectively to the work experience programme and other career oriented activities within the school such as the careers workshop and Industry Day. They also contribute through sponsorship and through service as student mentors.

64 The school organises a very extensive programme of educational and exchange visits locally, further afield with UK, and into Europe. Charitable activities in aid of local, national and international appeals, together with sporting and other achievements, and school concerts and productions, all further enhance social awareness and involvement within the community, and contribute appropriately to students' attainment and personal development. The extensive opportunities for social and community work provided through the school's involvement in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme are a very valuable educational resource.

65 The school enjoys a high level of partnership with its community, as it did at the time of the last inspection.

- **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

- **Leadership and management**

66 A new headteacher had been in post for a year at the time of the inspection. This new

headteacher has offered strong and energetic leadership since his appointment. There is a powerful sense of direction, based on efforts to raise standards further and improve the quality of provision. Regular departmental reviews are part of a considered programme to encourage heads of department to take a proper managerial responsibility for quality in their departments. This process has been only partly successful so far. In departments such as mathematics and geography departmental management is well focused and effective. In other areas there is still progress to be made. The English department, for example, lacks a clear focus on improvement and this leads to thin curriculum planning, unfocused plans for improvement and inadequate monitoring of the quality of provision. There is good management of and encouragement for curriculum development, of which plans for a key skills course are an example. As yet, though, there is insufficient systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching in departments.

67 The governors offer particularly good leadership and direction. The committee structure within which they work is very effective. Their knowledge of the school is strong. They are supportive and intelligent in their critical role. They ensure that the school meets its statutory obligations except in the provision of adequate time for RE after Key Stage 3 and in so far as there is not an act of collective worship every day.

68 Under the leadership of the headteacher, good progress has been made in reorganising provision for SEN students although the process is as yet incomplete. Progress needs still to be made in clarifying the responsibilities of the SEN co-ordinator, year heads and heads of subjects. Staff will need further training in order to meet their new responsibilities for SEN provision. Nevertheless, there is every indication that the reorganisation will be successful. Many of the management processes of the school have been opened up to participation and debate. Departmental allocations of funds, for example, are no longer confidential. The agendas and minutes of meetings are published to staff. New ideas are welcomed. The highly effective senior management team includes complementary strengths that work to the school's advantage.

69 Development planning, a key issue at the time of the last inspection, has been improved considerably. There is a good development plan that outlines priorities and provides for evaluation of progress. Planning is focused on improving provision to raise standards. Governors are heavily involved in planning and join planning meetings with senior staff. The school made a good response to the last report, making progress in the areas that were weak at that time.

70 The senior team has been successful in the recent introduction of necessary change. There is a substantial commitment to quality and to enabling members of the school community to participate in a way which establishes ownership and commitment to the school and its procedures. The ethos of the school demonstrates this as well as a real commitment to caring and inclusiveness. Much worthwhile effort is given to celebrating achievement. There is an enthusiasm for measured and considered change. Students and staff feel valued and respected. The great majority of students, staff and parents rightly believe in the school's strengths.

· **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

71 The school has an appropriate number of well-qualified staff who are generally well deployed to meet curriculum needs. The school does, however, have an unusually large proportion of less experienced staff which has some impact on standards in mathematics where six teachers

have less than two years experience and in modern languages where newly qualified staff have no permanent teaching base. Non-teaching and administrative staff make a valuable contribution to the life of the school though numbers are inadequate with too few SEN support assistants to support the new SEN arrangements and no technicians in modern languages and art.

72 Arrangements for the professional development of teaching staff are broadly satisfactory. There is an effective whole-school induction programme for newly qualified teachers with regular meetings, monitoring of teaching, a mentoring system and access to LEA in service courses. Departmental support is good in mathematics, DT and history but there is no planned scheme in modern languages. The good support provided for students undergoing initial teacher training is evidenced by the number who apply for permanent posts in the school.

73 Teacher appraisal is currently in abeyance while the school has discussions with the LEA on proposed new national arrangements. Other arrangements for professional development are effected primarily through whole school training days, opportunities offered by the LEA and, to a lesser extent, other external providers.

74 The school is located on an extensive and attractive site but with increasing student numbers, there is a shortage of general teaching space and many rooms are too small, both of which factors have some negative impact on standards. Science accommodation is poor. Laboratories are small and in need of renovation and shortage of laboratory space leads to limitations on students' access to practical experience when lessons are held in general classrooms instead of laboratories. There is insufficient accommodation for mathematics and, in history and modern languages, staff often have to teach in an unacceptable number of rooms making the resourcing of lessons difficult. There is no properly equipped area for drama and some English teaching rooms are spread across the site, often isolated from the department. The music department lacks practice rooms, art rooms are small and the size and location of the ceramics area inhibits use of this facility. Circulation areas, particularly in the lower school building, are cramped and present a potential safety hazard.

75 The site is generally well cared for with a rolling maintenance programme though necessary renovation of a listed building presents very specific problems.

74 The school has generally sufficient resources for learning. ICT rooms and resources are good overall, though they become uncomfortably hot. There is an above average number of computers to students but some shortage of ICT equipment for specific departmental use in the science, music, art, mathematics and modern languages departments. The library has recently been converted into an attractive and well-planned independent learning centre. Good use is made of the facilities in lesson time through a booking system for subjects and for post-16 study. During the inspection, students made very good use of the centre and the adjacent fiction area at break and lunch times. There is a useful draft policy in place on the effective use of the resource in order to support independent study, to link teachers in all departments and to develop further this valuable new initiative.

77 Issues on the allocation of funding to departments and the cleanliness of the site raised at the time of the last inspection have been resolved.

· **The efficiency of the school**

78 The School Development Planning effectively identifies broad strategies and outlines objectives for the next three to five years. The current year plan sets out an appropriate range of whole school and departmental objectives for which funding is planned. The forward financial planning process is firmly based in an analysis of the current situation and recognises likely changes in student numbers and any other anticipated variable factors. This effectively identifies any problems ahead so that appropriate measures may be taken. The current year budget is built from these projections and allocations to departments for operating costs are based on bids which must meet agreed criteria.

79 School funding is broadly average for secondary schools, and is managed well to deliver the aims of the school in a changing environment. Funds are used prudently with a strong and appropriate emphasis on supporting teaching and improving the learning environment.

80 The teaching and support staffs are efficiently and effectively deployed, with above average contact time with students. Students with SEN not directly funded by the LEA are supported effectively from within the school's budget. Accommodation and learning resources are well maintained and used to very good effect.

81 Administrative procedures work well. Financial records are well kept, making the monitoring of expenditure and commitment against budget and the identification of variations by management relatively straightforward. Spending decisions are taken with care. Administrative spending is below that of similar schools though the service provided is effective and meets the needs of the school.

82 When the standards of students on entry, the progress they make, the quality of provision and its cost are taken into account, the school represents good value for money. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in meeting the key issue of improving the quality of development planning.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

83 When students enter the school in Year 7 test results suggest that attainment in English is broadly average. By the end of Key Stage 3 attainment in the National Curriculum Tests in 1998 was well above the national average although when compared to schools with a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals, attainment at Key Stage 3 is broadly average. The proportion of students attaining the higher levels was well above the national average. Taking three years' results together, performance in English is well above the national average. Girls do better than boys but the gap between them is narrower than nationally.

84 At the end of Key Stage 4 GCSE results in English in 1998 were significantly above the national average and were slightly improved on the previous year. The proportion of students achieving A*/A in English was much higher than nationally. Performance in English Literature is also well above the national average. Girls continue to outperform boys in both examinations. This year results at A-C in both examinations are not quite as good as in the previous year but the proportion of students attaining A*/A remains high. Drama is offered as an exam option at KS4. Results in 1998 were well above average and have improved this year.

85 The department offers English Literature and English Language at A Level. In 1998 the proportion of students attaining the higher grades A/B was well above average for both examinations although the numbers entered were relatively small. Students did well again this year.

86 The good standards in public examinations reported at the last inspection have been maintained.

87 Overall progress in both Key Stage 3 and 4 and at post-16 is good so that by the end of Year 9 students have reached standards which are above average. Students are very good listeners. They are keen, attentive and listen very carefully to each other and to the teacher. Students become more confident speakers as they move through the school so that they are able to converse and discuss easily. They consider ideas carefully, enjoy expressing opinions and high attainers do so very fluently. They adapt their speech appropriately to different contexts and most are able to use standard English. Many can develop and sustain a point of view in discussion without prompting. In a Year 12 language group students comparing the opening paragraphs of two novels used well developed vocabulary and sophisticated and complex speech to analyse the text. Students have no difficulty with the reading required in English lessons and most read fluently and accurately. Although in Years 9 and 11 low attaining students, including those with SEN, read aloud quite laboriously they had good understanding - Year 9 understood the issues in 'Badger on the Barge' and Year 11 had good recall and understanding of the development of plot and character in 'Macbeth'. Students are able to examine language closely and identify points and styles of writing about character, narrative and meaning in the novels, plays and poems they read. Critical appreciation of writing and understanding of different language styles develops well as, for example, in Year 10 where students were considering a speech made by Lady Macbeth and in Year 9 where students were examining the way language is used in advertisements. Most students have a good

grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar and technical aspects of writing progress well. Students are able to write for a range of purposes and audiences and at Key Stage 4 high attaining students develop their ideas at considerable length. Drafting and note-taking skills are well established and some students have learned techniques to help them categorise ideas and information. Presentation of work is generally very good and some students make good use of word processing. Students with SEN make satisfactory progress in English. In drama lessons students made good progress with the development of ideas for performance using a range of approaches.

88 In Years 12 and 13 students make good progress with the critical analysis of texts and in both language and literature classes they demonstrate knowledge and understanding of appropriate terminology. By the end of Year 13 most students write in fluent and academic style - some writing achieves a very high standard.

89 Students at all levels respond very positively in English lessons. Most have very mature attitudes to work. They are lively, keen and interested. They listen very carefully, respond immediately, stay on task and concentrate well even when too little is asked of them. They volunteer opinions, make suggestions and answer questions readily. They work very well together and form very productive working relationships. There are high levels of collaboration and students are very supportive of each other. They respond well to challenge and accept responsibility willingly.

90 Most teaching is at least satisfactory or better. There is some very good teaching at all stages. The teaching of drama from Year 9 on is satisfactory. Although teachers are not all equally confident, knowledge of the subject is generally good. Classroom relationships are very strong. Students are treated with sensitivity and the rapport between teachers and students is very productive enabling students to gain confidence and self-esteem and thereby promoting good progress with oral skills. Teachers are well informed about the prior attainment of students including those with SEN though too little use is made of testing. In the best lessons learning objectives are made explicit, tasks are varied and careful planning provides structure and progression, for example, after a strong introduction, Year 13 students studying 'The Duchess of Malfi' followed a clear sequence of activities enabling very good progress in understanding Webster's use of language. Some teachers employ a wide range of strategies but across the department as whole the range of teaching styles is narrow although some very traditional practice is also very effective. Tasks are set at a level which is appropriate to students and in some lessons teaching challenges students very well and lessons proceed at a good pace, as for example in Year 11 where rigorous questioning enabled students to develop and refine their understanding of character and social background in 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. There is some very challenging teaching of students in low attaining sets. There are, however some lessons where tasks are not sufficiently demanding, too much time is given and the pace is easy going. Planning is not always sufficiently rigorous to provide for a seventy minute lesson. Good oral feedback is given in lessons but the quality of marking is not consistent. At its best, comment is constructive and encouraging and targets for improvement are set but some comment is cursory and does not help students to move forward. Homework is well used.

91 Arrangements for the teaching of drama have improved since the last inspection. In Year 7 students have one period of drama each week as part of the English curriculum. In Year 9 students have drama in two half-termly slots in a carousel arrangement with music. In Year 8 students can attend the lunch time drama club. Good curriculum planning supports drama in Key Stage 3 and the number of students who opt to take the subject at GCSE is increasing. There are some strategies

to promote reading in the lower school which are well conceived and make use of the two excellent libraries but the way in which time is currently allocated in Year 7 for reading and drama does not allow students to settle well to their work and make progress. In Year 7 arrangements in mixed attainment classes for the support of low attainers and SEN students, particularly those whose reading is below their chronological age are not yet clear and effective. A range of strategies to address literacy in Key Stage 3 should be developed. Ongoing monitoring of the progress made by these students, particularly in reading, is not yet in place though this was raised by the last inspection. Provision of ICT, also raised in the last report, has been much improved. More teachers now have skills in ICT and further training is planned. Opportunities for students to use ICT as part of the English curriculum are increasing though there is a need to build these into curriculum planning. Practice in assessment and recording has improved since the last inspection. Teachers now have a considerable amount of data on student attainment and are using it well to support individual students especially in Key Stage 4. The use of assessment to monitor attainment and to inform both teachers and students lower down the school requires further development especially the involvement of students in the process of assessment through target setting and review. Extra-curricular provision made by both English and drama is very good.

92 This is a large department staffed by hard working and committed teachers. Relationships are good and the department functions smoothly. Students do very well in public examinations. Leadership of the department has been concerned to support individuals in their work but has not been sufficiently focused to plan strategies for raising standards even further and to maximise the effort and talent of staff. At present the department has only brief and outline curriculum planning so that delivery of curriculum is ad hoc and the balance of provision by each teacher varies. Without effective planning there is no means of ensuring continuity and progression in the curriculum. A good start has been made with building a resource bank to support teachers but the value of this depends on secure planning and the sharing of practice and expertise of teachers. There are no departmental policies to support aspects of teaching, for example approaches to reading and spelling and the attainment of boys. Development planning identifies some of these points but lacks a clear focus on the development of teaching and learning. The department is beginning to introduce monitoring of classroom practice.

93 Accommodation is satisfactory though some rooms are very small and inhibitive of more active teaching styles. Accommodation for drama, criticised by the last inspection report, has not been improved. The stock of books has been reorganised and is now more easily accessible but the level of resources is only just satisfactory, some books are shabby, there are too few anthologies for use in Key Stage 3 and the number of dictionaries in classrooms is small.

94 There has been some improvement made on a number of issues raised by the previous inspection. If due attention is given to the points above, the department will be able to move forward with confidence.

- **Mathematics**

95 Standards of attainment in mathematics for the school as a whole are very good.

96 When students enter the school at the beginning of Year 7 their standards of attainment in mathematics are a little above the national average. They make good progress through Key Stage 3 so that by the end of the key stage their attainment is well above the national average, which is confirmed by the results of national tests taken in the summer of Year 9. In the three years up to 1998 results were well above the national average across the group as a whole and for boys and girls separately. Over this period the results gained by students in mathematics were similar to those for science and better than those for English.

97 By the end of Key Stage 3 most students have developed some facility with the use of the four rules of number. They are familiar with fractions, decimals and percentages and with the equivalences between them. They can use a calculator appropriately and accurately for a range of straightforward operations. They are accustomed to the use of letters to represent numbers in algebra; they can simplify expressions, re-arrange formulae and solve simple equations. They are familiar with a variety of shapes in two and three dimensions, with angles and with symmetry. They can tabulate data and represent it in suitable diagrammatic form and have been introduced to the concept of probability.

98 On the basis of their good attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, students continue to make good progress through Key Stage 4, so that by the end of the key stage standards are very good. In GCSE examinations taken in the summer of 1998 almost two thirds of the students then in Year 11 gained grades in the higher range A*-C. This was well above the national average and showed a significant improvement over the results of the two previous years. This improving trend was maintained in 1999, when results showed a continuing small improvement over those of 1998 in terms of grades A*-C. In 1998 almost the whole year group was entered for GCSE examinations and almost all attained a grade in the full range A*-G. This again was well above the national average, and this level of performance was maintained in 1999. The results gained by girls were better than those of boys in terms of grades A*-C in 1998. In 1999 this position was reversed and the results of boys were better. Overall there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in recent years.

99 By the end of Key Stage 4 the majority of students can solve numerical problems involving numbers of any size. They can draw graphs of algebraic functions and can use a variety of techniques to solve equations. They can calculate perimeters, areas and volumes of a range of shapes in two and three dimensions. They can use Pythagoras' Theorem in association with trigonometry to calculate the sides and angles of right-angled triangles, and can use a calculator for an extended range of operations. They can use more sophisticated techniques for the analysis and representation of data, and for the consideration of probability. Starting from problems or contexts which have been presented to them, most students can introduce questions of their own, can consider alternative approaches, and justify their generalisations or solutions.

100 Students who continue the study of mathematics post-16 follow a modular course. This leads to the A level examination in mathematics for students taking the subject as a single full A Level. Those who choose further mathematics take additional modules of study. Students choose modules in pure mathematics, statistics or decision mathematics, according to the requirements of the course, their preference and aptitude, and the usefulness of the modules in the study of other A level subjects. Students may study fewer modules and be entered for the A-S examination in either mathematics or further mathematics.

101 Results at A Level have improved strongly over recent years. In 1995 fewer than half the students entered for A Level mathematics passed the examination. In 1997 three-quarters of the students entered passed; in 1996 and 1998 all the students entered passed, with overall performance well above the national average. In 1999 all students entered passed, all attaining at least grade D, and with almost seven out of every 10 entered obtaining the highest grades A and B. This is an excellent result. In 1999 some students were also entered for further mathematics at either A or A-S Level, all attaining grades A or B, another excellent result. In order to reach these very good standards of attainment, good progress over the post-16 stage continues.

102 Mathematics is essential to the study of other subjects at all stages of students' learning. In RE students make confident use of percentages, bar charts and pie charts; the latter were also observed in use in geography. Students show good skills of measurement in art and of pattern making in textiles. Their numeracy is good in ICT and electronics. Post-16 there is sound use of number in business studies and economics and in science the skills of the students in statistical work are very well developed.

103 At all three stages progress is good in individual lessons as well as overall. In part this is due to the very good attitudes to their learning of students themselves. They listen carefully to their teachers and pay attention to the work on the whiteboard. They respond politely and usually accurately to direct questions. They are willing to ask questions of their own, to explain their reasoning and to demonstrate on the whiteboard. They apply themselves well to the examples set for them, sustaining concentration for the duration of the lesson. They take care with the presentation of work. Relationships between students are good and they co-operate well together for paired or group work when this is required. Behaviour was very good in almost all lessons seen.

104 The quality of teaching is good at all three stages. In all cases teachers' knowledge is more than adequate to the classes and courses they are required to teach and for the demanding A Level courses post-16 it is very good. Teachers generally have good skills of exposition and questioning, and their whiteboard work is clear and accurate. They plan their lessons carefully in accordance with the scheme of work. They set suitable homework, mark students' work effectively and insist on corrections.

105 Relationships between teachers and students are good. Teachers know their students well and do their best to meet their needs. Those students with SEN are now taught mostly in groups which reflect their levels of attainment and they make good progress as a result. Classes are smaller for those students who find the subject most difficult, so that they can benefit from more individual attention. The programme of formal assessment of the work of all students is very thorough. These assessments are recorded on the department's database, and the progress of all students is very carefully monitored on an individual basis. This is one of the great strengths of the department's work.

106 The attention paid to number, algebra, shape and space, and handling data is very good, and work in these areas is very thorough. Less attention is given to using and applying mathematics, though the examples of investigative work seen were good. Some use is made of games and puzzles and some of mental strategies; some good practical and group work was seen. Very little use of ICT was seen during the inspection, though some is planned for later in the year. All of these approaches should be used more frequently to create interest and variety within lessons, to promote better understanding on the part of students, and to incorporate ongoing work in the use

and application of mathematics into the course as a whole. This is particularly important for younger and lower attaining students, for whom it is most difficult to sustain attention and effort through the very long teaching periods. These points were made in the report following the last inspection. Although they have been addressed to some extent more remains to be done. The quality of teaching although never less than satisfactory is uneven, and more attention needs to be paid to the classroom work of some teachers. This relates to points of ordinary classroom management such as air quality and seating, to strict attention to accuracy, to the creation of interest in the subject through variety of approach, and to building on the interest of students once awakened. Weaknesses in these respects are reflected in the performance of students in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, which have been less good in the last two years than in the preceding three.

107 In other respects the department has made great strides. The department is well led and teachers work well together as a team. Over the last four years GCSE results have improved by nine percentage points in terms of grades A*-C. Further mathematics has been made available post 16, and A Level results have been transformed. Excellent work is being done in terms of monitoring the work of students. Great care is being given to the grouping of students in Year 7, and schemes of work are being revised in all key stages. Money is being made available to make the necessary improvements in textbook resources. The accommodation for mathematics is good in quality and is grouped on two floors in the main building. It is however insufficient to accommodate all lessons in a specialist classroom.

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Science

108 At the end of Key Stage 3 students' achievements in tests and during teacher assessment are well above the national average, performance is comparable with similar schools and is improving. In a very large majority of lessons achievements are above average. Most students have very good practical skills, for example they carefully observe and record what happens during chemical reactions. They can make predictions about the effect of an enzyme and successfully explain what they see. When measuring the amount of energy in potato crisps they understand the limitations of the methods they use and can tabulate data and draw bar graphs. Students with SEN do well in these lessons.

109 In GCSE examinations the results gained by both boys and girls are well above the national average, they are as good as those obtained by students in similar schools and they are improving. Students can make electrical circuits and use them to test electromagnets. Their knowledge and understanding of difficult concepts such as acceleration caused by gravity and its effect on a parachutist are very good. Scientific knowledge is used to explain why the rate of a reaction changes during an investigation. At the end of the key stage achievement is well above average.

110 Post-16 students' achievements during lessons are very good. By the end of their A Level courses students have very well developed practical skills and a thorough understanding of the facts and concepts of science. They use statistical methods to analyse biological data, they understand the reactions of ammonia and they can explain the differences between a gravitational and an electric field. A Level results are well above the national average. Many students gain high grades every year and the number doing so increases. Standards are well above the national average at the

end of this stage.

111 Throughout the school standards of literacy and numeracy are high, most write very well and speak about their work accurately. Lower attainers are commendably willing to write about their work. All students listen to each other and to their teachers very carefully. Graphing and calculation are done very well. The higher attainers readily use numerical data and regard this as a normal part of their study of science, they calculate speed and use chemical formulae to work out how much is produced during a reaction.

112 During Key Stage 3 students make good progress in lessons, successfully learning the facts and principles and the skills and practical procedures of science. Students learn about static electricity and they can make a pendulum and measure the time that it takes to swing.

113 At Key Stage 4 progress is very good. During investigative work students learn to measure and make dilutions accurately and they find out how an electromagnet is used to make a loudspeaker. Practical skills improve and students learn about the forces needed to launch a space shuttle.

114 Post-16 progress continues to be very good. Students learn to use spreadsheets to display and analyse data and they learn how to calculate the forces acting at different points on a balanced beam. In a lesson about cell membranes they developed a thorough understanding of the ways in which things enter cells. They make very good progress in learning the skills of planning, hypothesising, predicting and evaluating used during their studies.

115 Behaviour during lessons is very good. Students are industrious and co-operative and motivation is very good. Attitudes to work are positive and pride is taken in presentation. Practical work is done carefully and safely, instructions are followed carefully and thoroughly with a good appreciation of the reasons for the instructions. Students listen carefully, sometimes for extended periods. They show a great deal of respect for their teachers, for books and equipment and for each other. They are willing to offer answers to questions requiring a predictive or a tentative answer. A large majority adopt a critical approach to their work and are interested in explanations of phenomena. When carrying out investigative work many students show that they can work independently, identify fair tests, make predictions and identify the variables that need to be controlled. Students with SEN are very positive about their work.

116 Teaching of science is good throughout the school: frequently it is very good and it is clearly responsible for the high standards achieved by very many students. Teachers have a very good command of their subject and they maintain high standards of discipline. Lessons are well planned, they provide a variety of activities including illustrative and investigative practical work. Technical terms and instructions are very carefully explained and at the beginning of lessons good use is often made of students' ideas.

117 Since the last inspection teachers have ensured that very good progress is made in a great majority of lessons: it is now very unusual for lapses in concentration to occur. At Key Stage 4 all teachers follow the teaching scheme and for Key Stage 3 new materials that develop process skills throughout the course are being introduced. It is important that this work should continue.

118 In many lessons high order learning skills are developed especially where scientific investigations are carried out or where teachers' questioning techniques are particularly good. At these times teachers encourage students to put forward their ideas and substantiate them and such activities challenge and extend students' understanding. There is a need to develop this questioning technique throughout the teaching of science.

119 Teachers expect that all work will be completed to a high standard and that work will proceed at a good pace. In a very small number of lessons students have to listen for too long and no opportunities for independent work are provided. Students need more opportunities to discuss their work with each other. Post-16 lessons challenge the students and increase their understanding of important ideas and good use is made of visits and field trips. Excellent support is given to students with SEN.

120 The curriculum is well planned, management of the department is very good and students clearly benefit from this. Policy about assessment is clear and comprehensive and health and safety is given a high priority. Teachers are well qualified and provided with good support by the technical staff. The quality of some of the science accommodation is poor, some rooms are too small and others are inadequately furnished. They would be dangerous were it not for the good management skills of teachers and the excellent behaviour of students. Rooms in which science is taught are spread around the school and some teaching is carried out in classrooms. At times, although teachers make every effort to overcome these difficulties, this restricts the range of scientific activities that can be carried out by the students, which has an adverse effect upon learning. These features of the science accommodation hinder the department's plans for improvement by placing undesirable burdens on both teaching and technical staff. There is also a shortage of equipment for ICT in the laboratories and students cannot benefit from the opportunities for learning provided by such equipment. This situation has not improved since the last inspection.

· **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

· **Art**

121 Overall the standards of attainment in art of a majority of students are broadly average. Though students make slow progress in their first two years in the school when taught in whole class groups, they respond well to the more specialised and challenging teaching in Year 9 to reach standards by the end of Key Stage 3 which meet the national expectation. In Years 7 and 8, attainment varies considerably between groups. In the lessons observed, some students in Year 8 made good progress in understanding form and proportion of lettering while, in a parallel group, work was superficial and lacking in rigour. Though most students in these years demonstrate a sound understanding of the basic elements of line, pattern, colour and texture, there is insufficient development in key skills particularly in drawing from the natural and man-made environment. In contrast, in the more focused tasks in Year 9, students apply their observational skills well to work in clay and portraiture and make good progress in understanding and use of appropriate processes in computer graphics and printmaking. Across the key stage, most students use materials and tools with care and, when given the opportunity, can apply them imaginatively as in a three dimensional interpretation of food and examples of work from the built environment.

122 Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are unsatisfactory with the proportion of students attaining the higher grades A*-C in GCSE examinations below the national average in 1998 with a further decline in the most recent examinations. Though the restricted option scheme results in the subject attracting few of the highest attaining students, the average points score of those taking art is lower than that in other subjects. Limited evidence of work early in the school year indicates that the attainment and progress of current Key Stage 4 students is broadly average at this stage of the course as for example in some sound drawing skills in Year 10 and a good response to experimental work in Year 11. Scrutiny of work from the previous year, however, showed a lack of personal response to set themes and little evidence of ideas stimulated by critical study of the work of significant artists and movements. Presentation and understanding of media was satisfactory but work showed limited experimentation, little use of three-dimensional form and a lack of progress through preparatory studies to final outcomes. At both Key Stages 3 and 4, students with SEN make sound progress through individual support and projects that allow a personal response.

123 The attainment of post-16 students is satisfactory. Though recent examination results at A level have been below the national average, comparisons are not secure when only small numbers are entered. The progress made by current students is broadly appropriate for the stage of the course particularly in Year 12 and work from the previous year group indicates a greater breadth in the responses made by students though still with some lack of depth of study.

124 The subject makes a positive contribution to students' personal development. Behaviour is very good, and there is respect and consideration for the ideas and work of others. Materials and equipment are used sensibly and safely. The recent introduction of good quality sketchbooks for both class and homework is a positive innovation to encourage more independent and investigative study.

125 The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes good. Lessons are well organised and good relationships with students encourage sound working practice. All teachers have a good command of their subject but some lessons and topics, particularly in Years 7 and 8, are not sufficiently challenging. The best examples of teaching establish clear expectations, set a good pace and make very effective use of demonstrations as for instance in lessons on clay modelling and computer graphics. Where teachers bring students together at strategic points in the lesson, teaching points are clearly reinforced and understood by students and they make good progress. In contrast, some introductory lessons on line and lettering were slow, lacked rigour and showed an over reliance on individual support. Though outline planning is good, there is some inconsistency in the planning and delivery of individual lessons, which results in varied experience for students across teaching groups. The last inspection report was critical of the limited range of experience offered to students. In attempting to remedy this, some of the quality of graphic work observed at that time has been lost though students clearly demonstrate that they can respond well in this area when challenged. Timetabling of whole class groups for art in Years 7 and 8 is unhelpful to the department in providing both breadth and depth of experience and a range of skills for students early on in their school careers. The standards achieved in Year 9 indicate that more rigorous learning and teaching takes place when group sizes allow the introduction of a more diverse curriculum. Though both National Curriculum attainment targets are addressed, insufficient emphasis is given to the critical studies element at Key Stage 3.

126 Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the progress made by individual students and use this knowledge to inform their teaching on a day to day basis. Little use is made of whole

school and departmental assessment to inform curriculum planning. Assessment procedures are appropriate but do not yet include student self-assessment. Scrutiny of assessment data and examination results indicate a considerable mismatch between predicted grades and final outcomes.

This needs to be addressed to improve standards and ensure effective monitoring and mentoring of students in Year 11. Though homework is relevant to classwork, tasks could be more challenging particularly to extend drawing skills and develop the new sketchbooks as a more effective personal resource.

127 The head of department provides a clear sense of direction for his team. Improvement planning is well focused with good understanding of current areas of weakness. These now need to be addressed with an appropriate delegation of responsibilities to ensure that full use is made of the skills of the very experienced staff.

128 Much of the accommodation is small for the size of lower school groups and furniture is in a poor state of repair though good use is made of display to improve the rather shabby learning environment. Though there is a well-equipped ceramics area shared with community education, this is at some distance from the main department and can be used only in very limited way particularly with a lack of technical support. Supplies of consumable materials are adequate but there is little specialist equipment. Only one room has an ICT facility and group size inhibits use of the ICT rooms at Key Stage 3 other than for Year 9.

129 The standards and the quality of teaching observed at the time of the last inspection have been maintained but not significantly improved. Further review is needed to ensure breadth and balance in the curriculum and a consistent emphasis on high standards in all activities.

Design and Technology

130 On entry, students' standards of attainment are below expectations. The major weakness is that a majority of students lack previous experience in resistant materials, graphics, designing skills and making products using textiles. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards of attainment are good and above the national average. The majority of students achieve National Curriculum Level 5 when assessed by their teachers. The courses in Years 7 to 9, covering food technology, resistant materials, textiles, electronics, provides a solid introduction to a full range of DT skills and techniques. Students learn specific skills through focused practical tasks as in a Year 8 resistant materials lesson where students learned about gravity feed and how to design and construct a bird feeder. They used research information, gained from a class survey, to identify the size and feeding habits of garden birds. In textiles lessons they measure and mark out accurately. Students are competent in predicting and experimentation in their work. In food technology, for example, they understand what might happen when the ingredients are changed and additions, such as dried fruit, are included in their recipe. All students are aware of their own level of attainment and are focused on how to improve the quality of their work. ICT skills and applications are included in all DT subject areas. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection.

131 At the end of Key Stage 4, overall standards of attainment are above average and well above in graphic products where GCSE results in the higher grades A*-C are well above the national average. Girls' achievement at the higher grades is better than boys. Standards of

attainment in electronics are significantly above the national average for grades A*-C, although fewer girls take this option. Results in food technology and textiles are also significantly above the national norm. Attainment in child development is above average. Girls achieve results significantly above average and boys achieve above average grades in food. Only girls opt for textiles and child development.

132 In those DT subjects where students' attainment is very good they demonstrate independent research skills, good management of time and well-developed technical skills. Independent research skills and individual design were observed in electronics where students' researched an alarm system that, when triggered, plays a tape of dogs barking and projects a human shadow against the window. There is some weakness in resistant materials where results since the last inspection have remained low and below average, though this course has a lower than average proportion of generally high attainers. There is an upward trend in the most recent examination results, although the design component in the examination does not meet the needs of a large proportion of those opting for this DT subject. When involved in practical work, when students use exploded isometric drawing to show how a clock mechanism operates, the standards of technical skills are good. There has been an improvement in the overall standard of students' designing and making skills since the previous inspection. At post-16 the standards of attainment in A Level design and technology and A Level graphic products are good. The present cohort is able to work through a design process with clients. One student, for example, has designed a scrimmaging machine in liaison with a local rugby football club. Another student has designed a household plant watering system. Each has contacted companies who design similar products to obtain advice and direction. In graphic products students have developed good rendering techniques using pastel and marker pens. Standards of attainment have improved since the previous inspection and there is evidence that the present upward trend will continue. There is the potential to improve in the future.

133 At Key Stage 3 progress is good. Students of all abilities are equally provided for in terms of appropriate course materials and task requirements. SEN students make good progress and materials are provided to meet specific learning needs. There is individual support and guidance for all students. Homework is regularly set and is directly related to on-going projects. The pace in lessons is good and students are taught to plan tasks over the period of a lesson, for example, in Year 8 food technology where students make savoury and sweet scones, they plan the mixing and baking times to ensure successful completion on time. At Key Stage 4 progress overall is good. It is very good in graphic products where students are set challenging and demanding projects. The pace is appropriate and students develop a comprehensive range of graphic techniques. Progress is very good in electronics and in food technology and textiles, where students use time and resources effectively. In resistant materials progress is satisfactory. Teachers' expectations of all students are good. A Level students make good progress; they have well developed research skills and are conscientious in their out-of-class studies. Individual student timetabling causes some problems as not all students can be present for all lessons, as illustrated when one student missed an important lesson on 'why some designs fail'. An increase in numbers and the additional A Level graphic products course have added a new dimension to post-16 DT studies and progress since the last inspection is very good. Display throughout the department is of a very high standard and provides a good stimulus for students; it is planned to provide an understanding of the design process and contributes to good progress.

134 Student attitudes are positive at all stages. There is a concerted effort on the part of all staff to provide challenging and interesting projects. This motivates students; they show an interest in

their work and demonstrate a desire to learn. Their level of concentration is good and they work well individually and co-operatively. Behaviour in workshops and other DT areas is excellent at all times.

135 The quality of teaching is very good throughout all stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations. There is a broad range of qualifications and experience; for example two of the departmental staff recruited since the last inspection have industrial experience. Recent appointments to the department include two women teachers in graphics and resistant materials who present good role models for girl students. Lessons have clear objectives and are planned to meet the needs of students of all abilities. All projects are marked and the recording and monitoring of students' work is excellent. Assessment procedures include both teacher and student assessment. The department is supported by competent and enthusiastic technician support.

136 There is effective leadership of the department. The head of department encourages teachers to take responsibility, for example, in A Level graphic products where two teachers are jointly responsible for the construction and running of the course. The food technology and textiles area of the department is efficiently managed. Relationships throughout the faculty are excellent and departmental staff work well as a team. There are regular departmental meetings. Accommodation is very good and the department has been refurbished since the last inspection. There has been good progress in those areas identified as weak in the last report, for example in assessment procedures. The department has the potential to make further progress.

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Geography

137 Students' levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average, and at the end of Key Stage 4 and post-16 are well above. When teachers assessed students' work in 1998 at the end of Key Stage 3, the results showed a rising trend with boys and girls achieving similar levels. In 1998, GCSE results were excellent. Girls gained higher grades than boys. Results show an upward trend with continuing improvement in 1999.

138 The GCE A Level results in 1998 were outstanding with all students achieving grade C or above as they had in the previous year. This high standard was maintained in 1999. The standard of attainment throughout the school shows a significant improvement since the last report, particularly at A Level. The department has carried out a careful analysis of the results and has implemented a clear strategy for continued improvement.

139 Students have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and apply these effectively to new contexts. One group of students in Year 12, for example, used their understanding of coastal erosion to explain how the cliffs were being worn away on one small stretch of coastline shown on a video. They went on to explain how the coast might be protected and the best methods to use. All students have a good understanding of geographical terms and the higher attaining students use them effectively in oral and written work. Lower attaining students have good basic knowledge of what places are like and how landscapes are formed.

140 Students have very good understanding of the methods of geographical enquiry, in

collecting data, interpreting results, and reaching conclusions. They complete the GCSE coursework enquiry in the local area, and the A Level requirement for an individual study involving fieldwork research, to a very high standard. All students have good skills in collecting information from a range of resource material including maps, atlases, photographs and textbooks. Written answers are of good quality. They are full, accurate, and well written. Students have good numerical skills, but the range of methods used to analyse and interpret statistical data is narrow.

141 Progress at Key Stage 3 and at post-16 is good. Students make good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding due to clear explanations given by the teacher, well-structured work, good consolidation, and the diligence of the students. One group of students in Year 9 made very good progress in gaining knowledge of conflict between people and the environment in a National Park. After a brisk introductory review of previous work and rigorous questioning to ensure understanding of terms, students in groups suggested possible issues, reported them to the class, and reinforced their understanding by applying their new knowledge to an area of landscape shown on a video.

142 In Key Stage 4 progress is very good. Lessons consistently proceed at a brisk pace, are well focused, and students are well motivated to work hard to gain understanding and skills. Good progress in gaining knowledge of places is maintained through a good selection and very good use of well-chosen case study examples. The skilful introduction and explanation of geographical terms enables students to make good progress in learning to use them effectively. Students with SEN make good progress particularly when good teaching matches work closely to their needs.

143 Students have a very positive attitude to the subject. They are attentive, well motivated, interested in the subject, and are willing to make a contribution to the lesson. In lessons where they are asked to work in groups, they co-operate with each other, listen respectfully to each persons' point of view, and focus on the task throughout. In one lesson, low attaining students in Year 9 prepared a role play in pairs, worked hard throughout, and all had the confidence to have their presentation video taped and analysed by the class. Books are maintained in good order and the standard of presentation is good. Students have a positive approach to the subject, they persevere with lengthy pieces of work, and maintain high levels of concentration.

144 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 and post-16 is good and in one third of lessons it is very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject resulting in very clear explanations, rigorous and skilful questioning involving all students, and the use of good illustrations to ensure students gain a clear understanding. Lessons are well prepared and organised and planned with a variety of activities that consolidate understanding and involve students in applying their knowledge in other contexts. In one lesson students in Year 10 were studying rivers. At a brisk pace the teacher used sand and water in a tank and skilful questioning to illustrate the basic principles. The students related what they had learnt to three photographs and then explained the violent activity of a river shown on a video clip. Finally the teacher reviewed and reinforced what was learnt and set a purposeful homework. Relationships are very good and lessons have a purposeful working atmosphere. Exercise books are marked up to date and worthwhile homework is set regularly. Work is generally matched accurately to the needs of students but in mixed ability groups in Year 7 materials are not matched clearly to the needs of those with SEN.

145 At Key Stage 4 the quality of teaching is consistently of a very good standard. Lessons are challenging, interesting, well planned, and ensure students gain a good understanding of the topic through a well thought out series of exercises.

146 The curriculum meets national requirements. There is a sound teaching scheme for Key Stages 3 and 4 but there is no clear indication of progression from Year 7 to Year 13. A strength of the provision is the very good programme of fieldwork including visits to the Yorkshire Dales, the east coast, York, Leeds, Edinburgh, and culminates in a residential fieldwork week for post-16 students. This scheme makes a significant contribution to students' learning and provides an excellent preparation for GCSE and GCE A Level coursework. The use of ICT is limited, partly by the need for staff training. The procedures for assessment are good but, as reported previously the lack of a central record of results restricts its more effective use to support individual students.

147 Leadership of the department is very good. The ethos is one with a commitment to high achievement, hard work, teamwork, an effective learning environment, and a clear focus on the value of providing teaching of high quality. Formal monitoring is limited to marking but the department has regular and purposeful meetings. Accommodation is satisfactory and there is a good quantity of good quality resources. The department responded satisfactorily to the issues raised by the last report. This lively and very effective department is in a strong position to make still further improvement.

• **History**

148 The attainment of students at the end of Key Stage 3 is above average and shows improvement over the key stage. Attainment of students on entry is uneven; few have skills in handling historical sources and recall of previous learning is unreliable. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in this key stage. The attainment of students in one Year 9 group was well above average in their knowledge of the period, ability to link together important factors and fluent and confident expression of opinion.

149 The attainment of students at the end of Key Stage 4 is well above average. Over the past two years girls have performed slightly better than boys in the GCSE examinations. Students are able to recall previous learning, understand concepts, analyse sources and offer judgements based on evidence.

150 Attainment by students post-16 is above average: all students taking the A level examination gaining a pass in the A-E range in the past three years. Attainment by students in lessons is average. They can evaluate differing interpretations of the past, have a good overview of the main features of the period studied and recall and apply previous learning. Students in a Year 12 class showed above average attainment in understanding and using specialist terms and in knowledge of significant features of the period studied.

151 The progress of students in Key Stage 3 is good, especially in Year 9. Students develop the capacity for independent study, in using skills of selection and presentation from historical sources and in expressing personal points of view orally and in writing. The progress of lower attaining students in Year 7 groups is sometimes held back by uncertainty and misunderstood instructions; tasks set for these year groups do not always provide opportunities for higher attaining students to make appropriate progress. Careful planning enables students to progress effectively

from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. Progress is good in Year 10 and satisfactory in Year 11. Students are consolidating previous learning, developing skills in using a variety of source materials and beginning to use historical terms effectively to explain their views. On occasion insufficient challenge restricts the progress of the most able students in Year 11. Very good progress was observed in a Year 10 lesson in which students were analysing political cartoons they had brought into class, and in a Year 10 certificate group for lower attaining students who were able to give good explanations of the work they were doing and recall some important features of the theme they were studying.

152 The progress of students post-16 is satisfactory. They develop sound study skills, especially in gathering material from a variety of written sources, acquiring a detailed knowledge of the period studied and developing the ability to evaluate interpretations of the past given by historians. Limited opportunities for whole-class discussion inhibit progress in forming and expressing opinions and in evaluating the views of others in the group.

153 Students have a very positive attitude to the subject. This is evident by their willing and enthusiastic participation in class and by the take-up at GCSE, which is well above the national average. They collaborate well in group work, behave well in class and show respect and consideration for each other.

154 The subject is taught by a team of committed and well-qualified teachers who have a good command of the subject and teach with enthusiasm and commitment. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is good. All lessons have clear aims and are well organised; expectations of students are high and clearly stated. Suitably adapted resources are provided to meet the needs of students of all abilities in Years 8 and 9. Plans to meet the needs of the whole ability range in Year 7 groups are not always effective in practice and the range of tasks insufficiently challenging for the most able students. Very good teaching was observed in several classes in Years 8 and 9, where well-planned group work and imaginative approaches to the topic enabled students of all abilities to participate enthusiastically and work collaboratively. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 is good. Lessons are well-planned with a variety of activities to enhance student learning and enjoyment in the subject, though there are few opportunities for whole-class discussion and students are not always pressed to extend their answers to questions posed in class. The quality of teaching post-16 is good with attention paid to providing students with a thorough knowledge of the period studied and in developing analytical and study skills. Opportunities for discussion are restricted and teachers often satisfied with short and unelaborated answers to questions.

155 Assessment of students' work is good at all levels, though there is little opportunity for students to assess their own work or set targets for future learning. Very good procedures ensure accurate and co-ordinated assessment of students' work for end of key stage assessment and tests in Year 9.

156 An enthusiastic and experienced head of department gives positive leadership. There is a strong sense of commitment and high morale across the whole team. There is an evident commitment to high standards and the ethos for learning is excellent. Schemes of work guide the planning of teachers, though these lack detail about the approaches needed to meet the full ability range in Year 7. The curriculum is well planned and an extensive programme of visits enhances the experience of students studying history. Staff have had recent in-service training, but there is no systematic planning for staff development. Accommodation in the specialist rooms is good, but storage and facilities for teachers to prepare lessons and resources are poor. Two teachers teach a

significant part of their timetable in several different rooms, restricting their use of teaching aids and the display of students' work.

157 Improvement has been made since the last inspection in all the issues noted then, though there still remains some difficulty of access for ICT-supported learning. Attention needs to be given to meeting the needs of the whole ability range in Year 7 groups; providing opportunities for student self-assessment and target-setting; relating staff development more closely to developmental planning within the department.

Information Communication Technology

158 On entry students have received mixed experiences, overall standards are satisfactory and students are confident when using computers. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards of attainment are good and above the national expectation. The majority of students achieve National Curriculum Level 5. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment. The Year 7 foundation course is well planned and provides a challenging set of experiences for students. The theme of 'children's stories' provides a stimulating focus. Students are introduced to graphic imaging, the use of a digital camera, composition using MS publisher and planning a simple web page in addition to word-processing and other basic ICT applications. Year 7 students, for example, were experimenting with font sizes, colour backgrounds, distorted lettering and page design in the preliminary stages of composing a children's story. The weakness of the foundation course is in the limited time available during Key Stage 3 to develop a comprehensive range of ICT skills. Cross-curricular delivery, considered to be a weakness at the time of the previous inspection, is now a strength. In a Year 9 English class, for example, students demonstrated a good knowledge of word-processing skills using MS publisher software to write and illustrate stories and poems on an animal theme. There has been a marked improvement since the last inspection when there was insufficient evidence of systematic student use of equipment to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum entitlement. A bookable room with enough computers for full classes is heavily used. Statutory requirements are fully met.

159 At Key Stage 4 the standards of attainment are good. The most recent GCSE examination results for information technology show an improvement since the last inspection. Students are now achieving results significantly above the national average in the higher grades. At the time of the last inspection girls' results were well above boys, the situation has now reversed and in the most recent examinations boys outperformed girls. Standards of attainment are very good in the recently introduced NEAB key skills certification course. Students show themselves capable of writing a newspaper article about an event in their life and composing it into a magazine style format using MS publisher software. There is regular use of ICT across the curriculum and departments identify specific delivery responsibilities. The DT department, for example, uses computer sequencing to operate and control machines. In business studies students regularly use databases and spreadsheet applications in their work. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection when cross-curricular application was weak. Statutory requirements are fully met at Key Stage 4.

160 At post-16, standards of attainment are good. A Level examination results are broadly equal to the national average, although observation of the present cohort suggests an upward trend.

Students have a good command of the examination syllabus and research and experiment with confidence. There is a full range of cross-curricular use and students make full use of the post-16 computer room facilities.

161 At Key Stage 3, progress in lessons is very good. Teachers apply good teaching strategies and set a strong pace. Teacher preparation is very good and differentiated teaching materials provide appropriate challenge for students at all levels of attainment. Students make full use of the time available during lessons. Homework is set regularly and students complete the tasks set them.

At Key Stage 4 students progress is good. SEN students in both Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress. Progress is good in comparison with that reported at the time of the last inspection. At post-16 progress is very good. Students have a secure knowledge of computer systems and work well together as a group. Positive and mature attitudes contribute to a conscientious approach to study. Progress has improved since the previous inspection when there were no A Level courses.

162 Students' attitudes towards ICT are very good throughout the school. Students apply themselves to the tasks set them and make a good contribution in lessons by involving themselves in discussion and debate. Behaviour is exemplary in all classes. Relationships between students and teachers are excellent.

163 The quality of teaching throughout all three key stages is very good. All of the core ICT staff have been appointed since the last inspection and they are well qualified. The foundation course in Year 7 has been reviewed and modified to provide more challenge and includes greater variety of content. The PSE course in key skills has also been re-written with the intention of gaining validation with the NEAB Board as a certificated course. A Level computing is also a new addition since the previous inspection. The core team is well supported by other members of the school staff in meeting the needs of the ICT curriculum. In-service courses are in the process of being updated through the new opportunities fund to provide extension training for teachers over the next three years. All lessons observed had good pace. Teachers employ a range of teaching strategies, including group and paired learning. Reporting and assessment procedures are well constructed and provide effective support for learning. Students' progress is monitored through the regular marking of coursework and ICT staff monitor progress throughout the school curriculum. Two full-time technicians support the staff.

164 Computer provision throughout the school is very good, with a ratio of students per computer of 6: 1; this is above the national average. Accommodation is very good and includes two fully equipped computer rooms, plus a smaller base equipped with fifteen computers. Display is of a high quality. All rooms become excessively hot even on cool days and this has a marked effect upon students' alertness. CD-ROM and Internet connections are available for student research; they are popular and well used by all students.

165 The department is well managed. Leadership is good. Since the last inspection the quality of provision has been greatly improved and this has had a marked affect upon standards. The department has the potential to continue to improve in the future.

· Modern Foreign Languages

166 By the end of Key Stage 3 standards of attainment in French and German are above national expectations. Many students, including those with SEN, speak competently using simple phrases to describe themselves and other people. High attainers in Year 9 can adapt language to form new sentences and are beginning to use past tenses with confidence. In one lesson, for example, students described in quite fluent German what they had recently done during their spare time. Those who are spoken to consistently in the foreign language have commendable accent and pronunciation. Reading in the foreign language is currently confined to the relevant coursebook, but many students have good comprehension of simple reading matter and some are able to infer meaning of words from their context.

167 Overall, attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 remains above average in both languages. GCSE grades in 1999 were below the strong results of the previous year, but those achieving the highest grades A* and A in both years have, on aggregate, been comfortably above national levels. Results of the small number of students taking the Certificate of Achievement courses in French and German have been strong and reflect the careful teaching they have received. Attainment in lessons in the current Years 10 and 11 is variable. At the highest level students are capable of continuous pieces of narrative writing using two or three tenses and are clearly well on target for success at GCSE. Those of average and lower attainment have difficulties with writing beyond simple guided sentences, but have real success with speaking.

168 At post-16 standards continue to be above expectations. Numbers entering for A Level in French and German have not been large enough to compare usefully with national figures, but results over the past two years have shown a strong pattern with over eighty percent of foreign language students achieving grades A, B or C. Standards in lessons in Years 12 and 13 are good. In a Year 13 lesson, for example, students adopted various roles and argued in quite fluent French for and against the right of journalists to infringe the privacy of famous people.

169 At Key Stage 3 progress of most students, both in lessons and over time, is better than expected. This applies equally to low attainers and those with SEN who move forward at a sound pace in both languages, especially in speaking. The progress students make is largely responsive to the quality of teaching and is at its strongest where teachers allow abundant opportunity for students to take an active part in the lesson by thoroughly practising new language. In one Year 9 French lesson, for example, a group of SEN students made significant gains in learning new words describing parts of the body through teaching that was insistent and uncompromising. Those starting German in Year 8 are making very strong progress. There is little discrepancy between the progress of girls and boys at Key Stage 3.

170 At Key Stage 4 progress is rather more variable, but overall is good. At this level some inexperienced teaching leads to inattentiveness and a slower rate of progress in sets of middle and lower attaining students. In most lessons, however, demanding and resourceful teaching leads to rapid headway in the acquisition of new language. In a Year 11 French lesson a brisk pace drove students forward, giving them ample chances to practise their spoken language and to increase in fluency and confidence. At post-16 progress of all students is strong, promoted by good motivation and teaching that is mostly of a high order.

171 The large majority of students are very positive and well motivated towards the learning of foreign languages. They show enthusiasm and pride in their work, often eager to answer questions and volunteer to demonstrate dialogues in French or German. Behaviour overall is very good; inattentiveness is rare and is usually put right by an appropriate word or a change of activity. At Key Stage 4 there is a small number of students, principally boys, who lack motivation. Whilst not generally discourteous or poorly behaved, they are reluctant to participate in class and to submit written work carefully produced and on time. Most students, however, enjoy a very pleasant and respectful rapport with their teachers and in many cases show good independent study habits, co-operating sensibly in unsupervised paired activities, listening to language tapes at home and sometimes word-processing written work. Post-16 students work with real commitment and show a lively interest in their language learning. Those in Year 12 are already beginning to show the maturity needed to clear the intellectual divide between GCSE and A Level demands at this early stage of the year.

172 The quality of teaching is good. It is good or very good in six out of ten lessons and satisfactory in the rest. In most cases teachers are highly proficient in the languages they teach. This generally promotes very good use of French or German in the classroom, often with imaginative ways of getting students to understand without translating into English. In such cases the benefits are evident in the students' good comprehension and their readiness to speak. Where the foreign language is used inconsistently students are not as confident in using it themselves. Teachers should insist more on the use by students of the foreign language in the classroom. A good proportion of teaching is full of challenging expectations and intellectual rigour. The pace of work is fast moving but thorough; new points of language are well drilled and practised; students are kept busy and involved. In such cases students make very strong headway in their learning. At all levels, however, there is scope for giving more open ended tasks to allow keen linguists to extend their potential even further.

173 Overall, teachers plan their lessons imaginatively with an appropriate variety of activities and the flexibility to be modified when the need arises. Some inexperienced teaching is planned too rigidly and cannot be adapted if it is not proceeding well. A particular strength is the rich variety of methods and resources used by teachers to stimulate and keep students' interest. At times more use could be made of visual images to supplement the written and spoken word. Teachers generally manage students very well, treating them with courtesy and good humour, insisting firmly on high standards of behaviour. Although some use is made of ICT for word-processing and, at post-16, the Internet, the department should now plan to extend its use of the school's ICT facilities to enhance the learning of languages.

174 The department benefits from vigorous leadership and supportive relationships between staff which promote the sharing of good practice. In view of its size and the recent arrival of three newly qualified language teachers, the department should adopt a more formal and systematic approach to the induction, review and professional development of staff. In addition to this, the goal of raising attainment, especially that of boys, should be at the heart of the department's documentation and of its development plan. To this end schemes of work at all three key stages will need to be better elaborated. There are considerable benefits from the employment of a French and German assistant. The occasional services of a technician to assist the department in its large administrative and technical needs would relieve the head of department's heavy non-teaching load.

175 The department's classrooms are spacious and well appointed, but there are not enough of them for all staff to have a fixed teaching base. Two of the three newly qualified teachers currently

have to use a number of different classrooms during the week, some of them not specialised for foreign language teaching. This does not promote the best standards. The seventy-minute period is unsuitable for the proper delivery of a foreign language. Many students have difficulty concentrating in a foreign medium for such a long period and the very long gaps between lessons - in some cases as much as one week - undermine continuity and students' capacity to retain what they have learnt. A very good feature of the department is its continuing commitment to a programme of visits, exchanges and work experience in France and Germany. These visits have significant benefits - cultural, social and linguistic - for the large number of students who take part.

176 The department has largely maintained, and, in the case of A Level results, improved upon, the good standards of attainment and progress referred to in the last report. The overall quality of teaching remains high and students' attitudes continue to be very positive. There would be benefits from the reintroduction of a graded reading scheme in Key Stage 3. Through the goodwill of its effective and committed staff and secure leadership the department has the capacity to make further improvements.

• Music

177 Teachers' assessments for music at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were that 93% of students were achieving the expectations for the National Curriculum in music. In 1998 90% of GCSE students achieved grades A* - C though results were not so good in 1999. However, in view of the musical profile of many of the students taking the examination in 1999, the school judged these results to be a success, representing very hard work. Very few students take A-Level music, and results will continue to depend on the abilities, aptitudes and attitudes of the students taking the examination. Most students in the past have been successful but comparison with national data is not significant in view of the low numbers taking the examination.

178 The levels of attainment at Key Stage 3 are above average with a substantial number well above. In class, Year 7 students make very good progress to achieve a high standard of performance in their work on pitch and rhythm. One group of students demonstrated good control of dynamics and changes of speed in rehearsal although this was not sustained during the recorded performance. Again in Year 7's performance, students make good progress particularly in class performance of Land of the Silver Birch when there are several players to each part. In small group work, when part playing is more individual, progress is slower but is satisfactorily maintained with very good support from the teacher and good collaboration between the students. Students in Year 8 sing well. The tone and intonation improve in the lesson as a result of good vocal exercising and attention to breathing technique. Year 8's lesson on syncopation using three chords on xylophones demonstrated sustained good progress from students at all levels of attainment. They found this challenging and by the end of the lesson all groups achieved a presentable if unpolished performance of the Ragtime composition. In Year 9, students' written answers in challenging listening tasks on the 'Pictures at an Exhibition' were substantially correct. Most describe 'Bydlo' well, but find the use of musical terminology here a little more difficult. Students in the Year 9 SEN class show they can recognise different vocal styles well. Good progress is made by all students when deciding which sounds to use for different song titles, and progress is particularly good when they are supported individually in turn by the teacher, so re-establishing good concentration.

179 Generally concentration and enthusiastic involvement are very good throughout Key Stage 3, in part because the curriculum provides a wide variety of music of students' own culture as well as a little of world music to listen to and use for compositions. In an effort to give students a good range of experiences, sometimes depth is lost through insufficient opportunity to refine performances and compositions. Students are insufficiently versed in performance techniques that allow them to sustain a high standard across intervals of time. Although there is little opportunity for students to reflect on their work and evaluate as a class, the procedures for formally assessing and recording this are very good. However, students need to know what is required in the National Curriculum for music at Key Stage 3 and to know and understand what their grades are. Students at Key Stage 4, however, are familiar with what they have to do for the examination and are aware of the grading criteria used for performance and composition.

180 Levels of attainment at Key Stage 4 are above average with a substantial minority well above average. Year 10 made very good progress in their lesson on ground bass because of very well planned and integrated activities that lead from performance to listening to composition. The activities were challenging and the teaching lively and entertaining. In Year 11 students' listening skills are well developed. They talk knowledgeably about the techniques they hear in Ragtime, and their compositions on this topic show good imaginative work. Some students use computers confidently to assist composition. Taped examples of Year 11's compositions show well developed structures and considerable flair. Students in Year 13 A/S-level have good background musical knowledge, are good and perceptive listeners and perform to a high standard. Standards of attainment are above average in this year. Performance of music throughout the school is good.

181 Lively and thorough instrumental teaching supports good progress in this area. Students achieved 100% pass rate in instrumental examinations in the summer of 1999 with a third of students gaining a merit. As students share the short lessons, this represents very good progress over time. The department has a good open policy for extra curricular activities. If students are committed, they are welcome at the concert band and orchestra irrespective of their standard. Rehearsals are challenging, enjoyable and very well supported and the standard achieved is good. Choirs, musicals and regular concerts both in and out of school also provide very good enrichment and opportunities for social and cultural development. These activities are also well supported by other members of staff, and a teacher outside the music department ably directs the concert band.

182 Students behave very well and are well managed in lessons. They handle the instruments from room to room with respect and show great care when they play. They are totally trustworthy with equipment, which remains available for their use throughout the day. They show great respect for other students by listening carefully to individual and group performances.

183 Class teaching is very good. Teachers are good musicians and very knowledgeable in their subject. They use time very efficiently in lessons and are confident in the use of all resources including computers and recording technology. Teachers regularly evaluate the work of the department to ensure that standards continue to improve. Music is thriving in the school.

Physical Education

184 Overall standards of attainment are above average. At the end of Key Stage 3, whilst students' knowledge and understanding match expected levels, their skills are often above average as are their standards of personal fitness. In dance, girls can create sequences that are both inventive and creative and perform them with good style and control. In gymnastics, boys can establish good balances and show considerable strength in sustaining them in sequences. Within the key stage, skills in games are above the average expected standard. The levels of understanding and teamwork in boys' soccer and girls' hockey, for example, match this higher level. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards of personal fitness are generally good amongst girls and boys. This is already in evidence as the girls experience new activities, for example 'aquafit' in the local swimming pool and personal fitness programmes at the leisure centre. In more traditional activities, for example in boys' hockey, the overall standard of play is higher than might be expected at this age. Passing is accurate and stick control consistently good. Within the key stage in girls' aerobic activities, the highest overall standards are reached. Here there is a good match between performance, knowledge and understanding with almost all participants able to establish and sustain rhythms and produce well-controlled step routines consistently over long periods of time.

185 At Key Stage 3, boys and girls make good progress to reach their present standards of play in games, especially in soccer and hockey. The amount of progress made over time in the key stage is good, though not necessarily in every lesson. The focus on improvement in skills and increases in knowledge is insufficiently sharp in some activities. Where learning objectives are made clear, progress in the lesson is often good, as in Year 7 boys' hockey where increased confidence in handling the stick leads quickly to measurable gains in controlling the ball. Progress in lessons in Key Stage 4 is generally satisfactory across a programme of activity designed to broaden experience rather than raise standards.

186 Almost all students respond positively, working with interest and commitment. When given the opportunity to work together, they plan well and hold effective conversations, making decisions on how to improve their work, for example in Year 7 boys' gymnastics sequences. In Year 8 gymnastics, the girls show considerable maturity as they co-operate effectively together in assembling apparatus safely. High standards of teamwork are clearly evident in many activities but especially so in Year 10 girls aerobics. Many students are able to sustain high levels of concentration over long periods, including those with SEN. There is a need for a more structured approach to self-evaluation and assessment of others in many groups. This would help to develop further the students' knowledge and deepen their understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.

187 The quality of teaching is consistently good; all teachers responsible for the programme are very experienced and enthusiastic. There is clear evidence of good planning; class control and organisation are very good. There are consistently high expectations of student performance, participation and behaviour from all members of the department. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent. Mostly, lessons have good pace and shape. Activities are appropriately challenging, there are clear instructions and demonstrations and some opportunities are made for feedback and review of progress. In some lessons more attention should be given to highlighting what needs to be done in order to improve.

188 The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements and arrangements for assessment are properly in place. At present the information about students' experience before they join the school is inadequate to support the department's attempt to devise a Key Stage 3 programme with

relevance to earlier experience and balance to meet all needs. At the end of Key Stage 4 there is no focus on assessment in the subject that combines skill in performance together with knowledge and understanding of the nature and purpose of organised physical activity. In addition to the taught curriculum the department provides a popular and wide-ranging programme of sports and games. This contributes much to the school's reputation and enables many talented youngsters to reach their true potential at area, regional and national levels. The PE departments are very well organised by experienced and very capable managers. All activities run very smoothly based on good quality documentation. In planning to develop the work of the department attention should be given to a more thorough evaluation of what is already in place.

189 Specialist facilities for the subject are generally good and the all weather surface makes a significant contribution to standards in games. Indoor activities are however limited by the lack of a sports hall.

190 Since the last inspection, the department has worked hard to develop greater consistency in standards across a wider range of activities. This it has achieved in terms of performance and standards of personal fitness. Having also established improved arrangements for assessment, the potential clearly exists amongst the students to reach higher standards relating to their knowledge and understanding of physical activity and across the specialist staff to work to promote such standards.

Religious Education

191 The attainment of students at the end of Key Stage 3 is average. They have a sound grasp of some main features of the religions studied, know and can use specialist terms to express their knowledge of religious belief and practices and can recall previous learning. Most are able to write about religion, within structured frameworks, with understanding. The attainment of students in Key Stage 4 is average. Opportunity to experience work across all attainment targets of the agreed syllabus is restricted at this key stage. Most students have a basic knowledge of the religious traditions studied and are able to express a view, when asked, on the moral issues covered in the course. Students have not been examined at GCSE in the subject for several years.

192 The progress of students in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. In Key Stage 3 students develop their knowledge of religious beliefs and practices in Christianity and other world faiths and acquire a vocabulary of specialist terms which they use in written and oral work. Progress in this key stage is restricted mainly to the knowledge component of the agreed syllabus and students do not have opportunity to develop skills in individual research, expressing their own ideas or in forming personal responses to the knowledge of faith traditions they are acquiring in lessons. Good progress by students with SEN was observed in a Year 9 class. These students were acquiring a basic knowledge of some key terms, reinforcing their understanding of the main features of religious worship and developing social skills of collaboration and mutual support. In Key Stage 4 students add to their knowledge of religious traditions and develop awareness of moral and ethical issues. Progress in Key Stage 4 is restricted by the limited time allocated to the subject.

193 The response of students in Key Stage 3 is good and in Key Stage 4, satisfactory. Students are well behaved, apply themselves to the tasks set and, when required, work well together in pairs

and groups. Good responses were observed in a Year 8 lesson in which students were researching aspects of modern religious life. They were evidently engaged, concentrated on their work and produced interesting visual aids to illustrate brief presentations in which they spoke fluently and with confidence. Students in a Year 11 group considering ethical issues about race and sexual relations were clearly interested and several said they were pleased that they had been given the opportunity to think about the topic.

194 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. All lessons have a clear sense of purpose, expectations are carefully explained to students and there is good discipline and control. In some lessons tasks set do not challenge students, the pace is slow, opportunities for discussion are not developed and work sheets are unstimulating. Very good teaching was observed in a Year 9 group studying Hinduism. Effective use was made of religious artefacts, tasks were well-suited to students' levels of attainment and the lesson moved at an appropriate pace. At Key Stage 4 the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Where opportunities are given for student participation, the pace of the lesson improves and the aims of the lessons are more effectively met.

195 The curriculum is based upon the local agreed syllabus, but does not provide the full range of learning opportunities set out in the attainment targets. Time allocation in Key Stage 3 meets the requirements of the syllabus, but is insufficient at Key Stage 4 and at post-16. The scheme of work at Key Stage 3 provides for continuity and progression in the knowledge component of the agreed syllabus, but planning for other attainment targets is undeveloped. Students' work is regularly checked and marked and a new system for assessing students is to be introduced, though this does not cover all learning elements set out in the agreed syllabus.

196 The department makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The study of a number of world faiths in Key Stages 3 and 4 and a synagogue visit made by students contribute to their cultural development; students are encouraged to reflect on moral and social issues in the Key Stage 4 course. Visits by aid organisations and local clergy enhance the education they receive in spiritual and moral values. Students are positively encouraged to develop respect for other peoples' beliefs and values.

197 An experienced and committed teacher provides leadership. Development planning follows the school pattern but does not focus on the curriculum requirements of the agreed syllabus. Schemes of work for Key Stage 3 cover the main requirements of the knowledge component of agreed syllabus but lack clarity in planning to meet the full ability range in the mixed ability groups taught. The two teachers meet regularly to review and plan their work. There is a strong sense of commitment to their students and a desire to contribute to their development through RE. Limits on time allocation and the large numbers of students taught each week are felt to be factors inhibiting progress.

198 Staff are well-qualified and experienced and have had recent in-service training. Accommodation is good. Resources for the subject are adequate and supplemented by loans from a local religious education centre. There are plans to develop the use of ICT in the Key Stage 3 course.

199 There has been improvement since the last inspection in the time allocation in Year 9 and to the specialist qualifications of staff teaching the subject. Group work remains undeveloped and there is still too little opportunity for students to share ideas and experiences. The attainment

targets set out in the local agreed syllabus have not yet been fully implemented and the assessment of students' work not related to these requirements. There is still too little time allocated to the subject in Key Stage 4 and post-16 to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus in full. Attention needs to be given to implementing the full range of attainment targets set out in the agreed syllabus; providing more opportunities in lessons for discussion and encouraging a wider range of personal responses from students; providing an effective and manageable method of assessing students' work in line with the requirements of the local syllabus; improving time allocation in Key Stage 4 and at post-16 to enable all students to experience the full range of work set out in the local agreed syllabus.

· **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

· **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

200 The inspection was carried out by a team of thirteen inspectors, including a lay inspector. During the week, almost 150 lessons were inspected as well as registrations and assemblies. A number of lunchtime and after school activities were seen. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, members of the senior management team, heads of department and holders of posts of particular responsibility in the school. Curriculum, pastoral and administrative matters were discussed with many members of the staff. Inspectors looked at the practical and written work of many students. All the available work and reports of a representative sample of students from each year group were scrutinised. Planned discussions were held with these students and informal conversations with many more. Before the inspection the Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 30 parents. The team considered the responses of 551 parents to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school.

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• **201**
INDICATORS

DATA AND

• **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
Year 7 – Year 13	1,436	16	129	34

• **Teachers and classes**

• **Qualified teachers (Year 7 – Year 13)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	86.65
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	16.57

• **Education support staff (Year 7 – Year 13)**

Total number of education support staff:	12
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	269

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes: 78.4

Average teaching group size:	KS3	25
	KS4	21

• **Financial data**

Financial year:	1999
	£
Total Income	3,005,379
Total Expenditure	2,948,733
Expenditure per pupil	2,124.45
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,119
Balance carried forward to next year	91,765

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 1436
 Number of questionnaires returned: 551

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	12	58	18	8	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	28	59	7	3	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	14	49	25	5	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	13	56	17	9	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	21	53	13	8	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	34	53	8	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	55	11	4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	20	60	8	7	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	27	52	15	2	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	30	52	12	2	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	30	55	9	3	1