

INSPECTION REPORT

Blythe Bridge High School
Blythe Bridge

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique Reference Number: 124396

Inspection Number: 184449

Headteacher: Miss J Wyman

Reporting inspector: Mr D Driscoll
11933

Dates of inspection: 6th – 10th December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708250

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Community school
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cheadle Road Blythe Bridge Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST11 9PW
Telephone number:	01782 392519
Fax number:	01782 388261
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mr G Crookes
Date of previous inspection:	March 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Driscoll Registered Inspector		Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Rosalie Watkins Lay Inspector		Attendance Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Support guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Tristram Shepherd	Design and technology Art	
John Glennon	English	Assessment
Ann Axon	Mathematics	Accommodation
Christine Harrison	Science	
Alan Skelton	Religious education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Ewen Bird	Modern foreign languages	
Ray Jones	Geography Special educational needs	Efficiency
Cliff Blakemore	History Business education	
John Hunt	Information technology	Resources
Ian Kirby	Music	Curriculum Staffing Other curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 The sixth form
Bernard Jones	Physical education Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

CfBT Education Services
London House
59 – 65 London Street
READING
RG1 4EW
Tel: 0118 952 3900

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with David Banham, Senior Operations Manager at CfBT Education Services. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- An above average proportion of students gain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C and A* to G
- Test results at the end of Key Stage 3 are above the national averages in mathematics and science
- Attainment is well above average in art, geography, music and science by the age of 16
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are good
- Attendance is above average
- The school has a good ethos
- There are very good opportunities for extracurricular activities
- The school has good assessment systems
- There are strong links with partner primary schools leading to good arrangements for the transfer of pupils
- The school provides good value for money

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The curriculum is unsatisfactory in the sixth form and poor at Key Stage 4
- II. The provision for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 leading to low attaining students making unsatisfactory progress in English
- III. The provision for students' spiritual development is poor and for their social and cultural development is unsatisfactory
- IV. There are not enough computers and the library provision is inadequate
- V. The systems for monitoring teaching and providing for professional development are unsatisfactory
- VI. Parents do not receive reports on their child's progress in non-examination religious education and physical education at Key Stage 4

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

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection: GCSE results are now above average for the proportions gaining five or more passes at grades A* to C and A* to G; attendance has remained good, as has the good value for money provided by the school. The quality of teaching is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection. Most of the key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed but the efforts made to improve some of the areas criticised in the previous report, such as providing more opportunities in lessons for students to work on their own initiative, have been insufficient. Given the awareness of the issues facing the school and the improvements in planning brought about by the Headteacher since the school last had to write an action plan, the school is in a satisfactory position to continue its improvement.

Standards in subjects

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

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

Results at Key Stage 3 were average in English and above average in mathematics and science when compared to all schools. The proportions achieving five or more passes at grades A* to C and A* to G at GCSE were above average, but the average points score per student was pulled down to average because students at this school study fewer subjects than most other schools. The performance at A level is based on the average points score of students studying two or more A levels. In this school, almost a quarter of students studied only two A levels, a much higher proportion than is normally seen. This proportion reduces the overall average points score to well below average. The comparison with similar schools is based on eligibility for free school meals. If the school had 14 more students eligible the grades for comparison with similar schools would be C and D for Key Stages 3 and 4 respectively.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Satisfactory	Art, music	History, religious education
Years 10-11	Satisfactory	Art, music	History, religious education
Sixth form	Satisfactory	Geography	Religious education
English	Satisfactory		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons, good in 38 per cent and very good or excellent in 12 per cent. In no subject is teaching unsatisfactory, but expectations of the highest attainers are not high enough in history and there is too little teaching of religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Too many religious education lessons are taught by non-specialists at Key Stage 3.

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

• **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good both in and out of lessons.
Attendance	Good. Above average attendance with a below average incidence of unauthorised absence.
Ethos*	Good. A positive learning environment with good attitudes to work on the part of students. Good relationships throughout the school.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. A sound commitment to raising standards and very good monitoring on the part of governors. Weaknesses exist in the monitoring and support of teaching and curriculum development.
Curriculum	Unsatisfactory. Too few subjects taught at Key Stage 4, insufficient religious education and poorly organised personal, health and social education programme. Too little time spent teaching.
Pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory provision at Key Stage 3. The coordinator does not have enough time to carry out his duties.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory overall, with poor provision for spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Insufficient computers and library provision.
Value for money	Good, given the well below average funding the school receives.

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

• **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school

- VII. The number of reports that they receive
- VIII. The standards achieved by the students
- IX. The extracurricular activities available
- X. The amount of homework
- XI. The good behaviour
- XII. The welcome they receive at the school
- XIII. The good arrangements for the transfer of pupils from primary schools

What some parents are not happy about

- XIV. The timing of the publishing of reports

The inspectors agree with the parents' comments. Whilst the school makes clear on reports how the school can be contacted, some parents find that the time left at the end of term is too short to respond.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve the standards achieved and the quality of education provided, the Headteacher, staff and governors should:

Improve the curriculum by:

XV. increasing the length of the taught week; (paragraph 53)

XVI. increasing the number of subjects studied by many students to GCSE level; (paragraph 54)

XVII. ensuring that the curriculum in the sixth form is broad and is appropriate for the individual student; (paragraph 55)

XVIII. improving the provision for personal, health and social education; (paragraph 56)

XIX. providing sufficient lessons in religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. (paragraphs 54 and 55)

Improve the progress made by lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs by:

XX. assessing and monitoring the progress of students so that they are placed at the appropriate stage on the register; (paragraph 64)

XXI. improving communications between the special educational needs coordinator and other staff; (paragraph 48)

XXII. improving the quality of individual education plans so that teachers are able to provide appropriate support in lessons. (paragraph 58)

Raise the already satisfactory standard of teaching to a good level by:

XXIII. improving the systems for monitoring and supporting teachers; (paragraph 91)

XXIV. improving the systems for professional development and appraisal. (paragraph 97)

Improve the provision for students' spiritual, social and cultural development by:

XXV. planning a coordinated provision for these aspects; (paragraph 66)

XXVI. giving students more opportunities to take responsibility and play a part in the life of the school; (paragraph 69)

XXVII. providing more opportunities for students to learn about other cultures; (paragraph 70)

XXVIII. providing more lessons in religious education and meeting the requirement for a daily act of collective worship. (paragraph 67)

Increase the number of reference books and computers in the school. (paragraphs 99 and 100)

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

Providing written reports to parents on their child's progress in physical education and religious education (paragraph 83) and meeting all statutory requirements (paragraph 93).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Blythe Bridge High School is an average-sized mixed comprehensive school, educating students between the ages of 11 and 18. There are 981 students at the school (515 boys and 466 girls), only one of whom comes from an ethnic minority background. The school is popular with parents and the number on roll has risen significantly since the time of the previous inspection. There are now more students wishing to join the school in Year 7 than there are places available.

2. Students' attainment on entry to the school has improved since the previous inspection and is now above average. There are 68 students on the special needs register, which is below average, but 33 students have statements of special educational needs, which is above average; there were only 13 students with statements at the time of the last inspection. All but one student speak English as their first language and the one student is a fluent English speaker.

3. The school is situated in the village of Blythe Bridge within the Staffordshire Local Education Authority (LEA). Most students come from Blythe Bridge, Forsbrook or Meir Park. Overall, the socioeconomic circumstances of the students are above average, as they were at the time of previous inspection, with a below average proportion of students eligible for free school meals.

4. The school's aim is to educate its students to the highest standards and thereby to equip them to achieve their full potential as individuals and collectively as members of society.

5. The school has nine main priorities for its work in 1999/2000. These relate to improvements in communication; the setting of targets for individuals; the curriculum; the attainment of boys; assessment; staff development; the opportunities for students to develop skills in independent learning; resources and further developing the existing links with partner schools.

6. Each year the school's management sets comprehensive targets for the school's examination performance. The main targets for 2000 are: an average points score at GCSE of 38.71; 54.3 per cent of students should leave with five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C and 100 per cent should leave with one or more GCSE passes at grades A* to G.

6. **Key indicators**

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
For latest reporting year:	1999	86	76	162

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

6. National Curriculum test results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	54	63	59
	Girls	53	54	45
	Total	107	117	104
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	66 (74)	72 (63)	64 (65)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	34 (22)	47 (37)	21 (28)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

6. Teacher assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	49	59	66
	Girls	61	51	57
	Total	110	110	123
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	68 (79)	68 (77)	76 (74)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	35 (37)	44 (47)	33 (29)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest Reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	80	83	163

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	44	77	78
	Girls	48	78	80
	Total	92	155	158
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	56 (47)	95 (98)	97 (99)
	National	48 (45)	88 (90)	94 (95)

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
	1999	29	28	57

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

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

School	14.3	13.5	13.7 (17.1)	N/A	4.5	4.5 (0)
National	17.5	18.0	17.8 (17.6)	2.6	2.8	-(2.8)

Attendance

Percentage of half-days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:						%
	Authorised absence	School				6.9
		National comparative data				7.6
	Unauthorised absence	School				0.5
		National comparative data				1.1
6.						
6.						
6.	Exclusions					

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:			Number
	Fixed period		29
	Permanent		5

6. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:			%
	Very good or better		12
	Satisfactory or better		98
	Less than satisfactory		2

6. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

6. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

6. Attainment and progress

7. Attainment in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 1999 was above the national average. The proportions of students reaching Level five or above were above the national averages in mathematics and science and close to the national average in English. The proportions reaching Level six or above were well above average in mathematics; above average in English and average in science. Overall, results were above average in mathematics and science and average in English.

8. When the test results are compared with schools with a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals, the results are below average in English and mathematics; well below average in science and well below average overall. However, if the school had just 14 more students eligible for free school meals, the results would be average in all three subjects and average overall.

9. Results overall have risen and fallen again since 1996, but have consistently remained above the national average. The same trend is also observed in the results in mathematics and science but results in English have been in steady decline since 1996. This overall decline in the English results is because the lower attaining students' performance is falling, although the performance of the higher attainers is improving.

10. In the GCSE examinations in 1999, the proportions of students gaining five or more passes at grades A* to C and A* to G were above average and the proportion gaining one or more passes at grades A* to G was close to the national average. The average points score per student was also close to the national average, but this is because students at this school study fewer subjects at Key Stage 4 than in most other schools. Results, using the average GCSE points score per pupils, have shown no significant trend over the past four years, although the results in 1999, using the proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at grades A* to C, were the best in the school's history. There is little overall difference in the performance of boys and girls in GCSE examinations.

11. Results in the 1999 GCSE examinations compared with schools with students from similar backgrounds were average for the proportions gaining five or more passes at grades A* to C and A* to G and below average for the proportion gaining one or more passes at grades A* to G. The average points score per student was well below the average for similar schools. However, this comparison is again based on the proportion of students eligible for free school meals. If the school had 14 more students eligible, the results would be above average for the proportions gaining five or more passes at grades A* to C and A* to G and average for the proportion gaining one or more passes at grades A* to G. The average points score per student would be below the average for similar schools as students study fewer subjects at Key Stage 4 than in most other schools.

12. The proportions of students achieving grades A* to C were far above the national average in information technology; well above average in art, science and physical education and above average in business studies, English language, geography and mathematics. Results were broadly average in French, design and technology and Spanish and far below average in history. The best results were in music and English literature where results were far above the national average, although only the highest attaining students are entered for English literature.

13. The proportions achieving grades A* to G were above average in English language, geography, mathematics and science. In all other subjects there was a 100 per cent pass rate.

14. The best results overall, compared to other subjects in the school, were in art and music whilst the worst results were in French and history.

15.The average A level points score per candidate was well below the national average in 1999. This was a considerable fall from 1998 when results were average. As at Key Stage 4, however, the overall results are reduced by the number of subjects that students study. A quarter of all students last year studied only two A levels which is a much higher proportion than is found nationally. So, whilst results in individual subjects are often good, the small number of subjects studied reduces the average points score per candidate. Results for the school as a whole, and in individual subjects, vary considerably from year to year depending on the attainment of the students entering the sixth form.

16.Results at A level in 1999 were well above average in art, computer studies and geography and average in design and technology and physics. Results were below average in mathematics and well below average in business studies, chemistry and English. Results in biology were far below average. There were too few candidates studying other subjects to make statistical comparisons reliable. The best results were in geography and the worst were in biology.

17.In the work seen during the inspection, students' attainment at the age of 14 is above the level expected for their age. Attainment is well above the expected level in art and at the expected level in design and technology, English, history, modern foreign languages and religious education. In all other subjects attainment is above the level expected nationally. The attainment in English, mathematics and science is reflected in the results of the national tests. Attainment, where it is possible to compare with the previous report, has improved in design and technology and science. In all other subjects, attainment is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection.

18.In the work seen during the inspection, students' overall attainment at the age of 16 is above the level expected for their age. Attainment is well above the level expected nationally in art, geography, music and science and above the expected level in all other subjects except business studies, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages, where attainment is at the level expected nationally, and religious education where attainment is unsatisfactory. These levels of attainment are similar to those suggested by recent examination results in most subjects. In history, however, the students are now attaining at a much higher level than in the past owing to a change in teaching staff that has improved the quality of teaching in the subject. In business education, information technology and music there are slight differences between current attainment and that suggested by last year's examination results because the attainments of the students starting the courses are different to those last year. Attainment, where it is possible to compare with the previous report, has improved in English, design and technology, geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. In all other subjects attainment is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection.

19.The improvement of examination results in design and technology and modern foreign languages was a key issue for the school at the time of the previous inspection and has been addressed successfully.

20.Attainment in the sixth form is in line with the standards expected nationally. Attainment of the current students is well above average in art and geography; above average in computer studies and music and average in all other subjects except modern foreign languages, where attainment is below the standard expected of A level students. The current standards differs in several subjects from those suggested by the A level results as the levels of attainment of students entering the sixth form changes from year to year. Attainment, where it is possible to compare with the previous report, has improved in geography and declined in modern foreign languages and science. In all other subjects, attainment is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection.

21.The single student who comes from a home where English is not the first language is one of the highest attaining students in the school. There are no significant differences in the attainment of students from different backgrounds.

22.Standards of literacy are satisfactory. Students enhance their learning in all subjects by listening attentively in class. They express themselves clearly when answering questions or making other oral contributions. In many subjects they are given the chance to develop their oral skills in group work. The reading attainment of most students is at least satisfactory and in many cases is good. Most students communicate effectively in writing although they make spelling and punctuation errors. The higher attaining students, particularly in the

sixth form, write with very good accuracy and control. Lower attaining students, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress in literacy at Key Stage 3 because inadequate provision is made for them. However, by the age of 16 they are able to read and write sufficiently well to cope with most demands of adult life. The lack of a whole-school policy for literacy means that the amount of attention paid to it depends too much upon individual departments and efforts to raise standards are not sufficiently coordinated.

23. All students have good levels of numerical skills. They use them effectively in science where, for example, calculations of speed are carried out. Occasionally the lower attainers omit the units from their answers, but the majority of students appreciate the importance of quoting the correct units. They demonstrate good graphical skills, particularly in geography and science. In business education, students use numeracy skills effectively in cash flow calculations and key skills are developed well in GNVQ lessons. Students generally use the four rules of number accurately, although there is a need for a whole-school numeracy policy so that there is consistent practice across the curriculum and to ensure that teachers are aware of the mathematical expectations they should have for their students. For example, in science lessons at Key Stage 3, students were asked to rearrange formulae for finding speed when they had not yet encountered these skills in mathematics.

24. Students make satisfactory progress at the school. They arrive with levels of attainment that are above average and leave the school at the age of 16 with GCSE results that are above average.

25. Students join the school with levels of attainment that are usually above average, although there are some significant variations between years. For example, students who sat their national tests last year joined the school with average levels of attainment in English, whilst the students currently in Year 8 gained results at the end of Key Stage 2 that were well above average in mathematics and science. Students make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 and are attaining above the level expected by the age of 14. Progress is good in art, geography, music, science and physical education and satisfactory in all other subjects.

26. Students continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 and they leave the school with levels of attainment that are above the levels expected nationally. Progress is good in art, business studies, English, geography, music, science and physical education and satisfactory in all other subjects except religious education, where progress is unsatisfactory.

27. Students make satisfactory progress in the sixth form and leave the school with A level results that are appropriate for their attainment when they started the courses. Progress is good in art, business studies, geography, music and physical education and satisfactory in all other subjects except religious education, where progress is very poor. A small proportion of students study for A levels in subjects which they have not studied at GCSE. This is another effect of the constrained curriculum at Key Stage 4 and particularly effects those subjects which are options at Key Stage 4, such as art, music, business studies and computer studies. This means that these students are starting courses of study with levels of attainment in the subject which are below those of their peers who studied the subject to GCSE level.

28. The rate at which students make progress is usually a result of the quality of teaching that they receive, so that where teaching is satisfactory, progress is also satisfactory. However, there are some notable exceptions to this rule. In modern foreign languages in the sixth form, students are now making good progress in their lessons as a result of the good teaching they are receiving from an almost entirely new staff. Their progress since they started in Year 12, however, has been only satisfactory. This is because of short-term staffing difficulties experienced by the school when they were unable to appoint full-time teachers of sufficient calibre to raise standards in the subject. This issue has now been resolved most successfully. In religious education, the teaching of lessons is satisfactory but there are too few lessons at Key Stage 4 and none at all in the sixth form. The teaching of English in the sixth form is now good as a result of staff changes, but progress since students started their A level courses last year is only satisfactory owing to the previous quality of the teaching received. In art at A level, the very positive attitudes of the students significantly enhance their progress.

29. Students with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4. Most of these students, even at Key Stage 3, make similar progress to their peers in most subjects. However, at Key Stage 3, lower attaining students are not making sufficient progress in their literacy skills, particularly reading. There is insufficient communication between the English and special needs

departments. The targets on the individual education plans are not precise enough and it is not clear which departments are responsible for ensuring that targets are met. Monitoring of the progress of these students is inadequate, particularly in Year 9. Where support is provided for students with special educational needs, progress is satisfactory. However, the amount of support is insufficient and it cannot be targeted effectively given the other deficiencies in the system. There are several students who should be on the register of students with special educational needs who have not been placed at the appropriate stage.

30. Attainment at the ages of 14 and 16 has improved since the time of the previous inspection but has declined from the generally good level to average in the sixth form. There are, however, no clear trends in results at either GCSE or A level over the past four years as measured by the average points score per student.

30. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

31. Attitudes and behaviour are good, as at the previous inspection, and this contributes to the progress that students make. Parents are rightly happy with the good standards of behaviour and good relationships. Other aspects of students' personal development are also good.

32. Good attitudes to learning and good behaviour are evident in many lessons throughout the school. In the large majority of lessons students of all ages and abilities arrive ready to learn. They listen carefully to the teacher and work at activities and written tasks with well-sustained attention. They look after books and equipment. In around one lesson in five, and most often when teaching is at its best, students show a high level of interest and work with notable enthusiasm. For instance in a Year 8 music lesson students' enthusiasm in all aspects of the lesson, and their confidence in performing, helped them to make very good progress. In the sixth form, attitudes and behaviour are particularly mature. This was especially evident in a business education lesson where students showed a very good attitude to study in their preparation for a presentation on employer/employee relationships. Less often, students' attention may drift. A few may quietly chatter, and take time to settle. In middle ability groups in science at Key Stage 4, disinterest at times develops when the teacher is addressing the class, with students following their own thoughts while appearing to listen. In history, students' enthusiasm is less marked, though they still show a satisfactory response. Behaviour very seldom becomes less than satisfactory in lessons.

33. There is much enthusiasm for the many extracurricular activities. For instance a large number of students were involved at the time of the inspection, in the school's production of *Bugsy Malone* and the number of students involved with extracurricular sport is high.

34. Around the buildings and site, students are friendly and their behaviour is also for the most part good, even for instance in crowded conditions indoors during a wet break. They remain patient if they are hindered by congestion in corridors during movement to or from lessons. Occasionally boys become over-boisterous, especially when adults are not present to supervise them. A degree of carelessness with litter detracts from the appearance of the site, although this is not helped by the lack of litter bins.

35. Despite the generally good behaviour, a few students are involved from time to time in incidents of poor behaviour, to which the school responds by the use of exclusion. Rates of both fixed-term and permanent exclusion are similar to the average seen in other schools. There is no clear trend over the last three years in the rate of exclusions. An apparent increase in the rate of exclusions since the last inspection is explained by the school as due to more careful recording procedures now in place.

36. Relationships are good and contribute to students' progress in lessons. In all age groups they readily help each other and work together to good effect on the occasions when this is expected. At Key Stage 3, in drama, for instance, students applaud good work by their peers, and their group discussions of scenes promote their progress. In information technology they work well together when they share computers. They respect others' values and ideas, in geography for instance, and empathise with other viewpoints when these are presented to them. Their good willingness to respond to others' needs is very apparent in the enthusiastic response of Year 8 students to the 'shoe box' appeal for Zambian orphans.

37. Students display good evidence of other aspects of personal development when occasions arise. They accept the personal responsibility they are given for working towards the targets set for their progress and attainment. When occasionally they are given responsibilities towards others, or opportunity to show initiative, they cope well. Year 12 boys, for example, make a significant contribution to the reading skills of Year 7 boys in the way they support them in paired reading. Similarly the progress of sixth form musicians is aided by the way they compose music for Year 7 to play and accept responsibility for helping the younger students. Such opportunities are the exception rather than the norm.

38. During the inspection, a number of students displayed a good ability to advance mature views about the provision made for their education and welfare. However since their ability to exercise responsibility is little encouraged and there are no effective ways for them to express and debate issues of importance, they make little contribution towards the way the school community functions.

38. **Attendance**

39. Attendance is good, as at the previous inspection, and this contributes to the progress students make. In the most recent reporting year attendance decreased a little from the previous year but still remained higher than the average seen in secondary schools. Students in the sixth form show the same good attendance as younger ones.

40. In the weeks leading up to the inspection attendance in most year groups, including Years 12 and 13, was well over 90 per cent. In Year 11, however, it was just satisfactory at 90.5 per cent. There are concerns about the way absence interrupts the progress of a few students, especially in Year 11, and limits their attainment. Unauthorised absence is consistently lower than the average for secondary schools. However, a small minority of students, especially in Year 11, tend to miss school frequently, without any proper excuse.

41. A few families observe the traditional industrial holiday of the area and attendance drops significantly, by over five per cent, for this week during the second half of the summer term.

42. Students are seldom late without some acceptable excuse. Sanctions are effective in encouraging punctuality. Occasionally students arrive late when a school bus is delayed.

42. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

42. **Teaching**

43. The quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons, good in 38 per cent and very good or excellent in 12 per cent. Teaching is less than satisfactory in two per cent of lessons. The proportions of lessons taught to these standards are similar at both key stages and in the sixth form, although no unsatisfactory teaching was observed at Key Stage 4 and there was a slightly smaller proportion of good lessons at Key Stage 3.

44. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good in art, geography, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and science, and satisfactory in all other subjects. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good in art, business studies, English, geography, music, physical education and science, and satisfactory in all other subjects. Teaching in the sixth form is good in art, business studies, English, geography, modern foreign languages, music and physical education, and satisfactory in all other subjects. However, the schools provision for the teaching of religious education is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and it is very poor in the sixth form because students do not receive sufficient lessons.

45. In most subjects, teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. However, in religious education at Key Stage 3, several classes are taught by non-specialists who do not have sufficient in-depth knowledge. This leads to lessons going off in the wrong direction, rather than focusing on the key concepts central to religious education. In art, on the other hand, the teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject and use this to good effect in demonstrating a wide range of techniques that extend students skills beyond those normally seen.

46. The way that the school collates and uses data on attainment when students join the school ensures that teachers are aware of their students' capabilities and most have appropriate expectations of what they can achieve. This is particularly true in art and music, where the teachers expect their students to achieve their potential in all aspects of their work. The students readily accept this level of challenge and respond by working even harder. In some cases, however, such as in history and modern foreign languages, the teachers do not expect enough of higher attaining students and standards do not reach the same level as those in other subjects.

47. Lesson planning is generally satisfactory. Planning is best in art, geography and music. Here, the plans are detailed and, particularly in geography and music, a wide range of interesting activities is organised to ensure that students' interest is maintained and built upon throughout the lesson. In modern foreign languages,

particularly novel activities are used, such as describing a staff football team in French. This both amuses the students and makes them want to take part. However, there are several subjects where such variety of activity is not planned. In several subjects, including business studies, English and history, the teacher can over dominate lessons. Students in such lessons have few opportunities to work on their own initiative and develop personal skills such as the ability to carry out research.

48. Almost all teachers meet the needs of students on the A level and GNVQ courses well. They are always willing to give freely of their time to help students who have not understood a particular point, or to repeat topics in lessons where students have not quite grasped a concept. Lower down the school, however, some teachers do not meet the needs of lower attaining pupils including those on the special needs register. This is partly as a result of a lack of communication between the special needs department and, in particular, the English department and leads to students not receiving sufficient support in lessons. This results in, for example, an increasingly widening gap between the higher and lower attainers in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in English. However, some subjects, notably music, have developed a very efficient assessment system that allows them to keep detailed records of students' attainment and to carefully target their teaching at an appropriate level. Teachers in science use a different, but no less effective, method of subtly going back to key teaching points to make sure that they are reinforced.

49. The management of pupils is good throughout the school and no teacher has any problems with discipline. Most lessons proceed at an appropriate pace with the use of a range of resources. This is a particular strength of English where video, tape recorders and information technology are used well. In most subjects, however, information technology is not used sufficiently. This is partly because the school does not have enough computers to meet demands, but there are also teachers who need more encouragement to build the use of information technology into their lesson planning. Very good use is made of the local community in business studies.

50. Marking of work is generally satisfactory although this masks great variations between individual teachers. In the best examples, for instance in art and physical education, the comments indicate to students exactly what they need to do to improve, whilst in the worst cases such as design and technology and modern foreign languages, it is superficial and unhelpful. In physical education, a wide range of assessment methods is used to very good effect. Many of these methods are shared with the students so that they improve their own performance in evaluating the work of their peers.

51. The setting of homework is good throughout the school. In science it is used especially well. Here, students have to research topics before the lesson so that they already have a basic knowledge of the topic. This has the advantages of saving time and, more importantly, developing students' research skills. Good use is also made of homework in physical education, where a wide range of tasks are used. All subjects set appropriate homework on a regular basis and in many subjects homework is used to extend the lesson rather than simply completing work.

52. The quality of teaching is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection, although there is a slightly smaller proportion of teaching that now fails to reach a satisfactory standard. A key issue for the school at the time of the previous inspection was to increase the number of opportunities for students to work on their own initiative. Whilst there has been some improvement in this area, it is mainly a result of new teachers joining the school rather than improving the performance of existing teachers. Teaching, where it is possible to compare with the previous report, has improved in English, modern foreign languages and science. The quality of teaching has declined in religious education.

52. The curriculum and assessment

53. The curriculum arrangements are satisfactory at Key Stage 3, poor at Key Stage 4 and unsatisfactory in the sixth form. The total teaching time of 23 hours 20 minutes is well below average and places the school in the bottom 10 per cent of secondary schools nationally. This leads to insufficient time being available to teach an appropriately broad curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 4.

54. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is appropriately broad, balanced and relevant, containing all subjects of the National Curriculum including religious education and personal, health and social education (PHSE). The curriculum is appropriately planned to create a smooth transition between primary and secondary school. At Key Stage 4, however, the number of subjects available to students is too small and leads to students leaving the school with a GCSE points score that is only average when it should be above average. Under the present structure, the majority of students can take only eight GCSE examinations at Key Stage 4. This is as a result of there being only a single option block, which severely limits the range of choice and combination of courses available to students and leads to a lack of opportunities compared with students in other schools. For example, students can choose only a single arts subject, so are unable to take music and art. Drama, which is taught to all students at Key Stage 3, is not available at Key Stage 4 or in the sixth form. The provision for religious education is inadequate at Key Stage 4 to meet the demands of the agreed syllabus and only the highest attainers are entered for English literature.

55. The range of courses open to students in the sixth form is relatively narrow, although it has recently been improved by the addition of extra subjects at A level and a GNVQ course in business studies. No students study religious education although it is a statutory requirement to be taught to all sixth formers. General studies is not included on the timetable. There is also no provision for PHSE in the sixth form and no student receives sex education. Almost a quarter of all students studied only two A levels last year, a much higher proportion than is usually found, which depressed the average points score per student to a level that was well below the national average. The narrow nature of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 leads to poor continuity for students in that several choose to study subjects that they did not previously study at GCSE level.

56. Curriculum planning for the PHSE programme is disorganised and incomplete. The daily 20 minute tutorial sessions for both Key Stages 3 and 4 are occasionally used well, but too often the pace of these sessions is slow, with little constructive activity by the students. On several occasions, the teacher makes no attempt to deliver any part of the scheme of work, leading to wide variation in the quality of the students' experiences. A satisfactory programme of careers' education is delivered in liaison with the careers service. In Year 9, students are introduced to the careers library and then in Key Stage 4, follow a relevant module of the PHSE programme, supplemented by ongoing access to the library and to relevant advice. The programme in Key Stage 4 includes the opportunity for all students to attend an appropriate work experience placement. All work experience is monitored well, with careful preparation and follow-up during and after the placement by members of staff.

57. A small group of Key Stage 3 students are at present disapplied from French in order that they may have extra help with literacy and other basic skills. At Key Stage 4, 22 students are withdrawn from French in order that they may follow an alternative curriculum. This provides a most effective course of relevant work related learning for two days per week at Stoke College. All these students receive advice and guidance related to their studies from the careers officer. However, at present, the DfEE has not formally agreed the disapplication of these students from the National Curriculum as the paperwork has been held up at the DfEE.

58. The provision made for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 but satisfactory at Key Stage 4. There is insufficient communication between the special needs staff and other teachers to ensure that all staff are informed of students' needs. Throughout Key Stage 3 there is an inconsistent use of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), for those students identified as having special education needs. The IEPs for many departments are held centrally by the special needs department and are not therefore readily available to teaching staff so that they may use them to create relevant targets for individual students. In geography and physical education there is no evidence of the use of IEPs at all by the department. There is good practice, however, in music where the assessment carried out by the department allows the curriculum to be changed according to the attainment of the individual.

59. The school makes available a wide range of very good extracurricular activities at lunchtimes and after school which enrich the curricular provision. In addition to music, drama and sport, many departments offer curricular clubs, activities and educational visits. Over half the population of students participate regularly in extracurricular sport, which is higher than normally seen. These sporting activities are supervised by seven members of staff and enable students to achieve many awards, both locally and regionally.

60.The school has made little progress since the last inspection report with regard to the key issues relating to the curriculum. Although religious education is now taught at Key Stage 4, the time allocation is inadequate and there is still no provision for all students in the sixth form. There has been some broadening of the sixth form curriculum, with the school now offering four more subjects, including a GNVQ.

61.The school has good assessment procedures and it uses the information well to improve the curriculum. It gathers a wealth of information centrally at all stages of a student's career so that progress is accurately tracked in detail. Comprehensive data is collected about students on entry to the school. At both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 there is a very effective system for producing standardised scores based on the annual examination in each subject. Department assessments are accurate and the system provides reliable information about the progress of each student. Additional useful information is provided by the analysis that is done on the comparative performance of different teaching groups and different genders. Subject departments are beginning to make effective use of this information. For example, in science good use is made of assessment information in order to adjust setting and to identify and monitor under-achievement. In most subjects there is a good system of self-assessment by students which is also linked to target setting. There is a particularly effective procedure for self-assessment used in art.

62.The levels obtained at the end of Key Stage 3 are used to determine students' GCSE targets. Students and their parents are made aware of the targets and mostly they know what they have to do to achieve or exceed them. In the sixth form, analysis of the relationship between students' GCSE scores and their subsequent A level points total has been carried out, providing a good basis for producing a projected points score for the present sixth form students.

63.Good use is made in nearly all subjects of the information provided by the assessment procedures. For example, in mathematics the schemes of work are reviewed in the light of an analysis of the marks in the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 national tests. In English the marking of the annual examinations is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the schemes of work. Analyses of examination results have caused changes of syllabus at GCSE in history and in A level biology, while they have caused the English department to put a greater emphasis on language at A level.

64.The assessment of students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The results of standardised tests are not used sufficiently to ensure that students are placed on the correct stage of the special educational needs register. The monitoring of the progress that students make is inadequate, particularly in Year 9, to ensure that the code of practice can be used as an effective tool to move students through the stages. This leads to insufficient support for some students, particularly the low attainers at Key Stage 3, who make unsatisfactory progress in their literacy skills. Many of the problems stem from the special needs coordinator having insufficient time to carry out his duties effectively.

65.Since the last inspection the school has further developed its assessment procedures successfully in terms of the analysis of internal examination results, student self-evaluation, and target-setting.

65. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

66.The school makes unsatisfactory provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is no written policy and no central planning or management. Subjects do not include the provision in their curriculum planning and there is only informal evaluation of the school's effectiveness.

67.The provision for students' spiritual development is poor. Students in Key Stages 3 and 4 attend only one act of collective worship each week with no requirement for sixth form students to participate. Those seen during the inspection were of satisfactory quality with some opportunity for prayer and reflection. However the school keeps no record of assembly content over time. In religious education students have some opportunity at Key Stage 3 to develop their understanding of the nature of God and to begin to develop their own system of beliefs and values. However, even the spiritual element of religious education is not planned for and the amount of religious education available for students at Key Stage 4 barely meets statutory requirements and there is no religious education in the sixth form. In history there are opportunities for students to appreciate how aspects of

spiritual life have been affected through invasion and slavery. In music practical participation in high quality performance raises students' sights from the ordinary and mundane.

68.The school's provision for students' moral development is satisfactory. The school has clear aims and students are made aware of what is considered right and wrong through the home/school contract, their introduction to the school rules and a code of conduct. Members of staff are good role models and there is a consistent expectation of good behaviour throughout the school. Rewards known as achievement points are given a high profile in school life and praise is emphasised. In geography students study moral issues involved with planning and in religious education the moral codes and behavioural standards associated with religious belief. The music department operates an open door policy that makes clear to students that they are trusted to use the equipment and facilities in a responsible manner. Curricular weaknesses which reduce the provision for this aspect are the lack of a well planned and coordinated programme of PHSE in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form.

69.The provision for students' social development is unsatisfactory mainly because of the shortage of opportunities in most lessons and in the general life of the school for them to take responsibility and show initiative. Most lessons are too strongly teacher led with the resultant student dependence although students are responsible for making many of the arrangements for work experience in both Key Stage 4 and the sixth form GNVQ course. Limited access to library provision discourages individual research. There are opportunities for members of the sixth form to assist younger students in art, music and reading but the absence of student councils, social committees and prefect systems means that students do not see themselves as being active participants in running the school community. The sixth form do not even have responsibility for their own common room. Most subjects give opportunities to examination candidates to opt in to extra revision classes and there is a recently formed Duke of Edinburgh Award group. Participation in the school's large scale drama productions, in the musical life of the school and in extracurricular physical education activities develops students' team work and ability to relate positively to each other. There are a number of residential opportunities afforded through sixth form field courses and through tours organised by the music and modern foreign languages departments. There is limited provision for students to participate in the community. Some sixth form students engage in community service, there are occasional sponsored charity events and Year 8 is currently collecting parcels to be sent to a community in Zambia. Citizenship is not specifically mentioned in the PHSE programme although some aspects such as road safety are emphasised. In science and geography students study the implications for communities of developmental and planning issues.

70.The provision for students' cultural development is also unsatisfactory. Although there is much high quality work evident in music and art, there is a lack of opportunities for students to widen their cultural horizons through visits to exhibitions, concerts and theatres. There is no opportunity for students to study drama or theatre studies to examination level. Participation in an annual local arts event gives opportunity for some Year 9 students to join with other schools in a varied programme. The school does relatively little to help students appreciate and celebrate a multicultural society. Some work in art, music, history and religious education gives insights into other cultures. Through their study of modern foreign languages and through residential visits students gain an appreciation of life in France and Spain. However there are no initiatives to celebrate the contribution that other cultures make to UK society or to help students become more familiar with the multicultural nature of nearby urban areas.

71.Since the last report there has been little improvement. Apart from the minimal extra provision of religious education in Key Stage 4 there has been no improvement in provision for spiritual development. There appears to be less community involvement than at the time of the last report and there is now no school council. There has been no enhancement of students' preparation for life in a multicultural community.

71. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

72.Provision for support, guidance and welfare is satisfactory, with good support for students' academic progress.

73.Good use is made of academic records to support students. They are helped to understand their own

capabilities and to work towards particular targets set for them to improve their own performance. A system of achievement points is used well to encourage good attitudes and to motivate younger students, as at the previous inspection. Students identified as having special educational needs are satisfactorily supported, with the help, where relevant, of support staff employed by the local authority. The school's procedures fail to identify a number of other students who would benefit from special needs' support. A few older students with particular needs are helped by the good scheme for them to attend vocational courses, suited to their needs, at a local college.

74.The school has strong links with feeder primary schools and these make a good contribution to continuity in support and guidance, through good induction procedures and liaison over curricular continuity, for example in English and science. Mathematics is a current focus for shared developments in the use of assessment data and links with the special educational needs department are good.

75.Planning for thePHSE programme lacks any systematic development of topics or themes and this limits its effectiveness in supporting and guiding students. At Key Stage 3 in particular there is need to extend provision, similar to the position when the school was previously inspected. Careers guidance has improved and is now satisfactory. Parents appreciate the guidance meeting on choice of GCSE options, though a few feel that choices are unduly limited. Individual support for students in the sixth form is good. Students' planners are used effectively to support them, both through the students' own weekly target setting and also through their use to convey messages between subject staff, tutors and parents.

76.Management of behaviour is, overall, good and this is evident both in teachers' expectations and also in the good behaviour seen during the inspection. Pastoral staff generally persevere well in their support for the few students who have real behaviour problems, in some instances bringing about improvements. Exclusion, both fixed term and permanent, is used at a similar rate to that seen in other schools. There are general intentions to reduce the number of exclusions but no specific planning for the use of alternative strategies has been determined to achieve this. The no smoking policy is not enforced effectively enough among students.

77.Procedures for recording and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Records are regularly monitored for any emerging pattern of poor attendance. The school, in liaison with the education welfare service, takes appropriate steps to improve matters when individual attendance falls to an unacceptable level. There is, however, no routine for immediately following up the few unexplained absences that occur. For instance there is no arrangement to contact homes by letter or telephone if parents do not, as the school expects, immediately explain an absence. A check during the inspection indicates that there are occasional omissions in recording absence. The recording system adopted by the school demands especial vigilance on this point.

78.Pastoral support is satisfactory and there are sound child protection measures in place. Most students are confident that if any concerns, such as bullying incidents, arise they can report these to teachers and they will be tackled effectively. A few students however lack confidence that teachers will resolve such problems. Appropriate efforts are made to liaise with social services where this will contribute to a student's support. The fact that this demands contact with three different areas, coupled at times with a rapid turnover of personnel from the service, limits the benefits gained. Procedures are in place for responding to any child protection issues that arise.

79.Various satisfactory routines, such as arrangements for first aid, are followed and promote students' welfare. Arrangements for monitoring health and safety, and for rectifying any concerns that arise, for the most part maintain the school as a safe working environment. In a few instances potential concerns are not recognised, or remedial action is insufficient.

80.Concerns regarding health and safety, arising during the inspection, include:

- Science laboratories with only one exit, so that the faculty needs to be aware of the extra risk this poses.
- Two science laboratories share one gas isolator valve, which is inconveniently situated for one of them so that it is not readily accessible.
- Some surface problems in the hard court areas used for physical education.

- Certain toilets, in need of refurbishment because of their unpleasant smell.
- Congestion when vehicles and students share the use of the single site entrance, especially at the end of the school day.
- Emergency exit doors padlocked, without a key being immediately accessible, during parts of the day.

1. On being made aware of these concerns, the school took immediate action to rectify the most urgent issues, such as the locked fire doors and has instigated action on all of the other issues raised.

81. Partnership with parents and the community

2. As at the time of the previous inspection, parents find the school welcoming. Students' planners are used successfully for communications between home and school when any concern arises. There is a satisfactory supply of information about routines and events, through various letters as well as through the prospectus and governors' annual report. Parents come in good numbers to the consultation evenings organised during the year so that they can meet with teachers. Their response to curriculum evenings arranged in the past has been disappointing.

3. Reporting to parents about students' progress is unsatisfactory. This is a deterioration, as they were found at the previous inspection to be good. Parents receive each year an interim review as well as an end of year report, but at Key Stage 4 non-examination religious education and physical education are not reported. At Key Stage 3 information about progress in information technology, and aspects of design technology, may, depending on when the subject is taught, be confined to the brief summary in the interim report. In general, comments in reports lack useful subject specific detail. Recent reports about progress in music however, give a very good level of detail. Parents are invited to contact the school if they wish to discuss the end of year report but since these are issued close to the end of term time, opportunities to follow up any issues before the holiday starts are limited.

4. The small but active parents' association is supportive, arranging social functions for parents and students and raising funds to buy extra resources.

5. In a few areas of the curriculum, good links with local business and industry are established, so as to support students' progress. Such links make an important contribution to business education, design and technology and GNVQ courses. Good use of visitors is made in particular areas of the curriculum, for instance in geography and history, and when a group of business men told business students about the law in relation to health and safety; but opportunities to extend the breadth of students' understanding in this way are often neglected. Links with a wide range of local employers play an essential part in the week of work experience followed by all Year 10 students. This experience is built on well by the enterprise project that students follow on their return to school. Groups have to choose, produce and sell a product, either within the school or, for instance, by visiting local primary schools and giving presentations to the students.

6. Occasional visits contribute to students' understanding of their own local area as when Year 8 visits a local working museum. On balance though, too little effort is made to foster students' understanding of their own and others' cultural traditions by building links with the local community.

86. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

86. Leadership and management

7. The quality of leadership in the school is satisfactory. The Headteacher and other members of the senior management team demonstrate a sound commitment to raising standards throughout the school. Such commitment is evident in the emphasis that has been placed upon improving examination results in design and technology and modern foreign languages, which were key issues at the time of the previous inspection. The changes made to the management structure, together with changes in staffing, have led to at least satisfactory

leadership in all subjects, although it is notable that the best leadership is found in art, geography, music, physical education and science, where standards are highest. Improving the management structure was a key issue from the previous inspection, which has been addressed successfully. The governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is most supportive of its work. Governors are developing their own leadership role through initiatives such as the working group for special educational needs which is already having an impact on the provision made by the school in terms of improving communication.

8.The day-to-day management of information and the communication systems within school are very good, ensuring that the school operates most effectively on a daily basis.

9.The school has a good ethos, which results in positive attitudes to work on the part of students. Teachers are made aware of the capabilities of their students by the very good analysis of test and examination results that is carried out by the director of studies. This analysis ensures that the school has a clear picture of the progress made by students as they move through the school. The school's good ethos is apparent in the school's aims, although there are some inequalities in the curriculum provision; at Key Stage 4, for example, students do not get the same opportunities to study as wide range of subjects as students in other schools. The school is effective in meeting its aims through the consistent implementation of its values and most of its policies. Each year the governing body sets a very wide range of appropriate targets for the school's performance based on a detailed analysis of students' previous levels of attainment.

10.The quality of development planning is satisfactory overall. The school development plan has carefully identified priorities appropriate to the needs of the school. Some of these targets reflect the careful analysis of examination data. For example, the school recognised the need to improve the performance of boys and changed the way students are grouped in order to bring about improvement. Development plans identify realistic time scales and appropriate responsibilities for developments, but the analysis of the costs to the school is limited. The priorities from the school development plan are used to establish targets for individual subjects and the raising of attainment is the first priority in each subject development plan. The subject development plans, although satisfactory in most subjects, vary according to the experience of the subject manager in drawing up such plans. For example, plans are very good in business education, but poor in English. One weakness in development planning, however, is the rigidity of the targets. For example, all subjects had to address the raising of boys' attainment compared with that of the girls, despite the boys outperforming girls in subjects such as physical education. All developments are appropriately monitored, evaluated and supported through a system of regular reviews at which targets are revised in line with the progress that has been made.

11.The support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development is unsatisfactory. There is now a programme of formal lesson observations of all teachers, but this has only recently been introduced and no records have been kept of previous monitoring of teaching. There is no appraisal of teachers, as required by law, and the current arrangements for moderated self-review are not rigorous enough. This has resulted in the quality of teaching remaining largely unchanged from that at the time of the previous inspection. There are several weaknesses in the curriculum, which lead to a less than satisfactory provision at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Some of these, such as the provision of religious education at Key Stage 4, have been improved since the school was last inspected, but not enough to ensure an adequate provision. Others, such as the provision of religious education in the sixth form, have been allowed to continue, whilst monitoring had not identified the lack of sex education in the sixth form which is a fundamental part of the governors' policy on this matter. The most important weakness, however, is the failure of the school's management to improve the breadth of the curriculum at Key Stage 4, leading to fewer GCSE passes and a lack of equality with students in other schools.

12.Governors play a very good role in monitoring the work of the school through written reviews, reports, examination results analyses, looking at students' work and by calling individuals to meetings to explain aspects of the school's performance. Governors are aware of the deficiencies in the curriculum but, given their obvious strengths, have not been sufficiently forceful in promoting improvement in this area.

13.The governing body fails to meet five statutory requirements. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship; the arrangements for the appraisal of teachers are insufficient; there is no provision for

religious education in the sixth form; not all parents receive a report on their child's progress in physical education and religious education; and there is no provision for sex education in the sixth form.

14.The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection: GCSE results are now above average for the proportions gaining five or more passes at grades A* to C and A* to G; attendance has remained good, as has the value for money provided by the school. The quality of teaching is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection. Most of the key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed but the efforts made to improve some of the areas criticised in the previous report, such as providing more opportunities in lessons for students to work on their own initiative, have been insufficient.

15.Given the awareness of the issues facing the school and the improvements in planning brought about by the Headteacher since the school last had to write an action plan, the school is in a satisfactory position to continue its improvement.

95. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

16.The school has a sufficient number of qualified staff to meet curriculum needs. They are well qualified and there is a good mix of experienced and young teaching staff. There is, however, an exception to this overall satisfactory picture. In religious education, two-thirds of the teaching at Key Stage 3 is by non-specialists. The lack of in-depth subject knowledge is reflected in the lack of depth and detail with which subject matter is addressed. Special educational needs support staff, where available, make a valuable contribution to the quality of education in the school. However, there are insufficient numbers of support staff available. For example, in a science lesson, where there were students who needed additional support, there was none available, and in another lesson where there was support available, this was effective but targeted at only one student, although other students were also statemented. There is also an insufficient number of technical support staff available to support teaching, this is particularly noticeable in design and technology and information technology. The effect of there being no technician within information technology is that the department has had difficulty in carrying out the control aspects of the information technology requirements.

17.The school provides an effective induction scheme for all new staff, both teaching and non-teaching and this includes, when required, newly appointed experienced teachers. Appraisal has now been replaced by a departmental self-review process that does not meet the requirements for appraisal. Through the school's system, good practice in teaching should be disseminated throughout the department and provide the basis for the next review. This was piloted within four departments and involved the teachers observing each other and then feeding back. Although this system encourages good teaching, it does not give advice on how to improve weaknesses. Apart from these four departments, the majority of teachers are not part of any formal appraisal or whole-school monitoring process, and the consequence is an unsatisfactory arrangement for their professional development. The arrangements for professional development are not sufficiently linked to the needs of the school but depend more on requests from individual members of staff.

18.The school has sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of the present number of students and the quality of accommodation is satisfactory. A key issue at the previous inspection was to improve accommodation and facilities for the library, science, music, drama and design and technology. There has been no improvement in library provision since the previous inspection, but the school has plans for further development. Three laboratories have been totally refurbished, but one of the laboratories is still in a poor state of repair. There are plans to refurbish it in this financial year. In music, a new room has been set up with computers, but there is a shortage of practice rooms. The design and technology accommodation has been improved with the reorganisation of machinery in order to create a clean area for graphics and electronics. There remains no satisfactory area for drama. There is a good display of students' work around the school in the reception area, corridors and classrooms. This is particularly evident in geography where the work is very well displayed and provides an outstanding learning environment. The site is well cared for with a good level of cleanliness, except for toilets, and is free from graffiti. The grounds around the school are attractive and regularly maintained. The school provides a pleasant learning environment.

19.There is an adequate quantity of books, equipment and materials to support students' learning in almost all

subjects. However in mathematics there are insufficient textbooks and in history and religious education the range of materials is restricted. All the resources are in good condition. The school library has a very restricted range of books and other resources for the students to use and this is seriously impairing the opportunities for students to carry out research. Little has been achieved since the last inspection when it was identified that there was a need to extend the range of resources available for independent learning. There are only two computers in the library for students' use together with a very restricted range of CD-ROMs. Although the English department makes good use of the library, access for other departments is very restricted. Many departments have developed their own stocks of books and other resources in order that the students have sufficient access to an appropriate range of resources, but students in the sixth form point out that there is little incentive to get a book from the other side of the school when they are working in the sixth form study area, knowing that they will lose valuable time for studying.

20. The school has insufficient computers to meet the demands of the students. Access to computers is very restricted for groups of students undertaking subjects other than information technology. Although students can make use of the facilities outside the normal school day and particularly at lunchtimes, the computer rooms are otherwise extensively timetabled for students undertaking the discrete information technology courses. Overall the school has about one computer to every nine students. This means that in addition to access being restricted for many students there is a need for students in the larger groups to share computers.

21. Good use is made of external resources in a number of subjects. A number of exchange visits are arranged in modern foreign languages. In geography good use is made of the local area for field and map work. External visits are also arranged in a number of subjects including science and business studies.

101. The efficiency of the school

22. Financial planning is satisfactory. The school's prudent management of its limited funds allowed a build up of an appropriate level of contingency funding to safeguard against any unforeseen expenses by the end of the last full financial year. The cost implications of priorities identified in the school and departmental development plans are not all calculated and thus impair the setting of realistic targets for the school. Financial planning is well supported by established and effective financial procedures and a realistic timetable for planning the budget. The rising number of students on roll at the school has made the planning of future expenditure more secure. The planned reduction of teaching costs, the planned increase in resource spending and the planned extra budget surplus at the end of the last financial year are indicative of effective shorter term planning. However, the use of historical precedent as the basis for the funding of subject departments lacks precision in its relationship to curriculum need.

23. The school's teaching staff is deployed satisfactorily overall, although the coordinator for special educational needs does not have sufficient time to carry out his duties effectively. Teaching costs as a whole are above average but this reflects the higher costs of an experienced teaching force and recently this has been reduced by the employment of more newly qualified teachers. All non-teaching staff are deployed satisfactorily. The efficiency with which funding received for staff development is utilised is impaired by the lack of appraisal, which weakens the provision for the professional development of staff. Accommodation at the school is utilised effectively. The utilisation of the school's resources for learning is satisfactory overall and the use made of the school's limited library lending resources is good.

24. Financial control procedures are good and function very effectively. The governing body's finance committee maintains a close scrutiny of school spending through the use of regular updates from the school financial administrator. The sound day-to-day financial management and administration in the school was confirmed in the most recent audit of the school's finances carried out by the local authority. The good day-to-day financial management and administration in the school reflects the use of effective procedures by the school administrator and the appropriate use of information technology to support financial monitoring and control.

25. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in improving the efficiency of its financial planning and control. The low spending on resources, a key issue for action in the last report, has been improved over the past two years. The high proportion of the school's budget taken up by teaching costs

has been significantly reduced in the past year and the governing body's systems for evaluating the cost effectiveness of spending decisions have improved. The school development plan and many departmental development plans still lack sufficient costing for the targets set but financial control remains both efficient and effective overall.

26. In view of the school's improving examination performance at GCSE; the good levels of student attendance and behaviour and the overall satisfactory quality of teaching, the school is giving good value for money for the well below average level of funding it receives.

106. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

106. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

106. English

27.The attainment of students in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the age of 14 was in line with the national average. The proportion of students attaining Level 5 and above was close to the national average while the proportion attaining Level 6 and above was higher than the national average. However, a significantly higher proportion than average failed to reach Level 4. Results of lower attainers have fallen over the past three years, whilst those of the higher attainers have improved. The performance of girls was better than that of boys by about the same proportion as was true nationally. The results were below average in comparison with schools with students from similar backgrounds. Students' attainment in English was below that in mathematics and science.

28.The proportions of students attaining grades A* to C and grades A* to G in GCSE English in 1999 were above the national averages and close to the average for schools with students from similar backgrounds. Students' attainment has improved over the last three years. In English literature the proportions of students attaining grades A* to C and A* to G were far above the national averages and have improved over the last three years. However, only the highest attaining students were entered for the examination. The performance of girls was higher than that of boys in both English and English literature. Pupils gained results that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied.

29.Results in the GCE A level English language and literature examination in 1999 were well below the national average. They were significantly lower than results in the previous two years, which were in line with national averages. Evidence gathered during the inspection suggests that current attainment is similar to the standards attained in 1997 and 1998 and that students are working at the standard expected on this course.

30.Overall, the attainment of students is average at the age of 14, above average at the age of 16 and average at the age of 19.

31.Students' attainment in speaking and listening is satisfactory. By the age of 14, higher and middle attaining students listen carefully and respond appropriately both in conversation and in the classroom. They speak fluently, although at greater length in conversation than in more formal situations. Levels of vocabulary are good. Students of lower attainment converse competently but their replies are very brief. When they answer or ask questions in the classroom their language is limited. By the age of 16 higher and middle attaining students are articulate and their speech is interesting. They discuss literary texts and other complex topics using a good command of language. Lower attaining students speak in restricted language and rarely say more than a few sentences at a time.

32.Students' attainment in reading is good. By the age of 14, higher and middle attaining students read fluently, can draw sound inferences and summarise accurately what they have read. They are aware of some of the techniques used in newspapers. Lower attaining students read simple texts fairly accurately but hesitate over longer words, although they know how to use phonic cues. By the age of 16 higher and middle attaining students understand the concept of the subtext. They analyse poetry with awareness of literary devices such as imagery and word association. They understand how writers choose words to achieve their desired effect. Lower attaining students read sufficiently well for most practical purposes.

33.Students' attainment in writing is satisfactory. By the age of 14, higher attaining students have secure sentence control and their vocabulary is relatively mature. They make few spelling errors and their writing is well organised. The writing of lower attaining students results in effective communication in spite of poor sentence construction and often poor handwriting. They make plenty of spelling errors but the reader can usually understand what is intended. By the age of 16, higher attaining students handle language well. Their writing is technically accurate and of sufficient quality to interest the reader. In their writing on literature they

support their comments with judicious reference to texts. They often sustain quality work at good length. Lower attaining students communicate quite clearly in writing although their spelling is often poor and their vocabulary is very limited.

34. Attainment in the sixth form is at the level to be expected of students on an A level course. They show good understanding of such literary concepts as themes and symbolic representation and make good use of textual quotation to support their arguments. They use appropriate technical vocabulary and talk engagingly about literary and non-literary topics. They develop and organise their ideas competently in preparation for their essays. In their written work they control and vary sentence structure effectively and are technically accurate.

35. Most students make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. They improve their skills in speaking both in their regular programme of drama and in specific classroom activities, as, for example, when Year 8 students were observed giving individual and group oral presentations to the class. In their regular library lessons students develop their reading skills while weaker readers are provided with additional help from the teacher. Students benefit from being given opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and in a range of styles. However, lower attaining students at Key Stage 3, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress. There is insufficient communication between the English and special needs department. The targets on the IEPs are not precise enough and it is not clear which department is responsible for ensuring that targets are met. Monitoring of the progress of these students is inadequate. Where support is provided for students with special educational needs, progress is satisfactory. However, the amount of support is insufficient.

36. Most students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at Key Stage 4. Their speech work benefits from their being given many opportunities to work in pairs or in groups. For example, a Year 11 class had to discuss one of Seamus Heaney's poems in groups before one of the group had to tell the whole class their findings. Students also gain from the structured way in which writing in the media is studied. This was observed in a lesson on Gazzamania where students progressed from reading newspaper clippings to using their knowledge of newspaper writing to construct their own article. They are given many opportunities to analyse poetry and other literature at a suitably challenging level. Lower attaining students gain from lessons being tailored to match their abilities, as when good use was made of a video recording of 'Henry V'.

37. Sixth form students make satisfactory progress. They gain from reading a wider selection of literature and being required to analyse it at a higher level of sophistication. Their writing skills are developed by being given practice in writing essays about complex issues such as racism or whether the car is a blessing or a curse. However, the lack of suitable research materials in the school library limits the amount of independent research that they can do.

38. The response of students is good. They show interest in their work. They concentrate well in class and their behaviour is virtually always good. They work well together, both in the classroom and in drama. They are courteous to teachers and to other adults. They take good care of exercise and textbooks, and the written work of nearly all students is carefully presented.

39. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good, particularly in the sixth form. Lessons are challenging and expectations are high at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form although this is less marked at Key Stage 3. A good variety of methods is used: video, tape recorder, library, drama, pair and group work, and individual work. Good use is made of information technology. Class management is very good and most lessons are conducted at a good pace, although occasionally planning does not allow adequate involvement of the students. All work is marked and comments are aimed at showing students how to improve. Homework is given regularly and enhances the work done in class. The best teaching occurs when the teacher has high expectations of the students and focuses constantly on the learning objectives of the lesson. Teachers at Key Stage 3, however, do not focus sufficiently on the needs of students with special educational needs and do not provide them with the appropriate support.

40. The head of department provides clear leadership but management systems are poorly developed. Teaching is not monitored sufficiently and, although students' work is examined, this is done unsystematically. However, the assessment of students' work is used well to help plan the curriculum. The department's development plan

is poor: deadlines and responsibilities are vague and there is no costing. In-service training is not linked to the development plan.

41. Since the last inspection the attainment of students at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form is unchanged, but attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has improved. The quality of teaching has improved at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and remains similar to the previous inspection at Key Stage 3.

121. Mathematics

42. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportions of students attaining Level 5 and above were above the national averages. The proportions of students attaining Level 6 and above were well above the national averages. The performance in mathematics was above the national average for the age group and there was an improvement from 1998. The average National Curriculum points score attained by students in 1999 was below the national average for schools with students from similar backgrounds. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Results in mathematics were above that of English and similar to those in science.

43. The proportions of students achieving grades A* to C and A* to G in the GCSE examinations in 1999 were above the national averages. There was no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys and students gained results that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied. Results attained in mathematics at A level in 1999 were below the national average.

44. In work observed during the inspection, attainment at the age of 14 is above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Techniques in algebra are good. Students solve simple linear equations and apply the techniques to practical problems. The higher attainers solve simultaneous equations by elimination, substitution and graphically. Low attainers and those with special educational needs calculate areas of triangles, rectangles and parallelograms using formulae. Middle attaining students competently calculate percentages of amounts when calculating the simple interest. Those with higher attainment have a good understanding of frequency polygons when analysing data. They use a grouped frequency table and the frequency polygon to calculate the mean, modal class and mode of a distribution. Students skills in problem solving are below average, however, as they get too few opportunities to develop or practice such skills.

45. In work observed during the inspection, attainment at the age of 16 is also above the level expected nationally. Higher attainers show a good understanding of graph work when they construct the tangents to curves. They understand that the gradient is the ratio of the increase in y to the increase in x and identify a negative gradient. Middle attainers measure angles accurately and calculate the relationship between the sides and angles when beginning work on trigonometry. Low attaining students analyse pie charts by splitting them into fractions and calculate the proportions of data that satisfy each part. Students with special educational needs plot coordinates in all four quadrants and recognise the characteristics of horizontal, vertical and diagonal graphs. High attainers sketch and transform graphs of quadratic functions, recognising the graphs of the transformed functions.

46. In work seen during the inspection, students' standards of attainment at the age of 19 are in line with course expectations. In pure mathematics, understanding of partial fractions is sound and students use this knowledge to integrate functions. In mechanics, although students have some difficulty initially in recognising acceleration towards the centre when introduced to motion in a circle, apply Newton's laws of motion appropriately. Understanding of null hypothesis in statistics is secure. Students carry out statistical significant testing, both discrete and continuous. They calculate hypothesis testing for a Poisson distribution.

47. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. At both Key Stages 3 and 4, there are examples of good progress in lessons which can be attributed to the high level of expectations that stimulate students to think mathematically. Teachers use teaching strategies and methodology that achieve a good balance between explaining, discussing and practising new mathematics. This fosters a thorough understanding of the mathematics. At Key Stage 3, students progress quickly from calculating the mean from a frequency table of discrete data to the mean from a

grouped frequency table. They understand that it was important to take the mid-point value and the result was an approximation to the mean. Progress is good where the pace of the lesson is brisk and a variety of teaching strategies is used. In these lessons, students quickly assimilate new skills for example when interpreting graphs. In the majority of lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to assess students' understanding, consolidate previous learning and allow them to progress on to new mathematics. Teachers' effective support and guidance and use of questions promote this progress. Too few opportunities are provided for students to solve problems to ensure that they make satisfactory progress in this area of mathematics at Key Stage 3.

48. Students' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. Students generally concentrate very well in lessons and listen attentively to their teachers. They maintain interest and the majority stay on task throughout the lesson. They respond well to questions and give clear answers. Behaviour is very good and students take good care of equipment and books. They handle equipment sensibly. Work is neat and well presented. Relationships with each other, their teachers and other adults are very good. Students are courteous and show respect for other people. They work very well with each other and help each other with their work. When given the opportunity they take responsibility for their own work. In Year 10, students are beginning to take responsibility for assessing their own work and setting targets for improvement. They talk confidently about their work, explaining it coherently.

49. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. They explain tasks clearly and use mathematical terms appropriately. Lessons are generally planned well and the better lessons relate well to the National Curriculum. In the majority of lessons, teachers state what they expect students to have achieved and understood. There is effective use of questioning to assess students' knowledge and understanding. The better teaching occurs when teachers use challenging questions and this promotes good understanding. The management of students is good. In the most effective lessons, the pace is brisk and there is a good balance between explaining, discussing and individual practice so that students have a good understanding. In these lessons the interest and motivation of students is maintained. Homework is set and marked regularly. It reinforces knowledge and understanding acquired during the lesson. Teachers generally use constructive comments on students' work that encourages them to progress and to extend their understanding but this is not consistently applied.

50. There are good procedures for assessing and tracking the achievement of students. Results of national examinations are analysed well and the results are used to change the curriculum. At Key Stage 4, students assess their achievement and set targets with their teachers for improvement. They have a self-assessment record, which not only tracks their progress in mathematics, but also their personal development; this is proving most effective. Schemes of work, on the other hand, are unsatisfactory. They do not contain sufficient reference to the National Curriculum; they lack details of assessment opportunities, teaching methodology and use of resources (including information technology). Although monitoring of teaching and learning takes place, this is not rigorous enough in order to improve teaching further. The level of resources is unsatisfactory as there are insufficient books for students to take them home as an aid for homework and extended learning. Information technology has not been integrated into schemes of work and students have insufficient access to information technology.

51. Since the previous inspection, standards of attainment have improved at GCSE. Standards at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form are largely unchanged, as is the quality of teaching.

131. **Science**

52. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of students at the age of 14 achieving Level 5 and above was above the national average and the proportion gaining Level 6 and above was average. The average level which students achieved was above the national average but well below the average for schools taking students from similar backgrounds. Boys and girls achieved broadly similar results. The average points score in science for 1999 was better, in relation to national averages, than that in English and similar to that in mathematics. The average levels improved over the three years 1996 to 1998, but then fell slightly in 1999.

53. In the 1999 GCSE double award science examinations, the proportion of students gaining grades A* to C

was well above the national average and the proportion gaining grades A* to G was above average. The results were well above average for schools taking students from similar backgrounds. Girls and boys gained similar results in science in 1999. Pupils gained results that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied. The results in science improved between 1997 and 1999.

54. Results at A level vary significantly from year to year depending on the attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 of those students who join the small groups in the three science subjects. In 1999, the A level results in physics were in line with 1998 national averages but those in chemistry were well below average and in biology they were far below average.

55. In work seen during the inspection, students' standards of attainment at the age of 14 are above the levels expected for students of the same age nationally. At the age of 16, their attainment is well above the levels expected. These standards reflect those indicated by recent test and examination results. Most students have good knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied recently. For example, students in Year 9 understand the use of levers as both force and distance multipliers. Higher attaining students have particularly detailed knowledge and answer questions carefully using appropriate specialist terms. For example, some students in Year 11 accurately describe each stage in tracking the energy flow through ecosystems. Most students have investigative skills that match their attainment in other aspects of science. The exception is in Year 9 where some students find it difficult to relate their investigative findings to their scientific understanding. The faculty has improved the opportunities for students to do investigative work in Years 7 and 8 and the investigation skills of these students are better than expected for their age.

56. In the current sixth form groups, standards reflect those indicated by the 1999 A level results in physics but not in biology and chemistry. In physics and chemistry, standards in Year 12 and Year 13 are broadly in line with those expected for students following A level courses. However, in biology there are more students who began the A level course with relatively low attainment in GCSE examinations and, although most make satisfactory progress, their attainment is below average for students following an A level course.

57. Students make good progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory progress in the sixth form. They enter the school with attainment that is above the national average, respond well to the good teaching they receive, make good progress as they move through both key stages and achieve GCSE results which are well above average. In the majority of individual lessons, progress is good and, occasionally, very good. For example, in Year 10, higher attaining students make very quick progress in identifying what plants need to detect and why. The teacher's skilful use of students' existing knowledge and ideas and frequent changes of activity to maintain interest enhance the progress. Boys and girls make similar progress in science. Higher attaining students usually make good progress in both key stages. However, in some lessons in Key Stage 3, the progress of higher attaining students is not as good as that of other students in the mixed ability groups. This occurs because teachers sometimes do not provide enough challenge for the higher attainers, the activities are not sufficiently demanding and these students do not make the best possible progress. Students with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages. In Key Stage 4, the lower attainers and many of those with special needs are taught in small groups with carefully chosen activities and resources to match their needs. In particular, the Certificate of Achievement course is successful in improving students' confidence and motivation. However, in occasional lessons in Key Stage 3, students with special needs do not receive sufficient support and cannot make enough progress with the various activities.

58. Students in the current sixth form make satisfactory progress in all three science subjects. A minority of students entering the 1999 A level biology and chemistry examinations had made unsatisfactory progress in those subjects. The faculty has made significant improvements to the A level biology curriculum this year, there is closer monitoring of students' work and most students are now making satisfactory progress. In chemistry, progress was restricted because some students entered the course with insufficient knowledge and understanding from Key Stage 4 to benefit from A level teaching. This problem still persists in A level biology. There is not enough clear advice given to students to prevent some of them embarking on A level courses which they will find too difficult.

59. Students have positive attitudes to their work in science and apply themselves willingly to both written and practical tasks. Their behaviour is consistently good. Most students maintain good concentration for most of the

time. However, in middle attaining groups in Key Stage 4, there is a weakness in the concentration and listening skills of a significant number of students; they remain quiet and well behaved but are not always listening to what the teacher is saying. Most students in the sixth form work conscientiously and clearly enjoy practical work but a few boys do not organise and present their written work as carefully as they should.

60. The quality of teaching is good in both Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. The high proportion of good or very good lessons, particularly in Key Stage 4, is the major strength of the faculty. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully to use an interesting range of resources. Teaching is very good when there are very good relationships between teacher and students so that students know exactly what is expected of them and enjoy the teacher's enthusiastic approach to the lesson. Another feature of successful lessons is the subtle repetition of key learning points within different activities so that students' gains in understanding are secured and their interest is maintained. Teachers mark students' work regularly and give students clear indications of what they need to do to improve. The faculty makes good use of homework to enable students to make faster progress. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on radioactivity, students made very good progress because they had already researched the topic themselves for homework, giving them a sound basic knowledge on which the teacher could build quickly and efficiently. However, in some lessons which are satisfactory overall there are some weaknesses: in some lessons the pace is rather slow and in others the teacher does not quite hold the concentration of the class, particularly towards the end of the lesson.

61. The faculty is aware that it does not make sufficient use of information technology to support learning in science. There are occasional uses of, for example, light sensors and data-logging equipment; some students use word processing in writing up their investigations. However, the consistent and regular use of computers in lessons is hampered by the shortage of a fully equipped and up-to-date computer in each of the science areas for use in the laboratories.

62. The head of faculty provides good leadership and management and the members of the faculty, including the technicians and learning support assistants, work effectively together as a team. There is a clear emphasis on raising students' attainment and the faculty is making good use of target setting for individual students, particularly in Key Stage 4. There are more variations in teaching quality in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. A system of monitoring teaching in the faculty has been introduced but it is not yet being fully used to identify areas for improvement. The schemes of work for Key Stage 3 are generally satisfactory but have not been sufficiently monitored and adjusted to ensure that students of all levels of attainment and in all teaching groups make consistently good progress.

63. The faculty has made good progress since the previous inspection. The attainment in both key stages has improved and, in particular, GCSE results are much better than they were. However, A level results are not as good as they were at that time. Teaching is also better than that described in the previous report.

143. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

143. **Art**

64. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, the proportions of students gaining grades A* to C and A* to G were well above the national averages. Pupils gained results that were considerably better than in the other subjects they studied. Results at A level were also well above the national average. These results are a continuation of the same high standards that have been evident for the past five years.

65. In work seen during the inspection, students' standards of attainment at the ages of 14, 16 and 19 are well above the levels expected for students of the same ages nationally. By the age of 14, the majority of students are able to explore ideas and produce considered compositions and choices of colours. Colour is handled well and observational drawings show an increasing confidence. While students are well able to explain what their task is and say if they are pleased with progress, few readily use a developed critical vocabulary to describe and evaluate their work, although their written work begins to demonstrate a descriptive vocabulary in the evaluation of their own work and that of other artists. These features were evident in a project where students

produced self-portraits in pastel as the starting point for a painting that combined their own heads with a landscape background. Particular good use was made of colour and tone.

66. By the age of 16, all students are producing work of high quality. Many students demonstrate considerable fluency in the use of the visual language, producing sophisticated compositions that are executed with a high level of skill. Personal studies of artists are extremely well presented. Students have a particular strength in their understanding and application of the concepts of line, colour, texture, pattern and composition. Students are able to investigate a wide range of first-hand source materials and use them as the basis for their work. High standards are achieved in figure drawing. At A level, the work of the best students is highly proficient, demonstrating fine attention to detail. Students show that they can build upon the high standards achieved lower down the school and further develop the full range of their artistic skills.

67. Students of all levels of attainment make good progress throughout the school. They acquire confidence in the use of the visual language as they progress through the school. At Key Stage 3, painting and drawing, printmaking and work in ceramics is very well covered and provides a firm foundation for progress into Key Stage 4. In graphics, students make studies of the everyday use of typography and design logos which broadens their experience. Work in cultural studies is integrated well into GCSE project work and work at Key Stage 3; students are exposed to a wide range of artists and styles which enhances their cultural development. A number of projects involve investigation into visual imagery used in other cultures. For example, each Year 7 class works together to construct a 30 inch four-sided ceramic tower, made up of a textured and decorated tiles based on Mayan constructions. In the sixth form the examination syllabus used by the department requires students to focus exclusively on a specialist option throughout the course. Occasionally students work in three dimensions, but the majority choose painting and drawing which leads to a narrowing of their progress. The progress of some sixth form students, who have not studied the subject at GCSE level, is particularly impressive and allows them to reach the same high standards as their peers. Throughout the school, however, pupils make little progress in developing their ideas through the use of information technology.

68. The attitudes of students are consistently good. Students concentrate extremely well during lessons and persevere with extended project work. Their behaviour is good and, when given the opportunity to demonstrate initiative, they respond very well. Students collaborate well in pairs and in groups and are keen to help their peers.

69. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The great strengths of the teaching lie in detailed planning and organisation, clear instructions, high expectations and the teachers' very good knowledge of their subject. These features are combined, for example, to demonstrate techniques in a highly proficient manner and then to stretch students' capabilities in attempting to reach the same heights as those demonstrated. Comments in sketchbooks are helpful and specific: they clearly show students what they need to do to improve and, more importantly, demonstrate how they can achieve such improvement. However, at times teaching becomes too directed and opportunities for students' personal development are missed when they are not encouraged to use their own initiative to solve the problems that they encounter.

70. The head of department provides strong leadership, in close partnership with other staff. Departmental documentation is thorough and well-organised. There is a well-established assessment and record-keeping scheme in operation that is based on extensive portfolios of work. These are significant in providing comparative references at different levels of attainment and allowing teachers to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual students. A particular concern is the number of students taking GCSE, which has declined significantly over the past two years and is often below the national average. This is a consequence of the restricted number of subjects that students have to choose from. As a further consequence, A level numbers are also small and several students start the A level course having not studied the subject at GCSE. Standards of display in the department and in display areas around the school are extremely high and contribute to the quality of the learning environment of the studios and corridor areas of the school. They represent a further strength of the department.

71. Attainment has been maintained at a high level since the previous inspection. There were no clear judgements on teaching in the previous report against which to judge improvement.

151. **Business education**

72. The school provides courses in business studies at GCSE, A level and GNVQ intermediate level.

73. In the 1999 GCSE examination the proportions of students attaining grades A* to C and A* to G were above the national averages. Students gained results that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied. The attainment of boys and girls was broadly equal and the results represent a significant improvement on those of the previous two years. Results at A level were well below the national average. These results are a significant decline from those of the previous two years.

74. In work seen during the inspection, students' standards of attainment at the age of 16 are broadly in line with the level expected of students nationally. In the A level and GNVQ courses, standards of attainment are appropriate for the standards expected for the course. At the age of 16, students possess an appropriate knowledge of types of business activity. They are familiar with business terms and apply theoretical knowledge to real businesses. Most students write well for a variety of purposes, but for a minority of students, essays are insufficiently evaluative and do not make full use of examples. The quality of written work for a minority is reduced by weaknesses in grammatical accuracy. In the A level course students understand the structure of business. They also understand a range of financial terms and know about different management structures. For a minority, the knowledge of terms is insecure and oral answers are insufficiently developed. Students make effective use of computers for research when working on topics such as the UK balance of payments and use data to generate computer graphics. Written work is good. In GNVQ students develop action planning skills and most can independently monitor the relevant performance criteria for unit achievement. Some students have not established routines for personal organisation and tracking of work. Key skills are appropriately addressed through the vocational areas though computer work is at a basic level.

75. Students make good progress in all years and on all courses. At Key Stage 4 students make gains in knowledge and understanding about issues relating to law in the business context and about health and safety issues in the workplace. Lower attaining students learn to integrate the written and graphical content of assignments but progress is hindered by a continuing weakness in grammatical accuracy. Most students make good progress in the development of computing skills. A level students make good progress in learning about motivation in the workplace and to apply their understanding through the use of exemplar material. Higher attaining students develop oral answers well in group-work discussion but for others progress is less evident through limited oral engagement. Students make good progress in extending their knowledge of business terms and to apply numerical skills in work on a computer cashflow assignment. Occasionally written work is too generalised with only limited use made of data to analyse, for example, employment trends. GNVQ students make good progress in developing key skills. They become more self-reliant in progressing assignments, prepare research briefs and use the Internet for obtaining relevant information. Progress is more limited for lower attaining students in developing personal organisational skills and insufficient use is made of exemplar material in written work.

76. Students' attitudes to learning at Key Stage 4 and in the GNVQ course is good and at A level response is very good. At Key Stage 4, behaviour in lessons is good, lessons proceed smoothly and good progress is made. Students show respect for visiting speakers, listen attentively to presentations and take responsibility for recording notes. Occasionally attitudes of the minority are unsatisfactory when work is given insufficient thought and detail and left unfinished. At A level students show a mature attitude to study. They sustain concentration for extended periods of time and give mutual support in researching information. Many speak and read clearly in oral presentations, except for the minority who lack self-confidence in engaging in class discussions. GNVQ students work well independently and enjoy the work-related focus of their studies.

77. The quality of teaching on all courses is good. Teachers are well-qualified and some have undergone training for the GNVQ assessment. A great strength of the teaching is the way that teachers make effective use of the business community to support learning; this makes a significant contribution to the progress made. Teachers are competent in the use of computers, which are used well to stimulate the interest of students and to promote the development of research skills. The aims of lessons are clear but opportunities to pull together the main learning outcomes of lessons are not taken consistently. Occasionally in A level lessons, the discussions are dominated by the teacher with insufficient encouragement for students to become involved. Students work is

assessed well and helpfully informs the student of strengths and weaknesses.

78.The department is led and managed well. The introduction of the GNVQ course has been well prepared with management structures established and staff training undertaken. The introduction of this course has had a significant impact on the breadth of the curriculum in the sixth form. The schemes of work do not show how the department can contribute to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The development plan is comprehensive but targets need to more clearly prioritised.

79.There was no report on business education at the last inspection.

159. **Design and technology**

80.The proportion of students achieving grades A* to C in the 1999 GCSE examinations was close to the national average and the proportion achieving grades A* to G was above average. These results are a considerable improvement on previous results. Pupils gained results that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied. Results at A level were close to the national average.

81.Attainment at the ages of 14, 16 and 19 is in line with the levels expected nationally. By the age of 14, students have a good knowledge and understanding of working in a wide range of materials and processes, including food, resistant materials, electronics, and graphics. Work with food is a strength at Key Stage 3, although students show capability in manipulating tools, equipment and materials and carrying out processes safely and proficiently in all areas. For example, good quality work was seen in projects as diverse as designing scones for special occasions and packaging for a new range of perfumes. There is little evidence of evaluation, however, and this area remains a weakness, leading to students achieving higher levels in making than they do in designing.

82.By the age of 16, students' folders contain methodical documentation of progress throughout their projects. They relate their designs well to their finished products. These products demonstrate a good attention to detail and are supported by appropriate written work. Work is at least satisfactory in all materials, although it is best in graphic products where the higher quality of the products themselves lead to better GCSE results than in other materials. Students do not, however, use a sufficiently developed critical and descriptive vocabulary to discuss and evaluate their work. At A level the work of the best of the current Year 13 students displays standards commensurate with A to C grades. One student's major project involved her in working with a local pottery museum to produce designs for refurbishment, ready for presentation to attract potential sponsorship. This link with a local business significantly enhanced the work.

83.Students make satisfactory progress throughout the school. They join the school with levels of attainment that are appropriate for their age and leave the school at the age of 16 with broadly average GCSE results. Students who follow the A level course gain results commensurate with their performance at GCSE.

84.Students' attitudes to their work are good throughout the school. Students show good commitment to their work, concentrate well during lessons and sustain application with extended project work. Older students respond very well to the opportunity to discuss their projects with each other and, at A level, successfully work with outside agencies to provide information and support for their projects. Behaviour is consistently good.

85.The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Planning and organisation, good pace and enthusiasm are particular strengths in all lessons. The best lessons are characterised by references to industrial practice, opportunities for students to discuss their work with each other and at Key Stage 4 in the appropriate preparation of students for the written papers. For example, in one Year 11 lesson the use of a real estate agent's sign was highly effective in helping students tackle problems of designing a stable, yet cost-effective structure. An imaginative Year 7 project involved students using moulding techniques to make chocolate lollipops. However, the teaching fails to make connections between different material areas clear to students so they have difficulty in transferring their skills. Homework is regularly set, but comments on work tend to be brief and often fail to provide helpful and achievable targets for further development. There is a limited use of

information technology across the department.

86.The departmental heads work effectively together to provide strong, positive and enthusiastic leadership. The quality of leadership is clearly demonstrated by the good progress made by the department since the previous inspection. Good links with a wide range of outside agencies (for example, General Domestic Appliances and Manchester Metropolitan University) have been established. The Young Engineers project has been a particularly successful and motivating initiative and the school has won three national awards. The quality of technician support is extremely good, but quite inadequate to provide sufficient support to the department, leading to teachers spending long periods of time in preparation for lessons. The knock on effect of this is apparent in the curriculum planning where insufficient time has been allowed to modify projects to take account of students' gains in learning as they move through the rotational course structure. There is a lack of general reference books on design to support students which is partially responsible for the lower standards in designing than in making.

87.The department has made good progress since the previous inspection. GCSE results were a key issue at the time of the previous inspection and these have now reached the national average as part of the trend of continuing improvement. The quality of teaching is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection.

167. **Geography**

88.The proportion of students achieving grades A* to C and A* to G in the 1999 GCSE examinations were above the national averages. Over the past four years, results have always been at, above or well above average. Students gained results that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied. Girls have consistently produced better GCSE results than boys over the last five years and the gap in terms of A* to C grades is much greater than is the case nationally. In 1999 A level results were very good with an average points score well above the national average. This has been the case for the past six years. The proportion of students gaining passes at the two highest grades of A and B has also been well above the national average for the past six years. In 1999, a significantly higher proportion of girls gained grades A to B than boys. The number of students studying for A level is much higher than normally seen.

89.In work seen during the inspection, attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 are above the national expectation for 14 year olds. At the end of Key Stage 4 they are well above the national expectation for students of that age group as is the case at the end of the sixth form. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment reflects the above average attainment recorded in teacher assessments. In these assessments, girls' performance exceeded that of boys. At the end of Key Stage 3 students' writing skills exceed the national expectation, students can carry out extended enquiry work and record their findings in a range of genre. They read aloud competently and oracy skills are well developed. Students can make very productive use of graphs of different types to record geographical data. They show a good understanding of geographical processes at the urban fringe, can confidently explain the processes at work in river basins and have a clear understanding of the world's major ecosystems and of the relationship of climate and vegetation. Students' understanding of geography in Key Stage 3 is enhanced by the use of a well-produced booklet in Year 7. This uses the local area as the basis for the study of settlement and for giving students a confident grasp of the geographical skills they will need later in their studies.

90.Inspection findings show that the skilful use of enquiry approaches to learning contribute well to high attainment at the end of Key Stage 4. Students possess a sound grasp of issues relating to the commercial exploitation of tropical forests. Their skills in investigation are exceptional. Through a very well planned fieldwork excursion to a Nottinghamshire farm, students carry out an in-depth investigation into agricultural issues which include the use of soil profiles and calculations of soil acidity. This in-depth student knowledge is again well supported by a judicious choice of suitable case studies using a range of sources. Students in the sixth form demonstrate a very good grasp of all aspects of field investigation techniques following a residential field visit to Malta where each student makes an individual study of a different aspect of the island's geography.

91.Progress overall at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form is good. Good progress at Key Stage 3 is

supported by a strong groundwork of knowledge, understanding and skills laid down in Year 7. This is enhanced by good quality teaching in Years 8 and 9, where the consolidation of previous learning serves to raise student confidence in meeting the challenges of new learning. The progress of students with special educational needs at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory with a number of students struggling to keep up with the rapid pace of learning maintained in the mixed ability teaching groups. At Key Stage 4, the effective use of an enquiry-based approach supports good progress. This is supported by good quality teaching and the use of challenging tasks that allow students to apply previous learning in new situations. The outcome of this good progress is higher than average GCSE attainment by students across the attainment spectrum. Through the sixth form, good progress is maintained reflecting the effective use of a range of teaching resources and approaches which give students the opportunity to build upon the good range of geographical enquiry skills acquired earlier in their school career.

92. Students take a very positive attitude to their work and show good levels of interest and motivation. Students' behaviour is very good and most take a keen pride in their work and show clear enthusiasm for the subject. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent which supports high quality learning. Students show good teamwork skills when working together in pairs or groups.

93. Teaching is good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Teachers' planning is good; the extensive use of enquiry approaches often based on the local area is a major strength of the department and supports good progress. Teachers' good subject knowledge and excellent communications skills ensure that students get a very thorough coverage of their examination syllabus. Teachers give a strong emphasis to the reinforcement of previous learning through skilful questioning on previous work and good reviews of work already covered at the start of lessons. Teachers have high expectations of their students, which is evident from searching questions and challenging classwork tasks. Class control and lesson planning are of a high order with very sound use of a range of teaching resources and carefully prepared worksheets. Particularly good use is made of the department's good stock of videos to enhance students understanding. A wide range of teaching methods are used with group and pair work both well developed in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Field work in both the local area and beyond is well developed. In the best lessons, teachers provide a range of activities which serve to stimulate students' interest and maintain motivation. The assessment of students' work and the use of homework are good.

94. The department has a very good ethos for learning and is well led by a very able head of department supported by a committed team of hard working teachers. There is a clear commitment to maintaining, or even improving, the already high standards. The learning environment has been enhanced through the use of funding raised within the department.

95. Since the last inspection, this very strong department has significantly raised the success rate of students entered for GCSE and A level examinations. The department still delivers good quality teaching to its students and has improved its use of both information technology and differentiated learning resources. It now gives very good value for money.

175.

175. **History**

96. In 1999 the proportion of students attaining GCSE grades A* to C was far below the national average, whilst the proportion gaining grades A* to G was above the national average. Students performance in history was considerably worse than in the other subjects that they studied. Boys outperformed girls. The results were similar to those attained in 1998 and well below those achieved in 1997. There were no GCE A level entries in 1999.

97. In work seen during the inspection students' standards of attainment at the age of 14 are in line with levels expected nationally. Students have a sense of chronology and can sequence historical events in time-lines. They understand the nature of sources of evidence and know the difference between primary and secondary sources. Students successfully use written and illustrative sources to respond to tasks about entertainment in the sixteenth century. Investigative skills however, are insufficiently developed, with limited opportunities for enquiry study and use of a wide range of sources such as information technology and first hand observation.

Most students acquire a satisfactory knowledge base, but the minority reveals limited understanding of topics such as studies of the Roman civilisation and their impact in shaping society. Standards of literacy are generally good, though attainment of a minority is reduced by insufficient development of written and oral responses.

98. In work seen during the inspection students' standards of attainment at the age of 16 are in line with that expected of students of the same age nationally. They have a sound knowledge of the 1914-18 war and use film evidence to interpret attitudes of personalities and events. Most students understand about the Cold War and the reasons for the Berlin blockade, but make insufficient use of the evidence in developing ideas and interpreting the events. Oral contributions in many instances are brief, without demonstrating clear understanding of political events. The written work of many students however, is well organised and detailed, more so in coursework where they describe and frequently evaluate the contributions of such people as Edwin Chadwick to public health reform. The minority of students however, shows confused thinking and does not make full use of the evidence available.

99. Students make satisfactory progress at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3 they learn about the structure of Roman society and the contrasting lifestyles of the plebeians and patricians. Most develop skills in using illustrative evidence to interpret the social life of the rich and poor in Tudor times, but unsatisfactory progress is made by lower attaining students, particularly those with special educational needs, in the absence of close support to address individual difficulty. Slow progress in some lessons however, is linked to students' being passively engaged for extended periods of time. Good progress is evident, particularly for the higher attainers, in studies of the formation of military alliances at the time of the Great War when they improve their understanding of the nationalist interests of countries and link the chronological sequence of events resulting in the outbreak of war. At Key Stage 4 students develop both the range and depth of their historical understanding. They gain knowledge of terms and learn to evaluate the characteristics of Stalin's Russia, with higher attaining students making comparative judgements with modern-day Russia. Progress is apparent in coursework when the quality of assignments is improved through careful planning and subsequent re-drafting, but progress is less evident when students' continue to make insufficient use and evaluation of evidence both in oral and written work. Lower attaining students find difficulty in understanding complex issues about political events associated with the Cold War and make limited progress in the absence of additional material to meet their needs.

100. Students' attitudes to learning at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are good. They are well-behaved in lessons and cooperate with teachers. At Key Stage 3 most students respond positively to opportunities that allow them to develop initiative but they are frequently reluctant to engage in class or group discussion. Written work is well organised and neatly presented, except for the minority at both key stages when it is untidy or left incomplete. They have good listening skills and show interest in the work particularly in film presentations as seen at Key Stage 4. Students work productively on set tasks but opportunities for students to use their initiative or carry out research are limited.

101. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. At Key Stage 3 teachers are appropriately qualified with a range of teaching experience that impacts positively on students' progress in lessons. Good use is made of resources but insufficient opportunities are provided for students to work on their own initiative. Teachers provide some support for the different needs of students through questioning and extension material, but insufficient support is given to meeting the needs of lower attaining students, particularly students with special educational needs. The demands made of some higher attaining pupils are insufficient for them to reach their potential. Most of the work is helpfully marked with informative comment but the setting of targets for improvement is not developed consistently. At Key Stage 4 class control is good and lessons progress smoothly. Homework is linked to work in lessons but the unavailability for the use of books at home restricts the range of study that can be undertaken. Teachers provide clear explanations and make use of discussion to develop learning objectives, but often sessions are lengthy, students fail to sustain concentration and learning slows.

102. The department has recently undergone a change of staffing that has led to improved progress on the part of students, who are now achieving standards that are appropriate for their age. The schemes of work are in the process of being updated and further development is needed on some units of work at Key Stage 3. The provision for fieldwork experience or visits at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is poor and detracts from the

breadth of experiences that are available to students. Insufficient use is made of computers. The subject reports National Curriculum levels at the end of Key Stage 3, but the absence of clear criteria and a portfolio of moderated work makes judgements about individual student levels of attainment insecure. History makes a positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development but it is not systematically planned and evaluated. The development plan sets objectives consistent with whole-school planning but the comprehensive list of targets does not identify priorities and the longer term direction. Resources for learning are adequate for needs, except the availability of artefacts and the very limited book provision in the library which is inadequate for research.

103. Since the last inspection the GCSE results have deteriorated, though standards at Key Stage 3 have been maintained in line with that expected of students aged 14 nationally and standards are now improving again in Key Stage 4. The quality of teaching has been maintained at a satisfactory level.

183.

183. **Information technology (IT)**

104. In 1999 the proportion of students attaining GCSE grades A* to C was far above the national average, whilst the proportion gaining grades A* to G was well above the national average. Results vary considerably from year to year however and over the last three years results have varied from below average to far above. Girls' results at GCSE are generally better than those for the boys. Increasing numbers of students have been entered for the GCSE in IT over the three-year period. Pupils gained results that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied. The school commenced entering students for A level in computer studies in 1998. Only small numbers of students have been entered in each of the two years. The results in 1999 were well above the national average. Good results have also been obtained by Key Stage 4 and sixth form students who have been entered for a range of other qualifications in IT.

105. In the work seen during the inspection, the attainment of students is above the levels expected nationally at the ages of 14, 16 and 19. Students of all ages possess a good range of skills particularly relating to communicating and handling information. They manipulate and present information in various forms using a range of computer software. This includes that relating to word processing, spreadsheets and databases. Work observed in lessons, discussions with the students and the scrutiny of work in files demonstrated that the majority of students develop a good understanding of these aspects throughout their time in the school. Students have more restricted opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills relating to the control of events using a computer.

106. The attainment of students entering the school is above nationally expected levels. Students' progress at each of the key stages and in the sixth form is satisfactory and generally in line with their previous attainment. Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 in particular the students are able to develop a range of appropriate skills. In many lessons students make good progress but they are however given insufficient opportunities to consolidate and use the skills that they have learnt in other subjects.

107. Responses of the majority of students at each of the key stages and in the sixth form are good. Most students are able to sustain concentration and complete the task that they are undertaking. Some students need significant support from the teacher in order to continue to make progress. In these cases the students were not progressing sufficiently quickly towards becoming autonomous computer users. Other than for the major coursework undertaken by GCSE and A level students there are very few opportunities for the students to show initiative or take responsibility. Behaviour in classes with a few minor exceptions is good. A few students in the mixed ability groups quickly lose concentration or are easily distracted.

108. Teaching is satisfactory. All lessons are well planned and teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject content. Most lessons consist of an appropriate range of activities with the students undertaking work as a group or individually at computers. The management of students and standards of discipline in almost all classes are good. Supportive relationships have been developed with the students. Homework is regularly set, marked and returned to the students. In some classes there is a need to more frequently vary the nature of the activity undertaken by the students. In a number of classes good use is made of paper-based learning support materials that have been developed by the school. The quality of aspects of these could be improved. Teachers

also make use of a large monitor to demonstrate the output from a computer. In some classes not all the students are able to view this. There is also a need to ensure that students are given more opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility.

109. Although there is increasing use of appropriate information technology within some subjects such as geography and music, in others, including mathematics, there is very little or no use made. Students are also given insufficient opportunities to undertake control work. Although there is good access to up-to-date computers for students undertaking the provision made specifically for information technology very restricted access to computers is possible for student groups undertaking other subjects. Students are encouraged to make use of the computer resources outside classes and particularly during lunchtimes. The school has become a victim of its own success with IT and there are now insufficient computers in the school to meet the demands of the pupils. The school has also recognised the need to increase the skills and confidence of the teaching staff generally if appropriate use of IT is to be properly integrated into all subjects. At the time of the inspection, 16 staff in the school were undertaking training in the use of IT. There is no technical support available and this has affected the provision that can be made for control work, leading to a weakness in attainment in this area.

110. Standards of attainment are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. There were no clear judgements on teaching in the previous report against which to judge progress.

190.

190. **Modern foreign languages**

111. The proportion of students gaining GCSE grades A* to C in 1999 in both French and Spanish is broadly in line with national averages for maintained schools, although relatively few students attain the highest grades. Over the past three years there has been a rising trend in GCSE results, particularly in Spanish. Pupils gained results that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied in Spanish but results in French were worse than in other subjects. There were too few candidates for A level in 1999 to make statistical comparisons.

112. At the end of Key Stage 3, the majority of students attain standards in line with the level expected nationally for students at the age of 14. At the age of 16, attainment is in line with the standards expected nationally. In the sixth form, attainment is below the standards expected on A level courses. Across Key Stages 3 and 4 the performance of girls is better than that of boys.

113. By the end of Key Stage 3, most students can understand and communicate simple information within a range of everyday situations. They can extract details from short spoken passages, can answer teachers' questions and can participate well in short dialogues, although many are hesitant when speaking and lack confidence without written support or visual cues. Many students know a satisfactory range of vocabulary within the topic areas taught. In Key Stage 4, students can tackle a wider range of topics, read and listen to longer passages and use dictionaries appropriately to help understanding and to improve their range of vocabulary knowledge. However, the higher attaining students do not work enough with texts containing more complex language and the tasks are sometimes insufficiently challenging. They remain lacking in confidence when speaking in more open-ended situations. Across both key stages, pronunciation needs improving. Writing is limited in scope and often contains basic errors in spelling and grammar. In the sixth form, students can deal with longer texts and more complex language with satisfactory understanding and possess a more extensive vocabulary. However, they are hesitant when speaking, rarely initiating conversation in the foreign language. Written work is often inaccurate and limited in style, with students showing little evidence of being able to present an argument or write at length on a topic.

114. Students make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Progress is more limited for some higher attaining students in Key Stage 4 due to a lack of an appropriate challenge. Students with special educational needs generally make good progress. Across both key stages, students acquire new vocabulary within a widening range of topics and previously learned work is built upon well in class. The ability to listen and understand increases satisfactorily, but reading is underpractised at all levels. The higher attaining students develop their knowledge of grammar rules, but do not always apply them accurately. In the sixth form, satisfactory progress is made in reading and listening, but is insufficient in both speaking and writing. The students have suffered from unstable staffing in the past, which has reduced the overall progress they have

made. This is now being rectified by the good teaching at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, provided by an almost entirely new department.

115.The response of students to learning a foreign language is good. They demonstrate good levels of interest and motivation and many students, particularly in Key Stage 3, clearly enjoy learning a foreign language. They are often engaged in their work, participate well in lessons and are industrious. They are cooperative when working with other students or in teacher-led activities, can work responsibly on their own and concentrate well. Relationships in the classroom between students and with teachers are good.

116.Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Teachers are well motivated and have a very good command of their subject. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and generally appropriate content, although sometimes, for the higher attaining students, this is insufficiently challenging, particularly at Key Stage 4. Resources used are satisfactory and sometimes imaginative, although they tend to be textbook-based and their range should be broadened to increase the variety of material. Some lively teaching strategies were observed and the overhead projector was often well used to present and practise language. Activities are well managed and often engage students' interest, such as a variation on noughts and crosses to reinforce new vocabulary, actual items of food used to make learning more immediate or the descriptions in French of a staff football team which ensured close attention. Insufficient attention is given to pronunciation at Key Stage 4 in particular. At sixth form level, the careful choice of texts helped to maintain interest. The use of the foreign language in the classroom was very good and represents a clear improvement since the last inspection. Pace was satisfactory and often good. However, there are too few opportunities for imaginative written work and there is a need for a more rigorous approach to accuracy. Throughout the school, there is very little use made of IT. Homework is regularly set and consolidates work done in class. Students' work is regularly marked, but does not show in sufficient detail how they can improve.

117.In recent years, the department has suffered from staffing instability which has adversely affected standards, particularly in Year 11 and the sixth form. This situation has now changed with a number of new staff who are making a positive impact on language teaching and the department has improved distinctly since the last inspection. Leadership in the department is good, there is a vision for the future and there are clear indications of a cohesive and successful team.

118.The levels of attainment overall in both French and Spanish have improved since the last inspection, when GCSE results were a key issue. The quality of teaching is now better at Key Stage 3 and similar at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

198.

198. **Music**

119.In the 1999 GCSE examinations, 100 per cent of the students achieved a grade A* to C, this is far above the national average and continues the consistently high standards of recent years. Students achieved much better results in music than in their other subjects. In the A level examinations, all the students achieved A to C grades and one student was awarded an A grade for the AS level examination. However, the numbers taking these examinations are too small for statistical comparison with national figures.

120.By the age of 14, the attainment of students is above that expected nationally for students of the same age. They perform instrumentally and vocally with confidence, control, and are able to use music to create mood and emotion. In their ensemble work, many play with an awareness of the other performers. They compose using different techniques, ideas and styles whilst using appropriate information technology to explore, create and record sounds. Students respond to, and evaluate the effects of, music and are then able to describe these both verbally and in written form. They appraise their own work and also that of their peers and other composers and take note of the views and ideas of others. Students use an appropriate musical vocabulary and staff notation.

121.By the age of 16, the overall attainment of students is well above that expected nationally for students of the same age. They compose in various styles and forms whilst using various resources including information technology. In their ensemble work, they play with a fine awareness of the other performers and in their solo

work they play with confidence and control on a variety of instruments. The levels of practical attainment are supported well by the work of the visiting peripatetic teachers and the wide range of very good quality extracurricular groups offered by the department. Students can recognise periods, styles, form and instrumentation within both classical and popular music and also have a good knowledge and understanding of the main forms of world music. They listen attentively to the performances of their peers and when working in groups they take note of the views of others and negotiate to create a desired end result and then appraise their own and their peers' work.

122.The attainment of students observed, by the age of 19, is above that expected nationally for students of the same age. It should be noted that this is achieved from a varied cohort, not all the students having taken the GCSE music examination. The students understand about the origins of jazz and blues and also have a good knowledge of the history of music from Renaissance to the twentieth century, and can then place music within its' social and historical context. They analyse music of various periods and evaluate this using appropriate methods to relate to period and style and are able to realise the differences between performed and written examples of a piece of music. In dictation exercises they notate music from a given performed part and are able to make harmonic realisations. They compose in a range of styles, using various instrumentations and create pieces that have an extended form.

123.The progress of students at both key stages and in the sixth form is good. In Key Stage 3, the majority of students make good progress in consolidating and developing skills in group composition using various devices in isolation and combined. There are also good rates of gains in performance skills in both individual and ensemble performance on a variety of classroom instruments and also for many students, through the work of the peripatetic service, on other instruments. Students are developing an understanding of the skills and concepts learned and how to apply them in new and unfamiliar situations. Students identified with special educational needs are integrated well within classes and they make good progress towards individual targets set by the department.

124.Students at Key Stage 4 make good progress, with some very good progress observed in acquiring, developing and consolidating key skills in composition. They make good gains in analysing and appraising, supported by a good knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of the music syllabus. Students rate of progress is good on their selected instruments, both in individual and ensemble performance and this is assisted by the peripatetic teachers and the range of extracurricular opportunities. In the sixth form there are very good rates of progress in lessons observed, in consolidating and developing key skills of aural awareness and students are able to apply these to new and unfamiliar situations. They make good progress in developing and revisiting and consolidating key skills in analysis and evaluation supported by a good knowledge and understanding of the history of music.

125.The attitudes of students are very good. In the sixth form, students have a sensible approach to their studies, articulating ideas and effectively using questioning to reinforce and extend learning, with very good independent learning skills. They are then able to reflect on their experiences and the effect music has on emotion. Students throughout the school have a very enthusiastic approach to composition and performance and are keen to perform whilst listening attentively to each other. They negotiate and rehearse well in groups to create desired end result and are keen to take responsibility for composition and performance and also their own and peers appraisal. There are very good levels of concentration and students show a good respect for instruments. In both Key Stages 3 and 4, students are developing confidence in the use of computers to assist in composition. Behaviour is always good and they work with interest and an enjoyment of the subject.

126.The overall quality and provision for teaching in music is good. Teachers have a good understanding of both the subject and the syllabus requirements of GCSE, AS and A level examinations. Lessons have clear expositions and demonstrated examples and expectations that effectively challenge students. Teachers always prepare lessons well, with appropriate support resources that stimulate learning. They make effective use of question and answer, orally and musically, to consolidate and extend teaching, and to challenge students. Lessons have a very good pace, with a variety of interrelated tasks and teachers use praise and encouragement to effectively challenge and involve all students and inform teaching, this in turn, leads to very good discipline. There is good use made of departmental support, for example, team teaching during free periods and a general sharing of good teaching practice, there is also effective use made of support from sixth form students in lessons. Homework is used effectively, as and when appropriate, to inform, consolidate and extend teaching.

127.The curriculum is very well planned for continuity and progression, both within and across key stages and allows an equality of access for all students. Students identified with special education needs are well integrated within the main curriculum and have individual targets set by the department. The department has created an effective scheme for assessing students attainment and progress within key stages and for using the data to project examination grades and to create individual targets. Assessment data is used effectively to inform curriculum planning, for example, the high GCSE results are partly attributable to the use of assessment data collated by department to create a unique curriculum for each cohort of students. There is very effective leadership and management of the subject, all teaching is monitored and supported and this is linked to very good curriculum development. There is an excellent ethos within the department, with a commitment to high achievement by all students, through the creation of a very effective learning environment, very good relationships between students and staff, and an equality of opportunity for all students

128.The previous inspection report said that standards of achievement were good throughout, they are now above the levels expected nationally at ages 14 and 19, and well above at age 16. Teaching was described as sound overall, it is now good and the management, which was good, is now very good. The school has improved the accommodation for music, but with the popularity and expansion of the subject, it is still only satisfactory. The department has made good progress since the last inspection and now offers very good value for money.

208.

208. **Physical education**

129.The results of students taking the GCSE examination in 1999 were well above the national average for the proportion of students gaining grades A* to C, and 100 per cent of candidates gained at least a G grade. Boys performed significantly better than girls did, reversing the trend of recent years. Pupils gained results that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied. At A level, there were too few entries in 1999 to make statistical comparisons with national standards valid.

130.In the work seen during the inspection, students' attainment at the age of 14 is above the level expected for their age. In games, students use the tactics of creating space to receive a pass from a re-start. They work out ploys to outwit opponents and modify their tactics in the full game. The majority show effective use of a variety of passes and most are able to pass skilfully. All students show a good knowledge of the laws of the game. A positive feature of their work is the ability to plan their tactics and to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular strategy. This is also the case in swimming. They show a well-developed understanding of effective stroke production and can analyse weaknesses in the performance of a partner.

131.At Key Stage 4, amongst the groups taking the compulsory, non-examined courses in physical education, students' levels of attainment are above those expected at the age of 16. In the GCSE course, students are working at a level above the national average. In a hockey, most students operate at a level broadly in line with national expectations. Here, the lower attainers demonstrate basic techniques in controlling and dribbling the ball, but find difficulty in explaining how particular skills may be used to best effect in a game. In contrast, in a GCSE class, students showed high levels of understanding about swimming techniques such as the tumble turn, and could analyse the work of a partner and show how the technique could be improved. The theory work of this group is comprehensive, well-presented, and shows levels of understanding that are above average.

132.In the sixth form, the students taking the A level course attain standards in line with course expectations. Their practical work is above average. For example, their understanding of tactics in hockey and their ability to perform in set plays in the game are high. In the theoretical aspects of their work there is a greater range of attainment. Higher attainers are working at a level well above average. Their work is well presented and their individual project work is of a high standard. In a lesson on the chemistry of muscle contraction they showed a very good understanding of the way in which energy is created and utilised. A few lower attainers found these concepts very difficult to understand and were unable to explain the process. Their written work in general is of a standard well below the average.

133.Students make good progress through Key Stage 3. In gymnastics, for example, students in Year 7 build

simple sequences and know how to make judgements about gymnastic performance. A year later, students can build complex sequences and transfer their work on the floor to include apparatus work. By this stage they can observe the work of others and make judgements about the quality of the work against appropriate criteria and using correct terminology. As they progress through the key stage they increase their knowledge about how to warm-up and cool down in order to protect the body from injury. Students make good progress in all areas of their work, including games, gymnastics, dance and swimming.

134. A feature of the progress that students make is their increased knowledge and understanding about the activities they perform. This continues through Key Stage 4 where progress is, again, good. By this stage, students can talk knowledgeably about how to stretch the main muscle groups and mobilise the principal joint complexes when preparing for exercise. In swimming, GCSE students can observe a partner and analyse the main faults in their performance of the front crawl and then suggest how the stroke may be practised in order to improve. In doing so, students draw upon their earlier practical work and combine this with knowledge gained about specific practice techniques learned in their theory sessions. At both key stages students with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as others. In GCSE studies, girls and boys make similar progress, but the boys attain higher grades. This is because the boys opting for the subject are more representative of the full range of attainment than the girls.

135. Students in the sixth form make good progress. The different nature of the demands of the A level course, concentrating as it does upon theoretical components in the study of sport, causes difficulties for the few lower attaining students. However, they continue to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, while middle and higher attaining students make the transition more easily. Students of all levels of attainment make good progress in their practical studies.

136. The responses of students in lessons are good. A feature of the work throughout the age range is the developed ability in students to work and learn, independent of the direct presence of their teachers. Apart from one Year 8 class of boys whose responses were immature and inappropriate, students enjoy being given responsibility and trust in lessons and respond well. Students enjoy their lessons and behave very well. They have good relationships with each other and with their teachers, based upon mutual respect. Students listen to each other, watch demonstrations attentively and take a pride in their efforts. When set a problem to address they cooperate well, whether working in pairs in gymnastics or in groups in games. In a netball lesson taken in very poor weather conditions, a Year 9 class worked hard on their own to find a solution to a games-problem set. In spite of the cold, they practised effectively and debated long and hard about the advantages of taking one approach against another. Relationships are good even in the very competitive situations that take place during games and students cooperate well without friction and with obvious enjoyment.

137. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and prepare their lessons carefully. A feature of the work of the whole department is the emphasis laid on students' understanding about exercise and about the correct techniques used in different sporting activities. This enables students to develop well their ability to help each other to improve and to use the right terminology in their explanations. Thus, for example, students understand that evaluating a gymnastic performance is different to judging an effective swimming stroke. Teachers mostly organise effective lessons where satisfactory learning takes place and students make good progress. However, their planning lacks some precision in determining tasks that best match the needs of students of differing levels of attainment. Teachers maintain high expectations of the efforts and behaviour of their students. As a result, behaviour is usually good and students respond to the impact of this good teaching by producing their best efforts. The teachers know their students well and use question and answer techniques effectively to ensure that work is taken forward and that all students are fully concentrating and engaged in lessons. Homework is used effectively throughout the age groups and particularly well with examination groups. In preparing students for examinations, teachers are very effective in their planning and their marking of work and this is reflected in the good results obtained.

138. Since the last inspection, the department has maintained higher than average standards of attainment in the GCSE examination and attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 has improved. The quality of teaching has been maintained at its previously good level. However, the issue noted in terms of sixth form students' access to a programme of physical education is still unresolved.

218.

218. **Religious education**

139. Due to school curriculum policy, there were no candidates entered for either the GCSE or A level examinations in 1999.

140. By the age of 14 the attainment of students is satisfactory being broadly in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. They have a good knowledge of the beliefs, practices and symbolism of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. They understand why believers celebrate festivals and observe fasts and pilgrimages. For instance they can explain in their own words why Christians celebrate Christmas and something of their belief about the incarnation. They know that believers use imagery such as icons to help their worship and how believers try to explain aspects of God. Their appreciation of the mystery and excitement associated with religious belief is less well-developed especially in faiths other than Christianity.

141. By the age of 16 the attainment of the majority of students who are not following a GCSE course is unsatisfactory, being limited to some understanding of how religious belief affects believers' stance on a very narrow range of moral issues. The attainment of students following the GCSE course is satisfactory. They have gained a more systematic knowledge of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and can apply its teachings to moral issues such as the sacredness of life.

142. There is no provision for religious education in the sixth form.

143. Students at Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress over time. The progress in some individual lessons is less than could be expected because of a lack of pace or because they are spending time on inappropriate activities such as colouring. Most students consolidate the knowledge they acquire and can therefore recall it later. Students with special educational needs make progress similar to other students because they are individually supported by subject staff in the absence of specialist support assistants. The highest attaining students do not always make sufficient progress in understanding and evaluation because of a lack of challenge. Students in Key Stage 4 following the GCSE course including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress although that of the highest attainers could be better. The majority of students who only experience a one term course during the key stage make unsatisfactory progress. Whilst individual lessons are taught well and seen of value by students the course as a whole lacks a sense of urgency and purpose because of its brevity and lack of an external examination.

144. Students in the sixth form make no progress in the subject because of lack of provision.

145. The attitude to the subject by students in both key stages in which it is provided is good. They are very well behaved and have a positive attitude. They listen well to teachers and to other students and show respect for books and religious artefacts. Written work is very well presented. This positive attitude is reflected in a significant number choosing to study the subject for the GCSE examination in Key Stage 4 now that the opportunity is available to them. They collaborate effectively when asked to do so but can also focus well on individual work. Most are heavily dependent on teachers and are not developing to any extent the skills, confidence and initiative required for success in individual study.

146. At Key Stage 3 the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The standard of discipline in all classes is very good and relationships between teachers and students are warm. Teachers' knowledge of the subject varies widely. The conscientious work and good class management of non-specialist teachers does not compensate for their lack of subject background. In some lessons this leads to lessons being wrongly focused so that the teaching misses the key religious concepts associated with the topic. For example, a lesson concentrated on the detail of the creation account in Genesis rather than on a believer's faith, awe and wonder. Planning is effective in addressing the requirements of the agreed syllabus but the plans for individual lessons sometimes lack precision and the detail required to ensure that time is fully and usefully used with good pace and high expectations of all students. There is a range of activities but most lessons are heavily dependent on teacher input and there is insufficient use made of video material, computer programmes and first hand experience to give students insights into the rituals and practices of faiths. Students' work is marked conscientiously using a scheme that is

understood by them and indicates how well they are doing compared with their potential. Relevant homework is set regularly.

147. At Key Stage 4 the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Class management and discipline is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. On the GCSE course planning ensures that the examination requirements are met but the plans for individual lessons especially those in which students are engaged in coursework lacks rigour. Work is well marked and accurately assessed. In lessons addressing the core course there is a lack of rigour and urgency but the good relationships forged between teachers and students ensure that students take lessons seriously. They make positive gains in understanding of the issues involved even though they know that the course is short and there is no examination target. In these classes work is not assessed and the school does not require the subject to provide reports for parents.

148. The poor curricular provision for the subject has a serious impact on standards. It results in sixth form students making no progress after the end of Key Stage 4 and the majority of students at Key Stage 4 not having the opportunity to extend and deepen their knowledge. There is a serious shortage of well-qualified, experienced staff resulting in over 60 per cent of lessons at Key Stage 3 being taught by non-specialists. This leads to deficiencies in lesson planning and content. The resources available are satisfactory except for a shortage of video and information technology material and equipment and insufficient use of the opportunities afforded by the local community.

149. Since the last report there has been some improvement in the provision at Key Stage 4 but this is still well below the national average. Whereas the last report referred to high expectations in lessons these are now only satisfactory. There has been a significant change of staffing which has led to a decline in the quality of teaching. The provision of religious education in the sixth form was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection and has not been addressed.

229. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

229. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

150. The inspection team consisted of 13 inspectors who spent the equivalent of 52 days in the school. During the week 195 lessons and a sample of registrations, assemblies, tutor periods and extracurricular activities were observed, totalling over 183 hours. Lessons of all subjects of the curriculum were observed. All teachers were seen teaching at least once and most were seen three or more times. All the available work of a number of students from each year group was inspected. Six students from each year group were formally interviewed and informal discussions were held with many more. The work of further students was requested and inspected in particular subjects. Throughout the week the work of many more students was examined in lessons.

151. The Registered Inspector visited the school prior to the inspection. During these visits meetings were held with the Headteacher, Chair of the Governing Body and all available staff. During the week of inspection 60 planned and several unmetabled interviews took place and one inspector met a Headteacher from a local feeder primary school. Informal discussions were held with many staff. A large amount of documentation was analysed by the inspectors before they arrived at the school. The Registered Inspector and his deputy held a meeting attended by 35 parents before the inspection and considered 215 responses from parents to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school.

231. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

231. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	981	33	68	63

231. **Teachers and classes**

231. **Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	56.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	17.3

231. **Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)**

Total number of education support staff:	14
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	291.6

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	77
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	25
	KS4	21

231. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/1999
	£
Total income	1,966,963
Total expenditure	1,935,206
Expenditure per pupil	1,978
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,030
Balance carried forward to next year	66,787

231. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 981
 Number of questionnaires returned: 215

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	16	70	10	4	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	35	55	5	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	13	52	21	7	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	16	62	14	5	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	26	61	6	6	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	23	70	4	2	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	31	57	8	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	17	69	6	7	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	22	62	11	3	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	18	65	12	4	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	28	62	4	4	1

231. **Other issues raised by parents**

Some parents felt that annual reports were issued too close to the end of term.