

INSPECTION REPORT

Humphry Davy School

Penzance

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique Reference Number: 112067

Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Ferguson

Reporting inspector: Dr Barbara Hilton

3228

Dates of inspection: 13 – 17 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708069

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

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

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

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

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

Tel. 0171421 6567

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Coombe Road Penzance Cornwall TR18 2TG
Telephone number:	01736 363559
Fax number:	01736 331042
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Kevin Mackness
Date of previous inspection:	13 – 17 March 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Barbara Hilton, RgI	N/A	Attainment and progress
Husain Akhtar, Lay Inspector		Teaching Curriculum and assessment Leadership and management Efficiency Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Equal opportunities Special educational needs
Philip Winch	English Drama	
Margaret Price David Leonard	Mathematics Science Vocational course: leisure and tourism	Staffing N/A
John Richards Paul Hartwright	Art Design and technology Information technology	Learning Resources N/A
Marjorie Thomas Joyce Sanderson	Geography History Drama (Key Stage 3)	Accommodation N/A
Derek Cronin	Modern languages: French and German	N/A
Susan Wilkinson Caroline Runyard Ann Philp	Music Physical education Religious education	N/A N/A Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd
66-68 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB2 1LA

01223 578500

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

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

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school 1 - 5
- Key indicators 6 - 10

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

- Attainment and progress 11 - 36
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 37 - 40
- Attendance 41 - 42

Quality of education provided

- Teaching 43 - 51
- The curriculum and assessment 52 - 62
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 63 - 67
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 68 - 71
- Partnership with parents and the community 72 - 75

The management and efficiency of the school

- Leadership and management 76 - 81
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 82 - 87
- The efficiency of the school 88 - 94

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science 95 - 122

Other subjects or courses 123 - 205

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 206 - 207

Data and indicators 208 - 212

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The ethos for learning and achievement is good.
- Results are improving and pupils obtain better GCSE results than in similar schools, nationally.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported; they nearly all leave school with GCSE certificates.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The school responds well to pupils' needs; pastoral arrangements are good and pupils are helped to make the most of themselves.
- Extra-curricular activities contribute well to pupils' academic and personal development, especially in music and sports.
- Community links enrich the curriculum and life of the school.
- Leadership is strong; school improvement and resources are well managed.
- Governors are well informed and supportive.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Religious education is not provided for pupils at Key Stage 4, nor design and technology for all pupils in Year 11, and collective worship is not provided daily.
- II. Assessment is insufficiently used in curricular planning to directly improve the subject skills and knowledge of pupils, and to let pupils and their parents know about progress.
- III. In modern languages, and in some aspects of design and technology, teaching is weak in too many lessons.
- IV. Not all of the required information is included in the governors' annual report, nor in the prospectus.

The many strengths of the school outweigh its weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and successfully achieved a removal onto one site, with new buildings of high quality. Overall, teaching and learning have improved. GCSE results overall are improving, particularly for boys and for pupils with special educational needs. Results in individual subjects have fluctuated and in some are lower than at the last inspection but now show an upward trend, for example mathematics and science. In modern languages, however, results have declined. Results in art, geography and physical education are much improved. Pupils' opportunities to use information and communication technology are much improved with new facilities.

The school has invested much effort into strengthening the role of middle managers although in some areas, notably assessment and its use in curriculum planning and monitoring attainment, practice still lacks rigour, because insufficient links are made with the National Curriculum. Provision for religious education at Key Stage 4 and for collective worship, which were included as key issues of the report, is still insufficient.

The school's capacity to improve further is good. The upheaval of the removal is over, leadership is strong and effective use is made of planning and target-setting.

Standards in subjects

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

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

Results are better in 1999, both at the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE. Results for English, mathematics and science are similar at Key Stage 3. At GCSE, English results are highest, followed by science and mathematics. GCSE results, which had improved in line with the national trend up to 1998, are further improved in 1999. The GCSE results are higher than expected, relative to pupils' attainment on entry, which represents good value-added by the school. Almost 80 per cent of leavers in 1998 continued their education in further education or in local sixth forms.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	good	science, art	resistant materials, graphics
Years 10-11	good	art, drama, geography, humanities, physical education, leisure and tourism	modern languages, resistant materials, graphics, religious education
English	good	both key stages	
Mathematics	satisfactory	Key Stage 4	

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons, good or better in over half of these and very good (occasionally excellent) in 14 per cent of lessons. Teaching is consistently good in English and art. There are examples of very good teaching in most subjects. Most of the lessons which were unsatisfactory were in modern languages, and in aspects of design and technology (resistant materials and graphics). In these lessons, activities were not well matched to pupils' attainments, and teachers did not help pupils to improve in all aspects of the subject, including the design process in technology subjects.

Overall strengths of teaching are teachers' effective use of their knowledge to help pupils make progress, their good relationships and firm discipline. Pupils know generally how they are getting on, but little reference is made to the National Curriculum, until the end of 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 overall.
Attendance	Improved and matches the national average.
Ethos*	Purposeful and effective: pupils enjoy lessons and learn well.
Leadership and management	Strong: the headteacher is outstandingly good and senior managers work well as a team.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced overall, with good opportunities for pupils to build on their strengths at Key Stage 4. Planning lacks detail, especially links to the National Curriculum.
Pupils with special educational needs	Progress is good, with effective emphasis on literacy. Classroom support is attentive but is often not focused on the next step in learning.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Strong overall, especially pupils' moral and social development, assisted by a rich programme of extra-curricular activities and community links. In general, spiritual awareness is less developed than other aspects.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Teachers are very committed and have heavy teaching loads. Learning resources are generally adequate. Buildings are of high quality.
Value for money	Good

**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

V. Work in arts subjects, English, food technology, humanities subjects, computing, physical education and leisure and tourism.

VI. The good pastoral arrangements which enable pupils to grow in confidence and do their best.

VII. New buildings.

VIII. Overall improvement of results.

What some parents are not happy about

IX. Inconsistent use of homework.

X. Pockets of poor behaviour.

XI. Standards in some lessons, where pupils are insufficiently challenged.

XII. The quality of information they receive on their children's progress, and the timing of meetings for parents.

Inspectors' judgements endorse parents' positive views. The school is caring and encourages pupils to take responsibility for their learning and progress, which are good in many subjects. GCSE results have improved. The buildings, recently enhanced, provide a good environment for learning, with additional computers. Behaviour was good during the inspection, in lessons and around the school. Homework is used with varying effectiveness; sometimes not enough is set. In subjects where teaching is least effective, lessons lack challenge. End-of-year reports give little information on pupils' progress relative to National Curriculum or GCSE requirements. The school has plans to change the times of meetings with parents, in response to their concerns.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To raise further the standards of work and attainment of pupils, the governors, headteacher, senior management team and staff should:-

- XIII. provide religious education for all pupils at Key Stage 4, design and technology for all in Year 11 and regular opportunities for reflection on universal issues and worship (paragraphs 52 and 64);
- XIV. improve the assessment of pupils' subject knowledge and skills in order to plan the curriculum to promote their progress more strongly, and to inform parents more fully about what their children know, understand and can do (paragraphs 54, 61 and 74);
- XV. improve the quality of teaching in modern languages and design and technology, by identifying learning objectives for pupils which build on their attainments and help them progress across the full subject curriculum (paragraphs 43, 45, 47, 149 and 182);
- XVI. provide all of the required information in the prospectus and in the governors' annual report (paragraphs 74 and 79).

References to religious education and collective worship were included in key issues of the last report. In addition to the preceding key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the plan. These are indicated in paragraphs referring to: development of numeracy skills (21); the use of form time and punctuality (42 and 56); homework (50); the work of classroom assistants (61); the time available for monitoring of the curriculum and teaching (89); strengthening curricular planning in music (188 and 189); the teaching of electronics, and systems and control, in design and technology (150).

INTRODUCTION

. Characteristics of the school

1. Humphry Davy School is an 11-16 comprehensive school for boys and girls, locally managed by the governors in Penzance, Cornwall. The total number of pupils is 834, with about ten per cent more girls than boys; the difference is most pronounced in Years 10 and 11.
1. Pupils entering in Year 7 come mainly from 14 primary schools, in Penzance and the local area. The attainment of pupils on entry in Year 7 is wide-ranging, and just below the national average, overall. Altogether 190 pupils (23 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs and 32 pupils (3.8 per cent) have statements. Both proportions are above the national averages. The majority of pupils with more severe difficulties have moderate learning difficulties, or emotional and behavioural difficulties.
2. In all, 185 pupils (22 per cent) are eligible for free school meals, and this proportion is above the national average. The school copes with a regular turn-over of pupils. In 1998-9, pupil mobility was 12.3 per cent. Almost all of the pupils are white, which is representative of the local population. There are small numbers of African-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Chinese pupils. Only three pupils speak a language other than English at home and there is no external funding for language support.
3. The school has increased its roll by five per cent since the last inspection, with an increase in the number of girls (the ratio of boys to girls was about equal last time). The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs has more than doubled. In January 1998, the school vacated the lower school, about 500 metres from the main school, and consolidated onto its Coombe Road site (originally the boys' grammar school). This was possible because of a substantial building programme, which provided a new block for art, drama, mathematics and some science laboratories, as well as the regrouping of other accommodation.

4. The overall aim of the school is to ensure that children achieve their best. The school states that it concentrates on providing an atmosphere in which individual achievement, self-esteem and excellence are highly valued; providing a safe and secure environment; providing equal access and a caring, pleasant environment in which pupils become independent learners and confident young people, playing their full part in the wider community and with a sense of responsibility for the wider world. The school makes effective use of targets in planning its work and improving GCSE results.
- 5.

5. **Key indicators**

5. **Attainment at Key Stage 3¹**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	78	96	174
	(1998)	(66)	(103)	(169)

6. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	38 (22)	53 (35)	48 (38)
	Girls	69 (61)	65 (59)	58 (48)
	Total	107 (83)	118 (94)	106 (86)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	61 (50)	68 (57)	61 (52)
	National	(65)	(60)	(56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	24 (25)	38 (24)	31 (13)
	National	(35)	(36)	(27)

6. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	40 (36)	53 (46)	62 (37)
	Girls	71 (72)	69 (67)	72 (56)
	Total	111 (108)	122 (113)	134 (93)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	64 (66)	70 (68)	77 (56)
	National	(62)	(64)	(62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	36 (29)	34 (33)	56 (16)
	National	(31)	(37)	(31)

6. **Attainment at Key Stage 4¹**

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	83	90	173
	(1998)	(61)	(63)	(124)

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	39 (25)	80 (60)	81 (61)
	Girls	52 (27)	87 (60)	89 (61)
	Total	91 (52)	167 (120)	170 (122)
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	53 (42)	97 (97)	98 (98)
	National	(44.6)	(89.8)	(95.2)

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

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or Units and percentage of <i>such pupils</i> who achieved all those they studied:		Number	% Success rate
	School	13	100
	National		N/A

7. **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	8.9
	Absence	National comparative data	9.0
	Unauthorised	School	0.2
	Absence	National comparative data	1.1

8.

8.

9. **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	22
	Permanent	4

10. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	14
	Satisfactory or better	94
	Less than satisfactory	6

10. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

10. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

10. Attainment and progress

Overall standards and progress

8. The attainment of pupils on entry to Humphry Davy School is wide-ranging and overall just below the national average. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs, and with statements, are above the national average.
9. Results are improving at the end of both key stages. Attainment in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 was below the national average for the core subjects (English, mathematics and science), both overall and separately. When considered over the last three years, pupils' performance is similar in each of the core subjects. In 1998, however, when compared with similar schools, results were well above average in mathematics, above average in science and average in English. Pupils' performance improved significantly in 1999.
10. In 1998, pupils' attainment in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) for five subjects at the higher grades (A*-C) was close to the national average and, when compared with similar schools, the results were well above average. Results for the higher grades were significantly better in 1999. Results for five subjects across the full range of grades (A*-G) in 1998 were well above the national average, and very high when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining at least one graded GCSE was above the national average, and well above results for similar schools. In 1999, results across the full range of grades were similar to those for 1998. The high proportion of pupils leaving school with certificates reflects well on the performance of lower attaining pupils, especially those with special educational needs. Boys' performance at GCSE was relatively better than girls' in 1998, but girls' results improved in 1999, although their lead over the boys is no greater than usually the case, nationally. Pupils are successful on the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) leisure and tourism course. The first group of pupils entered in 1999: all passed and of these two-thirds obtained merit or distinction. In lessons and work seen, overall attainment is close to the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 3, and about average at the end of Key Stage 4.
11. Progress is good when overall examination performance is compared with pupils' attainment on entry. The single most important factor helping pupils do well is the quality of teaching which is good, overall, throughout the school. Effective use is made of mentoring for Year 11 pupils identified as having potential to improve, and of revision classes in all subjects.
12. Pupils make satisfactory or better progress in over 90 per cent, and good or very good progress in half, of the lessons. Examples of very good progress were seen in several subjects: in English (as in the use of the play *Buddy* to improve pupils' listening skills and understanding of how meaning is conveyed in language), in physical education (where pupils improve performance in games and other activities through teachers' very good coaching, explanation of how to improve, and on-going assessment), in science (when the teacher sets very clear objectives and builds effectively on previous learning) and in information and communication technology (when computers are used very effectively to improve both subject, for example science, and information technology skills). In English and art, overall progress is good throughout the school. In nearly all other subjects overall progress is at least satisfactory. It is better at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4 in science (because younger pupils are set relatively harder tasks than older pupils) and better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3 in geography and physical education (where progress is accelerated in GCSE groups). In an important aspect of design and technology progress is weak: this is the design aspect, which is not used consistently to underpin the curriculum, particularly in resistant materials. Progress in modern languages, while satisfactory overall, is affected, particularly at Key Stage 4, by pupils' generally negative attitudes to the subject, which are generated by weaknesses in teaching, including the lack of regular use of the spoken language in lessons. At Key Stage 4, pupils' progress in religious education is unsatisfactory, because insufficient is taught.

13. Overall, pupils' knowledge and understanding develop well through the school – for example of literature and the rules of grammar in English, and of historical periods and the reasons for change in history. Poor recall affects the ability of pupils in lower sets to draw on their earlier learning in mathematics, although pupils in higher sets generally apply their knowledge well, to further progress. Teachers develop pupils' own evaluative skills to improve their work in art and physical education, and this approach is being strengthened in drama. Very good progress is made in practical aspects of music, for example work on instruments and singing – although overall progress is just satisfactory because the great strengths of the work are counterbalanced by insufficient attention given to other aspects of the National Curriculum. The structure of the leisure and tourism course enables pupils to monitor and plan their own work and this helps them to progress well.
14. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Very good progress is made in reading, assisted by effective use of commercial schemes. They make satisfactory progress in subject lessons, dependent on the quality of support given. When this is focused on a particular learning step, pupils progress well.

17.

English

15. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in English was below the national average in 1998, though close to the average for similar schools. Results improved significantly in 1999. GCSE results in 1998 were above the national average for the higher grades (A*-C) and very high, compared with results for similar schools. Standards were maintained in 1999. The relative performance of boys and girls has fluctuated, with boys doing very well in 1998 and again in 1999. However, girls' results improved in 1999, although their lead over boys is less than the case, nationally. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is close to the national average, and at the end of Key Stage 4 it is above the national average. Progress is good throughout the school.
16. Pupils speak clearly and develop their ideas, giving reasons for their views. They are assisted by work in most subjects – English, history, religious education and personal, social and moral education particularly. They listen well. They read aloud with good pace and accuracy, and improve with practice in most subjects. The lower attaining pupils, however, lack fluency and expression. Pupils can write for a variety of audiences, often adapting their style to suit the situation as, for example, for reports in science, though a few write as they speak. They use paragraphing and punctuation appropriately and many have a sufficient range of vocabulary to develop ideas more fully. Spelling is sound and sentences carefully constructed.

19.

Mathematics

17. Results of National Curriculum tests in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998, while below the overall national average, were well above the average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades (A*-C) at GCSE in 1998 was below the national average for all schools, but well above the average for similar schools. Results at the end of both key stages improved in 1999. Progress across both key stages is satisfactory. In lessons at the end of both key stages pupils' attainments cover a wide range and overall are close to the national average for their age.
18. Standards of numeracy are weak among younger pupils. Pupils use calculators too readily. Numeracy skills are not systematically developed through the school and pupils' experience varies, depending on their teaching group. However in some lessons, in science and geography particularly, pupils make effective use of numeracy and they draw and interpret data using simple graphs. Charts and graphs are also used in history, leisure and tourism, and personal, social and moral education. Limited use is made of number in information and communication technology, for example recording and using data in databases and spreadsheets. Standards achieved are satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 4.

21.

Science

19. In 1998 the results of National Curriculum tests in science at the end of Key Stage 3 dipped below the national average, although they were above average for schools having similar intake. In recent years boys' results have been better than those for girls, but in 1999 there was little difference. GCSE results in

1998 were well below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining higher (A*-C) grades but above average for schools having similar intake. Boys do better than girls in achieving the highest (A*/A) grades. Results, both at the end of Key Stage 3 and GCSE, improved in 1999. Attainment in lessons is a little above expectation at the end of Key Stage 3 and a little below at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 3 with satisfactory progress across Key Stage 4.

22.

Art

20. Attainment in art at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectation. GCSE results were just above the national average in 1998, and better in 1999. Progress is good throughout the school. The strength of pupils' work lies in their practical work – some strikingly good work is achieved; documentation and contextual studies are relatively underdeveloped. Overall attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average.

23.

Design and technology

21. Recent GCSE results are below the national average overall, with results for textiles being above average and for resistant materials and graphic products being below average. In 1998, food technology results were close to the national average, but they were not as good in 1999. Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 shows a similar trend, with higher standards achieved in textiles and food technology than in resistant materials and graphics. At the end of Key Stage 3, the results of teacher assessments are above average, but pupils' work in lessons is generally below the national expectation. Attainment is uneven because pupils do not consistently relate their work to the principles of design, which are used more effectively in textiles and food technology than in other aspects of the subject. Progress in technology subjects considered overall is satisfactory.

24.

Drama

22. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades (A*-C) at GCSE was well above the national average in 1997, but below average in 1998, and results were similar in 1999. In lessons, attainment is average, at the end of both key stages. Pupils achieve well in practical work and performance and gain valuable experience in school productions, which are successful. Pupils do not do so well in the written aspects of their work, and evaluative comments are brief.

25.

Geography

23. Results in geography show marked improvement, from below the national average in 1997 to well above in 1998, and results in 1999 were similar. Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. In lessons and teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils attain in line with national expectations. Progress is satisfactory across Key Stage 3 and good across Key Stage 4.

26.

History

24. GCSE results at the higher grades (A*-C) in history in 1998 were well below the national average, but improved considerably in 1999 and the improvement was dramatic for girls. Recent results for humanities have been well above the national average. Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 is average, whereas at the end of Key Stage 3 it is just below average. Pupils maintain satisfactory progress across both key stages in history. In humanities lessons at Key Stage 4 pupils respond well to the opportunity to discuss issues related to everyday life and this helps them to progress well.

27.

Information technology

25. GCSE results in information technology have declined over the last three years, from above to below the national average in 1998. Results for pupils following the full GCSE course in 1999 were much improved, although pupils entered for the short course have not done so well. Boys are achieving better results than girls. Attainment in lessons at the end of both key stages is near national expectations and some older pupils show particular skill in using the Internet. Progress is satisfactory across both key stages. The use

of computers in most subjects is assisting pupils' overall progress.

28.
French and German

Modern foreign languages:

26. GCSE results in both languages are below the national average, better in French than German, and in most years results are better for girls than boys. Pupils' results in modern languages are below those in their other subjects. Standards in listening and reading are best, though writing is improving. Pupils do not do well in the spoken language at Key Stage 4. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is slightly above national expectations, and improving. Girls do better than boys, markedly so at the higher levels. Progress, overall, is satisfactory across each key stage.

29.

Music

27. Results for GCSE were in line with the national average in 1998, and slightly better in 1999. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is satisfactory in a restricted part of the National Curriculum, but overall attainment is below average. A few pupils, at Key Stage 4 especially, have very good instrumental skills. Progress is satisfactory across each key stage. Pupils' progress is assisted by their participation and enjoyment in extra-curricular activities, including choirs, ensembles and orchestral work, which contribute well to the ethos of the school.

30.

Physical education

28. Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 and GCSE results for 1998 are in line with the national average. GCSE results improved in 1999. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils attain in line with national expectations. Progress is satisfactory across Key Stage 3 and good across Key Stage 4. Games are a strength of the school; many pupils are successful in local and county events.

31.

Religious education

29. No external examinations are entered in religious education. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus, which represents good progress across the key stage. Very little religious education is taught at Key Stage 4, with correspondingly little progress, although pupils benefit from discussion of a wide range of issues in personal, social and moral education and learn to develop their own reasoned views and respect those of others.

32.

Vocational course: leisure and tourism

30. Results for the first group of pupils entered for the GNVQ in leisure and tourism at intermediate level in 1999 were very high: all passed, two-thirds with merit or distinction (equivalent to GCSE grades A*-B). In lessons, attainment is above average and progress is generally good. Pupils respond well to the practical style of learning. They understand what is expected of them and develop good portfolios of their work.

33.

Overall trends

31. In 1998, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE subjects at grades A*-C, at 42 per cent, reflected a trend of improvement in line with that nationally. Results improved further in 1999, when 53 per cent pupils achieved five or more grades A*-C. Results in individual subjects have fluctuated since the last inspection and some, for example mathematics and science, while lower, are now on an upward trend. In modern languages, results have declined. Results in art, geography and physical education are much improved.

32. In 1998, boys' and girls' results, overall, were similar. However, girls' results improved in 1999, although the difference between girls' and boys' results is no greater than is usually the case nationally. Generally, pupils' GCSE results in English and music are better than their results in other subjects. They do not do as well in aspects of design and technology, or in modern languages, as in their other subjects.

33. The school monitors results carefully and is keenly aware of the importance of raising examination results. Numerical targets are set for the whole school and for subjects. Targets influence school planning and the support given to pupils. In recent years, targets set by the school have exceeded the grades predicted (on the basis of standard tests) and have themselves been exceeded. The use of targets to improve results is effective.
- 36.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

34. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and generally more positive than at the time of the last inspection. For example, unauthorised absences are very low, and the staying-on rate in education has increased since the last inspection. The proportion of lessons in which pupils' response is good or very good has increased significantly and the proportion of lessons in which response is unsatisfactory has halved. Pupils' response is particularly good in English, science (at Key Stage 3), art, music and physical education.
35. In lessons, most pupils concentrate and work well. They co-operate effectively in group activities, take turns and are quite happy to share and think of others. They respond well to challenges, will act independently in choosing activities and selecting the resources they need (for example, in practising music, or composing a song) though in some lessons, particularly in low attaining sets, there are few opportunities for them to organise themselves. They persevere in order to finish and improve work they are doing as, for example, in art, physical education and extra-curricular activities. Too frequently, in modern languages, pupils' attention is allowed to drift; they talk to each other, rather than listen to the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to support in class. In lessons within the special educational needs area they are well motivated and well behaved. They are courteous and usually helpful, showing respect for the equipment they use, and they are keen to improve their literacy skills.
36. The atmosphere is calm and orderly throughout the school. Relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are very good. Rules are well established. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. Some parents expressed concerns before the inspection about bad behaviour by a small number of pupils in some classes. Inspectors found that occasionally small pockets of disruptive pupils, mostly with behavioural difficulties, affect work in lessons, particularly where teachers lose the interest of pupils and are less effective in managing behaviour. Inspectors also heard a little bad language in circulation areas. Otherwise, pupils are friendly and courteous, and take care of property. Lunchtime is short but generally calm. Pupils make good use of the picnic tables in fine weather; the atmosphere is relaxed and pleasant. While they generally arrive at lessons on time, they are more dilatory about arriving at the end-of-day form time. Fixed period exclusions are below the national average but have increased since the last inspection. The increase is partly due to the school admitting increased numbers of pupils who have failed to settle elsewhere.
37. Pupils' personal development is good: the caring ethos of the school, and personal, social and moral education lessons, are very effective in this respect. Pupils are confident. They are interested in reading and most know how to benefit from the library and other facilities, such as the Internet, appropriately (good examples of research were seen in GCSE coursework and in leisure and tourism portfolios). Pupils show responsibility by helping in the school routines, taking part in the school council, working as prefects (some computer prefects are very skilled), and raising money for charitable causes and for the school's resources. They participate well in sports events at local and county levels, and in other external events, for example the mathematics challenge and a national poetry competition. Many contribute well beyond the school; for example, groups visit local primary schools, to help younger children improve in sports and in music.

40. Attendance

38. Pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection and now matches the national average. Unauthorised absence is very low. Authorised absence is mainly due to illness. In a small number of cases, absence is due to family holidays being taken during term-time, because of parents involved with the tourist industry.

39. Pupils come to the school promptly but there is some tardiness in movement between lessons, particularly in going to the newly organised form time at the end of the day.

42.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

42. Teaching

40. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons, good or better in 50 per cent and very good (occasionally excellent) in 14 per cent. There are examples of very good teaching in most subjects. Teaching is consistently good in English and art. Weaknesses in teaching account for the unsatisfactory lessons seen (six per cent) and these occur more frequently in design and technology (resistant materials and graphics) and in modern languages, than in other subjects. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection: the proportion of very good teaching has doubled and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has halved. The school has made considerable efforts to improve the quality of teaching and focused on improving learning. The school's efforts have been successful: pupils are progressing well in lessons, in line with good teaching.
41. Two aspects of teaching are general strengths: teachers' knowledge and understanding of their own subjects, and their relationships and management of pupils. In most subjects time and resources are well used.
42. Teachers' subject knowledge is used well in nearly all subjects. English teachers draw on their knowledge of texts to help pupils understand how language is used to convey meaning. Explanations given by mathematics teachers are succinct and build effectively on pupils' understanding, especially at Key Stage 3. In history and humanities, resource material is well used to develop subject understanding and also pupils' independent learning skills. Demonstration is very effectively used by teachers in physical education to show pupils how to improve their skills. In design and technology teachers do not draw sufficiently on their understanding of the design process to underpin all technology subjects and this affects pupils' progress, especially in resistant materials and graphics. Expectations are also low in these two technology aspects - of the quality of finish in resistant materials and of the presentation of work in graphics. Generally, however, teachers' expectations are satisfactory, and relatively higher at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3, affected by GCSE requirements and school targets for improvement, as in geography and physical education. In physical education, teachers help pupils believe they can achieve a good level of performance: pupils practise, persevere and do well. Expectations of course work are high on the leisure and tourism course: pupils are compiling their portfolios to a good, and sometimes very good, standard. Expectations of pupils with special educational needs are also high. They join in classes with the rest of the year group and attentive classroom assistants help them to keep up. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from extra help in English given by teachers who have excellent knowledge of the commercial schemes, which are used effectively to help pupils' progress.
43. Overall, teachers maintain good discipline and manage their pupils well so that they can learn effectively in a pleasant atmosphere. This is very evident in many lessons in English, art and physical education. Effective use is made of work in pairs and groups. Relationships are generally very good. Only in a few lessons do teachers find pupils hard to manage. This happens most frequently in modern languages and it generally reflects on weaknesses in planning because work does not challenge pupils appropriately.
44. Lesson planning is satisfactory, and better in most subjects at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. The full lesson time is used, and activities are generally varied and reinforce pupils' understanding, to help them progress. In drama, activities are well sequenced to develop pupils' understanding of dramatic devices, and their speaking and listening skills (which help their work in English). Accounts of a wide range of experience are drawn on in personal, social and moral education, which help pupils to understand the different views people hold, and to develop their own. Activities for the leisure and tourism course are well planned. Pupils find the vocational contexts interesting (for example, arranging a visit to Disneyland) and these provide ample opportunity for them to acquire the competencies they need to do well. Plans for modern language lessons are not always well matched to pupils' attainment, so they sometimes find them too difficult, and this leads to frustration, pupils misbehave and this affects their progress.

45. Generally, teachers use a good range of methods to develop pupils' understanding. Questioning is used very effectively to probe pupils' understanding and help them apply their knowledge as, for example, with younger pupils in science, and with older pupils studying GCSE humanities. Mathematics lessons include a good range of activities so pupils' understanding is reinforced in different ways. In a few subjects too much talking by the teacher restricts opportunities for pupils to participate actively – for example practical work is delayed in resistant materials lessons, and group work in religious education. In a few information and communication technology lessons, explanations are too long and pupils lose track of the sequence of computer operations; in these lessons inadequate use is made of written guidance. Overall, however, teachers use resources well: computers are used in most subjects and equipment is well used in science and physical education. In modern languages a limited number of resources are used repetitively; variety is lacking. In music, there is exceptional richness in the use of instruments and voice in lessons with younger pupils, which promotes general appreciation of the subject. Time is generally well used. Teachers fill the lesson with purposeful activities and maintain a good pace.
46. Teachers freely let pupils know in lessons how they are getting on – and this is good, for example in art and music. Teachers provide relatively few opportunities for pupils to assess their own progress, however, especially at Key Stage 3, where little reference is made to the National Curriculum descriptors of attainment levels (until Year 9) so pupils do not know what is expected of them. Teachers' use of assessment on the leisure and tourism course is very good. Regular short tests on the literacy schemes used for pupils with special educational needs help them progress, and build their confidence.
47. While pupils know generally how they are getting on, marking is inconsistent in several subjects, for example science, and its use as a tool for improving performance is under-developed. In design and technology, comments too frequently refer to effort alone, with no reference to level of attainment. Overall, adequate use is made of homework, and it is more regular and purposeful at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. The general weakness in homework is that its use tends to be patchy and to depend too much on the individual teacher. But in several subjects it is consistently set, for example in mathematics, science, art and history, although pupils do not always hand in their work. Teachers help pupils to complete their homework through the homework and course work clubs.
48. Several findings of the last report remain true: teachers work hard and prepare lessons carefully; almost all of the lessons are taught by subject specialists; lessons are characterised by good relationships and pace. The last report criticised the lack of work matched to pupils' abilities, and lack of consistent expectations. These are no longer general weaknesses, although they apply in some lessons, for example in modern languages.

51.

The curriculum and assessment

51. Curriculum

49. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is broad and balanced, and overall meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school is rightly proud of its arts subjects, and these are appreciated by parents: visual arts, music and drama. All younger pupils learn an instrument in class. The option system allows pupils to study two arts subjects at Key Stage 4. However, at Key Stage 4, insufficient time is provided for religious education (which is taught within personal, social and moral education) and about one quarter of Year 11 pupils do not study design and technology, which means that statutory requirements are not met. However, other features of the curriculum at this stage are strengths. All pupils study double award science. The option choice system provides two routes leading to GCSE, allowing pupils to benefit from more time for subjects, if needed. The GNVQ leisure and tourism course provides valued opportunity for pupils to learn in a more practical way, and to monitor and plan their progress. Pupils enjoy the course and the success rate is high.
50. All pupils have access to the full range of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in subject lessons, with frequent help by classroom assistants, many of whom work in specific subject areas and are familiar with the curriculum. Very effective use is made of commercial literacy schemes to help individual pupils overcome difficulties, and they make very good progress. Improvement in literacy is a whole school development issue and teachers of nearly all subjects give effective emphasis to technical words, and reading practice. A start has been made in numeracy, but only within mathematics lessons.

Calculations are frequently used in science, physical education and other subjects, but approaches are not systematic: there is no agreed approach to numeracy across the school. All pupils have separate information and communication technology lessons at Key Stage 3, which provide a sound basis for cross-curricular work at Key Stage 4, which is satisfactorily planned and organised.

51. In most subjects, plans ensure topics are covered in appropriate order to help pupils make progress. However, the detail of planning is inconsistent. Schemes of work in English, science, physical education and most other subjects are good: they correctly link topics to the National Curriculum, enabling teachers to identify attainment targets and points in relevant GCSE syllabuses. For example, in lessons in physical education teachers help pupils to make good progress in skill practice by explaining different types of exercise and the use of particular muscles. In art and music, however, while subject work offers rich opportunities – particularly in music, where all Year 7 pupils learn an instrument – insufficient attention has been paid to the National Curriculum, so that some aspects receive relatively little emphasis. In design and technology insufficient attention is paid to the design process and in some drama lessons pupils have little opportunity to improve their skills through evaluating their own work.
52. The school works well with local primary schools. Visits and special events (for example ‘Discovering Davy’s Island’) provide a good introduction to the secondary curriculum. However, except for pupils with special educational needs, there is little joint curricular planning, so the overall benefit to pupils’ progress, while sound, is not a strength of the school. On the other hand, joint planning with the local college of further education is good: it has led to vocational initiatives at Key Stage 4 – the leisure and tourism course and a new course ‘XL2000’ including a college-taught element. The school maintains effective links with other post-16 providers and the proportion of pupils continuing in education or training post-16 is high.
53. Careers education is well planned throughout the school, with effective use of visitors – who, for example, describe their work – and suitable topics from Year 7 onwards. Careers officers contribute in Year 9 to assist pupils in making their option choices. Pupils appreciate their work experience in Year 10. Careers education is part of the personal, social and moral education programme. This includes well planned topics on citizenship, drugs awareness and sex education. Other subjects contribute to pupils’ understanding of these and related topics – for example geography (on environmental issues), science (on drugs awareness and sex education) and physical education (on health education). The curricular time given to personal, social and moral education is effectively used, yet does not provide sufficiently for religious education (which is taught concurrently at Key Stage 4). During the inspection, which coincided with the second week of the new timetable, elements of the school week were under-utilised: the end-of-day form time (planned for 15 minutes, but seriously eroded by lateness) and the Monday morning tutorial time.
54. The school provides a rich programme of extra-curricular activities, particularly in music, with vocal groups, ensembles and opportunities for instrumental tuition and performance, and in physical education, in which pupils reach high standards in a variety of sports and athletics, with a good number representing the county in individual and team events. Regular productions give pupils an opportunity to rehearse their drama skills and perform to local audiences. Contributions from art and music combine to make these successful. Pupils, in small groups, share their expertise with local primary schools – for example in sports and music. In 1997 the school received the Curriculum Award for work in the community. Clubs and revision classes extend the curriculum in most subjects. Annually, the well planned activities week provides valued opportunities including hobbies (such as aeromodelling and puppets), and local and foreign visits.
55. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum was satisfactory: in many ways it is now good. The last report described difficulties in modern language choices, which no longer apply. Improvements have been made in opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 4. Extra-curricular activities remain a very good feature of the school.
58. *Assessment*
56. The school’s overall assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Information is collected of pupils’ attainment on entry and, together with teachers’ assessment of their performance at the start of Year 7, it is used to group them into sets; these arrangements are effective and support pupils’ progress. The transfer

of information about pupils with special educational needs who join the school is satisfactory; their needs are understood and appropriate support is provided. Records of pupils' attainments as they progress through the school are held in departments, which use the information to guide pupils' progress. Information can be retrieved and it is well used, for example in the mentoring arrangements for Year 11 pupils. At school level the information is used to set targets for results. For example in 1999 the GCSE targets were higher than predictions (based on national tests) and were themselves exceeded.

57. Marking is not consistent across the school. In some subjects, emphasis is placed on effort and pupils' attitudes, with little reference to pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, so pupils do not know in practical terms how to improve. In English, history and physical education (for GCSE) marking is usually accurate and helpful. In other subjects insufficient reference is made to the National Curriculum (except at the end of Year 9) or GCSE requirements. Where there is lack of specific reference to the National Curriculum or GCSE syllabuses, little use is made of assessment information in planning lessons, and this holds back pupils' progress – as in design and technology, where there is insufficient emphasis on the design element. The use of assessment on the GNVQ leisure and tourism course is an example of very good practice. Work is well planned and organised to build on pupils' competences and help them overcome difficulties. Pupils like these arrangements and are confident of their progress.
58. The use of assessment for pupils with special educational needs is good in the special educational needs area. Data are well recorded and effectively used when planning reading and spelling programmes. It is no more than sound in supported lessons where the lack of targets for pupils at Stages 2 and 3 of the school's register of special educational needs make it difficult to chart progress. The classroom assistants, under the guidance of the special educational needs co-ordinator, are preparing individual education plans for pupils on these stages. For pupils on the higher stages of the register, plans are realisable and clear. The folder of notes on pupils with statements, circulated to all teachers, is very helpful and ideal for planning strategies and targets, though the use of these by subject teachers is patchy.
59. At the time of the last inspection, assessment arrangements were under review. Progress has been made in establishing school arrangements, but these are not consistently applied. The school continues to make effective use of assessment to evaluate overall progress and set targets for results. Considerable progress has been made in the assessment of pupils with special educational needs, which was just beginning at the last inspection, although the systematic use of information for all pupils is an area for development.

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

60. The school has clear aims and objectives, with personal development as a focus of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to explore their interests and use their talents. The good features reported at the last inspection remain strong – notably pupils' moral and social development, and also their cultural education. The weakness reported at the last inspection, pupils' spiritual development, remains weak and the school is still not providing a daily act of worship, which means that a statutory requirement is not met. Since the last inspection the school has consolidated onto one site and it has achieved this successfully. The sense of community is strong and the school has a purposeful atmosphere.
61. Spiritual development remains the weakest area of personal development. All pupils experience two assemblies each week and the core religious education programme at Key Stage 3 contributes to spiritual development. Religious education consistently encourages pupils to explore feelings and attitudes. However, the subject contributes little at Key Stage 4, because little is taught. Good examples were seen in arts subjects (visual art, drama and music), where personal talent is encouraged and reflection is built into lessons through investigating themes, and English where reflection is integral to lessons, and the study of literature, as in the study of poetry of the First World War. In general, however, spiritual awareness, where it is provided, is embedded in the general curriculum of the school and little developed.
62. Moral issues are widely considered within the school and pupils' moral development is very good. The personal, social and moral education programme is excellent with a strong emphasis on values. In English, moral issues are drawn from literature, as through discussion on 'An Inspector Calls' and 'Macbeth.' In science a range of relevant issues is considered, including genetic engineering and fishing disputes. In

geography. teachers draw on examples concerning the environment, and in history there is discussion of many relevant topics, including the slave trade and the holocaust. Standards are positively enforced within the school and teachers are good role models. The school teaches its pupils to distinguish right from wrong. There are adequate rewards and sanctions.

63. Pupils are confident and generally considerate of each other and adults: provision for their social development is very good. They work well in pairs and in groups in most subjects, with good opportunities provided in mathematics, science, physical education, and personal, social and moral education. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and others within the school, for example, through the active school council, acting as prefects and helping in the library. Year 8 gain experience and confidence by receiving visitors to the school. A range of visitors from the community enriches the personal, social and moral education programme, which includes topics such as democracy and the function of magistrates courts. Pupils help with parents' evenings, form a litter collecting team, help with recycling, act as traffic wardens and show confidence in giving votes of thanks at public meetings. Physical education enriches the lives of most pupils and its emphasis on sharing and fair play contributes to their development. The range of extra-curricular activities is wide, attendance at which is encouraged by a late bus service. Drama contributes a great deal to the social development of all pupils.
64. Overall, provision for pupils' cultural development is good. An extensive programme of music activities enables pupils to take advantage of local opportunities and contribute to them. In history, art and religious education pupils make local visits and art teachers have developed links with local groups, notably the Tate Gallery in St. Ives, which benefit both pupils' academic and personal development. The personal, social and moral education programme uses a wide range of community links and people to create a team which enhances pupils' development. English teachers take advantage of local dramatic productions, and Cornish life and culture are celebrated in a number of ways. Multi-cultural links are fewer because local opportunities are not available, but interesting activities are undertaken in drama where an exciting project is being developed which involves Australian aborigines, the native population of North America and the range of cultures both past and present in Egypt. Geography and religious education contribute to pupils' knowledge and appreciation of the variety of cultures to be found in Britain and the wider world. Activities week gives opportunities to travel abroad and more widely in Britain.

67. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

65. At the time of the last inspection, the school had an effective system which promoted the welfare and guidance of pupils; this remains in place. The style of reports is unchanged since the last inspection.
66. The school provides a pleasant environment in which pupils are secure and happy. Pastoral arrangements are good. Staff show care and attention to the personal and academic needs of pupils. Parents are positive about the help and support that their children receive. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour. School rules are clear. Most teachers are consistent in their expectations, there is effective use of rewards to promote high standards of behaviour, resulting in standards of discipline and behaviour which are generally good. The school effectively deals with reported incidents of bullying, using the 'no blame' approach which involves other pupils and parents successfully. Routines for attendance are well managed and absences are actively followed and monitored. Good attendance is promoted effectively, and rewarded. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for health education and raising awareness of issues related to sex and drugs, primarily through the programme of personal, social and moral education, as well as visitors to the school. Arrangements for pupils who do not feel well are good; the school has an area set aside as a 'hospital'.
67. New entrants settle in quickly and arrangements for transfer to post-16 education are effective. The school records pupils' progress and satisfactory records are kept. The pastoral structure, newly established, is based on key stage co-ordinators and senior tutors who monitor the progress and development of all pupils systematically, but it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. The mentoring arrangements for Year 11 pupils are very good. Detailed records are available to tutors, who have used them to help pupils to improve their GCSE grades. The assessment of pupils' GNVQ work provides a good basis for guiding their improvement. Older pupils compile records of achievement, which assist them in reviewing their progress and making choices. Careers officers provide effective guidance for pupils in Year 9 and later, about post-16 opportunities. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are generally well supported and their progress is carefully monitored.

68. The governors' premises committee is active in health and security matters. Appropriate procedures for health and safety and for child protection are in place. A variety of specialist services is well used to support pupils' welfare and a local police officer, who specialises in youth affairs, visits regularly and informs pupils about bullying, crime, drugs and child abuse.

71. **Partnership with parents and the community**

69. The good links developed by the school with the wider community were reported at the last inspection to have a positive impact on pupils' standards of achievement and on their learning, and this is still the case. Parents feel the general ethos of the school is good.
70. The school has productive links with the local community which support the curriculum, pupils' progress and their personal development. The school works with the local training enterprise council on a scheme 'Compact Plus for Jobs' for Year 11 pupils who want to see the practical benefits of school. The work experience programme in Year 10 is well supported by employers. Pupils are entered in a variety of competitions which help to raise their expectations. Educational trips and residential visits help pupils to gain self-confidence and coping skills. A number of visitors from community organisations support the curriculum and pupils' welfare. The curriculum links with the feeder primary schools have been strengthened and there are good links with the local college of further education: both assist pupils to progress. The school has received the Curriculum Award for its work in the community.
71. Information for parents about the school is mostly satisfactory, including newsletters, guidance on Key Stage 4 choices and arrangements for Activities Week. The prospectus is attractive and generally informative but it, and the governors' annual report, do not contain all of the required information (omissions include national examination results and, in the governors' report, information on staff development, progress on the action plan of the last OFSTED report and a full financial statement). The quality of information in annual reports on pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Reports include course descriptions but little information in relation to what pupils know, understand and can do, and in suggesting how to improve attainment; the targets set are too general. Parents are generally satisfied with their meetings to discuss pupils' progress, except for the timing of some, which are too late in the school year. Parents of pupils with special needs are kept informed about their children's progress. Reviews of their progress are well organised and generally supported by parents. Outside agencies assist with the assessment and support of pupils with the greatest levels of need.
72. Whilst parents are well satisfied overall with the care and education provided by the school, they quite rightly want more frequent and better information on their children's progress. They support the school and most are interested in their children's education. The school responded to their concern about bullying and arranged workshops for parents during the last school year. A small but significant minority is concerned about their children's homework. Inspectors found that, while generally adequate, the amount set varies, from teacher to teacher. In some subjects, homework is regularly set, but not all pupils return it. Many parents are closely involved with their children's learning through homework, helping in the school and accompanying pupils on educational trips. The parents' and teachers' association is effective: it organises well supported social events and raises considerable funds for school improvement.
- 75.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

75. **Leadership and management**

73. Leadership by the headteacher is strong and teamwork is good among the senior management team. Over the last few years, significant changes have been successfully accomplished, the school has moved onto a single site, staffing has been reorganised and examination results improved. The school has maintained a strong profile in the community, enriching the curriculum and assisting pupils' personal development. The school's policies cover all aspects of its work and are regularly reviewed by the governors, who work in close partnership with the headteacher. They are well informed about the school and know the work of the subject departments well, through visits, presentations at their meetings and documentation, and regularly discuss the work of subject departments. Governors have high expectations of the work of the school, and they monitor finances and buildings carefully. They work hard to ensure that, overall, the aims, values and policies of the school are implemented satisfactorily. The ethos is good overall: the school is caring with a good pastoral system. Relationships are good and staff help pupils to do their best and attain highly.
74. Staff restructuring and revised job descriptions are strengthening the capacity of heads of subjects and

heads of key stages to monitor the work of the school, through regular lesson visits and information on pupils' progress. They have been recently introduced, and it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness. Other review systems are well established in the school: teacher appraisal, heads of faculty meetings, discussions with pupils, visits by external subject advisers. Inservice training is linked to appraisal and to the school development plan. Effective use is made of whole school events – such as work on 'accelerated learning', led by an external consultant – as well as staff development for individuals. Teamwork is fostered among the faculty teams and at whole school level – for example through the Investors in People programme. The sense of community in the school is strong. While some monitoring detail is not yet to hand, the school is honest about areas of strength and weakness and finds ways of improving performance where it can – for example, by introducing mentoring to help Year 11 pupils improve their GCSE results. Overall, support and monitoring for curriculum development are satisfactory.

75. Most subject areas are well managed – English and physical education notably so, where curricular planning and the use of resources to help pupils do well are both good. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who took up her appointment two years ago, has created a good team spirit within her large department of classroom assistants. She has rightly seen as a priority the raising of literacy levels in the school and has co-operated with the head of English in promoting the whole school literacy policy. Individual education plans have been drawn up for pupils with the greatest levels of need. However, the school still rightly regards it a priority to ensure that all pupils on Stages 2 and above of the school's register of special educational needs have manageable individual education plans, so that subject teachers can provide suitable opportunities for them. In several subjects the implementation of the National Curriculum and the monitoring of pupils' attainment relative to the National Curriculum attainment targets have not been well managed and practice is inconsistent, in art, music, and modern languages, particularly. In design and technology insufficient emphasis is placed on design, and because not all Year 11 pupils study design and technology, a statutory requirement is not met. Bearing in mind the very strong leadership of the headteacher and areas of strength among heads of subjects, overall leadership and management are good.
76. Planning for school improvement is good. Spanning three years, the development plan is well organised, allows monitoring, evaluation and the setting of targets. Major changes have been implemented well, with close involvement by the governors. Plans for the school as a whole are linked with subject plans and they are regularly updated. Progress made over the last year has been good and future priorities are appropriate – including further training for middle managers, training for all staff in the use of information and communication technology, an extension of mentoring, and further work on literacy, to be followed by work on numeracy. Parents are kept informed about the work of the school through the governors' annual report and prospectus, although these do not contain all of the required information (for example the annual report does not include information on progress of the action plan following the last inspection, nor of staff inservice training, nor a financial statement), which means that statutory requirements are not met.
77. The last inspection reported several strengths which are still evident: good leadership, good development planning, the work of governors, efficient routines and sound policy documentation. The report found monitoring and evaluation to be inconsistent. This is generally much improved, especially at senior management team level, although inconsistencies remain across subjects and lack of time is a constraint for many heads of subjects.
78. The last inspection report included seven key issues:
- *ensure that the statutory requirements are fully met in relation to the provision of religious education and a daily act of worship for all pupils.*
Both the religious education curriculum and worship have been reviewed, but statutory requirements are still not met. Assemblies are held more frequently, but there are no arrangements for daily worship. Provision for religious education remains insufficient at Key Stage 4. The key issues of this report refer again to these areas.
 - *encourage the dissemination of good practice and consistent strategies to involve less motivated pupils in the education process.*
The co-ordination of special educational needs is satisfactory. Classroom assistants are attentive. Nearly all pupils leave school with GCSE certificates – more than is the case nationally. Overall

progress is good.

- *encourage further development of study and research skills and the use of IT across the curriculum providing, where necessary, training for staff.*

Substantial improvements have been made in the provision of computers and opportunities for pupils to gain information technology skills. The library is well used and plays a significant role in developing pupils' independent learning skills. While a few areas of the school are still without their own computers, the site has been networked and overall progress is good.

- *develop further the skills of middle management in planning, resourcing and evaluating developing courses.*

The new staff structure requires new skills of managers and strengthens their role in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress. Overall satisfactory progress has been made in most subject areas. The school is aware of the need for further training which is included in the school's development plan for 1999-2000.

- *critically evaluate how the performance of boys can be further enhanced to match the excellent performance of the girls.*

The school makes effective use of assessment information to track and set targets for the improvement of results. The relative performance of boys and girls has varied year by year and in 1998 boys did better than girls. In 1999, boys' performance was not quite as good as that of girls, although the difference in their performance was in line with the difference usually found nationally. Training opportunities for teachers and the use of mentoring for Year 11 pupils have increased awareness and opportunities for improving the performance of both boys and girls. Overall, good progress has been made.

- *continue to develop monitoring and evaluation procedures to cover all policy developments.*

Policies are systematically and regularly reviewed by governors, following review by the senior management team, heads of faculty and heads of key stage. This key issue has been fully tackled.

- *access in advance the benefits of moving to a single site in order to exploit potential curricular advantages and changes to collective worship and afternoon registration.*

The removal to a single site has been achieved, overall bringing many benefits to the school, including more effective use of resources and a stronger sense of community. Arrangements for afternoon registration are new in September 1999 and subject to review by the senior management team. Collective worship, as mentioned in a preceding paragraph, is still not provided daily. Overall, the move onto a single site has been successful.

Important aspects of the school are better than at the time of the last inspection, notably the overall quality of teaching and learning. Results have shown steady improvement for the last few years. Bearing in mind those features which remain to be improved: the provision of religious education (at Key Stage 4) and of collective worship, and areas where performance is below that in the school as a whole (modern languages, resistant materials and graphics, particularly), the school has made satisfactory progress. The school is well placed to improve further, with strengths in the very good quality of leadership by the headteacher, good team work at senior management level, supportive governors, and a good approach to school development planning.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing

1. The school is adequately staffed by hard-working, committed teachers. Subject teaching benefits from appropriately qualified, experienced staff. The staffing structure identifies teachers with responsibility for the monitoring of pupils' progress in each key stage. This structure is newly in place and it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness in raising levels of attainment. The large team of classroom assistants supporting pupils with special educational needs is deployed to fulfil the requirements of pupils' statements. The team draws on a wide range of experience. The provision for technical, non-teaching support for subjects is adequate overall. Since the last inspection the provision has increased; design and technology, and information and communication technology, have benefited, and also art, where rooms

are very well organised and the quality of presentation is high. In science, however, the support is insufficient, and this sometimes results in equipment for lessons arriving late, which affects the progress of pupils. The time worked by administrative staff, although below the average for similar sized schools, is adequate; this is a well experienced team where members are always busy, work well together and make a significant contribution to the school. Staff responsible for grounds and buildings contribute well to the ethos of the school: always pleasant and courteous, they work hard to ensure that the site is well maintained.

2. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. New teachers, including those new to the school, feel well supported by their departmental colleagues. The arrangements for the induction of new teachers are appropriate, with senior members of staff contributing to help them become familiar with the school's procedures. The school has gained Investors in People status since the last inspection and is now updating procedures to apply for renewal of this award in the year 2000. Although the appraisal process is a little behind schedule it is firmly established and in the first year of a third cycle. Opportunities for professional development are linked to development plans in faculties, subjects and the school overall, to support priorities for improvement. Staff have undertaken training to help raise pupils' levels of attainment. Future priorities are to improve teachers' skills in information and communication technology and middle managers' skills in monitoring standards. Arrangements are similar overall to those at the time of the last inspection, with improvements in support staffing, and the gaining of the Investors in People status.

83.

Accommodation

3. Accommodation is adequate to teach all subjects of the curriculum and its good quality contributes positively to the educational standards achieved. The school's reorganisation onto one site in January 1998, following a £1.5 million building programme, has had a positive impact on the school's ethos, encouraging closer team work and consistency of approach, for example in following up pupils' absences. The new buildings provide high quality specialist accommodation for the teaching of mathematics, science, information and communication technology, drama, music and art, allowing teachers to plan a wide range of experiences for pupils. The new accommodation for science provides a very good learning environment. Phase two of the building programme will address inadequacies of the old laboratories which need refurbishment, and extend the accommodation for drama, a popular option choice at Key Stage 4. The provision of faculty resource areas promotes team-work, affords good access to computers and allows teachers flexibility in their use of information and communication technology for groups of pupils and individuals. Facilities for physical education are very good, supporting the delivery of a varied curriculum. Accommodation for design and technology is mostly good, although there is inadequate storage for GCSE coursework, and there is no changing area in the textile room to facilitate the fitting of garments. Security of the site has been improved with perimeter fencing, and access for the physically disadvantaged is now good. Both the buildings and the grounds are well maintained and there are plans to provide additional outdoor seating and picnic areas, which are well used by pupils. The local community makes good use of the facilities, especially the gymnasium and playing fields. Corridors are narrow and congested at times of lesson changes; the possibility of some re-routing of access might be considered to alleviate the worst pressures.
4. The school is sensitive to the needs of the younger pupils in the larger community following their move from the lower school and, although pupils are now well integrated into the school, a separate play area has been set aside for Years 7 and 8 which is well used at lunch times. The reception areas and the gallery provide a welcoming introduction to the school with impressive displays of pupils' art work and attractive and informative displays about the life of the school. Departments make effective use of pupils' work to stimulate interest in their subject and to encourage pupils to take pride in their work. The accommodation is greatly improved since the last inspection and all the weaknesses in the last report have been tackled. Parents at their meeting commented favourably on the many improvements to the buildings and site.

85. *Learning resources*

85.

5. Provision of learning resources, books and specialist equipment is generally satisfactory in most subject areas, following the rationalisation and consolidation of resources during the move to a single site. A remaining weakness is the lack of appropriate equipment to provide pupils with experience in control technology - a National Curriculum requirement at both key stages. Other deficiencies are the lack of sufficient text-books for pupils to take home in physical education, and a shortage of modern language books in the library. The library is well used for study and research throughout the day but book issues are below average in all years. Computer facilities there are currently very limited, with only four computers, only two of which have Internet access. Although information and communication technology facilities have improved markedly since the last inspection, the ratio of pupils to computers remains below average, and some departments do not yet have appropriate networked computers for subject use - namely, art, drama, modern languages, music and physical education.
6. Most subjects make good use of the local resources, and the features which are characteristic of the south-west tip of Cornwall. Good use is made of educational visits to places of historical interest, theatres, and art galleries.

87. **The efficiency of the school**

7. The school plans its finances very well. Spending is prioritised, linked to development priorities. For example, computer facilities have been greatly improved and all pupils are provided with their own textbooks for English, mathematics and science. These improvements have been made while governors carefully monitor annual expenditure and ensure it does not exceed income. The amount of money coming into the school, per pupil, is below the national average. Governors are prudent about planning for future years and take account of likely changes in pupil numbers.
8. Teaching staff are effectively deployed. In strictly numerical terms they are used with great efficiency, because the number of hours they are in front of classes, and the number of pupils relative to each teacher, are both above average. In practice, while the quality of teaching is nearly all sound or better, teachers have little time for curriculum planning and assessment and managers have little time for monitoring teaching and the curriculum. Inconsistencies, where they occur, are partly due to lack of time. Classroom assistants for pupils with special educational needs are attentive but the work of some fails to focus on particular learning steps.
9. Accommodation is used well. Now on a single site, the co-ordination and management of the school are strengthened and resources are used effectively. Subject staff are no longer divided and do not have to waste time travelling. While the buildings are dispersed across the single site, there is very little lateness to lessons, except at the end of the day at the start of the final form time, and this new arrangement is being monitored by the senior management team. Time in lessons is used well by teachers. The school has arranged a late school bus so that pupils can stay for extra-curricular activities and still have transport home.
10. Learning resources are used very effectively in subjects, notably in science, physical education and work with computers across the curriculum. Resources from outside the school are used well to enhance pupils' learning - for example, an artist in residence, a dance specialist (in drama) and a visit by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Pupils' instrumental music skills are greatly enhanced by the scheme introduced into Years 7 and 8, where each pupil learns an instrument. This benefit is offset by uncertainty about National Curriculum coverage, because of a weakness in curricular planning. Overall, however, resources are used very effectively.
11. In the school office, responsibilities are clearly identified, and staff help each other at busy times. The number of hours worked by administrative staff is low for the size of the school and the receptionist is only part-time. Pupils from Year 8 take it in turn to assist as receptionists. They do well, and gain confidence in greeting visitors and helping those new to the school. The handling of day-to-day finances is efficient and the budget properly controlled by an experienced member of staff who uses an appropriate computer system. Recommendations of the recent auditors' report (which was satisfactory) have been

addressed. Other staff contribute well to the smooth running of the school, including catering, caretaking and library staff. Technical staff are over-stretched in science and under-utilised in design and technology; this merits review.

12. Specific grants are well used. Exceedingly good use has been made of grants for building improvement: the school benefits from well planned, attractive and business-like accommodation. Inservice training monies are appropriately used, partly on whole school priorities and also to support subject plans. Resources for special educational needs are appropriately used. The deployment of classroom assistants is systematic, in line with pupils' needs, but the use of some in the classroom is not well focused to promote progress and is therefore inefficient. The staff's hard work and caring demeanour go a long way towards giving pupils a feeling of security and a desire to learn.

13. At the time of the last inspection, budget and longer term financial planning were good, and they remain so now. During the time they are in school, pupils progress well, from attainment on entry which is just below average, to achieve GCSE results which are at least average (and better than this when compared with similar schools). When account is taken of the level of funding, which is below average, the school continues to provide good value for money, as at the last inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

94. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

94. English

14. The results of the National Curriculum tests in English at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 were below the national average, though close to the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In 1999, however, results improved significantly. Girls do better than boys. Results in English are similar to those in mathematics and science.
15. GCSE results have remained similar in English language over the past three years. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades (A*-C) in 1998 was above the national average, and very high when compared with results in similar schools. Standards were maintained in 1999. Pupils do better in English than in many of their other GCSE subjects. In 1999, boys did better in English than in any other subject. However, girls' results are better than boys', though the difference between their results is less than is the case nationally. In literature, pupils' results in 1998 were close to the national average, though no pupils gained the highest grades (A*/A). In 1999 results improved significantly.
16. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is close to the national average. Pupils speak clearly, often developing their ideas well – for example discussing the use of words to convey effect in *Cider with Rosie* - and they listen attentively. They read aloud accurately and sometimes with expression, understanding what they have read. They write in a range of styles and for different audiences, and more highly attaining pupils capture an apt style to create effect, for example working on their own doomsday scenarios, in response to poems and a book being studied. They communicate effectively but a few write as they speak and express ideas simply. Standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar are average.
17. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above the national average. Pupils take part competently in whole class and group discussion. They build on others' ideas, having listened carefully to what has been said. Pupils read aloud prose, poetry and plays bringing out the meaning well. They appreciate devices which writers use to achieve their effect, such as irony, simile and alliteration, as in the poem *Song of the Batterly Hen*. In writing, pupils vary their style according to the nature of the task and perform well in discursive, reflective and creative compositions. They write extended essays, showing understanding of texts such as *Macbeth*, Hardy's *Barbara of the House of Grebe*, and World War One poetry. Punctuation, paragraphing and sentence structure are generally accurate. Standards of spelling and the use of vocabulary are average, though pupils who attain more highly produce inspired essays sustaining accuracy of expression for several pages.
18. Progress over time, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is good at both key stages. Pupils enter the school with literacy levels which are below the average for 11 year olds, but by the end of Key Stage 3 the number of pupils reaching the expected level 5 and above is average. By the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results are above average in language and well above average in literature. In lessons, progress is always at least satisfactory. It is good in most lessons and very good in almost a third. Pupils learn to speak with greater confidence and to listen carefully to others. They increase their range of reading.
19. Pupils with special educational needs develop their reading and spelling skills using a published literacy scheme. Pupils learn to match their style of writing to the audience, and understand the value of using dictionaries and reference books. They draft work effectively, sometimes on a computer. They develop a sensitivity to literature. They learn to write about characters in texts such as *Julius Caesar* and *Of Mice and Men*.
20. Pupils' response to learning English is good. It is at least satisfactory in every lesson, good or better in over three-quarters, and very good in two lessons in five. Pupils show enthusiasm and concentrate hard. Behaviour is very good, sometimes excellent: pupils are courteous and co-operative and can be trusted to work independently without close supervision. For example, a Year 11 class researched into the First World War as an introduction to a study of the War poets. They worked sensibly in the library, taking

care with the books, and collaborated very successfully. In a Year 8 literacy group for pupils with special educational needs, pupils worked cheerfully on a computer, with minimal assistance, and a similar Year 7 group worked industriously with tape recorders and headphones. Both groups showed good independent learning skills and respect for the equipment. Pupils relate well to one another and show sensitivity to the feelings of others.

21. The quality of teaching English is good. It is at least sound in all lessons, good or better in over four-fifths and very good in nearly a third. English teachers have very good subject knowledge. This helps to encourage pupils to read more widely and appreciate the language used by reputable writers. Staff teaching the literacy scheme for pupils with special educational needs have excellent knowledge of how the scheme works and of strategies that will help their pupils to learn effectively, so boosting self-confidence. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. For example, a Year 11 class of low attaining pupils showed a lively interest in a challenging poem and worked hard to grapple with its meaning. Teachers plan well and lessons usually move at a brisk pace. However, occasionally pace slows when teachers talk for too long and pupils lose concentration. Teachers manage pupils, including those with behavioural difficulties, very well and are patient but firm. Most lessons involve pupils actively in their learning from the start. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, the teacher skilfully used a happiness graph on an overhead projector screen alongside a video of *Buddy*, to help pupils recognise how Buddy's feelings change within the course of a day. This immediately captured pupils' attention, helped them to understand the text and so promoted very good progress. Questioning is well used to assess pupils' understanding, though sometimes the questions do not allow pupils to give extended answers which show the full extent of their knowledge. Work is well marked with helpful comments to show pupils how they may improve. Homework is set regularly and arises naturally from class work.
22. Schemes of work provide a broad, balanced coverage of the National Curriculum. Drama skills are practised effectively in play readings and script writing. Information technology is well used in drafting to improve written work and in raising self-esteem. For example, Year 11 pupils preparing coursework on *Macbeth* felt it gave them opportunities to restructure their work more easily and to enhance the appearance of the end product. Pupils with special educational needs using computers in their work on food vocabulary were working with confidence and making good progress. In classes using the literacy schemes, pupils are improving not only their skills in English, but also their capacity to learn independently through the use of information technology equipment. Assessment procedures are good. Each aspect of English is separately assessed and the data is well recorded. Teachers easily chart pupils' progress and use the data in lesson planning. The head of department uses results of teacher assessments made at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 in planning, and analyses GCSE results to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses. This is helping to raise attainment. English lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through a study of War poetry pupils reflect on the sufferings of others. Discussions on *Of Mice and Men*, *An Inspector Calls* and *Macbeth* often raise moral and social questions. The range of literature studied - both twentieth and pre-twentieth century - provides pupils with an interesting introduction to their cultural heritage.
23. The English department is strongly led. The head of department is highly committed to raising attainment and has taken a leading role in discussions to improve boys' performance. The smaller than average difference between boys and girls' results in the GCSE examinations indicates the success of strategies introduced. There is a very good team spirit within the department. The head of department dealt effectively with the long term absence of two English teachers at the time of the inspection and ensured, with the support of his colleagues, that pupils' learning continued effectively. Links with primary schools are strong. Teachers draw on their direct experience of the literacy hour in primary schools when they are planning work for Year 7. Classroom assistants are generally well deployed in lessons to help pupils with learning difficulties. English teaching rooms are situated near the library which is well used to enhance research skills. Wall displays of pupils' work are very good and help to increase pupils' self-esteem. The impressive display in the corridor which shows Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 work enables pupils, through the use of labeling and highlighting, to see what makes a successful piece of writing.
24. Response to the last inspection report has been very good. Results in the GCSE examinations have improved and boys' attainment in written work at both key stages is better. The range of reading experienced by pupils is wider. Lessons begin more briskly and the time allocation for Year 9 classes has been increased. The use of information technology has improved. There is still gender imbalance in a few sets but this is not limiting progress.

25. The whole school literacy scheme is in its early stages of implementation and it is too soon to assess its impact. However, in many subject areas across the school, pupils have opportunities to practise their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Standards of spelling are good. In science, pupils at Key Stage 3 engage in extended dialogues with their teachers, and pupils at Key Stage 4 make group presentations to the rest of the class. In drama, pupils plan for improvisations well, though vocabulary can be limited. Pupils speak confidently in art, religious education and history, though in geography and physical education opportunities for discussion are infrequent. There are limited opportunities for speaking in modern language lessons: little pair and no group work was seen during the inspection and pupils generally lack the confidence to speak. Listening skills are good in many subjects, for example in drama, art, religious education and physical education. In science, pupils listen well, except for lower attaining boys in Key Stage 4. In history, while listening skills are generally good, there are weaknesses in groups in Year 7. In modern languages, general listening skills are poor, but listening for specific information is satisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use reading skills across the curriculum. There are no reading schemes in modern languages. However, pupils use books well in science, and leisure and tourism: they seek out information for themselves, showing good independent learning skills. Pupils sometimes read hesitantly in history, though they are fluent in religious education. Opportunities for pupils to use a range of writing skills are varied. In both science and drama, pupils describe practical work. In leisure and tourism pupils plan, describe evidence gathered and design questionnaires. In modern languages, pupils have frequent opportunities to practise writing. There is less opportunity for extended writing in music, art and geography. Standards are weak in physical education and religious education, though high attaining pupils produce good work. There are relatively few opportunities for creative writing outside of English, though in science Year 7 pupils write on what it would be like to walk on the moon.

106. **Mathematics**

26. Results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 for mathematics in 1998, while below the overall national average, were well above the average when compared with schools of similar intake. Pupils' performance in mathematics was similar to that in English and science. In 1999, the Key Stage 3 results were much improved. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades (A*-C) at GCSE in 1998, while below the national average for all schools, was well above the average when compared with similar schools. The results across the whole range of grades (A*-G) were in line with the national average. While the results in 1999 remain below those at the time of the last inspection report, they have improved and are better than the results for 1998. In 1999, boys performed better than girls at the highest grades (A*/A), but their average results were similar. Standards in mathematics are on an upward trend.
27. In lessons, at the end of both key stages, pupils' attainments cover a wide range and overall are close to the national average for their age. A proportion of pupils in the highest sets in all years attain in line with, and sometimes exceed, the national average. By the end of Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils has an understanding of place value and those who attain highly are sufficiently skilled in number operations to calculate square roots to two decimal places, using trial and improvement methods. Pupils from the middle sets calculate areas of simple shapes using whole numbers. The computational skills of pupils in the lowest sets are weak; they have limited knowledge of multiplication tables. Pupils are competent users of computers; they benefit from using computers in many aspects of mathematics (more than at the last inspection). By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' computational skills are generally much more secure. The highest attaining pupils understand and use powers of numbers in calculations with standard form. Their understanding of data-handling is sound; they determine measures of average and range and compare distributions from different sets of data. The computational skills of pupils in the lowest sets remain weak; recall of multiplication tables is poor and they struggle to find easy fractions of quantities.
28. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in nearly all of the lessons across each key stage. In about a quarter of the lessons progress is good and this is linked to good teaching. For example, in a Year 7 class, pupils consolidated and extended their knowledge and experience of three-dimensional shapes through the teacher's good step-by-step planning of practical activities. At Key Stage 4, in a group of pupils with learning difficulties, the teacher's skilled questions and selection of structured activities enabled them to draw on ideas they already understood to predict the positions of line graphs as variables of the equation changed.

29. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good, and sometimes very good at Key Stage 4. They enjoy their lessons, concentrate on tasks and generally collaborate well, for example, in supporting one another's contributions to the lessons. Older pupils develop a more serious attitude to their work. Pupils are mostly well behaved. However, a small minority of the pupils with special educational needs lacks interest in their work and are too easily distracted. These pupils are managed with patience and understanding by their teachers and assisted by classroom assistants. Although these pupils make at least satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment, the support is not always sufficiently well-focused to improve learning further.
30. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Teachers give effective emphasis to the use of subject vocabulary and display lists of key words to help pupils with spellings. A range of practical and investigative activities is systematically developed throughout the key stages and offers opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of mathematics and to discuss mathematical ideas. Teachers give clear explanations. Most lessons are well planned and the classroom management is good: firm classroom control supports a harmonious learning environment. Relationships between the teachers and pupils are good. Homework is regularly set, but not all pupils consistently complete this. In the better lessons, teachers draw on pupils' earlier learning and use a variety of activities and methods to maintain their interest and concentration. Weaknesses occur when higher attaining pupils are given tasks which offer little challenge and time in the lesson is wasted. Expectations are relatively higher at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are sound. Units of work are regularly assessed to monitor progress. Although sections of the schemes of work are being re-written to take account of curriculum changes, the review is not complete.
31. The head of the faculty is efficient and well organised but has little free time to monitor standards. Teachers support one another but there are no arrangements for rigorous monitoring of the teaching or the work of the pupils. Teachers work hard, are committed to raising levels of attainment and give of their own time generously to help pupils improve.
32. Results, although lower than at the last inspection, are now on an upward trend. Improvement overall is moderate. More teachers use practical resources to support activities, particularly in group work. More opportunities for the development of pupils' computer skills feature consistently in the schemes of work. However, the updating of the schemes of work is not complete.

113. *Numeracy*

33. Standards of numeracy are weak among younger pupils. Pupils are competent users of calculators, but sometimes use them too readily, for example dividing easy numbers by two. Numeracy skills are not systematically developed throughout the school and pupils' experience varies depending on their teaching group. A programme to improve pupils' numeracy skills is to be introduced into the Year 7 mathematics work later in the autumn term. However, effective use is made of numeracy in some lessons. For example, in Key Stage 3, pupils in science, history, geography and personal, social and moral education lessons draw simple graphs and use them to interpret data. Skills in measurement and number operations are also developed in science. Pupils' graphical skills are developed further in several subjects at Key Stage 4. Bar and pie charts are used to good effect on vocational courses. In geography, pupils consider averages and range. Activities in art use measurement, enlargement, perspective and pattern in two and three dimensions. Limited use is made of number in information and communication technology, in databases and spreadsheets. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards achieved are satisfactory.

114. **Science**

34. In 1998, the results of National Curriculum tests in science at the end of Key Stage 3 dipped below the national average, although they were above the average for schools having similar intake. Results improved significantly in 1999. In recent years, boys' results have been better than those for girls, but in 1999 there was little difference. Over the last three years, the levels reached by pupils in science have been similar to those in English and mathematics. GCSE results in 1998 were well below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining higher (A*-C) grades but above the average for schools having similar intake. As with the National Curriculum tests, results improved significantly in 1999. Boys did better than girls in achieving the highest (A*/A) grades. The results were similar to those in mathematics but not as

good as those in English.

35. In lessons and the work seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 9 are on target to attain levels a little above the national average by the end of Key Stage 3. Soon after entering the school their attainment is a little below the national expectation. In Year 7 they make reasonably careful observations during simple experiments, but have difficulty in drawing out generalisations, for example about the properties of solids, liquids and gases. Pupils write well and in a variety of styles. They have good understanding of scientific words because the department has a policy of emphasising their meaning at appropriate times. A pupil in Year 8 recently won first prize in a national competition for a poem about the beneficial and detrimental effects of the sun on the human body. In practical work they make measurements and record experimental results with satisfactory accuracy. By the end of the key stage most are able to draw on their scientific understanding to predict the effect of changing the length or thickness of a wire on its electrical resistance. Pupils' use of number, and their information technology skills, are satisfactory in science at Key Stage 3.
36. Towards the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is a little below the national average. Overall attainment is held back by the relatively low attainment of a few pupils who are poorly motivated. Almost all can explain the difference between photosynthesis and respiration. Pupils in low attaining groups can recall the names of common gases, with a little prompting. Pupils' practical skills are well developed because there is emphasis in lessons on finding out through experiment. By the end of Key Stage 4 they carry out good investigations, for example into osmosis in potatoes. During the inspection there was little evidence of pupils' use of computers in Key Stage 4. A new short course in information and communication technology has been introduced in Year 10 to address this deficiency.
37. Pupils make good progress in lessons and across Key Stage 3. For example, Year 9 pupils made good gains in understanding where hydrogen comes from when acids react with metals, and went on to see the pattern in reactions between acids and metals and that there are differences within the pattern. They make less good, though still satisfactory, progress across Key Stage 4 because some lessons in Year 11 lack challenge; a few pupils, particularly boys, are poorly motivated as a result. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of others.
38. Pupils behave well and concentrate throughout the full length of almost all lessons, throughout the school. They respond well to teachers' questions and many further their understanding by asking questions of their own. They enjoy science lessons and co-operate very well with each other during practical work; they often share their ideas and knowledge, as in a Year 10 class when small groups presented their findings from research into industrial chemical processes to the rest of their class. There are some exceptions to this positive picture in a few Key Stage 4 lessons where pupils show little interest, their behaviour is poor and they make insufficient progress.
39. Teaching is generally good in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4 teaching is mostly satisfactory, and good in about one-third of the lessons, but it is occasionally unsatisfactory. A good feature of lessons is that teachers set clear objectives so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. They extend pupils' understanding by effective questioning and insisting on the need to explain observations, as in Year 9 when developing the idea that, when metals and acids react, the acid is the source of hydrogen. In the best lessons in Key Stage 3, teachers ensure that all pupils are fully challenged. For example, in Year 9 the teacher encouraged high attaining pupils to look for a numerical relationship between voltage and the current flowing in an electrical circuit, while others investigated the effect on the current of changing the resistance. The weak feature in occasional lessons in Key Stage 4 is lack of challenge. In Year 11 little thought was required in following the textbook to 'cut and paste' the sequence of processes in photosynthesis. Marking is inconsistent. Teachers' comments are sometimes detailed and pose questions to encourage improvement but, too frequently, pupils' work is acknowledged with a tick and comment which is limited to a word or short phrase.
40. The science curriculum is well planned, overall. A new set of textbooks for Key Stage 3 pupils to keep at home has improved the relevance of homework, which is regularly set, and allows pupils to respond more effectively. Pupils' awareness of the importance of science in a wide variety of contexts has been raised by opportunities to participate in national competitions, visits to hear well-known speakers (such as the astronaut, Helen Sharman) and consideration of ethical issues. Teachers are committed to providing the best possible science education for their pupils, but practical work is sometimes restricted because the laboratory technician has insufficient time to provide all the equipment when needed or because classes

are too large for all pupils to participate fully. The head of department has few opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of teaching.

41. GCSE results are improving, although they are still lower than at the last inspection. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching remains. There are still a few poorly motivated pupils but they are now mainly confined to lower attaining groups in Key Stage 4. The department is well led and the new head of department has implemented a number of strategies for further improvement, for example by addressing under-performance of girls in GCSE examinations.

122.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

42. GCSE results in information technology have declined over the last three years, from above to below the national average in 1998. However, pupils completing the full GCSE course in 1999 achieved better results, although those pupils who completed the short course have not done so well. Boys are achieving better results than girls.
43. Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 3 is near the national expectation. Pupils' work shows that they have moderate competence in the use of word processors, databases and spreadsheets. Some page-making skills are near the national expectation where drawings and text have been arranged to communicate a specific idea. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is also near the national average and some Year 10 and 11 pupils show particular skill when using the Internet. Year 11 pupils make effective use of more advanced spreadsheet functions and send e-mails to each other to offer suggestions and advice.
44. Progress in lessons across Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. For example, a Year 9 class used a software encyclopaedia to obtain information and then carefully selected the content to be included on a separate information page running in an office application. Pupils become familiar with the use of computers and develop moderate expertise in the use of the most common programs. Some make faster progress, assisted by using a home computer. Most pupils with learning difficulties are able to progress satisfactorily but in large classes a few are left without help for too long. Pupils with more advanced information and communication technology skills build on the lesson content and make fast progress. Pupils in Key Stage 4 also make satisfactory and sometimes very good progress during lessons. A special feature of the school is the wide availability of the controlled Internet facility, frequently used as an information source, and pupils practise on this and improve their skills.
45. Pupils generally show interest in their work, especially when they are appropriately challenged and have individual access to a computer keyboard. Response was good during a Year 11 lesson where pupils were extending their knowledge of mathematical formulae and functions on an Excel spreadsheet. Pupils behave well and show respect for school property but concentration flags when explanations are too lengthy or when pupils have to share computers. They form constructive relationships with each other and work well together. Some pupils show initiative when they are able to combine ideas from school and home use of computers.
46. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and there are many good features in lessons. However, lesson organisation is not always satisfactory as pupils are sometimes expected to remember too much from an initial explanation. They then become impatient to use the computers, especially when they cannot see the screen and there is no overhead monitor. At times, information sheets are well used, so that pupils can make progress individually or in pairs. Teachers draw on their good subject knowledge in planning and co-ordinating the schemes of work effectively. Discipline is maintained very effectively in a calm manner. Most pupils are challenged and are engaged in appropriate work. Lessons are particularly effective when the information technology specialist combines with a specialist from another subject area. For example, a Year 10 science group used the Internet facility to find information on various chemical elements as part of their project work. Both teachers contributed to the well-structured lesson. Occasionally, time is not well used and lesson targets are not identified. Insufficient use is made of the printing of pupils' work to keep up their interest during lessons. Day-to-day marking and assessment are not regularly completed. However, long term records are satisfactorily kept. Homework is set and often forms a useful basis for the

next lesson. Teachers refer to the social effects of computers and the moral issues of hacking and using the Internet in their teaching.

47. The planning of the curriculum for information and communication technology is satisfactory throughout the school, with the exception of the control element. Insufficient emphasis is placed on keyboard skills in Year 7. Extra-curricular opportunities are satisfactory. Cross-curricular applications are used, and are developing further in many subjects. Examples are evident in English, mathematics, science, leisure and tourism, technology, art, geography, history, religious education and special educational needs. Pupils gain skills in using computers, self-confidence and greater understanding of subjects through these applications.
48. The information technology co-ordinator has a comprehensive development plan. New systems have been installed since the last inspection which provide an effective learning environment giving equal opportunities for all pupils. Information technology staff have appropriate qualifications and experience. Expertise is developing in other departmental areas as training allows. Technical support is good. Progress in music and art is limited by lack of information technology equipment; the library also has poor provision at present with only four computers, but plans are in hand to increase this number.
49. At the time of the last inspection, standards of achievement were sound at the end of Key Stage 3 and variable at the end of Key Stage 4. Standards are now more consistent and are satisfactory throughout the school. The availability and access to computers have improved substantially.

130.

Religious education

50. Religious education is taught separately at Key Stage 3, and as part of the personal, social and moral education course at Key Stage 4. Pupils are not entered for external examinations.
51. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, relative to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils know a range of facts about various religions, with greater understanding of Christianity than other religions. They understand basic features of Biblical history and the reformation, and have opportunity to study different branches of the Christian faith. This knowledge is enhanced by visits. They can talk about what they know and they understand that belief informs behaviour. Pupils are rather better informed than the average about the background to faith and know rather less in depth about the variety of faiths and cultures to be found in Britain. At Key Stage 4 the personal, social and moral education course does not cover the Agreed Syllabus so their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other religions develop little. Attainment in religious education is therefore minimal at this level. Pupils do know that religion influences personal commitment to various issues facing society and that personal morality is often dependent on belief. They develop skills of note-taking and a wide vocabulary, so that they can discuss and challenge assumptions, for example about prejudice and stereotyping.
52. Progress across Key Stage 3 is good and, by the end of Year 9, pupils are well informed, particularly about Christianity and they can talk about what they have learned. Special educational needs pupils are supported effectively and the teacher, who knows them well, constantly encourages them. Little is done to challenge higher attaining pupils, but they progress in line with the rest. School-produced work-books and good choice of resources enable pupils to progress and work at a good pace. Little organised group work was seen during the inspection but pupils generally work well together. They find it more difficult to take charge of their own development and learning. Progress in understanding Christianity and other religions is poor across Key Stage 4 because little religious education is taught. In the personal, social and moral education lessons the gains pupils make are in developing their own stance on a variety of issues facing adults and society.
53. Pupils are well behaved and respond enthusiastically in the classroom. They are interested in their work and concentrate well on the task in hand. Many show a real interest in their work and ask questions or respond to questioning very well. They consider the importance of values by which to live one's life. They are happy to contribute to discussion, reflecting on religious issues and respecting each other's opinions. Pupils do not often take the initiative or exercise responsibility for their own learning. Older pupils engage keenly in discussion of personal, social and moral issues. They are prepared to try out their

ideas and learn from each other.

54. Classroom teaching is lively and well planned, with clear aims. At their best, lessons have good pace and are stimulating, the resources are well chosen and all pupils work to capacity. Discipline is maintained with a lightness of touch and pupils feel valued. Resources have been produced in a way which makes them suitable for a wide range of abilities. Where lessons are less good, too much time is spent by the teacher talking at the pupils, and little opportunity is given for pupils to exchange views with each other or learn in groups.
 55. Work is co-ordinated satisfactorily. Curricular planning is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, shortage of time is a constraint and reference to religious education is slight; statutory requirements are not met at this key stage. Available resources are good but the quantity of books is limited. The library has some new books but has few on the range of religions and moral issues covered in class. Visits are occasionally made to local churches.
 56. In the last inspection report, features described as satisfactory or better remain so now: the quality of teaching, the majority of learning and general standards in lessons. The major weakness reported then has not been tackled: very little reference is made to the Cornish Agreed Syllabus within the personal, social and moral education programme, so pupils make little progress beyond Key Stage 3.
- 137.

Art

57. Standards in art have improved steadily and significantly since the last inspection, from well below, to above the national average. Through Key Stage 4, good progress is made and GCSE results were just above the national average in 1998, and better in 1999. A good number of pupils gain the highest grades, and the number of pupils taking the examination is above average for the size of the school, and increasing.
58. Progress in art is good across Key Stage 3, from below expected attainment levels at the beginning of Year 7. By the end of Key Stage 3, the range of attainment is wide, and overall it is in line with national expectations. Pupils' knowledge of the work and styles of artists is below expected standards, overall. Their knowledge and use of the art elements, including shape, pattern and colour, is in line with the national expectation. Their drawing from observation is satisfactory. Some higher attaining pupils have excellent skills in all areas of the subject, in both two- and three-dimensional pictorial and design studies. For example, the best direct observational drawings of school bags by Year 9 pupils show clear understanding of the use of line, tone and texture to suggest form. Year 8 pupils use a carefully selected colour range of waste papers, fabric and plastic materials to create exciting collages which communicate rhythmic pattern and mood effectively. In all years at this key stage there is insufficient evaluative and contextual work, including the study of art history.
59. Attainment in lessons and work seen are above the national average for the end of Key Stage 4. Following a visit to St. Ives, Year 11 pupils have the artistic ability to respond to the characteristic features of the Cornish landscape, and research the work of local artists past and present, such as Barbara Hepworth. They develop their own original ideas around a similar theme, working in a wide variety of media, including drawing and painting, card sculpture and collage. Sketchbooks provide records of the ideas and materials explored, but annotation and documentation of thoughts and processes are underdeveloped, and overall productivity is low. However, poster design work shows a good understanding of composition, and reflects well on the skills and commitment of pupils to achieve a high standard of finish.
60. Most pupils, on entry to the school, have limited experience of the subject, but they quickly develop understanding of the basic art elements, together with skills in using a range of art and design media. The work of high, average and low attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, shows good progress, both in lessons and over time. Pupils benefit from the good quality of teaching, the visual and creative nature of the subject, and the additional teacher support. Pupils' progress in ceramics, and in the use of computers, both for design and to aid the presentation of related studies, is constrained at both key stages because of the lack of readily available resources.

61. Pupils' response to art is good. In lessons the mixed ability groups integrate well, and peer evaluation is an aid to progress. Most pupils are interested and sustain concentration; they have good attitudes to the subject and tasks set. Generally, pupils' capacity for personal research and study is below that expected, especially at Key Stage 4, but initiative in the interpretation of themes is evident in the very best project work, where the children of artistic parents are developing striking individual styles. The vast majority of pupils behave extremely well in lessons, take pride in their own and others' art work and handle the art materials and equipment with care. Behaviour is considerably improved since the previous inspection. Pupils have good working relationships with teachers, they are willing to discuss their art work with others, and many art pupils retain contact with the school after they have left.
62. The quality of art teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good, with expertise based firmly in fine art and sculpture. Teachers promote high standards through structured assignments that enable pupils to work towards the highest grades. Teachers' expectations of pupils are generally high, and certainly realistic, with challenges that are open to a wide range of interpretation, and related to the art, landscape, and traditions of the locality. Lessons are well planned for the range of attainment levels, to increase confidence and self-esteem. Projects have clear aims and objectives. The quality of work is discussed with pupils, but targets are not used to set expectations about attainment, and the National Curriculum is little used to chart progress until the end of Year 9. Insufficient contextual work is provided, so pupils do relatively little written and evaluative work, as required by the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3, and to add depth and enrichment at Key Stage 4. Homework is regularly set; pupils benefit greatly from the constructive comments which teachers make in their sketchbooks, and from the ongoing oral feedback which is a good feature of all lessons. Teaching quality has improved since the last inspection.
63. There is effective leadership for the subject. Good management has ensured a steady improvement in examination results. Parents praise the department and appreciate the good quality of the pupils' work and of displays around the school. They feel the fame of the area and its artistic connections are reflected in the standards that the department promotes. The response to the last inspection report has been very positive and considerable improvement is evident. Current development plans identify important priorities, including the provision of further opportunities for all pupils to have experience of ceramics and use information technology.

144. **Design and technology**

64. In recent years, GCSE results have been below the national average, overall. However, across technology subjects there is variation: results for textiles are above the national average but results for resistant materials and graphics are below average. Food results were close to the national average in 1998, but were lower than this in 1999. Girls generally gain better results than boys, overall. While GCSE results are near average when compared with similar schools, they do not show any significant improvement since the last inspection. Key Stage 3 teacher assessments are generous: pupils achieve above average results, but scrutiny of pupils' work shows an attainment that is generally below the national expectation.
65. Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 3 is just below national expectation, overall. Pupils' making skills are usually better than their understanding of design. In a Year 9 class of girls only, pupils made scotch eggs following individual plans which included initial design and research work; their skills in practical work were stronger than their planning skills, and overall results were satisfactory. Examples of jewellery products were well designed and made. However, pupils' skills of working with wood are below expectations: manufactured items are poorly finished and do not follow a carefully prepared design. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is similarly just below average overall, with the best work in textiles and the weakest in resistant materials and graphics. Year 11 pupils create interesting designs by colouring fabrics in various ways and samples of pupils' GCSE coursework for textiles show that some pupils are capable of high achievement and present their work well.
66. Progress during Key Stage 3 lessons and across the key stage is satisfactory overall. It is good in textiles but unsatisfactory in resistant materials where the design process is not clearly defined. The pattern is similar at Key Stage 4, when progress in some textiles and food lessons is good but in resistant materials it is unsatisfactory. As noted in the previous inspection report, food technology pupils in Year 11 make good progress when organising their GCSE coursework in both the design and making stages. Considering technology subjects overall, progress is satisfactory, from Year 7 to GCSE. Pupils of all

abilities are able develop their knowledge and skills from the planned lessons. Pupils with special educational needs progress in line with the rest. They benefit from being with other, higher attaining pupils and sometimes have classroom support; there are times when more help is needed. After-school sessions help those wishing to improve their work, including examination coursework.

67. Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are generally good. They are lively and enthusiastic when engaged in tasks that they perceive as purposeful. They generally behave well with established teachers but are inclined to talk too much in any lesson if the task is not sufficiently challenging, or if required to listen to lengthy explanations and instructions. They show respect for school property and that of each other. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good; pupils co-operate sensibly when expected to do so, for example on design tasks. They have rather limited opportunities to show initiative or to take responsibility.
68. Most of the teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory or better, and about one third is good or very good; however in a significant minority of lessons it is unsatisfactory, due to inexperience and lack of support. Most of the teaching in Years 10 and 11 is sound or good and there are examples in textiles lessons of very good teaching, where effective organisation of many activities takes place. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs most frequently in resistant materials and graphics where expectations are too low. For example, in a Year 9 graphics lesson, although pupils had drawing instruments available, they were not asked to progress beyond the sketching stage, nor were they asked to consider scaled drawing. Teachers have good knowledge of most subject areas, although the technological design process is given insufficient emphasis because planning lacks detail, particularly in resistant materials. In some lessons, effective use of prepared workbooks for younger pupils overcomes this problem. Expectations are good in textiles and food areas, but often too low in graphics and resistant materials. Where pupils are able to work on both designing and making during the same lesson, as for example in Year 11 textiles, then they learn and progress very effectively. Pupils are well managed by the experienced teachers and control is good, but some lesson introductions are too long, so that pupils lose concentration. Resources such as computers and drawing boards are insufficiently used. Pupils' work is assessed at intervals by using a system of letter grades, but the distinction between attainment and effort is often very unclear. The system of recording progress through attainment targets in orange highlight is good. Some pictorial rewards are used in food technology to good effect. The use of homework is variable across the department.
69. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is suitably broad and provides progression. An appropriate variety of materials is used except for wood, which is underused. The teaching of electronics is under-developed and the requirement for teaching systems and control is not met. Food and textiles contribute to cultural development as they consider the heritage of different countries of the world. In most lessons, awareness is raised of moral and social issues. Some Year 11 pupils do not study any technology subject, which means that a statutory requirement is not met, but all Year 10 pupils have equal access.
70. Whilst the head of technology has prepared a handbook outlining the organisation and policies for the department, together with an overview of the schemes of work, curricular plans lack detail. Mapping of the schemes of work to show links with the National Curriculum is incomplete. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the technological design process as a unifying feature across technology subjects. Development planning has taken place but is not fully costed. At Key Stage 4, boys generally choose resistant materials and girls opt for textiles. Separate classes for boys and girls have recently been introduced into Years 8 and 9, to improve the gender balance at option choices in Key Stage 4. A newly qualified teacher is supported by the whole school system but needs greater lesson support from the head of department. Staff appraisal has taken place but this is not on a sufficiently regular basis to identify training needs. The full-time technician provides a valuable service in the department and elsewhere, but is underused and provides little direct help for pupils. The departmental classroom assistant could be more flexibly deployed to where the needs are greatest at any particular time. The accommodation is generally satisfactory, although it is difficult to access some rooms and facilities without disturbing another class, and storage space for GCSE projects is inadequate. There is no changing area in the textile rooms to facilitate the fitting of garments.
71. Standards overall have changed little since the last inspection. Then, as now, the standards achieved varied considerably. Younger pupils evaluated their work only superficially and did not understand the design process: there is still insufficient emphasis on design. Overall planning and co-ordination give insufficient attention to systematically raising standards across all technology subjects.

152. **Drama**

72. Drama is part of the expressive arts faculty. Provision includes one lesson a week for Key Stage 3 classes and an optional GCSE course in Key Stage 4, where there are six large groups. The course in expressive arts, which was commented in the last inspection report, has been discontinued since it was not meeting pupils' needs and GCSE results were disappointing. Drama was not reported on separately following the last inspection.
73. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades (A*-C) at GCSE was well above average in 1997, but below average in 1998, when pupils had to sit a written paper to supplement practical assessments, and results were similar in 1999. Across the full range of grades (A*-G), results were in line with the national average, with few pupils gaining low grades. Boys do well in drama in comparison with their performance in other GCSE subjects.
74. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, attainment is average at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils work together to capture a moment as a photoframe, use voice effectively and evaluate performance briefly. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils enter a role and develop it, though not always in depth and sometimes using a limited range of vocabulary. Pupils speak clearly and expressively, using space adequately. They write descriptions of their own performance, with brief evaluative comments. Pupils of average and lower attainment find the written aspect of the course more difficult than the practical tasks.
75. Over time, the progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory at both key stages. Progress is good in practical work and satisfactory in written aspects. Progress is good in most lessons and very good in over a third. Pupils learn to improvise with greater confidence and support one another in group work in lessons throughout the school. They learn to use technical terms such as 'freeze-frame' and 'stimulus' and this helps them to discuss their work. They learn to write extended commentaries on their performance for their GCSE folders.
76. Response in lessons is good, and very good in two-fifths of lessons. Pupils enjoy drama and it is a popular option at Key Stage 4. Behaviour is usually very good, though a few pupils at Key Stage 3 call out during discussions. Pupils collaborate very well in groups and are considerate of others' views. They applaud others' performances sincerely and can be relied upon to rehearse without close supervision. Pupils with special educational needs respond particularly well. For example, in a Year 10 group, the one statemented pupil was the first to volunteer to perform before the group. This testifies to the confidence he felt in his teacher and in his fellow pupils.
77. The quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory in all lessons, good or better in well over half, and very good in two-fifths. Most of the very good teaching is at Key Stage 4. Teachers have very good subject knowledge which helps pupils to improve their performance skills. They have a very good rapport with pupils, which encourages pupils to work hard. Lessons are well planned, though insufficient time is given to evaluating pupils' performances and this limits progress. Group work is skilfully organised and very good attention is paid to the use of subject vocabulary. For example, Year 10 classes, at the start of their two year GCSE course, were quickly learning to use and understand terms such as 'polished improvisation', 'spontaneous drama' and 'stimulus'.
78. Schemes of work in drama are well planned, though they place insufficient emphasis on pupils' evaluation of their performances. Drama makes a valuable contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are frequent opportunities to reflect on human behaviour and to work together to present a performance. Advantage is taken of links with other subjects and the wider community. The teacher in charge of drama is very enthusiastic and eager to raise attainment, especially in the written aspect of the subject. She has a major role in frequent public performances and in organising pupil performances for primary school children. This is raising attainment in performance skills and in pupils' confidence when performing before an audience.
79. Resources are adequate though more lighting equipment is needed. Accommodation in the drama area is very good but the area next to the canteen is unsatisfactory: because of its cramped space, teaching strategies are restricted and groups have to rehearse in the corridor. This is limiting progress.

80. Results in the GCSE examination in geography show a marked improvement, coming from below the national average in 1997 to well above in 1998, and results in 1999 were similar. Results in geography are high for the school. In the 1998 results the high percentage of the highest grades (A*/A) was significantly above the national average, although this has not been maintained in 1999.
81. In lessons, work seen during the inspection and in teacher assessments, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 matches that expected nationally. Pupils' understanding of ideas about how towns grow is enhanced by local fieldwork. They use a satisfactory range of graphical techniques to present their findings and reach valid conclusions from their investigations. Pupils respond well to opportunities to carry out independent research, for example finding information about volcanic eruptions. They learn about other countries, finding out about life in Japan and making comparisons with the United Kingdom. The faculty recognises the need to improve pupils' literacy skills. A satisfactory start has been made in identifying and displaying key vocabulary for some units of work and in improving pupils' written work. However, where written work is undemanding, such as copying, pupils' understanding of ideas is weak. For example, a unit of work in Year 8 did not provide pupils with relevant experiences in handling weather data to enable them to develop their understanding of the differences between weather and climate. By the end of Year 11, most pupils are attaining well in relation to national expectations. Their understanding of geographical processes is good; for example pupils explain how the sea transports materials along a beach and use technical vocabulary such as swash and backwash accurately. They use hypotheses effectively to focus their coursework.
82. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 3 and good progress across Key Stage 4. Progress is good when the work is well-matched to meet the needs of all pupils, and the lesson proceeds at a brisk pace. For example, a Year 9 lesson made effective use of group work to match the tasks to the range of abilities, enabling all pupils to contribute fully to the activity. However, when the work is pitched at the middle of the ability range, it is not hard enough for more highly attaining pupils and some less highly attaining pupils need more support. Pupils with statements of special educational need generally make satisfactory progress with the additional help of classroom assistants, although teachers could give more thought to ways of making more effective use of this support. Pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour and weaknesses in teaching contribute to inadequate progress in around a quarter of the lessons observed at Key Stage 3. Progress in lessons at Key Stage 4 is generally good. Pupils' workbooks offer support for less highly attaining pupils so that they keep up with lessons which proceed at a brisk pace. Effective liaison between the teacher and the classroom assistant in a Year 10 lesson contributed to pupils' good rates of progress. Although extension tasks are provided, higher attaining pupils could benefit from more opportunities to work with a greater degree of independence and initiative in lessons.
83. Most pupils behave well and make efforts to complete work in lessons. They respond well when they are given the opportunity to work in groups. When the work is challenging they express interest and concentrate well on tasks. There are occasional pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour with less experienced teachers, when pupils are not given enough to do. Time is wasted establishing order so that not enough progress is made. Pupils at Key Stage 4 behave well, have positive attitudes towards their work, and generally concentrate well through very long double lessons; these are significant factors supporting their good progress..
84. The majority of teaching is satisfactory but ranges from very good to occasionally unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3. It is all at least satisfactory and sometimes good at Key Stage 4. Specialist teachers of the subject are well qualified and experienced. This is reflected in good preparation for the GCSE examination, with appropriate emphasis on examination techniques. Relationships in the classroom are good. Teachers are approachable and generous with their time, offering additional support for coursework and an after school revision course, which contribute effectively to pupils' good examination results. Effective planning of the Key Stage 3 programme of study ensures that the work is varied. Pupils enjoy a range of experiences such as role play, decision-making, have some opportunities to investigate issues with a degree of independence, and engage in discussion of ethical issues, for example about environmental change. In Key Stage 4, the emphasis of the teaching on the acquisition of factual information limits opportunities for some of these activities and the programme is less varied. At this stage, effective focus on GCSE requirements and helpful revision prepare pupils well for examinations. Classroom management and discipline are generally sound and tasks are varied through the lesson to hold pupils' attention. Some lesson planning does not build upon prior learning – for example in Year 8 a unit on weather and climate

does not build on work done in primary schools – so that pupils are not always moved on in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and efforts, and homework is regularly set. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the work is not well-matched to meet the needs of all pupils in mixed-ability classes so that some higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Marking is regular and teachers' comments offer pupils encouragement and some guidance about how to improve their work.

85. There is effective leadership within the humanities faculty, but arrangements for the co-ordination of a sizeable team with some less experienced and non-specialist teachers at Key Stage 3 do not ensure that the best practice in lessons is shared by all teachers. The policy for assessment is sound but arrangements for moderation of assessments of the National Curriculum do not ensure consistency of judgements. Since the last inspection a start has been made to improve the match of work to meet the wide range of ability in lessons. Although some good practice was observed, this remains a weakness in lessons. The faculty's accommodation has been improved by the provision of a centrally located resources area providing good access to computers. However, the use of information and communication technology in the learning of the subject continues to be limited. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is not markedly different and its good features have been maintained. Examination results, after dropping to below the national average, have improved rapidly to be again well above average.

166.

History

86. Pupils' attainment in history at the end of Key Stage 3 is just below the national expectation. GCSE results at the higher grades (A*-C) were well below the national average in 1998, but improved considerably in 1999 and the improvement was dramatic for girls. For the past two years, all pupils entered for history have obtained a GCSE grade, including pupils with special educational needs. Recent results for GCSE humanities have been well above the national average.
87. In lessons and work scrutinised, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is just below national expectations. Pupils understand the terms used in historical periods and refer to them confidently and accurately, for example when describing the causes of the First World War. They understand that events may be interpreted in different ways and that sources vary in their usefulness and reliability. Higher attaining pupils develop ideas at some length and use evidence to support their argument. Pupils write satisfactory accounts including fundamental detail.
88. Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 4 is average. Pupils extend and refine the skills acquired earlier. Their knowledge and understanding of major events of the period are secure. They can comment on the sources they use to extend their knowledge - for example of the Cuban missile crisis - though only the higher attaining pupils use sources critically. Many pupils make the occasional analytical remark but fail to develop a sustained argument. Pupils studying GCSE humanities use a variety of evidence effectively to describe social characteristics and they make reasoned links to explain changes – for example in attitudes over the last 20 years. At the start of Year 11 pupils are in line to achieve well by the end of the year.
89. Progress in history is satisfactory across both key stages. At the beginning of Year 7, pupils' historical skills and use of relevant terms are below average. Writing is rarely extensive. However, by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils write at greater length. Lack of motivation hinders the progress of one group of Year 9 pupils. Overall, however, pupils have satisfactory factual knowledge and they have learned to link reasons and results to explain events. In Key Stage 4, low attaining pupils develop the ability to produce straightforward accounts for their course work; their overall progress is good. Higher attaining pupils have learned to bring together various strands of knowledge, analyse them fully, and reach pertinent conclusions.
90. Throughout both key stages, the vast majority of pupils is interested in lessons, work well together and maintain concentration. Year 7 pupils do not listen carefully but improve in later years. All pupils begin to develop enquiry skills so, by Year 11, pupils in GCSE humanities make effective use of textbooks, video and the Internet to widen their understanding of the Cold War. Pupils are encouraged to form their own opinions on the basis of evidence. The number of pupils choosing history as a GCSE subject has increased recently. A few Year 9 pupils have little motivation or interest in the subject and make their feelings clear in lessons.

91. Teaching in about half the lessons is good and it is satisfactory in the remainder. All teachers use their knowledge effectively in questioning, so pupils either remember facts or, more importantly, link points together to form a deduction or judgement. A range of resources (whiteboards, overhead projectors, video and computers) is frequently used, so pupils' learning is consistently reinforced. Teachers establish sensible routines in lessons and calmly insist on their acceptance, so ensuring that little time is wasted. When lessons are less effective, it has been impossible to motivate a group of pupils sufficiently and the pace slackens. In Key Stage 3 lessons, teachers are matching activities, tasks and support to the needs of different pupils, including those who are high attaining. At Key Stage 4, activities are less well matched to the needs of all pupils, although both core and foundation textbooks are in use. Pupils with special educational needs are supported by classroom assistants, but little use is made of specially planned materials, similar to that available for the Year 7 Roman history unit, which would increase the effectiveness of support further. Homework is consistently set and well linked to the lesson plan; it is regularly marked with brief helpful comments. Teachers correct spelling and work hard to extend vocabulary. Time is well used in GCSE revision classes for Year 11 pupils to raise their attainment in examinations.
92. The curriculum is broad and balanced, underpinned by a skills map for Key Stage 3 and revised schemes of work for Years 7 and 8. Pupils are encouraged to consider the social and moral implications of history topics they study. The new humanities computer suite has facilitated the use of computers for research, word processing and desktop publishing. There is no data handling and the department is aware of this. A planned series of visits to places of historical interest, such as Morewelham Quay, Lanhydrock House, St.Mawes Castle and the Blitz Experience at Flambards supports the curriculum at significant points.
93. Both before and since the last inspection, the department has faced prolonged staff absences which have disrupted measures to raise standards. A full year of stability has now been achieved: better organisation of coursework and Year 11 revision classes have resulted, and a focus on methods to raise boys' attainment and an accelerated learning programme have begun. There are now sufficient specialist teachers, committed to the subject, working closely together and effectively led, who have contributed much to re-establishing the GCSE standards reached at the time of the last inspection. The generally sound and often good teaching has been maintained. Since the previous inspection, pupils' response has improved and in almost all lessons is at least satisfactory. Better use is made of computers and outside visits.

174.

Modern foreign languages

94. Pupils learn either French or German throughout both key stages. Pupils in top sets in Year 9 study both languages and a small number choose to continue to do so in Key Stage 4.
95. At the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessments show pupils' attainment to be slightly above the national expectation; results have been improving over the last three years. Girls do better than boys, especially at the higher levels. GCSE results at the higher grades (A*-C) in both languages are below the national average. Results have declined since the last inspection. Results in French are better than those in German but have fluctuated over the last three years, whereas results in German are improving steadily. Girls always achieve better results than boys, substantially so in 1999 in French when girls' results were much better than boys'. Results for both boys and girls are lower in modern languages than for most other school subjects. Results over the full range (A*-G) of grades are slightly above the national average, showing that pupils in middle and lower sets, including those with special educational needs, do at least as well as expected. Performance is best in the skills of listening and reading, and standards in writing have improved considerably since the adoption of the written coursework syllabus for GCSE.
96. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectation. In both languages, pupils acquire a range of vocabulary on familiar topics. They are encouraged to write short paragraphs in the foreign language from the start, and this is supported by an emphasis on the structure of language and an early introduction to work in different verb tenses. Higher attaining pupils write accurately for a variety of purposes and at length, for example an account of a holiday or a letter to book into a campsite. They understand most of what they hear and read in reasonably long extracts of French or German, and can extract key details. They speak with good pronunciation and ask as well as answer questions. Pupils of average and lower attainment, including those with special

educational needs, write more briefly, but show awareness of tenses and grammatical rules in their work. They need more support in comprehension work but generally succeed in understanding what they read and hear. They find it difficult to articulate questions, for instance to ask for help in classroom situations, but can follow a model to make themselves understood.

97. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national average. It is better in most lessons than is suggested by GCSE results, and the standard of written work seen is good, reflecting the fact that the close focus on the demands of GCSE coursework is improving attainment in what was previously a weak skill. Standards in speaking and listening in lessons are relatively weaker and no reading comprehension work was seen. Higher attaining pupils speak confidently in German lessons though they need more persuasion and support in French. In some lessons, especially in French, pupils have difficulty in adapting to the speed of delivery of native speakers on cassette, but they persist and understand the gist of long passages. Their writing is well developed. They write about past experiences and future plans, and include a range of structures as well as tenses. They use a wide vocabulary. Pupils in lower sets also produce written work of good quality for their level of attainment. There is less accuracy and some carelessness in using unfamiliar concepts, such as accents in French and capital letters for nouns in German. Poor use of dictionaries also causes confusion in writing, but they manage to communicate their ideas acceptably. They do not retain vocabulary well, so that difficulties arise in speaking and listening, but they cope with most tasks at an appropriate level.
98. Progress is satisfactory overall across both key stages. Pupils steadily increase the range of their word knowledge, and the accuracy and range of their spoken and written work. Their awareness of language rules is applied more consistently to new topics as they move up the school. During Key Stage 3, pupils of all levels of attainment learn to talk and write about themselves, their family, their house, home town and hobbies, and to understand others talking or writing about the same familiar topics. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils can produce full accounts and descriptions, especially in writing, and begin to exceed minimum requirements. By the end of Key Stage 4, they are writing long and accurate passages on more demanding topics such as personal fitness, job applications and past and future holidays. At best, they research these topics thoroughly and feel confident in experimenting with language. Their breadth both of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge enables them to cope with a wide range of texts or spoken excerpts and they participate in conversations on familiar topics. The majority of pupils does not reach such high levels but they develop their vocabulary sufficiently to work towards appropriate targets at foundation level. Pupils' progress in speaking is not as strong as their progress in written work across Key Stage 4. Their pronunciation is somewhat approximate but, by the end of Key Stage 4, they need less repetition and visual support and can express themselves well enough to be understood, despite errors. Pupils with special educational needs generally respond positively to challenging tasks and make satisfactory progress.
99. Pupils' response in modern languages, with some exceptions, is unsatisfactory and to some extent reflects weaknesses in teaching. Many have a negative attitude towards learning a foreign language, and this derives essentially from their experience in lessons, which is insufficiently varied. In almost every lesson there are some pupils, both boys and girls, who prefer to doodle or chat to friends instead of paying attention to the work in hand. Whilst this does not usually degenerate into poor behaviour it does cause a problem for teachers and classmates so that progress, at least for these pupils but sometimes for the whole class, is adversely affected. There is an unusually high level of graffiti inside and on the covers of exercise books, though pupils show more respect for textbooks. However, where the work is appropriately challenging and delivered well, pupils respond positively. They enjoy such lessons and make progress. Pupils are generally courteous to teachers and to each other and respond sensibly to occasional opportunities to work in pairs.
100. The quality of teaching varies. Though teaching is good or very good in almost one third of lessons, there is a similar proportion of unsatisfactory lessons and weaknesses in other lessons, which makes the quality of teaching unsatisfactory overall. A contributory factor is some non-specialist teaching, but weaknesses are evident in other lessons as well. Whilst most teachers make satisfactory use of their subject knowledge to raise expectations by using French or German as much as possible, there is insufficient insistence on pupils using the foreign language routinely, and limited opportunities in some lessons for them to use it at all, which affects pupils' progress in speaking. The best lessons are well planned to include coverage of several skills through a variety of activities conducted at a brisk pace. In a Year 8 French lesson on household vocabulary, pupils with special educational needs learned through a series of games in which they had to respond in French, and which gradually increased in challenge, enabling them all to make progress whilst enjoying themselves. However, in some lessons lack of familiarity with teaching materials

and insufficiently clear explanation of tasks lead to frustration for pupils and impede their progress. Nearly all lessons are closely directed by teachers, and the range of methods and resources is limited so that pupils have little variety and are not stimulated. Available resources, such as reading schemes and video, are not much used, and the department has only one computer, which is not used in lessons. Teachers make good use of routine resources such as the overhead projector, cassette players and textbooks. In a Year 10 German lesson on personal characteristics, the teacher used a textbook exercise to develop further oral activities allowing pupils to make individual contributions, in which they showed some creativity. Some teachers lack appropriate ways of for dealing with challenging or passive behaviour, though praise and encouragement are well used and relationships are generally satisfactory. The marking of work is up-to-date but too often consists of ticks and single-word comments. Insufficient use is made of this opportunity to raise standards through helpful comments. Pupils do not do corrections. Homework is not always set when it should be, even when teachers have included it in lesson planning, and it is sometimes lacking in challenge.

101. The topics studied offer a balanced coverage of the National Curriculum and there is awareness of the need to improve schemes of work to provide a more useful working document than the current schemes. Procedures for recording results of assessments are good but the information gained is little used to improve learning, for instance by leading to amendments to schemes of work. Development planning is satisfactory, though monitoring and evaluation lack rigour. Accommodation is satisfactory, but insufficient use is made of the copious wall space to display and celebrate pupils' work.
102. Response to the last inspection report has been patchy. Whilst teachers now make more use of French and German in lessons, and standards in writing have improved, there has been little success in improving the variety of teaching activities. The poor concentration of some pupils remains a problem and has become more widespread. Above all, the standards of attainment reported at the last inspection have not been maintained, though there are grounds for optimism in the improvement in standards in Key Stage 3.

183.

Music

103. In the last few years, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades (A*-C) in GCSE examinations has matched the national average, with girls achieving a slightly higher percentage of higher grades than boys. Some very high grades (A*/A) have been obtained. Results for 1999 are improved slightly on those for 1998. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 were in line with the national expectation; results in 1999 were, overall, lower than this although a few pupils did exceptionally well. Compared with art and physical education, the number of pupils achieving the national expectation is lower.
104. Many of the pupils entering the school in Year 7 do not have the range of knowledge and skills expected at this stage. For instance, at the start of Year 7 pupils are not familiar with the meaning of 'dynamics', which describes one of the elements of music used in earlier key stages. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is in line with national expectation but across a restricted part of the curriculum, so that overall attainment is below average. Pupils can count and perform short syncopated rhythms using a variety of percussion instruments. In composing in Year 9, pupils are able to create the atmosphere of struggle and loneliness such as that encountered by Scott of the Antarctic. However, pupils' skills in being able to appraise their own music and the music of others are lacking, because there is little self-assessment built into lessons. Pupils have a narrow experience of music from other cultures around the world, and little research into these is expected of them. They have insufficient opportunities to notate their own music, for instance using graphic or staff notations. Pupils in Year 8 sing well in tune for their age. Almost all play a simple sequence of notes on an instrument. The opportunities available for all pupils in Years 7 and 8 to learn to play an orchestral wind instrument, as part of their classroom instruction, are giving pupils musical skills which enhance their understanding of musical language and the ability to read staff notation, and parents appreciate this. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment in lessons is in line with expectations for GCSE, lifted by the attainment of a few pupils with a high level of instrumental skill, for instance in voice or electric guitar. Pupils compose and perform in a variety of styles; these include the use of drum kit, keyboard and wind instruments. They listen to and appraise music from different eras, such as the songs of Stephen Sondheim in the style of musical theatre. They do not find it easy to describe the meaning of the words or the structure of the songs.

105. In lessons at Key Stage 3, progress for the majority of pupils is mostly good in practical aspects of music, though in relation to the full National Curriculum, progress across Key Stage 3 is only satisfactory. In a lesson in Year 9, pupils made good progress in maintaining their own part in a three part accompaniment containing repetitive cross-rhythms, four beats against six - a good example of numeracy being used well in music. Pupils develop secure knowledge of simple musical staff notation through the experience of playing an instrument regularly. All pupils have access to an orchestral wind instrument, including pupils with special educational needs, who often make the same progress as others in the class. However, there are not sufficient different tasks set for them to ensure they make the best possible progress in all areas of the curriculum. In addition, higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 are held back by some aspects of the instrumental initiative because they are not always given sufficiently challenging tasks. Progress across Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Pupils learn how to apply their knowledge to pieces in different styles, and their progress in GCSE work is assisted by their instrumental work. The development and quality of vocal work throughout the school and in extra-curricular activities are very strong, especially in Key Stage 3.
106. The attitudes, behaviour and response of pupils in both key stages are mainly good, except for a few boys in Key Stage 3 classes who do not apply themselves to the work in hand or sustain concentration. This is dealt with appropriately by music staff who give as much encouragement as possible to assist them to succeed. Performance to different audiences, such as in assemblies and concerts, is helping to raise the self-esteem of pupils. Pupils persevere to improve their instrumental skills, many returning voluntarily at lunchtime and after school. They treat the instruments carefully and with respect and enjoy the teamwork which ensemble, orchestral and choir work requires.
107. Teaching is good in half the lessons throughout the school, and satisfactory in the rest. The teaching of singing and instrumental work with whole classes is good. However, the balance of the instrumental whole-class tuition, combined with the National Curriculum, while carefully considered by the school, results in a narrower delivery of the National Curriculum than would otherwise be the case. All the strands of the National Curriculum are in place by the end of Key Stage 3, but more detailed planning is required to ensure sufficient breadth and emphasis. Time is not wasted in lessons, but no time is allowed for pupils to explore self-assessment through the appraisal of music. Visiting music staff were observed in lessons assisting Year 7 in starting to play instruments as part of whole class lessons. Their knowledge and ability with various instruments were well conveyed and pupils progressed well.
108. Day-to-day oral assessment is good, but although there is analysis of test and examination results at GCSE, this information is not used to inform planning for units of work, nor to set precise learning objectives or targets for improvement. Progress is not regularly measured against National Curriculum targets. Targets, to raise pupils' attainment in music, are not set for individual pupils in Key Stage 3, although there are suitable deadlines for coursework to be finalised in Key Stage 4, as pupils move through the course. Deadlines are helping pupils to discipline themselves creatively. Homework is set regularly throughout the school.
109. Spiritual awareness is developed through performance of music, in school and in the community, where audience reaction is very good. Cultural awareness is developed through opportunities to study British and European music, but there is a lack of multi-cultural awareness and little opportunity to study world music in Key Stage 3. Pupils benefit from many local opportunities. For instance, Year 10 pupils have taken part in a composing project, where piano pieces were inspired by art in the St Ives Tate Gallery. Other pupils attended an opera workshop for 'Rodelinda' by Handel, run by the Glyndebourne Touring Opera Company.
110. Leadership in all the practical areas of the subject is very strong both within and beyond lessons. Teachers are well qualified and skilled to deliver the planned curriculum including the classroom instrumental tuition. However, the current outline scheme of work for each half term does not show the more detailed planning required for each topic undertaken by pupils. Documentation does not ensure that pupils are improving their skills in all the elements of music as they move from year to year. Although prioritised in the subject development plan, there is little use of key words to assist in developing pupils' literacy skills. Accommodation for music is very good. Resources are adequate and well used, except that pupils do not have sufficient access to information technology, which limits the development of their audio recording skills. Little use is made of multi-timbral keyboards.
111. Extra-curricular work is excellent. There are many opportunities for pupils' social development, through various extra-curricular groups and ensembles such as the vocal groups 'Esprit' (for Years 7 and 8 girls)

and 'Jeunesse' (for Years 9, 10 and 11 girls). Attempts to include boys in regular vocal work outside the classroom have been unsuccessful to date. Instrumental ensembles, including rock groups, regularly perform at concerts and 'gigs' in school and for the community. Links with primary schools are strong, with younger pupils visiting as early as Year 5 for curriculum days. Joint work with a number of local schools has resulted in a very successful musical, 'Eclipse'. Singing and instrumental work in the school are strong.

112. Strengths mentioned in the last report have been maintained, especially the emphasis on practical music-making and general enjoyment of music throughout the school. GCSE results have improved. Weaknesses commented on in the last report are still evident, notably the lack of detailed planning to link pupils' musical experiences with the National Curriculum.

193.

Physical education

113. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectation. GCSE results in 1998 were in line with the national average and have improved in 1999. Girls achieve higher results than boys and are above the national average. However, in 1999 boys achieved the highest number of the very highest grade (A*).

114. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils attain in line with national expectation. A minority is attaining above and a few below. Rugby is a strength, with girls and boys successfully playing 'tag rugby' in Year 7. They have good ball handling skills, but the boys are more assertive in a competitive situation, sometimes to the exclusion of less able players. Girls understand the importance of rules and apply them. In gymnastics, the pupils compose sequences of movement that are mostly well controlled and refined. Badminton skills are satisfactory at this early stage of the course.

115. Attainment by the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national expectation. A minority is attaining above and a few below. Games are a strength, with pupils showing increasingly refined techniques in rugby and netball. Many pupils are able to adapt their own performance in response to the limitations of others. A significant number of girls have above average netball skills. They anticipate well and can control the game with good timing of moves and passes. Those attaining below the expected levels have ball skills that are less refined. Attainment by the majority studying GCSE is average, relative to examination requirements. Pupils have a satisfactory depth of knowledge, but are generally not confident in the use of technical language. Higher attaining pupils present written work that is well structured and shows careful analysis. A significant minority of pupils produces work with poor spelling and limited subject knowledge, and their notes are often incomplete. Practical work for the majority is average, with a significant minority attaining above average standards.

116. The majority of pupils makes satisfactory progress in lessons and across Key Stage 3. They consolidate basic skills, learn new ones quickly and begin to adapt them into a whole activity, with precision. Pupils make good progress when the pace is lively and tasks are designed to challenge all levels of attainment in the same class. In a very few cases, pupils make unsatisfactory progress, when the pace is slow and they are not sufficiently motivated to remain interested in the lesson. Progress is good in lessons and across Key Stage 4 for the great majority of pupils. They persevere when practising and work at a good pace, consolidating and refining their performance. Very good progress is made when pupils are encouraged to control their own learning. They are able to make astute observations of their own performance and that of others. Progress is less systematic in the theoretical aspects of the GCSE course because pupils' weaknesses are not targeted sufficiently early. Pupils with special educational needs work hard and often make good progress at both key stages.

117. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mainly good and contribute strongly to their progress. They are enthusiastic and comply willingly to the established code of conduct. They work well together, demonstrate good sporting behaviour and thrive in the caring learning environment that is effectively fostered by the teachers. They answer and ask questions with increasing confidence, and respect the opinions of others. GCSE pupils readily help to organise competitions, such as the school's sports day and coaching sessions for local primary schools. Past pupils often return to help with lessons and club activities. The good response to the varied extra-curricular programme allows all pupils to further their interests and compete to a high level in school, county and national teams. The take-up rate for the GCSE

course is good among pupils at all levels of attainment.

118. Overall, the quality of teaching in physical education is good: pupils enjoy their lessons, participate well and develop skills progressively. While teaching is good in nearly half of the lessons and sound in most of the rest, there are examples of very good teaching at Key Stage 4, and a small element of unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 3. Teachers closely follow the schemes of work and use a variety of styles to stimulate the pupils. Demonstration is very effectively used to help pupils to improve as, for example, in a rugby lesson, where the teacher made good use of a pupil demonstration to illustrate a technically safe “ruck” practice and then structured a task to allow for practice, evaluation and further refinement. Almost all lessons are reinforced with probing question and answer sessions to consolidate knowledge and provoke thought. Ongoing assessment in lessons is constructive, ensuring individual and group progress. Pupils are aware of national expectations of performance and GCSE requirements and regularly evaluate their own work to make comparisons at the end of each activity unit. Opportunities for observing each other’s work in lessons vary, and planning does not often include tasks to develop these skills, for those pupils who are temporarily not physically able to take part in the lesson. Marking of GCSE theoretical work is mostly constructive. Team teaching is a regular feature, using local club coaches and a wealth of talent from the school staff. Planning of these lessons is mostly thorough, but does not always involve all of the expertise to full potential. The teachers mostly have high expectations of all pupils and continually encourage them to strive for better performance, appropriately related to their ability. The department does not have a homework policy which ensures a consistent approach to development of skills, through a variety of planned assignments. Outstanding features of the teaching are the excellent management of the pupils and the mutual respect that exists between pupils and staff, creating an effective learning environment.
119. The department is very well led with exceptionally good planning to ensure that the large number of staff teaching physical education is well informed of the expected standards of the pupils’ performance and behaviour. The curriculum is continually evolving. For example, a special course has been designed for those pupils in Year 10 who did not meet national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. The teachers’ commitment and enthusiasm promote learning effectively and have led to improvements over the last four years. GCSE results were below the national average at the end of the last inspection and are now average, with a high success rate in comparison with other subjects. The variety of teaching methods has increased and the pupils now have greater opportunities for planning and evaluating performance. The playing fields have recently undergone drainage work to enable greater use during wet weather.
- 200.
- 200.
- Vocational course: Leisure and tourism**
120. The school has recently introduced a course in leisure and tourism in Key Stage 4 which leads to the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) at intermediate level. Results in 1999 for the first group of pupils were very high. All passed at intermediate level (in itself unusual for pupils in Key Stage 4, where most pass at foundation level) and over two-thirds gained merit or distinction grades (equivalent to GCSE grades A*-B). Girls did better than boys, all passing with merit or distinction.
121. In lessons and the work seen during the inspection, attainment is above expectation for the course, but there are some variations. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 11 is well above course expectation; for example, many give insights in their evaluations into why teamwork does not always operate successfully (when planning a visit to Disneyland) and suggesting some improvements. Attainment at the start of Year 10 is more varied, but satisfactory overall. Many pupils needed help from the teacher in organising their evidence for an assignment on ‘Free Time in Penwith’. Pupils generally write well and make good use of information technology in presenting their portfolio evidence; few errors in spelling or grammar were seen in completed work. Their numerical skills are well developed, for example when analysing and presenting the results of surveys on local leisure and tourism facilities.
122. Overall progress in lessons and across Key Stage 4 is good. Portfolios show good, often very good, progress across the key stage. By Year 11, pupils see the importance of collecting first-hand evidence in evaluating the current position before planning a promotional campaign for a leisure and tourism facility. Progress is less good in Year 10, because a few pupils have not settled to work purposefully throughout the full length of lessons. Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress.

123. Pupils are well behaved and generally concentrate well on their work. They quickly begin to take responsibility for their own work. They sometimes show initiative and confidence in their own ideas, for example about an investigation of their own, rather than following ideas of the teacher. A key factor in their high level of success is that their portfolios of evidence are very well organised and clearly related to course requirements.
124. Teaching is good in most lessons and is never less than satisfactory. Teachers expect all pupils to gain at least a pass at intermediate level; pupils respond by producing high quality evidence for their portfolios. Assignments are well written; as well as making clear what pupils should produce, they also leave room for them to follow their own interests in collecting evidence. Teachers encourage pupils to gather first-hand information wherever possible, as when conducting surveys about people's perceptions of the Geevor tin mine tourist facility. Assessments are accurate and records well presented, allowing pupils to track their own progress in relation to that of others. Some opportunities are missed for pupils to link their experiences in the world of work (for example work experience in Year 10) with their portfolio evidence. Teachers are committed to helping pupils achieve the highest possible standards but do not have opportunities to meet together as a team to plan future development. The course is well led and is attracting increasing numbers of pupils.

205.
INSPECTION DATA

PART C:

205.
INSPECTION EVIDENCE

SUMMARY OF

125. The team consisted of 13 inspectors who spent a total of 47 days gathering first-hand evidence in the school. In all, 168 hours were spent visiting classes, in discussion with pupils and looking at their work, and visiting assemblies and form times. All staff teaching subjects inspected under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 were seen teaching at least once and many several times. Lesson visits were arranged to sample the work of each subject across year groups and the range of ability of pupils in the school.
126. A wide variety of evidence was considered. Planned discussions were held with staff responsible for subject areas and different aspects of the work of the school. There was a formal discussion with the chair of governors accompanied by other key governors. Examples of pupils' work were looked at in lessons and representative samples of pupils' work in each year group for each curriculum subject were scrutinised by inspectors. Planned discussions were held with pupils in each year group, and informal discussions with many more. Documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. The Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 17 parents. The team considered 232 replies from parents to a questionnaire about the school.

207.
INDICATORS

DATA AND

208. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y11	834	32	190	185

209. **Teachers and classes**

209. **Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y11)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	44.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	18.8

209. **Education support staff (Y7 – Y11)**

Total number of education support staff:	20
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	513

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes: 78

Average teaching group size:	KS3	25
	KS4	23

210. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/1999
	£
Total Income	1,880,983
Total Expenditure	1,852,577
Expenditure per pupil	2,122.08
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,554
Balance carried forward to next year	43,960

210.

211. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	834
Number of questionnaires returned:	232

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	21	65	9	4	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	30	60	5	3	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	16	47	27	6	4
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	13	59	18	7	3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	19	56	14	8	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	24	59	10	5	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27	53	13	6	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	14	54	14	11	7
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	17	55	21	4	3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	14	43	28	10	5
My child(ren) like(s) school	22	55	13	6	4

212. **Other issues raised by parents**

In all, 17 parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector before the inspection. They were strongly of the view that the school ethos is good and praised work in many subjects – arts subjects, food technology, humanities subjects, computing, physical education and leisure and tourism. They were concerned about homework, which they feel is not used consistently well. Parents agreed that behaviour overall is good, but said there are pockets of poor behaviour. They were mostly well satisfied with information on their children’s progress, except for the timing of parents’ evenings. Opinions differed on the quality of information they received on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, they feel that pastoral care is excellent, and that the school encourages self-responsibility and enables pupils to find enjoyment and success in their individual strengths.