

Erratum

Please note, page 40 para 151 line 1 of the inspection report should read:-

"Teaching at all key stages was satisfactory in 11 out of 14 lessons seen, and good or very good in the remaining 3."

INSPECTION REPORT

**MORLEY HIGH SCHOOL
LEEDS**

LEA area: Leeds

Unique Reference Number: 108078

Inspection Number: 184524

Headteacher: Dr R Walker

Reporting inspector: Mr R Drew
7281

Dates of inspection: 13-17 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708009

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

Type of control: County

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Rawlins

Date of previous inspection: November 1994

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Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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Michal Jacobs, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Terence Brett	Modern foreign languages	Staffing
Ronald Cohen	Religious education	
Steven Cushing	Art	
Wendy Easterby	English	Equal opportunities
Alan Giles	Physical education	Accommodation
Derry Hannam	Music	The Curriculum
Geoffrey Hunter	Mathematics	Assessment
Veronica Kerr	Science	Special educational needs
Michael Merchant	Geography	Learning resources
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- There is consistently sound teaching, with much that is good.
- Clear educational direction is given by senior managers and governors.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Relationships are good.
- There are many areas of the curriculum in which there is above average attainment, especially in the sixth form and a range of subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- There is very good provision for pupils' support, guidance and welfare.
- Extra-curricular activities are very good in both their range and quality.
- There is good careers education and guidance.
- Good provision is made for moral and social development.
- Good partnership is established with parents and the local community.
- Efficiency is good.
- Curriculum and assessment are good in the sixth form.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Attainment and progress at Key Stage 4 are not yet satisfactory, especially those of boys.
- II. The quality of departmental management is not consistent.
- III. There is insufficient monitoring of heads of department by the senior management team.
- IV. Teaching, while sound overall, is often too narrow in the range of styles used; it makes too little use of differentiation.
- V. Assessment arrangements are not yet satisfactory: there is insufficient clarity and consistency in staff understanding of the system; the use of assessment, especially for target setting, is unsatisfactory.
- VI. Information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 has insufficient provision; assessment at Key Stage 4 fails to meet statutory requirements.
- VII. Religious education provision at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is unsatisfactory; there is too little scope for spiritual development; the act of worship does not meet statute.
- VIII. The library is unsatisfactory as a learning resource.
- IX. There are too few technicians in ICT.
- X. There are inefficiencies in the organisation of special needs provision.

The school has many strengths and is more than secure in the areas central to its work, such as teaching, management and the response of pupils. These strengths far outweigh its relative weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. On some matters there has been good improvement, for example, in sustaining and developing the positive relationships between staff and pupils and in maintaining high standards in the sixth form. Insufficient progress has been made on others, such as promoting spiritual development, religious education and the act of worship.

There is satisfactory capacity for future improvement, especially given the recent appointments made at senior management team and head of department levels.

Standards in subjects

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

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

Based on the table above and also on previous years' results and observations made during the inspection, standards at Key Stage 3 match the national average in the great majority of subjects. They are above average in art, music and religious education, but below in modern foreign languages.

At Key Stage 4, standards of attainment are above average in art, music, history and geography; they are broadly average in mathematics, design and technology, physical education and religious education (examination course). Standards are below average in English, science, modern languages, ICT and non-examined religious education.

In the sixth form, standards are well above average in art, above average in music and geography and broadly in line with national standards in all other subjects.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Satisfactory	good in: art, history, modern languages, music, physical education, religious education	satisfactory in: English, mathematics, science, geography, design and technology, ICT
Years 10-11	Satisfactory	good in: art, mathematics, modern languages, music, religious education	satisfactory in: English, design and technology, geography, history and physical education unsatisfactory in: science and ICT
Sixth form	Good	good in nearly all subjects	satisfactory in: religious education, geography and design and technology
English	Satisfactory		
Mathematics	Good		

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good in formal and informal situations; pupils are sensible and behave well around school and in class.
Attendance	Satisfactory – now just on 90%, so acceptable but with scope for improvement in Year 11.
Ethos*	Sound. There is strong commitment to high standards; strategies for achieving this are working in the sixth form and at Key Stage 3, but not yet at Key Stage 4.
Leadership and management	The school is soundly managed - good direction comes from the senior management team. There are some well-managed, and other less well-led, departments: monitoring of this by the senior management team is not sufficiently effective.
Curriculum	Overall satisfactory. It is good in the sixth form. There are some good developments at Key Stages 3 and 4, but unsatisfactory ICT and religious education provision detract. Too little differentiation in provision is offered at Key Stages 3 and 4.
Pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory provision. There are some strengths but staffing arrangements do not make maximum use of individuals' expertise.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall provision. - Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall. - Teaching staff are well qualified and deployed. - There are too few technicians. - Resources are satisfactory, apart from the library. - Accommodation is broadly satisfactory.
Value for money	Satisfactory. The correspondence between attainment on entry and that at the end of compulsory education is now close:

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve further the educational provision of the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

XX. Improve attainment and progress at Key Stage 4 by spreading the good practice already evident in many areas. Specifically:

- XXI. ensure that a wider range of teaching and learning styles is used;
- XXII. build effective differentiation into teaching to ensure support and challenge for all pupils;
- XXIII. redress the recent decline in boys' attainment compared with that of girls.

(See paragraphs 12, 14, 16, 33, 41, 99, 104, 120, 123, 151)

XXIV. In line with the school's existing priorities, establish greater consistency in the quality of departmental management so that the good practice found in some departments becomes characteristic of all. In particular:

- XXV. re-define the role of the head of department to emphasise the need for positive leadership, consistent practice, and accountability;
- XXVI. set up effective monitoring by the senior management team of the work of heads of department, so that precise targets for improvement are set, with agreed deadlines and decisive corrective action taken if progress is unsatisfactory.

(See paragraphs 74, 106, 123, 153, 194)

XXVII. Complete the process of establishing effective assessment arrangements for Key Stages 3 and 4, so that

- XXVIII. the system is consistently understood by all staff and pupils;
- XXIX. regular and frequent use is made of assessment data to plan work, set goals for pupils and monitor progress.

(See paragraphs 16, 49, 53, 105, 123, 152, 198, 201)

XXX. Improve ICT provision at Key Stages 3 and 4 by substantially increasing the opportunities for pupils to apply and develop ICT across the subjects of the curriculum as a whole.

(See paragraphs 42, 79, 166, 168)

XXXI. Ensure the school makes satisfactory provision for religious education and spiritual development by:

- XXXII. meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of worship and religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form;
- XXXIII. extending the scope for spiritual development across the curriculum at all key stages.

(See paragraphs 42, 45, 54, 55, 79)

In addition, the school should take notice of the need to: meet statutory requirements for ICT assessment at Key Stage 4; improve the resources and the use of the library and

provide more support staff, notably ICT technicians. (See paragraphs 82, 87, 129)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. The school is a large, coeducational 11-18 comprehensive school with 1313 pupils on roll, including 113 in the sixth form. It serves Morley itself, a small industrial and residential town just south of Leeds, as well as drawing pupils from other residential areas in south Leeds.

2. The vast majority of its pupils are white, with 19 pupils of Indian background and 11 from other ethnic minority communities. A significant majority of pupils are drawn from the traditionally working-class areas in Morley, but the percentage of pupils from south Leeds has grown to nearly 35 per cent. However, there is low unemployment amongst parents and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, at 13 per cent, is below average.

3. The prior attainment of pupils entering the school covers a range similar to that nationally in many respects. However, fewer pupils are in the highest-attaining and lowest-attaining categories than might be expected. Average attainment, also, has varied significantly from year to year, though recently a more stable picture has begun to emerge.

4. The 137 pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register represent a low proportion compared with national figures. Of these, 48 are at Stage 3 or above and 30 are the subject of a statement of special needs. The most common category of special need is moderate learning disability. No pupils are subject to disapplication of the National Curriculum. The ratio of girls to boys varies from year to year and appears to reflect no single cause. Girls outnumber boys by 43 overall, with a marked excess over boys in Years 8 and 11 and the sixth form. Boys are more numerous in Year 10. The number of pupils on roll is increasing steadily, having risen from an entry of 206 in 1994 to one of 260 in 1998. Since the formal compilation of statistics for this inspection, the number on roll has reached 1362, with 130 students in the sixth form.

5. A serious fire in December 1996 resulted in extensive damage, discontinuity in use of accommodation for two years and, eventually, impressive new buildings in parts of the school. Its negative impact has been minimised by the efforts of staff to keep the school running as normally as possible during the period in question.

6. The school's main aims are to:

- XXXIV. develop both the academic and personal potential of pupils to the full;
- XXXV. equip pupils for life in a constantly changing society;
- XXXVI. develop an appetite for learning amongst pupils;
- XXXVII. promote self-confidence, self-discipline and self-respect;
- XXXVIII. promote high social, moral and intellectual standards;
- XXXIX. create a community based on concern and respect for others and good personal relationships;
- XL. promote the school's role in receiving from and serving the local area.

7. Currently the school is focusing its attention on:

- XLI. raising attainment, especially at Key Stages 3 and 4;
- XLII. fine-tuning the policies on behaviour and discipline;
- XLIII. continuing development in the modern languages, mathematics and science departments;
- XLIV. improving attendance at Key Stage 4;

XLV.improving ICT provision;
XLVI.developing the whole school approach to assessment;
XLVII.continuing with a range of building and environmental improvements.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	126	111	237

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	81	78	85
	Girls	92	77	72
	Total	173	155	157
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	74	66	67
	National	65	60	56
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	46	41	31
	National	35	36	27

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	49	78	88
	Girls	69	79	82
	Total	118	157	170
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	50	67	73
	National	62	64	62
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	22	31	34
	National	31	37	31

Attainment at Key Stage 4¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	100	107	207

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	32	77	86
	Girls	48	86	95
	Total	80	163	181
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	39 (31)	79 (80)	87(84)
	National	44.6 (44.3)	89.8 (88.5)	95.2

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	0	na
National		na

Attainment in the Sixth Form²

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:

Year	Male	Female	Total
1998	35	21	56

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	21.5	18.3	20.5	0.9	0.3	0.7
National	na	na	17.6	na	na	2.8

Number entered for the IB Diploma, and percentage of *such students* who achieved this qualification:

	Number	% Success rate
School	na	na
National		na

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of *such students* who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	% Success Rate
School	na	na
National		79.1

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	8.3
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.6
	National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	159
Permanent	4

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	13
Satisfactory or better	97.5
Less than satisfactory	2.5

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

8. Overall, attainment in the school is in line with national standards and pupils make sound progress. There are some important differences, however, between key stages and between subjects.

9. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 broadly match national averages. In terms solely of National Curriculum assessments in 1998, standards were above average for the core subjects, English, mathematics and science. Compared with schools with a similar intake of pupils, the 1998 English and science standards were well above average, while in mathematics, standards were above average. However, on the basis of test results for the last three years in these subjects, standards are broadly average, with 1998 appearing as an exceptional year.

10. In pupils' work observed during the inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were in line with national averages. In English, pupils speak with confidence; some answer questions in detail. Lower-attaining pupils convey simple ideas clearly. Reading standards are good. Most pupils write with accuracy and high-attaining pupils write confidently and imaginatively. In mathematics, pupils are secure in their understanding of number, shape and space. They show a good grasp of algebra and are confident in handling data and using and applying mathematics. In science, higher-attaining pupils show considerable skill in experimental work. Life processes are soundly grasped by the majority of pupils. There is a satisfactory understanding of materials and their properties. Pupils understand physical processes and were able, for example, to see the difference between voltage and current in electrical circuits.

11. Amongst the other subjects of the curriculum, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above average in art, music and religious education. This reflects a positive combination of good teaching and sustained and strong departmental leadership in these subjects. Standards in modern foreign languages are below average. They are improving rapidly, however, redressing the influence of a previous period of under-performance in French. In all other subjects attainment is broadly in line with national standards.

12. At the end of Key Stage 4 overall attainment is below average. In 1998 39 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A* to C GCSE grades or GNVQ equivalent, compared to 45 per cent nationally, and the points score per pupil was 29.7 compared to 36.8 nationally. Compared with schools with a similar level of free school meals (fsm) the 1998 figures are well below average. Currently the school is just inside a different fsm category and similar results would now appear as above average. These figures, and three-year averages for GCSE/GNVQ, suggest that attainment at Key Stage 4 is well below average, but there is an upward trend in results, continued in 1999's figures and confirmed by observations during the inspection week. Current pupils' work scrutinised by inspectors and observed during lessons in Year 11 is collectively below, rather than well below average. Indeed, in several subjects current standards are above average: this applies to music, history and geography. In other subjects, standards broadly match national ones, notably in art, physical education, design and technology, religious education (examined course) and mathematics, while standards are below average in English, modern languages, science,

ICT and the non-examined religious education course. This inconsistency confirms a trend in GCSE results: while collectively they produce below or well below average points scores, many individual subjects regularly achieve average or above average standards. This was true for mathematics, art and design, music, German, geography and history in 1998. Other subjects, including English, science and French, depressed the overall position with below-average results in 1998.

13. At the end of sixth form education, standards of attainment are above average. The points score for A/AS level has averaged 19.2 from 1996 to 1998, compared with 17.2 nationally. Equally, advanced GNVQ point scores in the school for 1998 at 15.0 are well above the national average of 10.9. Despite the depressed 1999 A/AS results, the longer established trend has been upward since 1995. Amongst current Year 13 students, attainment broadly matches national standards in the majority of subjects. However, attainment in art is well above average and in music and geography it is above average. Only in the non-examined religious education courses are standards below expectations.

14. The trends in attainment over time are variable at Key Stage 3, generally upward from a low base at Key Stage 4 and one of consistency at post-16. There is no clear single cause at each key stage, but the overall monitoring of attainment has been a strength at the post-16 stage, while it has been less effectively used at Key Stages 3 and 4. Girls' attainment is better than that of boys at Key Stage 3, and significantly better at GCSE. The school used to have a narrower gap than was found nationally but in the last two years the performance of boys has deteriorated relative to the national trend.

15. Progress for pupils and students as a whole is satisfactory. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, though extensive data of high reliability has not been available within the school until recently. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils have maintained a position at least in line with national averages, so that progress is satisfactory. This is also true of the lessons and work scrutinised during the inspection: for the vast majority of subjects, progress is satisfactory, while for art, music, mathematics, physical education and religious education, progress is good.

16. However, at Key Stage 4, progress is unsatisfactory. Collectively, pupils attain below average at the end of Key Stage 4, despite matching averages at the previous key stage, so that overall, there is too little progress. Progress at Key Stage 4 suffers because, while the motivation of pupils, especially that of boys, is slightly weaker than at the adjacent key stages, the managers of some departments are not adjusting provision to counteract this trend. There is too little consistency in assessing, setting targets and monitoring attainment regularly, and teaching and learning strategies in some subjects lack the variety and imagination found in others. As a result, there are marked contrasts in the progress achieved by different subjects. In several, current progress in lessons as well as between Key Stages 3 and 4 is above average. This is true in art, history, music, geography and mathematics. In other subjects there is broadly satisfactory progress, notably in modern foreign languages, design and technology, physical education and the examined religious education course. Progress is unsatisfactory, however, in English, science, ICT and the non-examined religious education course.

17. At Key Stages 3 and 4, special needs pupils make good progress in literacy, which leads to satisfactory progress across the whole curriculum. Attainment is in line with expectation and occasionally better.

18. Progress in the sixth form is good. Students build effectively on their learning at Key Stage 4 and achieve results which in most years are collectively well above national

averages. Among the individual subjects, there is good progress in art, music, geography and mathematics and it is satisfactory in all other subjects except the non-examined religious education module. Students' attainment on entry is well known and their subsequent progress very systematically monitored in the sixth form; coupled with consistently good teaching, the good progress made is clearly explicable.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

19. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. They listen and concentrate well, respond to teachers' instructions and accept class routines. Most pupils respond eagerly to questions and listen to each other as well as to their teachers. Many take pride in the presentation of their work. In most subjects, there is little opportunity for pupils to develop independent study skills. Limited library books available for loan and restricted access to ICT across the curriculum curtail chances for pupils to pursue personal study. Sixth form students work diligently in their selected subjects and respond well to the more adult approach teachers adopt with them. They show initiative and understand the need to undertake their own research and investigation in both advanced level and GNVQ subjects.

20. Pupils' behaviour in the classroom and around the school is usually good and staff and pupils feel that the assertive discipline policy has helped to improve general behaviour. Although fixed term exclusions increased rapidly after the introduction of the assertive discipline policy, subsequent review of the system has reduced numbers so that only about 20 pupils were excluded during the summer term. The use of the internal exclusion unit has also decreased. At lesson changeover time, most pupils behave sensibly. Most are considerate of each other and respect the fact that opinions and beliefs may differ. Pupils are usually courteous to adults and to each other. They are trusted to move around school and be in school without conspicuous adult supervision. Rooms and displays are well cared for and there is very little graffiti. However, pupils show less respect for the external environment where thought has been given to providing social seating with plants and shrubs to make an attractive area for pupils to socialise at break and lunchtime. Although there is more than adequate provision of bins, large amounts of litter are dropped on the ground and outdoor sports areas.

21. Relationships between pupils and adults and amongst pupils and students themselves are good. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions and are mostly respectful. They work together in small groups and are willing to help each other. There are particularly good examples of pupils collaborating in Year 11 GCSE music and exceptionally good mutual support in the same subject amongst A level students. Pupils have little fear of aggression or bullying and they are confident that any incidents will be dealt with quickly and fairly. The few pupils from ethnic minorities are fully involved in all aspects of school life and their values and beliefs respected. Year 10 pupils spend two weeks on work experience at the end of the summer term and most return with glowing reports from their temporary employers.

22. Overall, the scope for personal development is sound. In the sixth form, there are many opportunities to take on responsibility and leadership. All students are prefects, four are elected as head girl and boy and deputies and others are house captains. The sixth form council makes many suggestions to the head of the sixth form and the whole sixth form is expected to take care of their common room. They organise charity events for the school and help with reading for younger pupils. In extra-curricular music, older students and pupils help those who are less experienced. A whole-school council operates along similar lines. However, in Years 7 to 11 pupils are offered fewer opportunities to assume responsibility than are commonly found in similar schools.

23. The attitudes of special needs pupils to all aspects of school life are good; their relationships with mainstream peers are positive and show a great deal of mutual tolerance.

Attendance

24. At 90 per cent, attendance is just satisfactory. Both authorised and unauthorised absence are slightly above national average figures. There was a very high rate of unauthorised absence in the previous Year 11, which affected the whole school's statistics. The majority of parents do keep school informed of reasons for absence but a small minority do not give adequate explanation and the school is strict about its interpretation of unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive punctually to school and to lessons. Students in Years 12 and 13 are expected to attend punctually each day and to be in school at all times unless they have free periods at the end of the day. Computerised registers are clearly marked and clerical arrangements for the recording and reporting of attendance and punctuality are good.

25. The statutory requirements for the reporting of attendance to parents in the Governors' Annual Report and school prospectus are met.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

26. Teaching in the school is sound overall, though within this there is much which is good. Aspects of planning by some teachers are, however, not satisfactory.

27. In the lessons observed during the inspection week, nearly 97.5 per cent had satisfactory or better teaching. About 40 per cent had good teaching and in a further 13 per cent it was very good or excellent. About 2.5 per cent of lessons had unsatisfactory teaching.

28. At both Key Stages 3 and 4, teaching quality broadly follows the pattern for the school as a whole, with sound teaching overall, a very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching but much which is good. In the sixth form, teaching is predominantly good and during the inspection week no lessons had unsatisfactory teaching. Of the lessons seen by inspectors at Key Stage 3, 54 per cent had satisfactory teaching, 34 per cent good teaching and nine per cent very good or excellent. In three per cent, teaching was unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 4, satisfactory teaching was found in 38 per cent of lessons, with 42 per cent good and 16 per cent very good or excellent. Again, three per cent had unsatisfactory teaching. In the sixth form, 33 per cent of lessons had satisfactory teaching, 54 per cent good teaching and 13 per cent very good or excellent.

29. Teaching quality varies between subjects. At Key Stage 3, the broad judgement is that good teaching is typical in art, modern languages, history, physical education, music and religious education. It is satisfactory in mathematics, geography, design and technology, ICT, English and science. At Key Stage 4, overall teaching quality is good in art, music, modern languages, mathematics and religious education. It is satisfactory in English, geography, design and technology, history, and physical education. In science,

teaching at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory in quality, while in ICT it is unsatisfactory because there is too little teaching across the curriculum for the position to be judged satisfactory.

30. Teaching in the sixth form is good in art, modern languages, English, mathematics, history, music, science, physical education and the GNVQ subjects. It is satisfactory in design and technology, geography and religious education.

31. It is clear from the lessons observed during the inspection that many features of day-to-day teaching are strong. There is good subject expertise evident at both Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the sixth form it is predominantly very good. Similarly, the management of pupils and students is good across the school. These two factors alone are sufficient to explain why very few lessons had unsatisfactory teaching, and in none was it poor or very poor. Other features help support teaching quality: homework is well used at all key stages, for example.

32. Teachers' expectations are good in the sixth form, while at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 they are satisfactory overall. They are suitably challenging in many subjects, for example, art, music, mathematics, modern foreign languages and religious education, but less so in others, for example, science and English. The use of time and resources and the quality of day-to-day marking are two other areas in which practice in the sixth form is generally good, while at Key Stages 3 and 4 there are strengths and weaknesses. Those subjects which have good overall teaching are generally those with consistent and positive marking of work, an efficient use of lesson time and a good variety of resources.

33. A few aspects of teaching are less successful. While the planning of lessons is good in the sixth form, where it matches the students' needs, it is unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. The same is true for the range of strategies and styles used by teachers. At Key Stages 3 and 4, subjects with good overall teaching plan for and use a wide range of engaging strategies including whole-class, group and paired work, high levels of pupil participation and different approaches and levels of demand for pupils of different aptitude or prior attainment. In many subjects, however, these have yet to become common or established features of practice.

34. There are many times when teachers combine strong features to produce good lessons and some individuals do this consistently. In a very well taught mathematics lesson with Year 11, the teacher gave a very clear verbal explanation of the topic and helped pupils of differing ability by putting simple well-constructed material on the board. He took careful note of the response of pupils, reacting swiftly with praise and encouragement where progress was rapid and giving individual help and a re-wording of instructions to those with problems.

35. A geography lesson with Year 7 surveying the school grounds had very good teaching: all pupils were actively involved throughout; they were challenged at the correct levels by careful and persistent questioning and the lesson proceeded at a brisk pace. There was very good teaching in a Year 13 music lesson in which a crucial factor was the very careful marking of previous work and the way this was used to help set objectives for the future. There was a very good rapport with the students, who were highly motivated by the dynamic and well-structured teaching. In a very well taught Year 10 art lesson on still life drawing, expectations were high; skills were demonstrated to the whole class and to individuals; excellent informal feedback was provided by the teacher throughout the lesson so that the progress of individuals and groups was promoted effectively.

36. Where teaching is less successful, the weaknesses are generally the level of

expectation and variety of activity. For example, in an unsatisfactory Year 10 science lesson introducing acid and alkali equations, the pace was slow and the material did not build effectively on previous learning; there was too little variety in tasks and levels of challenge to motivate pupils of differing aptitude. Pupils worked in silence throughout the lesson with little scope for them to participate actively. In a Year 11 physical education lesson with unsatisfactory teaching, while subject knowledge was secure, the match between the tasks set and the skill levels of pupils was weak; the teacher's introduction took too long and reduced the scope for pupils to practise the necessary range of activities. In a Year 8 science lesson, where the teacher's expertise and class control were good, the unsatisfactory element was the failure to involve pupils effectively in discussion before proceeding to the main task: it was not clearly understood by some pupils and the graph drawing task was too difficult for many.

37. Teaching in many subjects is already a strength of the school, but equally good use of teaching strategies is required of the remaining subjects if attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 is to rise.

38. The specialist teaching of literacy, which is based on accurate diagnosis of difficulties and the use of appropriate materials and techniques, is good. In the wider curriculum, there is a lot of variation. Special needs are well provided for where setting allows teachers to provide suitable work and to use appropriate teaching methods. In classes where there is a range of attainment, special needs pupils rely on the teachers' ability to provide individualised work of a suitable nature. In modern languages, suitable work is well provided. In mathematics, history, technology, art, music and physical education, provision is satisfactory. Provision is poor in science, geography, English and religious education. All teachers show sensitivity to the problems of special needs pupils but many lack the technical expertise to meet the needs of such pupils, particularly ones who have very weak literacy skills. The in-class support by ancillary staff is very effective when properly incorporated by the teacher into the lesson plan.

The curriculum and assessment

39. Overall, the breadth and balance of the curriculum are satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. It satisfies statutory requirements in most respects, is strong in some, but has deficiencies regarding religious education and information technology. Equality of access for boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 due to inadequate differentiation in a number of subjects. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good in the sixth form. Planning for progression and continuity is satisfactory overall at Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form.

40. The curriculum policy statement sets out the purpose and structure of the curriculum clearly. Differentiation in the curriculum is an expectation of the policy, but the emergence during this inspection of its inadequacy in a number of subjects at Key Stage 3 indicates that effective implementation does not always result. The ultimate responsibility of governors for the curriculum is clearly documented, as are the responsibilities of the governors' curriculum sub-committee. Individual governors are now linked with specific departments, though this linkage has yet to become fully operational. The overall curriculum organisation allows departments to introduce setting if and when they feel it to be in the pupils' best interests and the system allows for considerable flexibility.

41. At Key Stage 3, the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are being satisfactorily implemented on the whole, but there are a few deficiencies in individual subjects. Cross-curricular aspects of ICT are inadequately co-ordinated and there

are weaknesses in the use of ICT in English and art, though the discrete course is satisfactory. Too little drama is provided within English. Physical education is taught in single-sex groups with dance only available to girls; the creative aspects of the subject are insufficiently developed for boys. Differentiation is inadequate in English, science, physical education and geography. The overall match of the Key Stage 3 curriculum to National Curriculum requirements in modern languages has significantly improved since the previous inspection. The introduction of the GCSE course in religious education to Year 9 provides a good match for the needs of pupils and is having a beneficial effect upon attainment. There are some difficulties in establishing links with Key Stage 2, due in part to the number of partner junior schools, and this is reflected in unsatisfactory progression and continuity from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 in some subjects, such as English, science and geography, though others, such as music, have established good links. A major initiative has begun to establish links with the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators in the feeder schools and there are plans for Year 7 English teachers to visit Year 6 classes. The time reduction for physical education in Year 9 has a serious impact on continuity and progression and impedes attainment.

42. At Key Stage 4, overall curriculum provision is also satisfactory. National Curriculum requirements are met in most respects. However, ICT is unsatisfactory except for the discrete provision to lower mathematics sets who have additional ICT with a time reduction for mathematics. The provision for religious education is also unsatisfactory, preventing the full delivery of the local agreed syllabus, and is thus in breach of statutory requirements. Breadth and balance are satisfactory overall. Alternatives to GCSE are available in several subjects and full GNVQ part 1 is available in Year 10 in health and social care, and leisure and tourism. In Year 11, in health and social care only GNVQ modules are available. There is no GCSE drama course but the aesthetic curriculum is enhanced by the provision of a successful expressive arts GCSE course. Schemes of work are inadequate for GCSE history. There is no GCSE course in physical education/sports studies. The time-tabling of optional subjects substantially meets the demands of pupil choice.

43. Equality of access and opportunity is better than at Key Stage 3 with fewer problems with differentiation. Departmental planning for continuity and progression from Key Stage 3, within the key stage, and preparation for post-16 is good overall but there are some inadequacies from Key Stage 3 to 4 in science and geography.

44. There have been a number of improvements since the previous inspection, including those in modern languages, where a one-year course in Spanish for Year 11 has been introduced. Also, the provision of an alternative curriculum for disaffected pupils is an imaginative innovation and already seems to be more effectively meeting the needs of these pupils in Year 10. In addition, a useful role is played by the Creative Arts Partnership in Education initiative - a partnership between the LEA, the school, the National Lottery and the private sector to establish and increase an awareness of creativity across the curriculum. Targeted pupils, including some with behavioural problems, have been introduced to the application of creativity across the curriculum through the use of resident poets and drama workshops.

45. The post-16 curriculum is good in almost all respects. It is possible to mix A levels with advanced GNVQ courses. However, the provision of religious education in the sixth form was found to be unsatisfactory in the previous inspection and this remains the case. The time allocation for two-year students does not allow effective delivery of the agreed syllabus and there is no provision at all for one-year students, thus putting the school in breach of statutory requirements.

46. Provision for personal, social and health education is effective at all stages and statutory requirements for health, sex and drugs education are met. Careers education and guidance are very good with effective provision of work experience, assisted by developing links with industry.

47. Extra-curricular provision is very good overall. In physical education, there are good levels of activities with a wide range of inter-school competitions. The school recently received the Sportsmark award. There is, however, a tendency for boys to have greater opportunities than girls in this area. Extra-curricular opportunities in music are exceptionally good with a large take-up for well-taught instrumental lessons. There are many opportunities for singers and players to perform in a wide range of ensembles and genres. Productions are of a high standard and involve very large numbers of pupils. The stage band has toured abroad and received a National Lottery award to make a recorded CD. There is a wide range of other clubs and activities in such areas as history, foreign languages and science and for sixth formers in general.

48. All special needs pupils have full access to the mainstream curriculum and a very effective paired-reading scheme is provided by the ancillary staff and sixth formers. The new course introduced this year at Key Stage 4 has greatly improved the learning opportunities for special needs pupils. Identification of special needs pupils is thorough. The special needs department constructs individual education plans, which are well used to plan the specialised teaching within the special needs department, but they do not yet form a structured basis for teaching in the wider curriculum. Pupils' progress within the special needs department is carefully monitored and assessment is well used to modify schemes of work. Monitoring and co-ordinating of the progress of special needs pupils across the curriculum are weak.

49. The last inspection identified "an urgent need to address the shortcomings and inconsistencies in assessment, recording and reporting." Some progress has been made in this respect but it has been too slow. A whole-school policy for assessment is now in place and has been operational since January of this year. This policy overlays a previous policy which was proving unsatisfactory. It is not, as yet, sufficiently well established and understood to be as effective as it should be. There are inconsistencies in some subject areas, for example science and geography. Although the policy is adhered to by the mathematics, design and technology and modern languages departments, some staff in other departments find the assessment grades for Key Stage 3, in particular, confusing. Some teachers, in the English department and in other subjects not nationally assessed at Key Stage 3, are not secure in their judgements when comparing pupils' performance against national standards. Hence the operation of the policy is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, teachers are more secure in their judgements of the pupils' work in relation to established GCSE standards. Whole-school assessment at this stage is satisfactory. Assessment in the sixth form is good. Students are given an estimated minimum grade upon entry and are then interviewed individually following regular tests. They are set targets for achievement and parents are kept informed.

50. The school now receives useful information on reading scores and a full breakdown of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test scores for pupils transferring from primary school. This stills fails, however, to supply information about the pupils' full range of cognitive abilities which many similar schools measure and evaluate. Some departments, for instance mathematics, make good use of this information, but others do not. Too long a period elapsed during which the school had seriously inadequate data about pupils' attainment on entry to the school: these year groups have been insufficiently monitored, with staff ill-prepared to respond effectively to their academic needs.

51. The quality of day-to-day assessment also varies from department to department. In English, for example, marking is thorough with detailed comments. In geography, an imprecise policy leads to inconsistent marking, with too little guidance for pupils on how to improve.

52. The pupil performance data produced at Key Stage 3 and for GCSE is now being analysed to compare departmental results. Each department is furnished with the results of each individual compared with their average result in all other subjects. This information should prove useful in enhancing performance.

53. The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is good in a minority of departments. This is especially true of modern foreign languages, where assessments are used to agree standards in all years and staff discuss the meanings of each level. However, planning based on assessment is poor in many subjects, including English, science, geography and physical education where it does not include sufficiently rigorous analysis of strengths and weaknesses to enable useful decisions to be taken.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

54. The school makes satisfactory provision overall for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Its aims are promoted by staff and improvements have been made to the time allowance for school assemblies. There is still, however, no arrangement for a daily act of worship and the assemblies are moral rather than spiritual occasions. The school remains in breach of statute on this matter. "Thought for the week" which was introduced to support spiritual development does not fulfil this purpose and on the occasions when it is carried out by some staff its subject is not appropriate, for example the introduction of the new recording system in the library. An excellent assembly was observed on martyrdom, "Paying the price", which linked the past with current events through drama, performed by a Year 8 history class.

55. Little opportunity for spiritual development was seen in lessons, though some exceptions were noted. Music provided an opportunity for spirituality and in geography pupils were able to reflect on the earth's origins, future, diversity and beauty. Religious education makes a significant contribution by asking pupils to consider how truths conveyed through the world's major religions impact on the moral and social issues of our time. Also, the school's war memorial was re-dedicated, followed by an evening dedicated to memories of the First World War. In history, through a study of this same period, pupils experience poignant moments during their visit to the battle fields at Ypres and to the graves of ex-Morley High students who died there. In general, however, despite an awareness-raising exercise after the last inspection, staff are failing to recognise the opportunities for pupils' spiritual development offered by their subject and their responsibility for promoting it.

56. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school has a clear message on discipline and its ethos clearly supports its statement of aims. There is a clearly recognised and implemented system of rewards and sanctions for behaviour, work and attendance, and rewards are publicly distributed at assemblies and at the annual prize day, which pupils report has a positive effect upon them. Assemblies often take a moral lead and personal and social development lessons give rise to discussion of moral issues. In many departments, the staff are good role models, encouraging and promoting positive attitudes and actions. Some subjects include moral issues in their schemes of work, such as consideration of the unequal distribution of the world's resources in geography, care for the

environment in religious education and equal opportunities issues in the study of the play "Blabber mouth" in English. The school raises money for charities, including taking part in the annual poppy day appeal and Comic Relief, through events such as non-uniform days and music performances. The sixth form take on prefects' responsibilities and 22 of them worked with local primary schools in support of a Leeds United sponsored IT/numeracy initiative. The joint initiative with the police, the "After Dark Disco" which provides drug, alcohol and smoke-free discos, is well supported and links with the police are strong. A group of students recently became runners-up in a nation-wide competition to contribute to the community, by promoting security measures for older citizens.

57. Opportunities for the social development of pupils are good, with activities such as theatre trips and outdoor activities in the Lake District, visits to London and the USA, France, Belgium, Germany and skiing in Italy. The school runs a breakfast club and the sixth form runs its tuck shop. Issues for discussion can be raised at the school council. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities and a large proportion of the pupils benefit from them. There is a wide range of sports teams, house drama and sporting competitions and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award group.

58. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Through the European Awareness Initiative the school has sought to develop its links with Europe and exchange visits take place with schools in Germany and France. Trips in England include visits to the ancient city of Lincoln and to Dunham Massey where pupils experience life as it was in the past. As well as the many musical activities available, pupils visit the theatre regularly. Good opportunities for cultural development exist in the school but there are insufficient opportunities to experience cultures other than those of western European origin. In English, books lack a multi-cultural element and in religious education, art and assemblies in particular, opportunities are missed to celebrate the multi-cultural nature of the world.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

59. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development. A strong, stable pastoral team ensures that pupils are well known to more than one member of staff. In a carefully planned transfer policy, incoming pupils meet several members of the school staff and visit the school on a number of occasions before they start full-time. Personal and social education in Years 7 to 9 is taught by form tutors, which gives them further insight into their pupils and enables them to monitor personal development closely. Tutor time in Year 7 is well used, but in other year groups the time is mostly used for routine administration whilst pupils talk to each other. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are well supported by specialist teachers to enable them to make the right decision for the next stage in their education. Support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Careers education is very well planned and taught with good support from the careers service. Pupils and sixth form students are given good guidance to help them make decisions about their future education and careers.

60. Procedures for child protection are very secure. There is a thorough, well-taught programme of personal and social education through which pupils are given guidance on how to protect themselves and to be aware of the need to help others.

61. The school takes its duty of care for pupils seriously and the concern for day-to-day welfare of pupils is very evident. Health and safety is given a high priority and risk assessments are carried out. The school caretaker is extremely safety-conscious and has undertaken to improve many systems and procedures. First aid is administered with care

and sensitivity and good records are kept. The needs of pupils with specific medical conditions are made known to all staff. The dining room is well organised and sociable and pupils can choose from a wide range of food. At the request of the school council, breakfast is now also available and many pupils appreciate this service.

62. All special needs pupils are fully and successfully integrated into the normal pastoral system, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. The pastoral staff provides any additional support needed. Medical/therapeutic support is effectively provided according to need. The nature of the special needs base and the organisation of staff effectively prevent it from being the valuable refuge it should be for pupils experiencing problems at unscheduled times during the day.

Partnership with parents and the community

63. The school has established a good partnership with parents and the wider community. It believes in fostering close links with parents and keeps regular contact by telephone and letter. Staff alert parents early to any potential problems. Information for parents in the prospectus and governors' annual report is well presented and tells parents what they need to know about day-to-day life in the school. More specific information is given for parents of pupils in Year 9 on options choices and for students entering the sixth form. The student planner contains good information about the code of conduct and assertive discipline policy and most parents sign the diary weekly. Reports tell parents what their children know, understand and can do and set some targets for improvement. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are adequately informed of their children's progress and appropriately involved in annual reviews.

64. Parents of all pupils on the register of special educational needs are informed and involved through the normal system of reports and parents' evenings. Annual reviews of statements fully involve parents and other agencies.

65. There is a satisfactory level of parental involvement in pupils' learning, and parents comment favourably on their relationships with the school. Parents invited by the school to discuss their child individually usually attend and staff will visit in the home if necessary. Attendance at parents' evenings is quite good, with greater interest being shown for specific meetings such as Year 7 open evening, Year 9 options evening and in the sixth form. Parents are very supportive of school concerts and productions in which their children are performing. The Morley High School Association is run by a small, dedicated group of parents and staff. Although support for their events is sporadic, they raise significant amounts of money for school.

66. The pupils' education is successfully enriched by links with the community. There are good relationships with the main partner primary schools through the Family of Schools, which has recently embarked on a number of projects to improve curricular links for literacy and numeracy and transfer procedures. The school offers its ICT suite to primary schools in the summer term and there is a strong, shared music tradition. Many pupils and students participate in sporting activities and are members of sports clubs in the area.

67. There is a close working relationship with the police, which benefits the school, pupils and the community. The police also deliver the drugs education section of Year 9 personal and social education curriculum and help with safety training. The Lifestyles project run during the summer is a community project.

68. Pupils' awareness of the needs of the local and wider community is raised by their

charity work. They raise money for charities such as Barnardos, Oxfam, Shelter and a children's hospice. Pupils put together Christmas parcels and sixth form students take younger pupils to deliver them to needy people in the area.

69. Links with industry are growing. Local companies and businesses take Year 10 on work experience; outside speakers from industry visit to speak to pupils and students in careers lessons and for a sixth form industry day; a major store holds sessions for staff and pupils both on its premises and in school; there has been some sponsorship of the efforts to improve the outdoor environment of the school.

70. The school is very aware of its close proximity to the town and encourages pupils to be considerate in the neighbourhood at all times.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

71. The school is soundly managed and many aspects of leadership are good, but the monitoring of teaching and of middle management is not yet satisfactory.

72. The headteacher and other senior managers, with appropriate support from governors, give the school a good sense of educational direction. For instance, the school's aims and many specific objectives are clearly defined and staff are well aware of the school's priorities, having been extensively consulted over them from the outset. Many heads of department are also giving a strong lead on whole school matters as well as the specific needs of their subjects.

73. At the time of the last inspection the school senior management structure was criticised, but the number of senior managers has since been reduced and their roles are now fully appropriate and clearly defined. New appointments plus well-established post-holders provide the required blend of innovation and continuity.

74. The monitoring of teaching and of middle management is not yet satisfactory. While many heads of department observe staff in their department and provide other forms of support and monitoring, the extent and quality of this activity are inconsistent. This allows some departments to acquire a strong sense of corporate identity, united behind an effective leader, consistent in all major aspects of practice and committed to well-planned improvement, while others function simply as a group of independent professionals with too little consistency and no rigorously applied strategies for improvement as a team. Despite several valuable mechanisms for the senior management team to oversee the work of heads of department, their monitoring is not yet sufficiently effective. Well-led departments can and do flourish but others are not monitored closely enough for their modest performance or more significant limitations to be spotted in good time and acted upon decisively. Senior managers are not placing sufficient urgency and accountability on some heads of department in the school's drive for improvement.

75. Monitoring and support of the curriculum are satisfactory. Despite some shortcomings in ICT and religious education provision, there has been some well-judged extension of the curriculum to include more vocational courses and a newly introduced alternative curriculum for less well motivated pupils at Key Stage 4.

76. Overall, the school's aims and values are successfully implemented. This reflects

the clarity of educational direction and the successful communication of aims and values across the staff as a whole. Policies vary in the way they are implemented, partly because some are more established than others but largely because monitoring of policy implementation is not yet satisfactory. For example, the assertive discipline policy has been well implemented, while whole-school assessment policy has yet to achieve sufficient consistency in the understanding and practice of staff.

77. There is a sound ethos in the school. Staff, parents, governors and most pupils are committed to high standards. The strategies for achieving this already work well in terms of pupils' behaviour and social development, and in many academic areas, but they are not sufficiently effective in producing high attainment at Key Stage 4 as a whole.

78. The school's overall development planning is sound. Aspects of it are indeed good, for example the degree of consultation with staff, and the detailed definition of aims and success criteria. Plans are less precise about deadlines for completion of tasks or the monitoring of progress towards completion. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. On some matters there has been good improvement, for example, in sustaining and developing the positive relationships between staff and pupils and in maintaining high standards in the sixth form. Insufficient progress has been made on others, such as promoting spiritual development, religious education and the act of worship. There is satisfactory capacity for future improvement, especially given the recent appointments made at senior management team and head of department levels.

79. Governors contribute effective strategic oversight of the school's work. They help shape and prioritise plans and a sufficient number visit the school often enough to acquire an accurate picture of its day-to-day operation as a community. They monitor financial and educational activities effectively and fulfil their statutory duties in virtually all respects; they are aware of the need to ensure that ICT at Key Stage 4 and religious education at Key Stage 4 and post-16 meet statutory requirements.

80. In relation to special needs provision, the governing body fulfils all statutory requirements and the nominated governor is very supportive. Parents are informed about the special needs policy, practice and effectiveness through the school prospectus, the governors' annual report and the work of the designated governor. The management of special needs provision within the department and the administration of the special needs code of practice are good. Management of provision across the curriculum, which operates through a system of representatives for different departments, is inconsistent.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

81. The match of number, qualifications and experience of teachers to the demands of the curriculum at both key stages and in the sixth form is satisfactory overall. Teachers are well qualified in their subjects and there is a satisfactory balance between newer and more experienced teachers. However, the overall number of teachers is barely sufficient to cover the demands of the curriculum, even with the employment of a considerable number of teachers on a part-time basis. Since the last inspection, staffing levels have deteriorated further, and average class sizes have also increased. The school acknowledges the need to address this problem. The relatively small amount of teachers' non-contact time is unequally distributed. Heads of year now have more non-contact time, as recommended in the last inspection report, but most teachers have above-average teaching loads with, in many cases, little time allowed for essential non-teaching roles. There are sufficient special needs teachers who are relevantly qualified and very experienced. The school makes good use of visiting instrumental teachers in music.

82. The match of number, qualifications and experience of support staff to the demands of the curriculum is less than satisfactory. Levels of technician support in practical subjects are low for the size of school, which places additional burdens on teaching staff. It also limits the development of the use of ICT across the curriculum. This shortcoming was mentioned in the last report. The school proposes to improve the situation shortly. Levels of extra support in class for pupils with special educational needs are well above average. Administration and clerical staffing levels are average for the size of school and these staff play a significant part in the smooth running of the school. Caretaking staffing is sufficient to ensure good upkeep of the school buildings. The school is well provided with ancillary staff who have a wide range of experience and skills, have good access to in-service training and who contribute a great deal to the education and the quality of life of the special needs pupils.

83. Arrangements for the professional development of both teaching and non-teaching staff are good. The school has made good improvements since the 1994 inspection. Appraisal is now an integral part of staff development. Procedures are good, and there is a well thought-out programme, efficiently supervised and managed. It caters for both teaching and non-teaching staff. In-service training is satisfactorily linked to school development plans, and a clear and detailed record is kept. The arrangements for the supervision of newly qualified teachers and those new to the school are satisfactory. Details of staff development appear in the termly reports to governors.

84. The school is situated in an urban setting close to roads and industrial sites. It has taken steps to improve the external site, with a tree planting programme and the creation of a picnic area. The school is small for the number of pupils on roll, but the internal fabric has significantly improved since the last inspection. The school now has satisfactory accommodation, with many good features, for the effective delivery of the curriculum. To cope with growing numbers of pupils, a major building programme has created many new and well-equipped classrooms. However, a significant number of curriculum areas still have small classroom spaces and face difficulties with large pupil groups. The school has recently had to cope with a major fire and new buildings to replace fire damage are now in place. A modern and spacious school hall, dining room and changing rooms greatly enhance the school accommodation. The school buildings are connected by a number of narrow corridors but a one-way system and good behaviour by pupils go a long way to diminish this problem. The external site is free of vandalism, but there is a significant amount of litter, especially on the games playing areas.

85. Many subjects have good specialist facilities, grouped together for easy access and communication. Major refurbishment has improved facilities for technical aspects of science, technology and music. However, science, music and art still have small classroom spaces and face restrictions when coping with large classes and extra-curricular groups. The mathematics, English, modern languages, religious education, history and geography areas have spacious and well-decorated rooms. Good use is made of pupils' displayed work. Physical education has suffered from the fire damage, but now has a good range of internal and external specialist facilities. Further adaptation is needed to make maximum use of the school hall for activities such as dance. The school presently has an inadequate area in which to teach pupils who are withdrawn for special education needs.

86. Provision of learning resources is satisfactory overall, but with a number of deficiencies in some areas. The school's modest allocation of funds to learning resources matches its modest income per pupil. Consequently, most teaching departments have not been able to build up an extensive range of learning materials to use in the classroom,

although most subjects have access to audio visual equipment and overhead projectors. Some departments, such as modern languages, have a satisfactory range of textbooks but a shortage of individual books for pupils to take home. In many subjects, such as history, there are few resources for class reference and there is an over-use of photocopied worksheets. The book stock in English is very dated and there are few multi-cultural texts. The absence of texts for pupils to take home and lack of classroom-based learning materials contribute in some subjects to a narrow range of teaching methods.

87. Staff have worked hard since the last inspection to improve the library. It is pleasantly decorated and has been refurbished. A start has been made to re-stock with a wide range of fiction and subject-based texts. The library contains five networked PCs, one of which has Internet access, and there is a growing stock of CD ROMs. However, the library capitation has not kept pace with the need to improve the book stock. Most of the texts are for reference only, which severely limits the use that pupils make of the library. The room is too small and often it is used as a walkway from the sixth form area. The library has not developed into a learning resource centre for the whole school. Few departments, other than English and modern languages, explicitly require their pupils to use the library to search for information.

88. For pupils with special educational needs, learning resources, including printed materials, are inadequate. The provision of computer-based learning materials for these pupils is very poor. The school is not well equipped for people with ambulatory problems.

The efficiency of the school

89. The school's efficiency as a whole is good. This is partly a reflection of good quality financial planning. The budget is managed effectively, with spending closely matched to educational plans for whole school matters. At departmental level there is also a clear and efficient process for allocating funds to agreed educational priorities. A modest overspend on the budget is readily sanctioned by the local authority and is indicative of the school's commitment to putting maximum funding where it is needed with minimum delay.

90. Overall, the use of teaching and support staff is also good. Subject specialists are effectively deployed in line with their teaching expertise and hence few lessons are taught by non-specialists. Staff are directly involved in teaching for a high percentage of their time. The number of support staff is low, particularly ICT technicians; they are effectively used, but the present shortage leads to under-use of aspects of ICT provision.

91. The present arrangements for staffing of special educational needs provision are inefficient. The co-ordinator has a 75 per cent teaching commitment to a subject department and the teacher responsible for all the direct work with pupils has insufficient time allocated to administration. Their expertise is hence not fully exploited. Ancillary staff's knowledge of pupils' progress across the curriculum is also under-used because opportunities to meet with SEN teachers are too few.

92. On a day-to-day basis the quality of financial control is sound. All administrative tasks are effectively carried out and necessary information is quite quickly communicated throughout the school.

93. The school gives satisfactory value for money. This reflects results that are approaching national averages at the end of compulsory education and behaviour and social gains which are good. These are derived from relatively low spending, coupled with sound management and teaching.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

94. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. Pupils speak with confidence. High-attaining pupils answer questions in detail and use a varied vocabulary. Low attainers listen carefully and convey simple ideas clearly. In their reading, some respond to the imagery in such poems as, *Sad I Am*, whilst most understand what atmosphere the poem conveys. Pupils' writing is accurate, and in the case of high attainers, sustained, confident and imaginative. Many use paragraphing and direct speech effectively. Low attainers produce short pieces which have simple words correctly spelt and which are lively. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, attainment over the last three years is in line with national averages. It rose to well above average in 1998, with 74 per cent of pupils gaining level 5 and above, which was very high in comparison to pupils from similar schools, on a par with science in the school, and better than mathematics. However it has gone down significantly in 1999 to 55 per cent.

95. At Key Stage 4, standards are below those expected nationally. Few pupils produce work of a very high standard, though some was observed in coursework folders. High attainers compare texts such as *A Christmas Carol* and *O Henry* competently and analyse the media intelligently. Low attainers respond to the change of mood in *An Inspector Calls*. Most pupils can select appropriate detail to support their arguments. Some coursework folders are sparse, especially for the low attainers, with assignments incomplete or not attempted. High-attaining pupils speak confidently in formal and informal situations. Low attainers are confident but not always able to adapt their language for different purposes and lack suitable vocabulary to extend their ideas. In the English and English literature GCSE examinations, both in the number attaining A* to C grades and in the number attaining A* to G, attainment is below average.

96. At both key stages, girls' performance is better than that of boys, with the difference increasing by the end of Key Stage 4 to well above the difference nationally. In the sixth form, attainment is just in line with course requirements. High-attaining pupils respond to the development of Othello's imagery under the influence of Iago. All can work independently and have confidence in their own interpretations.

97. Low attainers lack incisiveness of analysis. Students read around their texts and enjoy discussing their frequent theatre visits. In the A level examinations, attainment is average. Most students gain at least a pass grade, but few gain grade A. Pupils draft and redraft work to improve it but very little work is done on the computer at any key stage, either to improve final presentation or for developing writing.

98. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Pupils' writing improves, both in content and expression. Vocabulary expands and a wider variety of writing is produced. However, progress of high attainers is restricted by the lack of sufficiently challenging work in many lessons and for homework. Reading in class becomes more demanding, but pupils show less interest in wider independent reading by the end of the key stage than when they enter the school, especially in the case of boys.

99. At Key Stage 4, progress is unsatisfactory. There is a tailing off of commitment during Key Stage 4, especially with the boys. In individual lessons, as distinct from over

time, progress is satisfactory. Pupils study texts in greater depth, though these are often relatively simple ones, for example *An Inspector Calls*, *Our Day Out* or *Kes*. Writing becomes more sustained and pupils become more adept at selecting appropriate references.

100. On occasion, when pupils are appropriately challenged and methods and resources interesting, their interest is stimulated and good progress is made. Pupils in the alternative curriculum group working on their street stories, using individual help, video extracts and wall display, plus much positive encouragement, make good progress.

101. Progress is satisfactory in the sixth form. Challenging texts are enjoyed and vocabulary is increased. Technical terms are assimilated and used in students' responses. Interest in and enthusiasm for learning are increased significantly.

102. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They benefit from the support of special needs assistants but little material is produced to enable them to access work at their own level.

103. In Years 7 and 8 and in the sixth form pupils are keen and respond with interest to the lesson. Later in Key Stage 3 and at Key Stage 4, behaviour remains satisfactory but many lose their enthusiasm for the subject.

104. Standards of teaching are satisfactory. There is some good teaching, especially in the sixth form, but little that moves beyond this. Teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, clearly conveyed, productive relationships, fair and firm discipline and efficient class management. However, long-term planning lacks clear progression and short-term planning, especially at Key Stage 3, does not take sufficient account of the different abilities within the class. Lessons cover a range of attainment targets but methods lack variety, with comprehension and note-taking predominating.

105. Procedures for assessing pupils at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are good but at Key Stage 3 they are not linked closely enough to the National Curriculum and comments do not indicate sufficiently how progress can be made. Assessment is not used sufficiently to raise standards.

106. The department is run efficiently on a day-to-day basis, but is not developing as a cohesive unit, working together to raise standards. It has made insufficient progress from the previous inspection, especially in standards of attainment.

Literacy

107. Standards are in line with national expectations for all three areas. Pupils are competent readers. History, music and modern foreign languages offer opportunities for pupils to develop their reading. However, the library is under-used both for developing research skills and for promoting enjoyment of reading. Pupils present work neatly and accurately. They use appropriate terminology and spell reasonably well. There is evidence of planning and drafting in some areas of the curriculum, for instance several subjects teach spelling. There is little evidence of sustained writing or writing for different audiences, except in modern languages and history. A Year 8 class wrote plays about martyrs to perform for Year 7 assembly. Pupils speak clearly and confidently and ask sensible questions. They can develop their ideas individually and collaboratively, when given the opportunity, for example, in mathematics and music. They listen well to each other and the

teacher. The school lacks a co-ordinated policy to develop pupils' competency in language across the curriculum. Though some areas have accepted their responsibility in this area, as pointed out in the staff handbook, others have not.

Mathematics

108. Pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests, taken at the end of Year 9, was above the national average for 1998 both for pupils achieving level 5 or better and for those achieving level 6 or more. When compared with the results obtained by pupils from similar schools, boys' results approximated to the average and girls' were above. Over the years 1996 to 1998 the Key Stage 3 results have been close to the national average. The pattern for 1999 is similar. By the age of 14 higher achieving pupils are confident in their use of fractions. They can convert vulgar fractions to and from decimals and percentages and can express one quantity as a percentage of another. Most pupils have secure mental mathematics skills. Low attaining pupils are competent at basic number work and can use a calculator with accuracy. The least able, however, find some difficulty with the straightforward mensuration involved in finding the area of a rectangle or parallelogram.

109. Results in the 1998 GCSE examinations were broadly in line with the national average. However, the number of pupils gaining a grade C or better (52.6 per cent) was better than both national and local norms. Pupils' results in mathematics compare favourably with their achievement in other subjects in the school. At GCSE in 1998 they scored almost half a grade higher than their average grade across all other subjects taken. When compared with pupils from similar schools, the number of pupils achieving A* to C is well above average. These results are reflected in the standards of attainment observed during the inspection. More able pupils in Year 11 showed themselves capable of factorising quadratic functions of the form $x^2 + bx + c$ and the difference of two squares. Lower attaining Year 11 pupils understood concepts such as prime, multiple, difference, product and sum. They could also recognise line symmetry and reflect a shape using a mirror line.

110. A level results in the sixth form are in line with national standards. There is an understandable variance from year to year with a relatively small number of candidates possessing variable abilities, but in relation to their ability as observed during the inspection, the students are achieving well. They apply themselves to their studies and are well supported by good teaching from well-qualified staff. However, those who have followed the intermediate level course at GCSE find the transition to A level difficult.

111. Pupils' progress is good at all stages in the school. Regular testing and monitoring of work enable the pupils to maintain and focus their efforts. Pupils' performance at Key Stages 3 and 4 is monitored formally four times per year. The results of the assessments are given to the pupils by their class teacher. They are then set targets for improvement. This is good practice which enhances pupils' performance and motivation. Pupils with special educational needs achieve the targets on their individual action plans and progress well.

112. The pupils' behaviour and commitment to success in their learning are of a very high standard. During the inspection, in only one lesson were pupils seen to be giving less than their best. Books are, for the most part, neatly kept. Behaviour and application in lessons

are good and sometimes excellent, reflecting the high standards set by the teaching staff as well as pupils' own desire to do well. Relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and their teachers are warm and cordial. The strength of these relationships does much to promote the culture of achievement which pervades the work in the mathematics department.

113. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory or better in all lessons. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, teaching is good. A strong feature of the department is that the teachers are all knowledgeable about their subject. The best lessons seen were especially well prepared with work matched to individual pupils' needs and delivered at a good pace. A good example of this was an investigative lesson for low attaining Year 10 pupils. They were asked to design a gift card scheme which involved them in considering number patterns. Another good example was seen in a lesson on the recognition of various types of number, taught to a Year 11 class.

114. The mathematics department benefits from very good leadership and a fully qualified team of hard-working teachers committed to building on the successful improvements of the last two years. Improvements in teaching are arising from monitoring of performance and from teacher in-service development. Monitoring arrangements for teaching and marking are now in place and are to be subject to further development. The department works well together as a team and is already benefiting from these arrangements to improve the quality of their work in the classroom.

115. The last inspection identified the need for clear leadership, more sharing of ideas within the department, an improvement in the environment, and in the quality of worksheets used. All of these issues have been resolved. The head of department gives a very clear lead to his team with a strong emphasis on raising standards. Departmental meetings are focused on improvement and all views and opinions are welcome from every member of the department. The wall displays in the classrooms are an interesting and lively mixture of children's work, posters and other teacher-produced materials. All pupils now have textbooks available to them in lessons. The majority are entrusted with a textbook for their own use. The worksheets used in the lessons seen were all well produced and appropriate to the task in hand.

116. The last inspection also highlighted the need for the department to widen the range of teaching and learning styles. It has been made clear above that overall the teaching seen was of a satisfactory or good quality. This reflects the strong subject expertise, very good management of pupils and other positive features observed. However, the range of teaching strategies used is limited for some staff and still needs to be extended if standards are to rise further.

Numeracy

117. Whilst numerical skills can be seen to be well developed in mathematics lessons, numeracy across the curriculum is not so. There has been no attempt to formulate a whole-school numeracy policy, with the result that little work is done to support the pupils' mathematical understanding outside the department. In history, for example, some basic statistical work was done to identify population groupings and some pie charts were drawn but poorly presented, and when drawing time-lines the pupils used different scales so that the information produced was misleading. In science, there was no documentary evidence of numeracy being considered in its own right, although there was a good example of the treatment of estimation of error in an A level physics lesson.

Science

118. At Key Stage 3, attainment in science over the last three fully reported years is in line with the national average. In 1998, the numbers gaining the expected level for pupils of this age were above both the national figures and those for similar schools. The 1998 average level, which includes the lowest attaining children, was well above that achieved in similar schools. Attainment in 1999, for which national averages are not yet available, may fall below that of 1998. Attainment observed in lessons was in line with national standards. Higher-attaining pupils successfully completed an elegant experiment demonstrating diffusion in gases and were fully aware of the need to control variables and repeat readings. Pupils of average attainment were able to understand the difference between voltage and current in electrical circuits.

119. At Key Stage 4, attainment is below the national average and standards achieved in similar schools. Observation of lessons indicated that pupils at the higher and lower attainment levels were achieving standards which match national expectations but that the standards of pupils of average attainment were not in line with national expectations. High-attaining pupils had a full understanding of the diffraction of light and pupils in the lowest set were able to use microscopes competently. Pupils in a middle set understood the use of indicators to determine acidity and alkalinity but failed to appreciate the difference between litmus paper and universal indicator. The attainment of post-16 students following A level courses is in line with national averages and with their attainment in GCSE. All work observed was set at the standard needed for the higher grades (A-B). Students in Year 13, for example, could use colorimetry to assay starch concentration, whilst Year 12 students, just starting A level, were able to understand the calculation of error margins.

120. Taken as a whole, pupils make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 3. However, too much time is devoted to repeating work which should have been covered at the feeder primary schools. In Year 7, pupils were observed doing experiments involving filtration and evaporation which most had learned thoroughly at Key Stage 2. By Year 9, pupils are steadily acquiring knowledge and understanding at a good pace which reasonably reflects their attainment. A mixed-ability group in Year 8 were all able to learn quickly how to test foods for different nutrients and were able carry out the tests accurately. A middle set in Year 9 improved their practical skills and enhanced their understanding of the way in which energy can be changed from one form to another. Progress is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4 because teaching does not succeed in adjusting to the needs of older pupils or motivating them as effectively as it should, especially for middle-ability sets. A level lessons, however, move at a brisk pace and students' files contain coherent records of work, which provide a good basis for attaining the higher grades. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in classes which are set according to attainment. In classes which contain a range of attainment, suitable work for pupils of varying ability is not always provided.

121. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Most are very well behaved, attentive and sometimes show great enthusiasm. They co-operate well with each other in practical work and most can be trusted to work safely and productively without constant close supervision.

122. Of the teaching observed, 85 per cent was satisfactory or better, 65 per cent was good or better; the remainder was unsatisfactory but not poor. All teaching displayed mastery of the subject and 90 per cent showed good classroom management and pupil discipline. Short- term planning of each individual lesson is good and occasionally imaginative touches such as the introduction of "Star Wars light sabres" and touch-sensitive

plants make learning both exciting and effective.

123. The department lacks effective leadership and the consistency in practice and collective approach to improvement which should go with it. Long-term planning is weak: although the schemes of work are coherent on paper they are not always followed effectively. Too much time is spent repeating work, particularly in Years 7, 9 and 10. Teaching is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4 where too little attention is given to providing work of suitable challenge to pupils of varying attainment and the preparation of pupils in middle sets for GCSE examinations fails to motivate high performance. Day-to-day marking of books is usually satisfactory, but long-term assessment relating to National Curriculum standards is poor. Although most teachers do make periodic assessments, there is no machinery for collating this data. This lack means that management is unable to monitor progress made by different classes or in different parts of the curriculum, which in turn results in failure to monitor the quality of science education provided.

124. At the time of inspection, the level of technician support was inadequate, although the hard work of both technicians and teachers is minimising the effect of this deficiency on the quality of education provided. The school has recognised this problem. Accommodation has been improved considerably over the last few years, but some of the refurbished laboratories are too small for full-sized classes when doing practical work. Learning resources are barely adequate: some equipment is out of date and near the end of its useful life; there are not enough textbooks to allow pupils to take them home and the provision of computers and associated equipment for practical work is very poor.

125. The school has responded to the criticisms made at the last inspection and effected some improvements.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

126. Standards of art work are good across the age range. Standards in the sixth form are very good with a 100 per cent pass rate for the last five years. GCSE grades were steadily improving from 1996 to 1998, when at 62 per cent A* to C they were well above national averages. In 1999 results dipped below national averages to 45 per cent A* to C, due to the very poor performance of boys. Using both examination evidence and work observed during the inspection, standards in art are above national expectations at Key Stage 3, match them at Key Stage 4, and are well above expectations at post-16. Pupils throughout the age range have sufficient opportunity to work with the full range of materials and the breadth of activities specified in the programmes of study and examination syllabuses. Displayed work covered a full range, from three-dimensional sculpture and painting to printed textiles. There is also a balanced coverage of activities and a wide range of two- and three-dimensional materials is used. In observed lessons, pupils used skills of visual analysis in recording images and ideas effectively from direct observation, memory, feelings and imagination.

127. Progress is generally good at all key stages. It is aided by clearly focused and demanding homework and classroom tasks. Explanations and demonstrations are pitched at the correct level for the pupils' current understanding, although differentiation needs to be developed further. Teachers ensure progress by purposeful intervention and individual help and support. Good progress is made where pupils are stimulated to evaluate and review their work and teachers reinforce the learning. Progress is enhanced through

encouragement by good use of questions and answers to help consolidate learning. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress across the school.

128. At all key stages, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils arrive punctually for lessons and are keen to participate. They demonstrate curiosity, interest, a willingness to investigate with enthusiasm and a sense of discovery, although they are teacher dependent. Discipline is excellent. Generally, pupils enjoy the subject and have a very good relationship with the teaching staff. Most pupils show responsibility for themselves and others and the excellent displays of artwork around the school are treated with respect. Pupils maintain a safe working environment and are keen to get on with their work. The number of pupils opting to take A level art is rising.

129. Teaching at all key stages is good overall. In all observed lessons, teaching was satisfactory or better, with the majority of lessons good or very good. All of the lessons seen had a satisfactory impact on educational standards. Art teachers are enthusiastic, well qualified and able to stimulate interest and motivation. With the exception of ICT skills, all art teachers have a secure and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of concepts and skills across the disciplines of art, craft and design. Effective links are made between practical work and the application of associated knowledge, and between different aspects of art, craft and design. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate and reflect critically on their own work. Displaying the work of other pupils and other artists supports this. Good discussions between teachers and pupils, comparing the techniques and approaches used, help to encourage pupils to express opinions about their own and others' work, and help them to move from colloquial to more formal language, using an aesthetic and technical art vocabulary. A large number of lessons are punctuated by very good discussions between teachers and pupils. Lessons are well planned. Assessment and informal marking and discussions of assignments are good, and teachers are able to work with individual pupils and thus maintain a good pace in the lessons. However, insufficient attention is given to target setting and differentiation, particularly to close the gap between the performance of boys and girls.

130. Progress has been made since the last inspection, with teaching now ranging from satisfactory to very good when the previous report implied a satisfactory overall quality. In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and able to stimulate interest and motivation by drawing attention to examples of other artists' work. The art department is a well-led cohesive unit, albeit geographically split. Departmental planning and organisation are good. ICT equipment and staff training have been under-funded.

Design and technology

131. The results achieved in a number of GCSE design and technology examinations in 1998 were below average with 31 per cent obtaining A*-C passes. However, in 1999 results compared favourably with national figures. Graphic products, food technology and textiles results were close to expected average passes at A* to C level. Results in electronics and in resistant materials show a lower percentage of A* to C grades. There has been substantial improvement in results in food technology over the past three years. A level results in design and technology for 1998 were below average, but in 1999 they were good. Of the four candidates, two achieved grade A and two grade C.

132. Standards in the workshop and workroom at Key Stage 3 are in line with standards expected nationally. Pupils at this key stage acquire a satisfactory range of practical skills working with an appropriate range of materials. They develop sound design skills when they research colour and shape in a hat project. In all areas, pupils generate a sound range

of ideas and set them out well in their folders. They learn about mechanisms in practical investigations of everyday objects such as whisks and vices and they successfully sketch and label what they observe. In food lessons, they learn about and successfully apply concepts of quality control.

133. Overall standards at Key Stage 4 are in line with national expectations. Pupils develop a satisfactory grasp of the areas of knowledge and understanding required by the examination syllabuses. They use the knowledge they gain to successfully develop an often good range of design ideas. Research is stronger in some areas than others, and the progression from initial ideas to final choice is not always clearly explained. Insufficient use is made of ICT in the presentation of pupils' work, but the graphical skills used by pupils to communicate their designs are often good and clearly show the beneficial influence of art. This is particularly so in aspects such as sketching and layout. The evaluation of work is generally sound. Practical skills are successfully developed. In food technology, pupils organise themselves well and utilise a sound range of skills. The practical outcomes in other areas are at least satisfactory. The more able pupils produce work of high quality in a wide range of materials. Teachers ensure that pupils are often able to follow their own interests, for example when a pupil wants to create jewellery using casting techniques.

134. Students in the sixth form produce good, original ideas for their design projects. These often meet a real individual need, such as when one student designs an easel in a project that makes good use of traditional materials and structures. There is evidence of a strong influence from art in folders when students produce an impressive range of sketches that model and communicate their ideas. They learn about and apply in their designs concepts such as ergonomics. They use information sources appropriately. Their practical outcomes are often good.

135. The progress made by pupils at both key stages and in the sixth form is at least satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities make similar progress. Year 7 pupils make sound progress in learning to be aware of considerations of safety and hygiene in the workroom and workshop. They learn the importance of weighing and measuring with accuracy. Year 8 pupils make sound progress in aspects of technical drawing that are needed to communicate their designs in their folders.

136. Key Stage 4 food technology pupils make sound progress in developing an understanding of healthy eating. Electronics pupils improve their understanding of current, and those studying textiles and resistant materials make gains in research skills, learning to apply the information they amass to the design process. The observational skills of graphics pupils are enhanced when they create their own lettering style drawn from commercial examples. Students in the sixth form develop their understanding of the properties of materials and their awareness of the importance of aesthetics in design. They develop their practical skills and use a good range of materials and techniques. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages.

137. Pupils and students show interest in the subject. The good level of take-up in the present sixth form demonstrates the popularity of the subject. Little time is lost by pupils in lessons and concentration is good. Pupils act safely and sensibly in the classroom. They are courteous and show respect for the fabric of the school, displays, tools and equipment.

138. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often exhibits good features. The subject knowledge teachers show in their everyday work is never less than sound. They provide high-quality support in the workshop and workroom and produce some good support booklets for the modular courses. They have appropriate expectations of their pupils. Their

planning is thorough and their introductions to lessons clearly set out what work will be covered. The management of pupils is good. Teachers have established sound working relationships with their classes.

139. The department is effectively led. There is good teamwork throughout. There is valuable assistance from technicians which adds to the quality of learning. A comprehensive and manageable system of assessment is being put in place at Key Stage 3. The process of review and rewriting of coursework and of coursework booklets continues to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.

140. Overall improvement in the department since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Geography

141. Attainment on entry is below average: interviews with pupils in Year 7 and a scrutiny of their work show that most have poor prior knowledge of geography; very few have well-developed map skills, a good sense of place or an awareness of their local geography.

142. Attainment at age 14 is in line with national averages. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of geographic terms and processes, such as natural hazards, but few can confidently apply these to unfamiliar situations. Only a minority of pupils appreciate the relationships between processes in the physical environment and their influence on human activities. The sense of place of many low attaining pupils remains poor and many are unable to describe and explain basic geographic terms and ideas, particularly those associated with migration and earthquakes. The acquisition of geographic skills, particularly interpreting and evaluating information and presenting this in a variety of ways, is under-developed, as is the use of ICT to enhance and extend geographic knowledge and understanding.

143. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 indicate attainment in line with national averages. In 1998, 58 per cent of pupils attained level five or above, compared to 58 per cent nationally. The work of pupils seen similarly suggests that attainment at the end of this key stage is in line with national expectations

144. Throughout Key Stage 3 the great majority of pupils make satisfactory progress at acquiring new skills and knowledge in lessons. Higher-attaining pupils, however, occasionally make unsatisfactory progress in lessons where they are not given sufficiently challenging tasks, and pupils with special educational needs sometimes lack the support they require.

145. Geography is a popular subject at Key Stage 4, and most pupils make good progress, with the result that attainment is above national averages. Pupils' work shows a good development of geographic knowledge and understanding, but less so in the acquisition of skills, especially the ability to evaluate information and interpret geographic data. As at Key Stage 3, however, higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently exposed to more exciting and challenging teaching which prompts them to think about issues and find out answers to problems for themselves, and there is little specific help for pupils with special educational needs.

146. Many pupils at Key Stage 4 have a very confident understanding of geographic processes and concepts, and high-attaining pupils can often offer sophisticated explanations for processes in the physical environment, for instance when explaining the

water cycle. Few opportunities are given to pupils, however, to develop a range of geographic skills, such as analysing and selecting information. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is limited by a lack of teaching techniques, such as role play and group work, that help develop these skills.

147. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. In 1998, 59.2 per cent of candidates gained grades A* to C, compared with a national average of 51.5 per cent. This has improved over the last two years, from 46.1 per cent in 1996 and 53.3 per cent in 1997. The attainment of boys in 1998 was significantly better than in previous years, while the attainment of girls has also risen. However, the overall upward trend was weakened in 1999, when the proportion of A* to C grades fell to 51.8 per cent.

148. Geography continues to be a popular subject in the sixth form and attainment at the end of the sixth form is above average. In terms of A level grades A to E, standards are well above average but the proportion of higher grades has recently fallen: in 1998, only 17.6 per cent of students attained grades A or B, compared with a national average of 33.7 per cent. In previous years the school's figures had been 33.3 per cent (1997) and 40 per cent (1996). However, the actual A level grades of geography students exceed those predicted for them at the beginning of the course, and the attainment of grades A and B is in excess of that achieved by similar subjects in the school. Progress of most students on the A level course is, therefore, good, except for the high-attaining students who are not sufficiently stretched or challenged in all lessons.

149. Students in the sixth form have a good grasp of terminology and many are able to apply it to new and unfamiliar situations, but few are able to summarise complex information, analyse it and make reasoned deductions. Their coursework files show a good progressive development of geographic knowledge and understanding of concepts, especially of urban processes, but many need more practice at developing skills of evaluation and note-making. Students are not sufficiently prompted to read more widely around the subject, to carry out their own research and make presentations to the class. Some low-attaining students find it difficult to organise and maintain order in their work and their progress is sometimes impeded by poor command of written English.

150. Although well behaved, the majority of pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are not eager or enthusiastic learners. In most classes, they are compliant rather than willing learners. Sixth formers also are frequently passive in class. Pupils are quiet during the teacher's explanation and will listen to other class members during question and answer sessions or during class discussions. However, they are often hesitant to ask or answer questions or to make a contribution to whole-class discussions. Pupils remain largely quiet during textbook exercises, which they often complete in a mechanical way without thinking about or appreciating the purpose of the work.

151. Teaching at all key stages was satisfactory or better in 10 out of 14 lessons seen, although there are few examples of good or very good teaching. Many lessons are characterised by too much talk by the teacher and low expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Pupils in these classes copied from worksheets or completed textbook exercises and consequently little progress was made. In many lessons at Key Stage 3, teachers' knowledge and understanding of geography are good, but are not used to provide meaningful extension work for higher-attaining pupils or to engage pupils in challenging and probing question and answer. Many lessons are characterised by poor planning. These lessons list activities to be carried out rather than making explicit what knowledge and skills the pupils are to acquire and what methods are to be used to ensure

that they achieve them. There are, however, a few examples of very good teaching. These lessons are characterised by a vigorous pace of work and high expectations of what pupils are capable of attaining. In most lessons, however, there are many examples of repetitive tasks being given to pupils and few examples of teachers planning for extension work. Most teaching is characterised by good class control and effective management of pupils. Lessons nearly always establish links to previous work and exposition is clear and appropriately pitched to the age and aptitude of the pupils. Although there are examples of stimulating and exciting teaching in the department, these are not systematically planned and many pupils, especially the high attainers, are not being sufficiently stretched and extended by interesting teaching that challenges them and probes their understanding of geography.

152. Assessment, particularly at Key Stage 3, is not closely linked to curriculum planning, with the result that it is not used to evaluate the effectiveness of learning. Little use is made of information on pupils' attainment at all stages, and so target setting is yet to have an impact on raising attainment, except in the sixth form. At Key Stage 3, assessment tasks do not always give opportunities to pupils to demonstrate competencies at level 6 or above. Marking is not always thorough, nor does it always give guidance to pupils as to how they can improve their work.

153. Subject administration is good, but there is a lack of clear vision and direction within the department. Staff, although mutually supportive, lack a shared common purpose as to how geography can be developed within the school or how classroom teaching could be improved. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the department and the dissemination of good practice are under-developed.

154. Since the last inspection, the department has made good progress in raising attainment at Key Stage 4.

History

155. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in GCSE examinations in 1998 was above national averages and results over recent years have shown a steady upward trend. Attainment of boys has risen steadily over the past three years and in 1998 was above the national average for boys. Results are good in relation to those obtained by pupils at the school in other subjects. Results at A level have been variable over the last three years, with no clear trend. Results are generally just below national averages for similar schools, apart from 1997 when they were above.

156. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is broadly average. Teacher assessments of National Curriculum levels, scrutiny of work and lessons seen indicate that pupils are performing in line with national expectations. with a significant minority performing above national expectations. The majority of pupils can recall, select and organise information in response to questions set. For example, Year 9 pupils can identify the various changes that took place in the life style of people in the 18th century. They can use written and picture source material to obtain information. They can identify primary and secondary sources and can evaluate their reliability. Pupils make clear oral responses to questions and are gaining confidence in the use of specialist vocabulary. They can communicate their knowledge in a variety of forms, such as letters, charts, extended prose and plays, in, for example, their study of the trial of Louis XVI. Pupils recognise and are starting to analyse the reasons for change and are developing an overview of the periods studied. Skills of investigation and independent research are less well developed due to limited resources, which results in an over-dependence on teachers for materials and ideas. Pupils make satisfactory progress

across the key stage.

157. The attainment of the large proportion of pupils who choose to study history to the age of 16 is above average. Pupils respond to written questions in greater depth and can write at length. They recognise long- and short-term causes and that a multiplicity of causes may contribute to a single event, as, for example, the First World War. They recognise that events may be viewed from a variety of standpoints and can discuss the relative merits of each, with guidance. They are developing the skills of interpretation of historical data successfully. Independent learning and research opportunities are still limited by the extensive use of worksheets and a single textbook for each topic and by the predominance of lessons over-dependent on teachers. While the progress of most pupils is good, that of a minority of pupils in Year 11 becomes unsatisfactory, in this and other subjects, as they lose their motivation and absenteeism grows.

158. Attainment at the end of the sixth form is broadly in line with national averages. Students can write in depth in extended prose and take greater responsibility for their learning. They can discuss the relative merits of a variety of opinions, for example the benefits or otherwise of the boom economy in America in the 1920s. They can make links across time periods and countries in order to identify the origins of change and investigate the causes that give rise to events. Their acquisition of facts is good and they use specialist terminology, such as 'proletariat', with confidence. Progress in the sixth form is satisfactory.

159. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. Where differentiated tasks and worksheets are used, progress is best. More often, where no allowance is made in the quantity of reading and writing required, these pupils become discouraged and work is left incomplete or sketchy. Frequently at Key Stage 4, when special needs assistants are not involved in developing history support and teachers do not target special needs, pupil progress is slow.

160. The behaviour and attitude of pupils are good. They display interest, are active participants in lessons, and are generally keen to respond to questions, though there is less evidence of enquiry. They sustain concentration even across a double period and listening skills are good. Written work is generally well presented, though on occasion the teacher's written comment is ignored. Pupils work well collaboratively and treat each other with courtesy. Their teachers are good role models in this respect.

161. The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen it was at least satisfactory on all occasions and it was good or better in over 40 per cent of cases. Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic and the pace of lessons is brisk. Aims are clear and lessons are well managed with good use of encouragement and praise. Questioning is well used as on-going assessment though the predominance of short-answer questions reduces their effect as a teaching aid. The majority of lessons seen were strongly directed by teachers with relatively little scope for pupils to take the initiative. Where the standard of teaching is highest, a variety of strategies is used to encourage independent learning by pupils. The development of the use of drama and ICT is a positive move towards this end. The use of visits and visitors encourages a practical approach to history and brings information alive, for example, the visit of a spinner enabling pupils to experience at first hand the work of early 18th century people.

162. Assessment at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and in the sixth form it is good. At Key Stage 3, pupils are unaware of the criteria for the National Curriculum levels, and though teacher assessment levels are recorded in the department, pupils are unaware of them until the end of the key stage. Pupils are not involved in self-assessment and receive little

feedback. Procedures for monitoring progress have now been set up.

163. There is a good team ethos within the department. However, lesson plans are not sufficiently detailed to allow for closer targeting of pupils and the schemes of work do not encourage sharing of good practice. Accommodation is attractive and excellent use is made of wall display to extend learning opportunities and to celebrate pupils' achievement.

164. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communications technology (ICT)

165. Standards of attainment in ICT are in line with national expectations at Key Stage 3 but are below national expectations at Key Stage 4.

166. Key Stage 3 pupils develop sound word processing and desktop publishing skills in their dedicated ICT course when they tackle topics such as producing a brochure for a theme park. The ICT course also gives them a satisfactory grounding in the development and use of databases. They produce a detailed television programme schedule that they can search. They make sound use of CD ROMs to research topics. They are introduced to spreadsheets and are able to model financial information. They can create geometrical shapes on screen using simple programming language. The level of cross-curricular use of ICT is low, but pupils are able to consolidate their skills in a number of other subjects, in particular history.

167. The progress Key Stage 3 pupils make in acquiring ICT skills is satisfactory. They make sound progress in transferring the skills they already have to new software operated on the machines recently installed in the school. Year 7 pupils make good progress in learning to use a graphics package. Year 8 pupils make sound progress in learning to enter formulae in a spreadsheet.

168. A small number of Key Stage 4 pupils receive one hour per week in an ICT course which leads to a national certificate in ICT competence. The majority of Key Stage 4 pupils have only approximately ten hours dedicated ICT time in the year and these pupils are unable to acquire and develop the full range of ICT skills as set out in the National Curriculum. Pupils at this key stage do not receive a co-ordinated cross-curricular programme of ICT. For some Key Stage 4 pupils, the major experience they have is at home, though most pupils do use computers for word processing at some time in lessons such as history, technology and modern languages. Most use CD ROMs to research their work and some use the Internet on their own computers. The Internet is not yet generally available in school. Pupils do not develop their understanding of the uses of databases beyond what they have picked up at Key Stage 3. They experience little or no modelling of information at this key stage unless they are on the GNVQ or business education courses. The technology is well used when pupils taking music compose using keyboards linked to computers; here, they are able to experiment with elements such as rhythm and sound. At this key stage there is little control and no measurement of external events. Though the school has the equipment to sense and control events they make no use of it.

169. The lack of a prescriptive scheme of work for this key stage leads to a lack of a comprehensive experience for individuals in ICT. In addition, at Key Stage 4, the overall level of activity in ICT is insufficient for pupils to consolidate or build on the skills they pick up at Key Stage 3. This unsatisfactory level of progress at Key Stage 4 leads to standards that are below the national expectation. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 but unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 4.

170. Attitudes to learning are overall sound. Pupils are generally interested in using the technology. They maintain their interest and concentration well in lessons and are well behaved. They take advice well and act on it. They will experiment with the applications and are generally confident with the machines. They respect the equipment. Many voluntarily undertake tasks on home computers that add to their school coursework.

171. Teaching in the dedicated courses is at least satisfactory and has a number of good features. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and have developed good challenging Key Stage 3 courses that allow all pupils to progress at the rate of which they are capable. The management and control of pupils are at least satisfactory and teachers have developed good working relationships with pupils. Assessment of Key Stage 3 pupils is sound and relates well to National Curriculum levels. There is no system of assessment at Key Stage 4, apart from those following a course that leads to certification. The Computer Club adds value to the overall provision of ICT in the school.

172. While there has been satisfactory improvement in ICT provision at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, there has been too little at Key Stage 4, particularly in the assessment of skills.

• **Modern languages**

173. Attainment in modern languages is below average at the end of both key stages. In GCSE examinations in 1998, the number of pupils gaining A* to C grades was well below the national average in French, taken by the vast majority of pupils, and above in German which is taken by much smaller numbers of higher attainers. In both languages, there are fewer than average A* to B grades. Over the four years to 1998, GCSE results were mainly above average in German, but consistently well below average in French which compares unfavourably with other subjects in school. However, the most recent 1999 GCSE results and teacher assessments at Key Stage 3 indicate an improvement to nearer national averages. Girls outperform boys in French by more than the national rate.

174. Attainment in the sixth form is at expected levels for the A level courses in both foreign languages. Over four years, A level results for small numbers of entries have been below expectations until 1998 when both French and German were well above. Some students show higher-grade skills. They cope well with unfamiliar language when listening and reading, and are confident in the use of the foreign language and its structures in speaking and writing. For others, attainment is at lower levels, but appropriate for the course. Overall, students consolidate their knowledge of grammar, improve their extended writing skills including the use of information and communication technology in their coursework, and in general develop a satisfactory range of language skills for the examinations.

175. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the majority of pupils still show a lack of confidence in speaking and have below-average pronunciation and listening skills despite recent improvement. However, in all years, some pupils in both French and German show quick understanding, good fluency and confidence, as for example in personal descriptions and planning or talking about their holidays. Pupils read satisfactorily short phrases or paragraphs for information, and at Key Stage 4, higher attainers cope satisfactorily with longer pieces required for GCSE. There is some good extended reading for enjoyment, but the reading programme is only in its early stages of development. Writing is below average

generally at Key Stage 3, but higher attainers are beginning to use different tenses with satisfactory understanding. There is some good extended writing, with drafting and re-drafting of pieces at Key Stage 4 and, in the sixth form, some good use of word-processing.

176. Pupils' progress is satisfactory at all key stages. In no lesson observed was progress unsatisfactory. In general, pupils steadily extend their range of topic vocabulary and improve their confidence in grammar and in handling structures. Sixth formers consolidate their grasp of grammar, extend their reading skills, and combine successfully higher-level language skills in discussing topical issues. Generally pupils at all key stages learn to combine language skills and use the foreign language for real purposes. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory at both key stages, especially when extra support is present in class.

177. Attitudes to learning of the vast majority of pupils are good. In only one lesson were the attitudes and response of a minority of pupils unsatisfactory. Generally, pupils behave well, participate willingly in class activities and, in the best lessons, show considerable interest and enjoyment. Concentration is mostly good. Some pupils have good independent learning skills, particularly at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, but the majority are more reliant on guidance from the teacher. In a good number of lessons, pupils work productively together in pairs or small groups.

178. The quality of teaching is good in all years. In over half the lessons, teaching is good or very good. In no lesson was teaching unsatisfactory. Teachers have good command of the foreign language, and use it appropriately in lessons. Planning and preparation are good, and there is a good variety of appropriate activities in the best lessons. Expectations of the pupils are almost always suitably high, relations are positive, routines and discipline are consistently good, and feedback to pupils is regular and encouraging. Teachers regularly utilise a good range of resources, and incorporate planned use of ICT. Suitable homework is given regularly.

179. Leadership and management of the department are very good, focusing well on raising standards of both teaching and learning. Development planning is detailed and thorough. Assessment procedures are thorough and manageable, and the use of information for curriculum planning is good. Awareness and use of National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3 are developing well. The response to the last inspection report has been good. There is now a greater variety of teaching styles. At Key Stage 4, both assessment procedures and provision for pupils' foreign language experience are much improved. Specialist rooms are well maintained, with attractive displays. Staff morale is good, and there is a very positive ethos for the teaching of modern languages.

Music

180. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in music is above average, despite widely variable experiences at Key Stage 2. Teacher assessment figures for 1999 judged that virtually all pupils were meeting or exceeding national expectations. Inspection evidence suggests a mismatch between the national criteria and those used by the department's assessment scheme; but a more appropriate match of criteria would still give over 80 per cent of pupils meeting or exceeding expectations, with a small but significant minority demonstrating exceptional performance. There is a slight tendency for girls to attain more highly than boys, probably due to the higher proportion having instrumental lessons. Pupils show a good practical grasp of the elements of music; they use musical vocabulary fluently; and they compose well using imaginative melodies and suitable harmonies derived from

basic triadic chords. They perform confidently using voice and instruments and listen intelligently. The attainment of all is enhanced by the skills of the significant proportion of pupils having instrumental lessons. The potential of ICT in music is being developed at Key Stage 3 beyond the use of electronic keyboards and tape recording to include computers.

181. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results consistently show a higher proportion of candidates achieving grades A* to C than the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that this will be repeated by the current Year 11 class. Numbers gaining grades A* to G exceed national figures year on year. There is a tendency for individual pupils to gain higher grades in music than in their other subjects. Contrary to the national trend, boys are just as likely to gain higher grades as girls. Numbers entered for A level in recent years have been too low to have statistical significance but have contained a good proportion of high grades in most years, with four out of five candidates gaining grades A or B in 1997. Scrutiny of past coursework indicates that grades were in line with potential in most years, with some very good composition by high attainers choosing that option. High standards of composition in both notated and recorded form were observed in Year 11, with very good use of music technology including computers. Individual and group performance skills and preparation for the listening component of the GCSE examination are similarly well developed.

182. Attainment in Year 13 is in line with students' potential and all are realistic candidates. The capacity to analyse works and historical essay writing skills are developing appropriately and performance standards are high. The progress of students accepted into the Year 12 group without GCSE or instrumental qualifications in the subject and who have only a modest grasp of notation will need to be monitored with care to ensure that they become realistic candidates in time for the examination.

183. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment make good progress at Key Stages 3 and 4. Some good examples of exceptional progress by musically able pupils were observed at Key Stage 3, especially when pupils were using their own instruments or had the responsibility for directing the efforts of small groups. Very occasionally able pupils quickly mastered tasks and did not move on to more appropriately demanding activity, repeating what they could already do, indicating that the differentiated materials and tasks available in the department need to be used a little more consistently. Pupils with special needs justifying individual education plans thrive in practical lessons at Key Stage 3.

184. Pupils enjoy music lessons. Attitudes and behaviour are universally very good with many examples of responsible collaboration and initiative observed. There is no falling away of interest in Year 9. Take-up for GCSE is in line with the national average in Year 11, though in most years it falls a little below it. However a larger group of pupils will get some musical experience within the GCSE expressive arts course.

185. Overall teaching is good. This is also true for Key Stages 3 and 4 individually, while in the sixth form teaching is consistently very good. However, examples of lessons with very good teaching were observed at all stages. Classes are effectively managed and discipline is good. Teachers' subject and examination knowledge and lesson preparation are very good. Lessons are varied and lively with high but appropriate expectations based on good understanding of the needs of all pupils even in large classes at Key Stage 3. Assessment techniques are evolving that are informative but manageable. Homework is set and marking is thorough at all stages, being exceptionally impressive at GCSE and A level. Good use is made of tape recording in lessons.

186. The music department is exceptionally well led. The teaching team is now stable

and functions effectively in a collaborative and mutually supportive way. Coherent schemes of work fully meet National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 3 and support GCSE work at Key Stage 4. The extensive programme of good quality instrumental teaching is efficiently managed and take-up by pupils is high. A wide range of extra-curricular music-making in a variety of genres offers opportunities for players and singers of all levels of prior attainment. The more advanced ensembles such as the stage band, which has produced a CD of high quality, reach a very good standard and regularly perform at school and community events. There are regular school musical productions where a high standard is achieved. Large numbers of pupils participated in the recent summer concert. Pupils are encouraged to initiate their own musical activities and are trusted to use the department's facilities for their own purposes. They respond with responsible behaviour and interesting musical outcomes.

187. Music is well resourced but there are problems with accommodation. Even when current refurbishment is complete sound insulation will be poor and it will still be necessary to pass through teaching rooms to reach the administrative and storage areas. The number of practice rooms is insufficient to support the extensive programme of instrumental teaching together with small group work in the large Key Stage 3 classes. This difficulty is compounded when three Key Stage 3 classes are timetabled concurrently. The practice room doors require glazing as a matter of urgency.

188. The evidence suggests that there has been steady improvement in attainment and ethos since the favourable comments of the previous inspection report and that current staffing stability should support further improvement.

Physical education

189. Pupils' attainment in physical education at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is in line with national expectations. Standards are satisfactory when compared with schools of similar intakes. Present levels of attainment are similar to those indicated in the previous inspection report. There is under-achievement by girls in the acquisition of game techniques and conceptual understanding at the end of both key stages. A top girls' set in Year 11 has unsatisfactory badminton skills; they have poor racket control and their games playing is of a standard below that expected at this stage. Boys have higher skill levels in major games and use these to achieve noted success in local area competitions. Their understanding of the principles of health-related fitness is below that expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 4. The department has made good gains in athletics and rugby league skills since the previous inspection.

190. Pupils arrive in Year 7 with skills that are below national expectation; they make good progress overall at Key Stage 3. They make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4. Girls make good progress in acquiring movement skills. In a Year 8 gymnastics class, they systematically practised and refined advanced balances in sequence; in a parallel dance lesson they made good progress in moving to rhythm and understanding different dance themes. Boys make unsatisfactory progress in gymnastics: in Year 7, they have poor tension and control in movement and are unfamiliar with the conventions of controlled sequences. Boys made good progress in a basketball lesson, however, with teaching tasks improving vision on the court, resulting in improvement in passing and movement of the ball. Year 10 girls make good progress in netball when they create centre-passing strategies to overcome defences. However, general games-play, skills in developing strategies, techniques and tactics relevant to full games are under-developed in the girls' department. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress overall. Lower attaining rugby groups make good progress, learning how to make relevant decisions in 2v1 passing

situations. Setting arrangements have generally improved progress across both stages.

191. The overall response to physical education is good. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning and respond willingly and enthusiastically to the tasks set. There are very good levels of participation in lessons and this is carried over into extra-curricular activities, especially in boys' games. Pupils present themselves extremely well for lessons. Teacher-pupil relationships are generally good. Independent learning skills are satisfactorily developed by lesson tasks that focus on the need for pupils to be involved in planning, performing and evaluating their performance. There are good levels of co-operation and collaboration in group-work. In some lessons, a minority of pupils have unsatisfactory listening skills, and they lose concentration as a result of over-long teacher explanations.

192. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the majority of lessons, teachers give good explanations and their questioning encourages pupils' participation. They have very good subject knowledge, but do not consistently use this expertise to give clear and relevant tasks and targets for improvement for all levels of ability. In girls' gymnastics and dance, perceptive evaluations of performance and progressive task setting allow pupils to make very good progress. In boys' games, tasks generally require pupils to refine and adapt skills to new situations. All teachers have good management skills: lessons are orderly and appropriately paced and pupils' consideration is maintained. Present planning arrangements fail to pinpoint the principal progressions in all areas of activity and do not match the relevant learning outcomes identified by the department. As a result, there are sometimes low-level challenges in girls' games lessons and boys' gymnastics classes. There is insufficient monitoring of achievement; day-to-day assessment is not used as a basis for future planning or to set consistent and relevant targets for pupils of all abilities.

193. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has a satisfactory breadth of programmes that are games-orientated. The recently introduced A level course has greatly improved the opportunities for study, but pupils are not able to study at GCSE. Extra-curricular provision is good: there is strong participation in a wide range of inter-school competitions. There is, however, a tendency for boys to have greater opportunities than girls in this area. The award of the Sports Council 'Sportsmark' to the department is indicative of the critical evaluations made since the last inspection and of the good motivation of staff. Present timetabling constraints at Key Stage 3 and subsequent staffing and grouping arrangements combine to reduce the continuity and progression in pupils' learning. In some cases, very large groups make the environment unsafe and affect the quality of teaching. Continuity in girls' progress is further hampered by a series of long-term staff illnesses and the communication problems created by two staff working part-time.

194. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection, especially in the light of restrictions imposed by the fire. The continued separation of boys' and girls' physical education as two departments prevents management of the subject as a whole from promoting improvement as effectively as it might. As a result, there is a lack of overall purpose resulting in an under-estimation of the many strengths, and sometimes a failure to overcome weaknesses, across the two departments. There is a lack of clear educational direction for physical education in the school; the department structure fails to establish priorities, to set goals and targets and to support and monitor these developments collectively. This is presently reducing the potential for further progress.

Religious education

195. There have been no GCSE results since 1997 and only a very small cohort of pupils entered at A level. Comparisons of results with national averages and expectations, are,

therefore, impossible or invalid. However, at Key Stage 4, pupils' work and their attainment in class are in line with national expectations. At GCSE, pupils cope well with the conceptual beliefs of Judaism and are at ease with much of the Hebrew nomenclature for appurtenances in the synagogue or in a Jewish home, for example "parochet" and "challah". In non-examined Key Stage 4, where religious education is offered as part of a personal and social education programme, pupils' attainment in class is in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. However, the inadequate allocation of time to this area, and similarly to the non-examined post-16 provision, means that cumulatively pupils acquire insufficient knowledge by the end of these key stages.

196. At Key Stage 3, where the policy of introducing pupils in Year 9 to the GCSE course has been implemented, the level of attainment is good, particularly in the pupils' ability to understand the central beliefs and practices of Christianity. For example, Year 9 pupils, in their study of Baptism, can correctly ascribe the pertinent role of spiritual or religious mentors to the godparents.

197. At Key Stage 3, pupils' progress is good. It is particularly enhanced by the introduction in Year 9 of the GCSE course of study. Higher-attaining pupils consolidate their prior learning with appreciation of concepts such as matters of life and death. Lower-attaining pupils build upon facts about artefacts used in religious ceremonies and prayer. Pupils' progress at examined Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Pupils' progress at non-examined Key Stage 4 and post-16 is negatively affected by the poor time allocation and is therefore unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4.

198. At all key stages, the response of the vast majority of pupils is good. Most pupils show involvement, application and enjoyment of the subject. The best pupils respond to intellectual challenge and show pride in their work, although some pupils' work is not always presented well.

199. Teaching is good overall. In the sixth form it has good qualities but there is too little for it to be judged better than satisfactory. More than 80 per cent of lessons seen had good teaching and in none was it less than satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. In the best lessons, planning is augmented by the use of a range of teaching resources which stimulate the pupils. Pupils make progress but they are too often over-directed by their teacher and are not sufficiently encouraged to become independent learners.

200. Key stage 3 provision is balanced, planned effectively, and promotes progression across the key stage. However, other than at GCSE there is insufficient religious education provision at both Key Stage 4 and post-16. At Key Stage 4, non-examined religious education is offered as a part of a carousel programme in the personal and social education programme, and post-16 religious education provision consists of a module in foundation/general studies. In both cases, the allocation of time is inadequate. This unsatisfactory provision for religious education means that effective coverage of the local agreed syllabus is impossible. The school does not, therefore, comply with statute. This is a feature of the last inspection report which is not yet addressed.

201. Assessment is still not satisfactory. There are still gaps in the provision of assessment for the parts of the syllabus concerning "learning about" and "learning from" religious studies, and target-setting has not yet been satisfactorily established. The department is managed quietly but efficiently and effectively and has clear, comprehensive and effective policies and procedures for the range of activities in which it is engaged.

202. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the school's provision for the spiritual, moral and social development for pupils. Pupils are introduced to moral and social beliefs and are exhorted to consider and apply them to a range of contemporary issues. In one such lesson, on the pollution of the planet, a moment of spiritual awe and wonder followed a showing of part of the Michael Jackson video, *Earthsong*.

203. The housing of the department in a centrally located suite of rooms gives it a new status and strengthens its position in the curriculum. The rooms are pleasantly decorated and there are suitable displays, including the pupils' work, which create an atmosphere conducive to learning. Resources include a new TV/VCR and the range of artefacts is satisfactory. There are insufficient visits to the abundant examples in Leeds of holy places of worship of the major religions studied by the pupils.

204. With the exceptions of the provision of time for non-examined religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, and the issue of assessment, there have been improvements in some areas of the department's work since the last inspection, particularly in the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 4, the quality of the schemes of work and the consistently good level of teaching.

· **Sixth form provision**

205. The quality of education provided in the sixth form is good. The sixth form offers a challenging and stimulating environment for students and has achieved an appropriate balance between encouraging students' independence and monitoring and guiding their academic and social progress.

206. The school is currently providing 18 subjects at A level together with advanced GNVQ programmes in business studies and leisure and tourism and intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism. It also runs intermediate level courses in business and in health and social care when take-up is sufficient. Attainment at A level is consistently good. In both 1998 and 1996, the average points score was well above the national average and in 1997 it was at the national average for all schools. Attainment on the GNVQ programmes is excellent. External verifiers consistently compliment the school on the quality of vocational provision; it is described as a "centre of excellence" by the awarding body. A significant factor contributing to the high attainment of sixth formers is the highly effective system of giving students minimum target grades and regularly monitoring their progress to ensure that they attain them.

207. The head of sixth form and his team of tutors have successfully created a distinct ethos for sixth form students and have done much to create an environment which prepares young people for the demands of higher education and the world of work. Students enjoy their own social area for which they are encouraged to take responsibility. Relationships between students and staff are relaxed, supportive and mutually respectful. Students are treated as young adults and respond positively to the responsibility they are given for their own learning.

208. The wide range of extra-curricular activities has done much to contribute to this distinct ethos. Students take part in team building exercises at the end of Year 12 as well as having opportunities to attend a residential outward bound course and gain qualifications in teaching English as a foreign language. There are numerous visits and sponsored events and students are active in the local and school community, for instance

in helping pupils in this and other schools in Leeds with their literacy.

209. The sixth form is very well managed and led by an energetic and effective head of sixth form who has built up a team of tutors who work extremely well together and with the students. Systems of pastoral care and guidance are excellent, although the form tutor periods in the mornings are not always well used.

210. The head of sixth form does not have final responsibility for curriculum issues in the sixth form, which hampers the integration of pastoral and curriculum leadership and management.

211. Sixth form numbers are small for the size of the school and do not reflect the high quality of provision which is provided. The range of A levels offered, although wider than in the recent past, is still modest for a large school and its achievements are not well advertised.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

212. This report bases its judgements on the work of 13 inspectors spending a total of 55 inspector days in school. Extensive analysis was made before during and after the inspection of policy documents, schemes of work and other relevant statements. Parental views were sought and recorded via the standard questionnaire and parents' meeting. 142 hours were spent on lesson observation, sampling all year groups, subjects and ability sets. Interviews took place with governors, the headteacher and all teachers with a significant management role as well as with non-teaching staff and representatives of the wider community. The work of a sample of pupils across all subjects was formally scrutinised by inspectors, together with that of other pupils seen in lessons. Discussions were held with pupils. A total of 80 hours was spent on further observations, interviews and the formal scrutiny of work.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1313	30	137	172

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	73.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.8

Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked each week	459

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	80
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	26
	KS4	22

Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	2,948,035
Total Expenditure	2,813,644
Expenditure per pupil	2145
Balance brought forward from previous year	-15,820
Balance carried forward to next year	118,571

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:
Number of questionnaires returned:

1313
94

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	16	70	9	5	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	26	67	2	4	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	20	48	23	9	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	7	67	17	9	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	20	65	8	7	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	23	65	11	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	25	55	15	5	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	15	60	13	12	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	15	61	25	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	20	50	19	10	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	22	59	13	6	0

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