

INSPECTION REPORT

Malet Lambert School
Kingston Upon Hull

LEA area: City of Kingston Upon Hull

Unique Reference Number: 118069
Inspection Number: 184525

Headteacher: Mrs Sheila Ireland

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Cosway
2734

Dates of inspection: 15th - 19th November 1999

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Kingston Upon Hull
Name of chair of governors:	Carolyn Maslen
Date of previous inspection:	March 1995

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J. Cosgrove <i>(Team Member)</i>	History.	
R. Frostick <i>(Team Member)</i>	Music.	
M. Harrison <i>(Team Member)</i>	Geography.	
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P. Metcalf <i>(Team Member)</i>	Mathematics.	Curriculum and assessment.
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S. Richardson <i>(Team Member)</i>	Modern foreign language.	Learning resources.
M. Sewell <i>(Team Member)</i>	English; Special educational needs.	
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Teaching is good, and there are good arrangements for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to work.
- Relationships are good and there is good provision for the social, moral and cultural development of pupils.
- The school has good leadership.
- There is a very good range of clubs, visits and sporting opportunities that enrich the curriculum, and careers education is good.
- The support and guidance for pupils are good.
- Parents make a very effective contribution to the work of the school.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The lack of literacy skills of some pupils, especially boys, restricts their progress.
- II. There are many good policies in place, for assessment and marking, for example, but not all are followed consistently by all staff.
- III. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, and restricts the progress pupils make in some subjects.
- IV. The curriculum is narrow at Key Stage 4; there is insufficient choice of courses to meet the needs of all pupils.
- V. Some statutory requirements are not being met, including the requirements for religious education and information technology in Key Stage 4 and the daily act of collective worship.

There are many ways in which this is a good school, and its strengths outweigh its weaknesses. It provides a secure and caring community for its pupils. There is an increasing emphasis on improving attainment in the school. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan. A copy of this will be sent to every parent and carer of pupils at the school. Governors will report once a year on the progress they are making to address the issues raised in this report.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has overcome many of the weaknesses identified in the 1995 report and has made satisfactory improvement. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. It is well placed to continue to improve in future. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are now providing evidence of pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils are given adequate guidance in most subjects, but there are aspects that can be improved still further and assessment information could be used more effectively. The new management structure of the school is effective. Monitoring procedures have improved, and there is evidence that sound management systems are now in place to enable further improvement to be made. Members of staff with posts of responsibility carry them out well. The monitoring done is identifying the training needs of staff, and there is a very effective system of professional review.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved, but there is still a need for further improvement. A daily act of collective worship is still not provided for all pupils. There has been some improvement in the overall provision for pupils' spiritual development.

· **Standards in subjects**

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds in national tests and GCSE examinations in 1999:

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

Results in the latest Key Stage 3 tests are best in mathematics, where they are above the national average. In science, performance is in line with the national average. The results in English are below average for the country as a whole. Overall, the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test results are in line with the average for secondary schools across the country as a whole, but they are below average for schools of a similar type. The finding of the inspection is that attainment is close to average at the end of Year 9 and that attainment in English is rising.

The standards in GCSE examinations were average overall in 1999 compared with national figures, but they were below those of similar schools. There was a drop in performance from 1998. This was the result of a relatively weak cohort moving through the school, and the drop in performance was predicted. The performance of boys caused the fall in results. Girls sustained their 1998 levels in 1999, but the attainment of boys overall dropped significantly, because of the high percentage of boys with learning difficulties in the cohort.

The finding of the inspection is that attainment is close to average in the school overall at the end of Year 11, but there is some under-attainment. Attainment is highest in English, the GCSE physical education course and science. It is lowest in religious education in Key Stage 4.

• **Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	English, Mathematics, Science, History, Design and technology, Art.	
Years 10-11	Good	English, Design and technology, History, Art.	• Religious education
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

Teaching is at least satisfactory in just over 97 per cent of lessons. It is good, very good or excellent in 64 per cent. In the large majority of lessons, teachers are well organised, have good subject knowledge and the control of pupils is good. In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers' expectations are too low, and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to make progress in their learning.

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: behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory: attendance is slightly above the national average. Pupils are generally punctual to lessons.
Ethos*	Good: pupils show interest in their work, concentrate, and form positive relationships. There is a positive commitment to raising attainment in the school.
Leadership and management	Leadership in the school is good overall and the management is effective. The new headteacher, with the senior management team, provides very good leadership. Other managers in the school lead their areas well overall.
Curriculum	Satisfactory: the curriculum is reasonably balanced and broadly based in Key Stage 3. The range of subjects is too narrow to meet the needs of all pupils in Years 10 and 11, and they are not taught enough religious education.
Pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory: most pupils with special needs make sound progress, but the teaching is not organised efficiently enough for the provision to make enough impact on their learning.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good: there are some weaknesses as well as strengths in some aspects of the spiritual provision. The provision for moral, social and cultural development is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory: there are sufficient teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. There are deficiencies in the accommodation that affect pupils' progress. Resources are satisfactory overall.
Value for money	The school gives good value for money.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

VI. Almost all parents feel welcome in the school, and find teaching and non-teaching staff very approachable. They feel they are encouraged to play a full part in the work of the school.

VII. Most parents feel that the school handles any complaints appropriately and is responsive to their suggestions.

VIII. They are satisfied with overall standards in the school.

IX. The values and attitudes the school seeks to develop meet with the approval of most parents and almost all say that their children enjoy coming to school.

What some parents are not happy about

X. A few parents do not feel well informed school, and do not have a clear understanding

XI. Some parents are dissatisfied with the

XII. A few parents are concerned about

XIII. A small number of parents are not
complaints.

XIV. Many parents wrote to the inspection
notation, including the provision of toilets and

The findings of the inspection team substantiate the positive points made by parents about the school. Some parental concerns are justified. There are problems with the buildings and site that sometimes have an adverse effect on the progress made by pupils, and affect their health and well-being. Not all reports to parents give enough information on the progress that children are making. Behaviour, however, is generally good. The behaviour policy is being implemented consistently throughout the school and is effective, overall, in bringing about a good learning environment in classes. The provision for homework is satisfactory and the homework done by pupils helps them to move forward in their learning. The school cannot resolve every parent's complaint satisfactorily, but makes reasonable efforts to do so.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to continue to improve and to raise levels of attainment and the quality of education in the school, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff, with the support of the local education authority, should:

XV.continue to seek ways of raising levels of attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3, especially of boys, by:

- *.identifying literacy targets in the schemes of work for all subjects;
- *.ensuring that all teachers emphasise literacy targets in their lessons and in their marking of written work.

(Paragraphs 6, 7, 9, 13, 23, 31, 33, 36, 143, 144, 153, 194, 235)

- .ensure that teaching and learning strategies identified in school policies are implemented consistently across the school, especially those related to marking and assessment.

(Paragraphs 30, 32, 58, 61, 79, 80, 82, 111, 116, 161, 196)

- .meet all statutory requirements, including those for:

- *.a daily act of collective worship for all pupils
- *.the teaching of religious education at Key Stage 4,
- *.the teaching of the full programme of study for information technology
- *.the appraisal of teachers
- *.the information to parents required in the governors' annual report.

(Paragraphs 16, 17, 40, 64, 70, 71, 118, 227, 231, 250, 261, 264, 265)

- .continue to work with the local education authority to resolve the problems with accommodation, especially the heating systems in isolated teaching rooms and the shortage of toilets for pupils.

(Paragraphs 31, 100, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 151, 164, 178, 183, 193, 204, 208, 238, 239, 250, 281)

Other areas of weakness which have been noted by the inspection team but not picked out as key issues are:

- *.the organisation of the teaching of special educational needs is not sufficiently coherent;
(Paragraphs 66, 80, 117, 147, 161, 236)
- *.pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop independent learning skills;
(Paragraphs 58, 112, 248, 258, 266)
- *.the governing body needs to develop more formal and effective systems for monitoring the work of the school and evaluating the effectiveness of budget decisions and policies;
(Paragraph 115)
- *.levels of resourcing need to be improved in science, religious education, art, child development, design and technology, French, German, geography and history.
(Paragraphs 130, 131, 133, 164, 176, 186, 189, 193, 217, 250, 277, 281)

INTRODUCTION

*** Characteristics of the school**

1. Malet Lambert School is an 11 to 16 comprehensive school for girls and boys serving an area to the north east of Hull, close to the city centre. At the time of the inspection, there were 1355 pupils on roll, which is above average for a school of this type. The number on roll has been gradually increasing over recent years. It is a popular school and over-subscribed.

2. The school serves a mixed socio-economic area, although most of the housing in the immediate vicinity is local authority housing, some of which is now privately owned. It is in an inner-city area, where the proportion of adults with higher education qualifications is well below average, and there is not a tradition of high academic aspirations. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average at 9.5 per cent. The school does not have adequate facilities for serving school meals, and so many pupils who would be eligible do not apply, because they live within easy walking distance of the school. The proportion of pupils on the register for special educational need is broadly average at 10 per cent. Almost all pupils are white, which reflects the ethnic nature of the school's catchment area, but there is small proportion of pupils who represent the range of cultural diversity in our society. Overall, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school at age eleven is close to the national average.

3. The school has set targets for 1999/2000 for attainment at Key Stage 3 and GCSE passes at grades A* - C. The school is aiming for 51 per cent of the pupils entered for GCSE achieving five or more passes at A* - C. In 1999, the cohort had a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and 42.9 per cent of that year group attained five or more passes at these levels. At the end of Key Stage 3, the school aims for 73 per cent of pupils attaining at least Level 5 in English and mathematics in the National Curriculum tests. In 1999, these targets were almost met, with 70 per cent attaining Level 5 or better in both subjects. The target for science is for 65 per cent to reach Level 5 or above and 58 per cent did so in 1999. Again, these targets are appropriate, and reflect the school's commitment to high attainment.

4. Key indicators

4. Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of

Year Boys Girl Total

4. National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	(78)66	(83)99	(72)86
	Girls	(96)84	(87)91	(72)67
	Total	(174)150	(170)190	(144)153
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	(70)57	(70)72	(58)57
	National	(65)	(60)	(56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	(26)16	(48)44	(19)16
	National	(35)	(36)	(27)
4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	(88)82	(93)101	(63)81
	Girls	(105)99	(98)95	(70)64
	Total	(193)181	(191)196	(133)145
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	(79)68	(78)75	(54)55
	National	(61)	(64)	(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	(39)24	(55)53	(32)24
	National	(30)	(37)	(30)

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	126	116	242

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	49	116	122
	Girls	55	110	112
	Total	104	226	234
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	42.9	93.4	97.1
	National	47.8	88.4	95.0

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised	School	7.6
Absence	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised	School	0.7
Absence	National comparative data	0.3

4.

4. Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	15
Permanent	0

4. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	21
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

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

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

4. Attainment and progress

5. Standards of attainment have improved since the last report, although attainment dipped in 1999 as a result of a less academic cohort moving through the school. Nevertheless, attainment overall in GCSE was close to the national average, and well above the average for Hull schools. In the last report, it was stated that pupils were attaining in line with the national averages at Key Stage 3. This has been sustained. Attainment was in line with the national average for performance overall in the national tests at Key Stage in 1999. Good standards were reported in English, and this is still the case at the end of Key Stage 4. Attainment in mathematics was said to be poor. There has been significant improvement in attainment in this subject; standards at present are good at the end of Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 4.

6. Attainment is below average at the end of both key stages when it is compared with similar schools, that is, those schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. This suggests that some pupils in the school may be under-attaining. Although this comparison is generally valid, it is unfair, to some extent, to this particular school. It does not take account of all the socio-economic factors that affect pupils' performance in an inner-city area. Significantly, it does not allow for the fact that few pupils beyond Year 7 in this school continue to claim free school meals. There are two reasons for this. The first is that almost all pupils live within walking distance of their homes. The second is that the school canteen is not large enough to cope with the numbers of pupils in the school. Nevertheless, the finding of the inspection is that there is some under-achievement, generally amongst boys. Their literacy levels on entry are below those of girls to a greater extent than is the case nationally. Analysis of the Key Stage 2 results in English reveals that almost twice as many boys attain below average levels as girls, and that twice as many girls as boys attain the higher level (Level 5).

7. Their literacy problems affect the progress of boys in many subjects, especially those in which reading and writing skills are of particular importance. Able boys told inspectors, for example, that the targets their teacher has set them in history are too high, because they have difficulty expressing their ideas and knowledge in essay form. In science and mathematics, boys' numeracy skills are generally satisfactory or better, but many boys have difficulty performing well in tests and in written work in class. They do not fully understand what written questions in tests are asking for, and find it hard to express their answers in writing, even though they may know the answer when the question is explained to them by a teacher. Girls attain significantly better at GCSE in modern foreign languages because their literacy levels are generally good. Boys attain more highly than girls in physical education, art and design and technology, where literacy plays a less significant role in assessment. Boys make good progress in English, however. At the end of Key Stage 4, although there is still a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, slightly greater than that nationally, boys attain standards close to the average nationally in the subject. Nevertheless, their progress in the traditional 'academic' subjects is affected by the problems they have had through the school in literacy, and resulting difficulties in articulating their ideas and in conceptual development.

8.The attainment of pupils on entry to the school, judged by performance in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests and standardised test data, was close to average for the country as a whole in science and mathematics in 1999. It was lower in English. There was a large difference between the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 in English, for example, compared with the proportion in mathematics and science.

9.In English, 12.8 per cent attained higher than average levels, but in mathematics and science they were attained by just over 28 per cent of pupils. In previous years, overall attainment on entry has varied from below to well below average. Attainment in mathematics and science has always been above that in English over the past four years. Between 10 and 23 per cent fewer pupils attained the expected level (Level 4) or above in English than in the other two core subjects in the national tests in each year. The test results have been improving steadily in the feeder primary schools, and the attainment of the present Year 7 was close to average on entry. Nevertheless, taking the attainment of the pupils in the school as a whole, attainment on entry is below average.

10.In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3, attainment overall was similar to the national average. It was below average compared with that in similar schools. Attainment in mathematics was above average compared with the country as a whole and in line with similar schools. Attainment in science was in line with the national average, but below that in similar schools, and in English it was below the national average and well below that in similar schools. In recent years, this level of performance has been sustained. Since 1996, the performance of boys and girls has been close to the national average, taking all three subjects together.

11.In GCSE in 1999, 43 per cent of pupils gained five or more grade A* to C passes. This proportion was broadly average in comparison with most schools, but below the average for similar schools. The proportion who attained five or more A* to G grades was 93.4 per cent, which was well above average compared with schools nationally, and average compared with similar schools. The proportion gaining at least one GCSE pass at A* - G was above average, at 97.1 per cent, and again in line with similar schools. However, this represents a drop in performance on previous years, because of a cohort of boys moving through the school whose attainment levels were lower than average for the school. Girls attained better than the year before, with a one and a half per cent increase in the proportion gaining five or more GCSE passes at the A* - C levels. However, boys' attainment dropped from 46 per cent gaining five or more A* - C passes to 38.9 per cent. The boys' results at GCSE were below the national average for boys.

12.Attainment at GCSE was relatively high in English, English literature and physical education. In these subjects, the overall A* - C pass rate was higher in 1999 than in 1998. In all other subjects, the A* - C pass rate fell. The greatest fall was in mathematics, from 39.3 per cent to 25.6. The school carefully analysed the reasons for this and took effective action. As a result, the inspection found that attainment is rising this year in mathematics.

13.The inspection found that performance in most subjects reflects the results in the end of Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations in 1999. There are no differences in attainment and progress of the small numbers of pupils from minority groups. Attainment in English is in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 3 overall, but below average in writing. A significant minority of pupils has problems with punctuation and grammatical accuracy, but speaking and listening skills develop well. Reading ability has improved from slightly below average overall on entry to at least in line in expectations. At Key Stage 4, attainment is above the national average in English and English literature. This is partly because of the good teaching of literature in the department and partly because of the pace and rigour in many lessons.

14.In mathematics, attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 3 and average at the end of Key Stage 4. This reflects the improvements in teaching, learning and the curriculum that have been introduced to counter the fall in GCSE performance last year. Standards have risen at both key stages, but the effects are taking longer to show fully at the end of Key Stage 4 because pupils in Years 10 and 11 have more ground to make up than those newer to the school. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory at both key stages. Although the school does not have an explicit policy for the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum, there are many good examples. In art, pupils do good work using tessellation when studying random and repeat patterns. In science, Key Stage 3 pupils collect data, plot bar charts and find 'lines of best fit' on scatter diagrams. They use skills of weighing and measuring in food technology. In design and technology they use 'nets' in their designs. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing numeracy skills across both key stages. In Key Stage 4, they demonstrate progressively more advanced skills, scaling measurements up and down in art; calculating the mean of a series of readings in science, mathematics and geography; and doing more advanced work in using and drawing a wider range of graphs in many subjects.

15.Attainment in science is in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 3, and is average at the end of Key Stage 4. In general, pupils have sound practical skills. High attaining pupils master the complex technical vocabulary of science well. They discuss scientific concepts intelligently and with understanding.

16.Attainment in information technology is average at the end of Key Stage 3. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have above average attainment in some skills, but they are not taught the whole range of skills required, with the result that their attainment is average overall. The technical ability of pupils is generally good, so they are able to apply their knowledge to solve problems.

17.Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations set out in the agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 3, but it is well below expectations at the end of Key Stage 4. This is because there is insufficient time for the subject at the later key stage and it is taught by non-specialist teachers. Until Year 9, pupils acquire satisfactory knowledge of major world religions.

18.In design and technology, attainment is in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. Attainment is best in the making elements of the course, but attainment in designing is not consistently satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is average overall. It varies from aspect to aspect, with attainment in resistant materials being below average.

19. In modern foreign languages, the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with expectations overall at Key Stage 3, and average at the end of Key Stage 4. Girls generally attain more highly than boys do.

20. Attainment in drama is generally in line with the national average at both key stages. The GCSE course only began last year, so no pupils have yet been examined. There are no significant differences in the attainment of different groups of pupils or by gender, except that the attainment of lower-attaining boys is affected adversely by their lack of literacy skills. They also suffer from a narrow range of vocabulary and registers in speaking and listening activities. Other pupils perform well in practical activities, such as improvisation. In media studies, attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 4 and the first group of pupils to take the examination is in line to attain well at GCSE overall.

21. Attainment in geography is in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 3, with some examples of pupils working at standards above expectations. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is average overall, with results close to the national average at GCSE. Girls' attainment is generally higher than that of boys. Strengths in attainment include the quality of the course work that pupils produce on topics such as tourism in the Lake District and flooding in Bangladesh. Graphical skills are good and they use secondary sources well.

22. In history, attainment is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3, but close to the average at the end of Key Stage 4. GCSE results in 1999 were below average, with girls achieving better results than boys. Staffing has changed in the department since last year, and there are signs that attainment at Key Stage 4 is improving. At the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils have a sound understanding of chronology, and a satisfactory knowledge of major historical figures and events. They can tell the difference between fact and opinion, objectivity and bias. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils demonstrate in their lessons on Second World War propaganda that they can understand, interpret and evaluate historical sources.

23. Attainment in art is in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 and average at the end of Key Stage 4. There is a difference in the attainment of boys and girls, with boys under-achieving overall. The weakness in the work of boys is in the theoretical and written work.

24. In music, attainment is in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 and average at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils at the end of Year 9 generally have a satisfactory knowledge of rhythmic and pitch notation. Almost all can play an instrument with one hand, following a graphic score. Higher attainers can read standard notation as they play. Pupils on the GCSE course play music with varying levels of skill, and read music reasonably well. They comment perceptively on pieces of music they hear and evaluate their own compositions.

25. In physical education, attainment is above the national average in GCSE courses, but average overall, and in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. In the GCSE examinations in 1999, 64.9 per cent of pupils attained A* - C grades. These are the best results in the school, and well above the national average. The gap between boys and girls has widened over the last two years, and is greater than that found nationally, with boys out-performing girls. Girls attain slightly above average grades overall; boys well above average. Pupils attain well in games skills, and have good knowledge of theory, such as physiology and respiration. Both boys and girls have sound basic skills in gymnastics, games and dance.

26. Pupils attain below average standards overall in child development. All the pupils on the

course are girls. Most understand the basics of the subject, but they are less skilled at developing their work beyond this level, and they lack analytical skills.

27.The progress made by pupils overall has improved since the last inspection. Progress is satisfactory or better in almost 98 per cent of lessons. It is good or very good in about 62 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in about 36 per cent and unsatisfactory in just over 2 per cent. Overall, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4.

28.The features that have brought about improvements in progress since the last report are linked to improvements in the overall quality of teaching. Where teaching is good, pupils are making good progress. They are motivated to succeed and behave well, listening carefully to their teachers and one another. There is a good ethos for learning in which high achievement is valued. The work they are set is carefully matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils so that all are appropriately supported and challenged. This has come about partly as a result of the new focus on teaching and learning strategies from the senior management team. They have established clear principles that they expect to be followed by all teachers in their lesson planning, and they regularly monitor lessons to ensure compliance.

29.There is evidence from scrutiny of work and talking to pupils that progress is improving as a result. Evidence, including assessment information and GCSE results from last year, indicates that in the past progress has been just satisfactory, whereas now it is good overall.

30.Nevertheless, the positive moves the school has made to improve teaching and learning strategies have had more impact in some classrooms than others. It is necessary for the professional development of staff and the monitoring of teaching to continue, so that good practice is shared more widely to attain greater consistency in the progress pupils make across the school.

31.In the few lessons where progress is unsatisfactory, pupils learn little because the work is too easy, repeating what they already know, or the teacher dominates the lesson so much that there is little time left for pupils to do any work. In lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, there are other factors that reduce progress. In some lessons, pupils' poor literacy skills or an inability to articulate clearly, especially on the part of boys, can slow pupils' progress. In a Year 10 drama lesson, for example, most of the girls could interact very well with other pupils when performing an improvised piece of drama, but some boys were awkward and found it difficult to articulate any worthwhile ideas. In science and mathematics lessons, a significant number of boys have difficulties in reading and understanding questions and in expressing their answers in written form. Another significant factor affecting progress is the accommodation in some areas of the school. There are rooms where the heating system is so noisy that pupils must choose between sitting in very cold conditions or hearing the teacher. There are only six toilets for nearly 700 girls. They have to queue and are sometimes late for lessons as a result, affecting the progress they make. Many girls go home at lunchtime in order to use the toilet, and so miss additional learning opportunities, including the chance to research in the school library, which would enhance their learning and progress.

32.Marking is not used effectively in order to help pupils make progress. Many teachers mark superficially. The comments they make on pupils' work tend to be bland and encouraging, rather than rigorous and helpful to pupils by pointing out where they are going

wrong and what to do to improve. Few teachers outside the English department mark for spelling, punctuation or grammatical accuracy. This is not helpful, especially to those boys whose difficulties in expressing their thoughts and ideas in writing impede their progress.

33. Over their whole time in the school, most pupils make good progress in English and in the development of their literacy skills. This is not true of all boys, however, and is in large part due to the hard work of the English department, where teachers work skilfully to develop reading and writing skills. Drama provides good additional opportunities to develop a spoken vocabulary that pupils can transfer to their written work. Most subjects teach pupils the specialist vocabulary they need to succeed in their work, but do not help them to express themselves better.

34. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and the development of numeracy skills overall in Key Stage 3, and sound progress overall at Key Stage 4. Developments in the curriculum and improvements in teaching are too recent to have led to a significant improvement in progress in Key Stage 4. Although attainment is improving at the higher grades at GCSE, there are times when the lowest and highest attainers make less progress than they should because the work set for them is not always appropriate.

35. Progress is good in Key Stage 3 in science, because teachers structure lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. Attainment is below average on entry, but pupils improve their knowledge and skills to the point where they attain results close to average in the national tests at the end of the key stage. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Pupils attain the results at GCSE that their attainment at the end of Key Stage would predict. Most lessons are sharply focused on the needs of the pupils, but this is lacking in a minority of lessons.

36. In modern foreign languages, progress is sound overall in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. The grouping of pupils, into classes set by ability, is helping to ensure that pupils of different attainment are set appropriate work and so make progress. Girls make better progress than boys because their literacy skills are generally higher.

37. Progress in geography is good at both key stages, as a result of effective teaching and the positive attitudes of pupils. They make good progress particularly in developing skills such as enquiry, note-taking, and good presentation of course work. In history, pupils make good progress overall. They acquire a sound knowledge basis of historical facts, and develop appropriately the skills of historical enquiry.

38. In information technology, progress is generally sound for pupils in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, progress is good in those aspects that are taught, but unsatisfactory overall because aspects of the course are not being covered. In design and technology, progress at Key Stage 3 is good overall. This subject's strong links with primary schools are helping to ensure that pupils build successfully on their prior experience and knowledge. Progress is good at Key Stage 4. The sharing of targets and assessment information is enabling pupils to understand what they need to improve and pupils are responding to this well.

39. All pupils make sound progress in physical education across both key stages. When they come to the school in Year 7, many pupils have no experience of netball, basketball or dance. They grasp the new skills they need quickly. In Key Stage 4, they grow in confidence as they are given more independence. They learn, for example, to devise their own fitness

programmes. Progress is helped in both key stages by the placing of pupils in setted groups, so that they can be set work at a level appropriate for their attainment. This is more successful for boys than for girls because there are more sets for boys and the classes are therefore smaller.

40. In religious education, progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, but poor in Key Stage 4. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the knowledge and skills required by the agreed syllabus up to Year 9, learning about major world faiths and about moral principles and codes. However, there is insufficient time allocated at Key Stage 4 for pupils to develop skills and knowledge progressively or to cover the syllabus. As a result, most show insufficient development and use of skills associated with the subject.

41. Progress in drama is generally satisfactory at both key stages. However, the progress made by lower-attaining boys is slowed by their lack of sensitivity to character and relationships in drama and their low literacy skills. Pupils make sound progress in the development of skills in practical activities, such as improvisation, and, especially at Key Stage 4, in the evaluation of their work. Pupils make good progress in media studies because of the quality of the teaching. In music, progress is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 3, with examples of good progress. In Key Stage 4, progress is good overall. Pupils learn how to work together to produce a group performance. They develop the ability to evaluate their own work constructively and that of others. They grow in confidence and competence as performers and composers. In art, pupils make good progress at both key stages overall, although there are weaknesses in the development of skills of research. Pupils in both key stages make good progress in developing their creative skills as well as their artistic appreciation. Assessment is used to share with the pupils the analysis of strengths and weaknesses in their work, which helps them to understand what they have to do to make progress.

42. In child development, pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of the positive attitudes they show and the quality of teaching. Some higher attaining pupils make good progress in their understanding and use of the language of the subject as well as in their acquisition of knowledge. Progress is hampered by a lack of access to resources, such as computers, and poor accommodation, without the facilities the subject needs.

43. Pupils with special educational needs are supported satisfactorily in their learning across the curriculum and make sound progress.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

44. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are good, overall.

45. Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils show interest in their work. They concentrate and listen well, and are willing to apply themselves to the tasks set. They come to lessons with positive attitudes and a willingness to learn. They ask and answer questions readily, are attentive and contribute during lessons. Pupils work co-operatively in pairs and groups, particularly in English, science and physical education, where they share tasks and discuss problems. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about most lessons, and particularly so in design technology, where they come up against imaginative and exciting challenges. There are good

opportunities for collaborative work through group discussion in most subjects.

46. The behaviour of pupils around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils understand the code of conduct, and are supportive of one another in lessons. They socialise well outside the classroom. Movement around the school is sensible and orderly, despite the overcrowding in corridors and the lack of space to relax at lunchtimes. No incidents of harassment were seen or reported during the inspection. Anti-bullying is given a high priority throughout the school in tutorial periods and assemblies. Pupils report there is little bullying, but that it is generally dealt with quickly and sensitively if it arises. Parents are generally pleased with the behaviour of pupils, and report very few instances of bullying in the school. There is a respectful relationship between pupils and staff. Pupils are polite, courteous and friendly, and welcome visitors into their school.

47. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions system and consider it fair. The system is implemented consistently by all staff, and monitored by the learning co-ordinators. Levels of exclusions have risen since the last inspection, but are still not high in comparison with schools of a similar size. They are all short, fixed period exclusions, and are used appropriately as part of the school's overall behaviour policy. The school sets itself targets to reduce exclusions by actively promoting positive attitudes and behaviour amongst pupils.

48. Pupils' personal development is promoted through the tutorial programme, in which pupils are encouraged to think about their own attitudes and approach to school and to life in general. As a result, pupils' confidence and self-esteem are good. Pupils have a chance to contribute to the running of the school through being form representatives in year group meetings and on the school council. The school council has recently been successful in changing the school uniform after consultation with parents and pupils. They are also setting up a listening scheme for pupils who have experienced bullying. The school is promoting independent learning, and encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. In some subjects (particularly English and design and technology) pupils are well equipped to do so, but in other subjects their skills are insufficiently developed for them to be as effective in this area.

49. The very good range of extra-curricular activities offered enhances pupils' personal development. Many pupils organise and take part in a variety of musical and dramatic productions, quite often on a large scale. During lunchtimes, many pupils rehearse and work unsupervised in an orderly and constructive way. In physical education, pupils can represent the school in most sports, and many also play for local teams in the area. The school has developed a strong European identity through its involvement in the 'Comenius' project, and its exchange visits with schools in France and Germany. Through the link with BP, some pupils have been to China and correspond regularly with Chinese pupils. Others have been to Alabama in connection with their studies of 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. The school celebrates Commonwealth Day by tele-conferencing with pupils in a school in Cameroon. The school supports many international, national and local charities by organising fund-raising activities, and, in this way, develops an awareness of the problems of others. The careers programme introduces pupils to the world of work in Years 10 and 11, and this is well supported by work experience placements.

49. **Attendance**

50. Attendance at the school is satisfactory.

51. For the school year 1998/99, the attendance rate was 91.6 per cent, which was slightly above the national average of 91 per cent. Authorised absence was 7.1 per cent (national average 7.9 per cent) and the unauthorised average was 1.4 per cent (national average 1.1 per cent). In no year group does the overall attendance fall below 90 per cent, but the attendance of girls in the current Year 11 is less than that of boys, and drops just below 90 per cent. 23 per cent of pupils have an attendance rate below 90 per cent, which has a detrimental effect of their attainment and progress.

52. The school uses a computerised registration system, which provides detailed information. Close monitoring of attendance data by senior staff, tutors and education welfare officer identifies problems quickly. The school makes effective use of outside agencies, and there is a good support network to help those pupils with serious attendance problems

53. Pupils register with their tutors in the morning and with subject staff at the beginning of the afternoon and every lesson. Use of the morning registration time is efficient and businesslike. Spot checks are carried out to detect internal truancy. There is little significant difference between morning and afternoon attendance. When differences do occur, it is mostly authorised absence, indicating there is little post-registration truancy. Punctuality is good. Few pupils arrive late, and the majority of lessons begin on time, despite the congestion between lessons.

53. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

53. **Teaching**

54. At the time of the last report there was a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching was good or very good in a third of lessons, particularly in geography and modern languages. Teaching was unsatisfactory in a quarter of lessons seen, and poor in a small number of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in personal and social education in particular. Significant weaknesses in teaching were identified as low expectations and a lack of challenge across the ability range. Planning was weak, with insufficient regard to pace and the matching of work to the needs of pupils. Poor feedback was preventing pupils from making progress.

55. The school has made good progress in addressing the issues raised, and is well placed to continue to improve in future. The senior management team has put in place an impressive programme of lesson observations, professional development and meetings with middle managers aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. A staff conference was called to address the issue, and it is the major focus of the school's work for the current year.

56. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last report. There is no poor teaching, and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced from 25 per cent to just under 3 per cent. Whereas teaching was good or better in a third of lessons, teaching is now

good overall. Teaching is satisfactory in 34 per cent of lessons, good in almost 43 per cent and very good in 20 per cent. Excellent teaching is a feature of one per cent of lessons. The teaching of personal and social education has improved, and is now good overall. Although there is slightly more unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3, the proportions of good and very good teaching are almost identical.

57. The school has taken initiatives to raise teachers' expectations of the levels pupils should be reaching. There is evidence that many members of staff have successfully adopted the teaching techniques that the senior management team has promoted and this has helped to raise standards.

58. Nevertheless, there are still some inconsistencies in approaches across departments and across teachers in departments, because there has been insufficient time for the recommended strategies to become embedded. A significant number of teachers, for example, still give pupils too little responsibility. They do not encourage them to work things out for themselves, with the result that many pupils are too dependent on the teacher to explain the task in detail before they begin work. The good or very good teaching shows the effectiveness of the teaching strategies that are now being encouraged across the whole school.

59. A feature of the best teaching is good subject knowledge that gives teachers the ability and confidence to extend and challenge even the most able pupils. In the good lessons, teachers have positive relationships with their pupils. This leads to effective class control and an atmosphere of trust, in which pupils are able to share ideas and learn from their mistakes without being discouraged from trying hard in future. Teachers plan very effectively, setting clear learning objectives for the lesson. They share these objectives effectively with the pupils, so that they know what is expected, and revisit them at the end of the lesson to consolidate their learning. Lessons are structured so that skills and knowledge are built gradually and progressively over time. Resources are prepared to support lessons effectively. The pace of learning is brisk in the good lessons, and pupils are challenged appropriately. Those with lower attainment are supported in their learning, and the higher attainers are challenged and extended. Homework is used well to extend the learning opportunities in class; only rarely is homework to finish off the work being done.

60. Excellent teaching of a Year 9 English class featured excellent control and management of class activity, very good awareness of pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses, and clear strategies for moving them forward. The teacher used the study of a written text to help pupils become better writers. She chose an interesting and relevant story to share, and used questions well to make pupils think for themselves. She had very high expectations of their work and behaviour. Although it was a mixed ability class, the teacher treated them as one might an A Level group, encouraging them to reflect and transfer what they learnt to their own work to improve their writing skills. In an art lesson for Year 8, excellent teaching was characterised by sensitivity for the needs of individuals, evident in high quality planning. The level of challenge was high, so as to make pupils think. As a result, they rose to the challenge and learnt for themselves, making very good progress.

61. A weakness in teaching is the quality of marking. Many teachers mark only the content of pupils' work, ignoring the accuracy and appropriacy of the writing. This does not help to develop and improve pupils' writing skills across the curriculum. Too frequently marking is superficial, with comments confined to praise for effort or neatness. In too many sets of exercise books, there is a lack of comments that analyse the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work, and clear guidelines on what to do to improve.

62. Teaching is good overall in English. The planning and organisation of lessons are areas of strength, and ensure that time is used effectively. In mathematics, there is good teaching in Key Stage 3 and sound teaching Key Stage 4. It is thoroughly planned. Teaching in science is good overall in both key stages, characterised by good subject expertise. Teachers work well to encourage scientific thought from their pupils, with good use of questioning to promote understanding.

63. Teaching is good overall in art in Key Stage 4. It is very good in Key Stage 3, where it is well organised, with effective use of appropriate resources. Positive use is made of praise and encouragement to build pupils' confidence and help them to succeed. Tasks are varied and interesting, which helps to motivate pupils. However, some teachers lack expertise in the use of computers for extending the range of work possible with older pupils. Teaching in design and technology is good overall in both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise, and use the specialist resources and facilities well. Their enthusiasm helps to motivate and interest pupils.

64. In geography, teachers focus on the skills of geography as well as the knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum. They use questioning well. Teaching is good overall in both key stages, and is enthusiastic and challenging. Teaching is good overall in history, and some teaching is very good. Lessons are planned well to help pupils learn progressively, so that each skill they learn helps them to master the next. The detailed planning ensures that pupils make consistent progress. Teaching is good in religious education in Key Stage 3, with good use of resources to stimulate pupils' interest. No Key Stage 4 lessons in religious education were observed in the inspection, but there is insufficient teaching to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus.

65. Teaching in modern foreign languages is good in both key stages. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and half the lessons are good or very good. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure that the work is appropriate for the needs of all pupils, and teachers have high expectations both of standards of work and behaviour. They are skilled in expanding their use of the target language as a teaching medium, matching pupils' ability to understand it, so that all classes make good progress in their use and comprehension of spoken French or German.

66. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, but it is not always planned effectively to help these pupils to meet the targets they have been set. The targets in their individual education plans are not always specific enough to help them make progress. Class teachers are not always made aware of the best teaching and learning strategies to enable pupils with special needs in their classes to succeed. Support assistants work well with individuals or small groups.

67. In information technology, teaching is good overall in Key Stage 3. Teachers sustain a brisk pace, which ensures that pupils work hard and make good progress. Parent volunteers, some of whom have had training in the subject, provide good support for pupils who need additional help. Information technology is not taught as a discrete subject in Key Stage 4, but where it is taught across the curriculum, the quality of teaching is generally good.

68. Teaching in music is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, with good teaching in almost half the lessons. It is good overall in Key Stage 4. The activities are carefully planned so that they are appropriate for pupils at different levels of attainment. There is sufficient challenge to extend the high attainers, who can, for example, play an instrument reasonably well. There is sufficient guidance to enable the lowest attaining pupils to make progress. Teaching is good in both media studies and drama. A brisk pace is sustained, which helps to ensure that pupils make progress in their learning.

69. In physical education, teaching is satisfactory across both key stages. Half of the teaching is good, but about 14 per cent is unsatisfactory. Where this occurs, it is because it is repetitive and does not move pupils forward in their learning. Most teachers make the aims of their lessons clear to pupils and encourage them to be independent. They have good subject knowledge, and know what pupils need to do to improve.

69. **The curriculum and assessment**

70. The school provides a sound Key Stage 3 curriculum, which is balanced and broadly based. The curriculum in Year 7 is complemented by additional literacy lessons. Pupils have the opportunity to take an additional foreign language in Year 8. All pupils take information technology in Year 7 and this subject is included on a modular basis in Years 8 and 9. However, the requirements for information technology in music are not being met in Key Stage 3. The balance of time given to subjects is appropriate.

71. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. It is not sufficiently broad and so does not meet the needs of all pupils. The provision for religious education does not meet statutory requirements because the time allocation is insufficient. The school has sought to meet the demands of the locally agreed syllabus through a series of units of work, delivered by non-specialists in personal and social education lessons. However, there is no coherence, continuity or progression to the programme offered. In Year 11, the programme is reduced to one short unit, which is not taught to all pupils. Information technology is taught across the curriculum rather than as discrete lessons, and the coverage fails to meet statutory requirements. Option choices are limited, especially for a school of this size, and do not provide sufficient breadth to the curriculum. There are no vocational courses, although there are pupils who would benefit from such provision. Consideration is being given to the possibility of GNVQ courses in the near future.

72. In general, all pupils have equal opportunity within the curriculum to learn and make progress. The school has recognised the under-achievement of boys, and departments have introduced a number of strategies designed to raise the attainment of all pupils and of boys in particular. The English department ensures that setting takes account of gender, to avoid the top sets being dominated by girls. However, in mathematics there are still some discrepancies in the balance of girls and boys, especially in the top sets. In physical education, pupils are

taught in single sex groups, but this restricts the choices for girls. For example, they cannot play soccer. Equality of access is enhanced by the provision of 'certificate of achievement' courses in English and mathematics, while there is a vocational qualification in physical education. These cater for the lowest attaining pupils and provide a limited alternative to GCSE certification.

73.The school meets statutory requirements for sex and health education. Factual information is taught to Years 7 and 9 in science. General guidance on relationships is provided as part of the comprehensive personal and social education programme. This also includes a well-structured course on drugs education. Good provision for health education also comes from the physical education department in the form of health-related fitness lessons.

74.The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs, and the school attempts to keep these pupils in the mainstream of whole-school education. A 'bridging class' has been recently introduced for pupils in Year 7 with special education needs. This course is taught separately for some of the timetable, and provides an appropriate curriculum for these pupils. High attaining pupils are also identified as having special needs. The school attempts to meet these by giving them additional work of a more exacting nature, as well as a GCSE enrichment programme. This includes classics and statistics in Year 11 and the opportunity to take a third language in Year 10.

75.The school works closely with partner primary schools to provide curriculum continuity between the primary and secondary phase. Successful cross-phase projects are operating in design and technology, history, art and English. In Year 6 in the primary school, for example, pupils start a project called 'myself', which is revisited and developed in Year 7 English lessons. Other cross-phase initiatives are encouraged to overcome difficulties, particularly in mathematics, associated with insufficient information on pupil attainment and progress on entry. Provision for continuity between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is sound. Pupils start their GCSE courses before the end of Year 9, when timetables are adjusted to take account of Year 11 leavers. However, curriculum links with colleges offering Post 16 education are under-developed.

76.Provision for extra-curricular activities, including sport, is very good. There is an extensive fixture list with other schools in several major sports. The curriculum is further enriched by a variety of out-of-school activities including a wind band, singing ensembles and orchestra in music, extra classes in Spanish and Italian, clubs in design and technology. There are also Saturday classes in art and the services of an artist in residence. A good range of school visits enhances the curriculum; to art galleries, history visits to the royal armories in Leeds, theatre trips to Stratford and a visit organised to Berlin to support an in-depth study on life in Germany in the Second World War. Exchange visits are provided to France and Germany, as well as a trip to China. Recently, a visit to Alabama was arranged for a research project.

77.The school provides comprehensive and good quality careers advice. It is impartial and well-informed, drawing on the expertise of outside agencies, particularly the careers service. Pupils have lessons on occupational awareness in Year 9, followed by a six-week careers module in Year 10. All pupils have an interview with the careers service in Year 11 and

undertake a one-week work experience. The school is an active participant in the Young Enterprise Scheme, and enjoys partnership arrangements with Humberside 'TEC', as well as useful contacts with a number of local employers. The school's careers library is a good resource, and is presently being developed to take account of new technology.

78.Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory overall. Progress has been made since the last report, which noted that there was some variation in practice between, and sometimes within, departments. Teachers then used widely different formats to keep records of pupils' progress in the National Curriculum. The school has recently set up a working group to look at whole-school procedures for assessment, to consider pupil data-bases on pupil attainment, to introduce GCSE target grade publications for Year 11 pupils, and to increase the use of base-line data to inform planning and set targets.

79.Good assessment policies are in place in English, science, art, design and technology, geography, history. Most departments provide pupils with assessment information in terms of National Curriculum level descriptors or GCSE grade criteria. In English, history and geography, this information is provided in terms that pupils can easily understand. In religious education, the grade criteria are too broad and need updating. In mathematics and modern foreign languages, practice is inconsistent and levels and grades are not always shared with pupils.

80.Teacher assessment is usually accurate, and assessment procedures are regularly moderated within departments. Target setting is still being developed, but there is good practice in this approach in English and design and technology. Elsewhere, target setting is satisfactory, but it is not consistent across the departments of mathematics and science. Target setting in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory overall. Nevertheless, the targets set for these pupils are often too vague and tend to concentrate on presentation skills, such as handwriting and spelling, rather than on subject-specific issues.

81.The use of assessment to inform curriculum planning is satisfactory. Good use is made of assessment in modern foreign languages, where schemes of work have been modified to give greater emphasis to speaking. Assessment is used well in mathematics to inform setting. Assessment is analysed in a variety of ways in science, music and physical education, and is used to guide a review of schemes of work. There is no evidence of assessment being used in religious education to inform curriculum planning.

82. Since the last inspection report, there has been an improvement in the quality and consistency of assessment, but it still remains under-developed. More co-ordination is needed to build on the good practice in a number of departments, and to ensure that greater use is made of the data available, so that subject areas can predict pupils' performance and identify underachievement at an early stage.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

83. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils was a serious weakness in the last report and a key issue for the school. A further key issue was the need to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. The findings of the last inspection were that the spiritual development of pupils was weak. Provision for moral education was variable, with good contributions from only a very few departments. There were limited opportunities for social development, including the development of personal responsibility. The cultural development of pupils was effective.

84. The school has made satisfactory progress, and provision is now good overall. There is a clear commitment to developing the knowledge and understanding necessary for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through all the subjects of the curriculum. The provision for spiritual development is now satisfactory, while that for moral, social and cultural development is good.

85. A co-ordinator for these aspects of the school's work was appointed after the last report. She has worked effectively to promote the awareness of all teachers and departments. All departments have been required to include a statement about the promotion of these areas in their policy documents. Teachers are expected to include them in lesson plans, and often do so. The senior management team monitors the effectiveness of these arrangements as part of their programme of lesson observations. The school has the capacity to improve further, when the paper on the school's development of values and attitudes is discussed and ratified.

86. Opportunities for spiritual development are now satisfactory overall. The raising of the awareness in the minds of teachers about the importance of planning for spiritual development has had a positive effect. Many examples of good practice were observed during the inspection week that had a clear impact on the progress pupils make in this aspect.

87. In the child development course, for example, there is significant emphasis on awe and wonder in lessons on birth and child care. In art, the opportunities for the appreciation of the work of great artists have a spiritual dimension. When pupils work on their own drawings and paintings, they are encouraged to wonder at the beauty of natural objects, and the mood of spirituality is reinforced by the playing of appropriate music through the lesson. For example, whilst pupils work on studies of leaves and flowers, the Pastoral Symphony is played. For pupils on the GCSE physical education course, there are elements of spirituality in their work on the Olympic Ideal. There are strong elements of spirituality in some work on English in the study of Shakespeare's plays and discussions about poetry. Work in music has moments of awe and wonder as pupils learn to appreciate great music. In drama, there are strong moments of spiritual experience as pupils explore human relationships, feelings and beliefs. There are good examples of teaching to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and self-knowledge in personal and social education lessons. Religious education makes an effective contribution to spiritual experience in Key Stage 3, as pupils learn about the spiritual beliefs of a range of religious groups, but little religious education is taught at Key Stage 4. Some acts of collective worship, broadcast over the loudspeaker system, are very moving. All are well prepared and worthwhile, giving pupils time for reflection. Whether their content is spiritual, moral or social, pupils listen to them intently, and they have a strong impact. Nevertheless, overall they do not meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship that is mainly Christian in character.

88. Provision for moral development is good. The school has a statement of values that includes knowing right from wrong. Pupils are taught not to give in to 'the temptation of opportunity'. They are instructed to behave correctly and to be well mannered and polite. The explicit statement of these values has only recently been shared, but they are intrinsic to the work of all adults in the school. Their teaching and example transfer such values transferred very effectively to the large majority of the pupils. Pupils are taught in personal and social education lessons, as well as through the loudspeaker broadcasts, to take personal responsibility for their actions and their part in the creation of an ordered community. The moral code within the school is strongly in place. There is an acceptance of the need for honesty and a refusal to tolerate anti-social behaviour is entrenched in the culture of the school. Pupils are involved in the discussion of moral issues in many lessons, and this is very effective in English, drama and geography. Lessons on the environment and green issues raise moral questions. Similarly in history and science, teachers plan for and take opportunities to discuss moral questions related to the work in class. They study human relationships and ethics in personal and social education, environmental issues in science through the school, and moral responsibility in religious education in Key Stage 3.

89. Provision for social development is good. There are good opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility as representatives on the school council or, eventually, as head boy or girl. Through their school council representatives, pupils can make suggestions about the way their school operates and challenge decisions that they do not like. As a direct result, a number of recent changes have been made. For instance, more rooms have been connected to the Internet. Changes have been agreed in the school uniform. Alterations are being discussed in the homework timetable to ensure that homework assignments are spread evenly through the week. By such means, pupils learn about citizenship and how elected representatives make decisions in a democratic process.

90. Many subjects of the curriculum support pupils well in the development of their social skills. In physical education, pupils are encouraged to support and relate to each other. Group work is used to support skill development and to help pupils to evaluate their own and others' performances. Collaborative working supports the development of social skills in English, drama, geography, science, history and music, amongst others. The importance of pupils' working collaboratively has been emphasised in recent staff development sessions and in the monitoring of lessons and lesson planning, so as to move teachers away from over-didactic teaching styles. As a result, small group work to develop social and collaborative skills is a regular part of every teacher's planning.

91. The school encourages pupils to extend their social experiences through a range of opportunities. They raise money for a large number of charities. There is a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities and residential visits, including trips abroad to Europe and America, twice yearly visits to Stratford and others to art galleries and museums.

92. The school's provision for cultural development is good overall, although the sharing and appreciation of world cultures is not strong. English lessons include the study of literature of worth, including a reasonable proportion of pre-twentieth century literature and literature from outside the white European tradition. A black poet has recently visited the school to share his work with the pupils. Music makes a useful contribution through the study of music from a range of cultures. Musicians come into the school to interest and involve the pupils in

performance, including a visit from the Halle orchestra. Pupils respond well and benefit significantly from opportunities such as these, learning, for example, for the first time the volume and power of the music of an orchestra playing live. Work in art makes a significant contribution to the cultural development of pupils. A good range of European artists is studied, but in addition pupils are introduced to a fascinating and varied range of art from across the world. There is a good programme of visits to museums and art galleries, and visits abroad always include cultural heritage sites, including cathedrals. There are also regular visits into school by drama companies. The provision for the development of cultural awareness is good overall, but the school does not reflect the full range of cultures, in its displays, for example, that pupils will encounter as they take a full part as citizens in our multi-cultural country. A positive step forward has been the appointment of a teacher with responsibility for improving the school as an aesthetic environment. She has already improved the quality of display.

92. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

93. The school provides good support, advice and guidance for its pupils, which creates a caring and secure environment. Tutors play a central role in making this provision effective. Tutors and pupils stay together for a number of years, so there is plenty of opportunity to build stable relationships. Since the last inspection, the school had spent time on clarifying the roles and responsibilities of tutors, learning co-ordinators and subject staff. As a result, everyone works together in a cohesive team to support pupils well. Parents are generally pleased with the support and guidance their children receive, but they have a number of concerns about the way that deficiencies in the accommodation affect their children's well being.

94. Teachers and tutors know pupils well individually and have a genuine concern for their progress and welfare. Pupils find the majority of teachers approachable, accessible, responsive and encouraging. Much of the personal support for pupils is built on the quality of their relationships with teachers. Pupils appreciate the attitudes of staff, and their willingness to stay after school to help or to organise extra-curricular activities.

95. Effective systems are in place to record, monitor and report pupils' academic progress and personal development. Again, the role of the tutor is essential and effective in co-ordinating the information and spending time with each pupil to discuss his or her progress. All pupils now receive a termly effort grade. They are beginning to set themselves learning targets in many subjects. This helps to motivate them and show them how to make progress. Tutors have timetabled time each week to ensure they fulfil their monitoring role fully, which they do. The role of year heads has been extended into that of learning co-ordinators, to emphasise the school's commitment to learning. They monitor the progress made by individual pupils and mentor them as necessary, which is beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Extension classes in Spanish, statistics and classics have been set up, to offer useful extension opportunities for high attaining pupils. Similarly, there are revision workshops and a mentoring scheme for Year 11 pupils in the run-up to GCSE examinations. Such strategies are effective in providing additional learning opportunities and helping pupils to higher standards.

96. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a more structured approach to the co-

ordination and delivery of personal and social education lessons. Specialists put together the separate modules, and a senior teacher is responsible for overseeing the whole programme. Tutors are well supported in terms of resources and advice. They meet in year-groups monthly to discuss the tutorial programme. Each module is evaluated by staff and amended for the next year. The observations of tutorial lessons during the inspection showed that teaching was at least satisfactory and good in many cases. This aspect of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection, and makes a positive contribution to the support and guidance of the pupils throughout the school.

97.Procedures for recording, monitoring and promoting attendance are good and meet statutory requirements. The school makes satisfactory use of the information available from the computerised registration system. Attendance is monitored on a weekly, monthly and termly basis by tutors and senior staff, and good attendance is rewarded. The school constantly measures its performance against itself, wanting to improve on the figures for the previous week or term. In this way, attendance always has a high a profile within the school.

98.There are comprehensive and good procedures for encouraging and maintaining good discipline and behaviour, based on a climate of honesty and fairness, showing tolerance towards others and accepting responsibility. The code of conduct is well established and considered reasonable by pupils. It is supported by a system of rewards and sanctions that pupils generally respond to in a positive, mature and responsible manner. The good relationships between pupils and their teachers also contribute to an orderly and happy atmosphere.

99.The school follows the local child protection procedures, and all members of staff are aware of how they operate. Teachers are provided with clear and helpful guidance on how to deal with concerns, and confidential information is kept secure. The school nurse visits when requested, and there are clear channels of communication with all outside support agencies. There is a detailed policy on the organisation and participation of off-site activities and visits. There are effective arrangements for first aid, sickness and fire procedures. A detailed health and safety policy identifies roles and responsibilities. The school is awaiting the report of a risk assessment of the site recently undertaken by outside contractors. Few departments have carried out a detailed risk assessment of their classrooms and working practices, and it is recommended that this should be addressed.

100.The buildings as a whole pose a number of health and safety risks. They are too small for the number of pupils, and overcrowding in corridors is a problem. Some classrooms are too small and do not have appropriate teaching areas. Several rooms are extremely cold and draughty. Heaters have to be turned off because they are too noisy and blinds do not work. The conditions make it very difficult for pupils and staff, and it is a credit to them all that their attitudes and morale remain so positive. There are no social areas for pupils to relax in. The dining room is so small that pupils have to rush their food. The condition of the playground is so poor that it is now used as a car park. The toilet arrangements are inadequate, particularly for girls, as there are only five toilets in the main building for 661 girls. There is one toilet in the sports hall, but access to this is difficult because the building is sometimes locked. Parents have expressed serious concern over this matter and the inspection supports their concern. Many girls report that they suffer extreme discomfort through the lack of adequate toilet facilities. All these problems have a detrimental effect on the learning and welfare of pupils.

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

101. The school has a good partnership with parents and the community. Parents receive information on school life through the prospectus, the annual governors' report, termly and weekly newsletters, and letters home. Parents are invited to two parents' evenings each year. They meet with their child's tutor at one meeting and with subject teachers at the other. Attendance at these evenings is good. Parents receive termly effort grades and an annual written report. The termly grades indicate pupils' attitudes, but do not give parents a clear picture of the progress their child has made. The written reports provide detailed information on pupils' attitudes and involvement and are personal and encouraging. Some subjects indicate National Curriculum levels reached, but not all give this information. Reports do not always compare them standards reached with national expectations, so parents do not know how well their child is doing compared with pupils elsewhere or with others in the same class. Few subjects give specific targets for pupils to work towards in order to improve. An exception to this is in modern foreign languages, where the targets are very specific, giving pupils clear guidance for improvement. Information contained in reports depends on individual staff, and as a result their quality varies too widely across and within departments. The school is shortly moving to an electronic format for reports, and this may improve the quality. Some parents feel that they do not receive sufficient information on how well their child is progressing.

102. The school is keen to encourage parents to take an active part in their child's education and are successful in doing so. Over 90 per cent of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire find the school easy to approach with questions and problems. Parents are expected to sign and check the planners, and some parents use this as a means of communicating with tutors and individual subject teachers. The home-school agreement was established after consultation with parents. The draft agreement was published in the newsletter and comments invited. Parents were asked to meetings, and the views were sought of groups such as the parent volunteer group. Parents are encouraged to help in school and within lessons. During the inspection, parents were seen in art and design and technology lessons, assisting pupils with special educational needs and supporting readers. All parent helpers are well briefed and supported. Some have gone on to receive City and Guilds accreditation in Learning Support. The school and parents work in partnership to help each other, and this has a positive effect on many pupils. The school has provided workshops for parents to help them understand new initiatives within education. Recent ones have covered spelling, literacy and information technology. There is also an abundance of information to encourage parents to help their children at home. Booklets, leaflets and videos have been produced by the school covering such topics as time management and organisation, improving memory and presentation skills, and learning to learn. There is an active association for parents' (the PSFA) which supports the school with social and fund-raising events, and school productions are also well attended.

103. Partnership with the community is good. The school makes every effort to forge strong links with the large number of feeder primary schools. Members of staff visit them and primary children are invited into Malet Lambert for a variety of activities, taster lessons and induction events. Year 7 pupils report that they settle into secondary school life easily, and feel at home very quickly. Primary schools close by are also encouraged to use some of the school's facilities, such as computers and the community history museum. All the schools concerned are working together effectively to make sure there is continuation across the key

stages. There are subject group meetings, to share information and understanding, and discuss teaching methods. This currently occurs in English, maths, history and information technology. In design and technology, a project has been set up, with funding from British Aerospace, which allows a secondary teacher to work with feeder schools to produce a link project, begun in Year 6 and completed in Year 7. In this way, secondary teachers get useful first-hand information on the ability of pupils early in the school year.

104. The school supports a number of charities, either as a whole school enterprise or as individual tutor groups. Links with the immediate local community have improved since the last inspection. Members of the police, fire, prison and medical services are regular visitors to tutorial lessons and assemblies. The Aids Action Team play a significant part in the health education module and work with all tutor groups. Through physical education, many pupils play competitively in netball, football, hockey and rugby teams and leagues outside school. Access to the local sports centre for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has encouraged them to take up activities such as squash and aerobics.

105. The school has a good relationship with industry and commerce, including close contact with BP and British Aerospace. Local employers are used widely for work experience placements, and there is good communication with Sixth Form colleges. The school has a good working relationship with the careers department at Hull University. They were involved in a pilot project run by the University to promote higher education - Aim for Continuing Education (ACE Day) - which is now a regular event attended by many Year 11 pupils.

106. Further afield, the school has developed good links with schools in Europe through the Comenius project. There are exchange visits with pupils in France and Germany, and blossoming friendships with pupils and schools in China, America and Cameroon.

107. Unfortunately, the school does not have any links with churches of any religion, and there is little contact with the disadvantaged within the community such as the elderly or the ill, except at Christmas time. Development in this area would add to pupils' understanding of the world and help strengthen this aspect of their development.

107. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

107. Leadership and management

108. The last report noted that the school had clear aims and a supportive governing body. There were criticisms, however, of school development planning and of the link between the process of planning for whole school development and that in subject departments. The staffing structure was unclear and there was no shared recognition of the direction in which the school should move. As a result, the aims of the school were not being implemented satisfactorily. The first key issue for the school in the last report was the need to address these weaknesses.

109. Good progress has been made. Development planning is now satisfactory. It has been improved in departments and the school as a whole for a number of reasons. Effective management and leadership have led to improved communication with all members of staff,

but most especially with middle managers. This ensures that there is common understanding of whole-school aims and values. Effective professional development has ensured an agreed and consistent approach to the process of planning. Communication through the school has improved following the clarification of roles, including those of the senior management team. Line management and routes of communication are now clear and understood. A generally very good professional development programme, including good use of staff conference days, has focused on the primary aims of the school, to ensure that they are understood by all. Further professional development is required in religious education, however, at Key Stage 4.

110. The quality of leadership is good overall. A new headteacher was appointed in June 1999, and she is providing very good leadership in setting out a clear educational direction for the work of the school. She quickly analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and was instrumental in focusing professional development on the improvement of teaching and learning strategies. The senior management team is giving good support, and together they have been effective in raising the expectations of teachers as to what pupils can achieve. Senior members of staff are making increased use of assessment data in order to establish what pupils should be achieving and to assess their progress. Targets are being set for departments, teachers and pupils. This is having a significant impact on learning. Teachers are routinely sharing the aims of the lessons with pupils, then reviewing with them how far the aims have been reached. They share with them both the National Curriculum or GCSE levels they are currently at, and what they need to do to move to the next. The sharpened focus on the purpose of lessons has introduced more rigour into the work of most teachers. The clearer view that pupils now have of where they are and how to succeed has raised their sights, and enabled them to make progress at a more rapid rate.

111. There are systems newly in place for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and curriculum development. These are rigorous and effective. The first round of monitoring has just been completed, and all teachers have been observed teaching two lessons. Useful and swift feedback was given to each teacher, and an overview to the department head. Heads of department are invited to a shared lesson observation with a member of the senior management team, in order to develop their monitoring skills and to lead to a shared understanding across middle management of the characteristics of a successful lesson. This has led to increased consistency in lesson planning and delivery, as well as more consistent implementation of school policies for teaching and learning. Teachers are aware of the criteria that are being used to monitor the quality of their work in the classroom. The criteria for success are shared, and include all the characteristics of effective teaching, such as appropriate pace and the effective use of formative assessment to help pupils improve their work. There has not been time for the monitoring to have removed all inconsistencies, but a good start has been made.

112. The headteacher found that in many lessons the balance between teaching and learning was wrong. Pupils were over-taught because teachers talked at them too much. Pupils were not learning effectively because they had too little time to work as individuals and groups on specific tasks. Independent learning was not being encouraged in some areas because pupils were rarely given responsibility for their learning. In addition, there was complacency in some areas about the quality of education that was being delivered and the apparent progress that pupils were making. Observation of progress over time and the scrutiny of work by inspectors confirm these features. Comparison of attainment on entry with attainment levels at the end of the two key stages shows that progress has been satisfactory, but it has rarely

been good. However, inspection evidence indicates that the recent management strategies are having a good effect. The quality of teaching in the inspection week was good overall, and so was the progress that pupils were making. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when 25 per cent of teaching was found to be unsatisfactory and some was poor. Nevertheless, there are still inconsistencies in practice, and a significant number of teachers still give too little responsibility to pupils, not encouraging them to work things out for themselves. The result is that many pupils are too dependent on the teacher to explain the task in detail before they can begin work.

113. The senior management team is using an increasing range of data to monitor the work of departments, to measure the effectiveness of the developments they have introduced, to track the progress of individual pupils, classes and year-groups and to set targets. They make full use of the statistical information that they generate as a school and that which comes from government sources. The regular and thorough tracking of the progress of all pupils, linked to regular testing and mentoring, reflects the commitment of the school's senior management team, middle-managers and form tutors to the promotion of high attainment. Again, the improvement in pupils' progress that the inspection has detected indicates that this is beginning to have an effect.

114. Governors are supportive, know the school well and give readily of their time for the benefit of the school. They liaise effectively with the senior management team and have, over the past year, come to an understanding of the complexity of their role and responsibilities. They now plan to participate in the setting of the school development plan as well as the budget, and seek to link the two effectively. The finance group helps to monitor the budget, and has begun to monitor the effectiveness of major budget decisions. Some of the governors have specific strengths and skills to bring to their work, and overall the governors fulfil their role satisfactorily.

115. However, they now realise that their role is that of a critical friend, and are planning a more systematic programme of focused visits. They need to develop more formal and effective systems for monitoring the work of the school and evaluating the effectiveness of budget decisions and policies. This will better inform their understanding of the effectiveness of the school and of their future planning and management decisions.

116. Almost all heads of department and year heads provide very effective leadership, giving clear direction to the work of teachers in their charge. Policies and schemes of work provide generally sound guidance for their work. The organisation and administration of departments and year teams are generally areas of strength and help to ensure that the work of the school runs smoothly. Overall, there is a good ethos and a commitment to high achievement and equal opportunities, but it is not consistently good in every department or classroom. There is a need for further consolidation, in order to ensure that policies and values are shared and implemented by all. The aims and values of the school are reflected in its policies, but not all policies, such as the ones for assessment and marking, are implemented consistently in practice.

117. The management of provision for special educational needs is sound overall. The special educational needs policy meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The register of special educational needs is accurate, and the records of identified pupils are well kept. Statutory requirements for the statemented pupils are fully met. Pupils on the register have

individual education plans, with targets that are set and reviewed regularly. However, the provision lacks coherence because strategic planning is weak. The responsibilities for different aspects are divided, leading to some inefficiencies in provision. The result is that, although the amount of support is generous, it is not all targeted effectively. The management of equal opportunities is satisfactory overall. The equality of opportunity is implicit in the schools' ethos and the documentation of most departments indicates awareness of equal opportunities issues. Performance is monitored by gender and the tutorial program offers pupils the opportunity to consider issues relating to self-esteem, stereotyping and prejudice.

118. The school complies with almost all statutory requirements, but there are significant omissions. The requirement for a daily act of collective act of worship for all is not met. The loudspeaker broadcasts are of good quality and appropriate for the pupils' needs, but they rarely include an element of worship. The provision for the teaching of religious education does not meet the minimum requirements of the agreed syllabus at either key stage. The teaching of information technology at Key Stage 4 does not meet statutory requirements. Appraisal has lapsed, pending information on new requirements. Information on access for the disabled is missing from the governors' annual report to parents.

118. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

119. The number, qualifications and experience of staff are generally satisfactory. There are some areas of weakness, however, that have an adverse effect on pupils' attainment. Religious education has two full time teachers for Key Stage 3, but all teaching at Key Stage 4 is undertaken by form tutors, none of whom is a specialist teacher of religious education. Some of the weekly personal and social education lessons are used to deliver the religious education unit. As a result of this arrangement, the attainment and progress of pupils are unsatisfactory overall, and further professional development is needed if it is to continue. There are staffing weaknesses in physical education, where there is no full-time female member of staff. There is less staffing available for girls' groups than for boys' in physical education lessons. This means that girls' groups are significantly larger than boys', and this has a detrimental effect on the progress girls make and the choice of activities available to them. There are also areas of strength. The levels of staffing in English and design technology are very good and have a positive effect on standards. The staffing is well balanced in terms of experience and provides good quality staff development within these departments.

120. The ratio of teachers to pupils is slightly above average at 18:1. More teachers are being employed annually because of the increased number of pupils in the school. Parental concerns about staff changes and the number of student teachers have been addressed satisfactorily by monitoring staff in relation to teaching groups and reducing the number of student teachers. An initiative to monitor individual teaching hours is in place, and has cut down the number of supply staff being used. There are sufficient non-teaching staff and a generous provision of special educational needs assistants. The learning resource centre is appropriately staffed at present, but is dependent on voluntary help. The technical support for information technology has been successfully increased in both quality and quantity since the last report. The school has a strong commitment to the initial teacher training, helping to train between 15 and 28 students each year. Their deployment remains very well monitored, and one

university has used much of the school's good practice as exemplar material.

121.Appraisal has been replaced by individual reviews with team leaders and lesson observations by the senior management team. These systems clearly identify the development needs of each teacher, and the school has excellent systems for responding to their requirements. There is a very effective staff development officer. Very good records are kept which include evaluations, audits and regularly reviewed policies. There is an induction evening in July for all new staff. A staff handbook and newsletter support them in their new posts. Newly qualified teachers are given a mentor, and both are given time for weekly meetings. Whole staff training days take place on a regular basis, and independent learning, literacy, information technology and special educational needs have been addressed recently. Thirty-five members of staff have been provided with lap top computers and given training in their use. In a recent audit, the majority of members of staff have indicated that they feel competent in basic information technology skills. This shows the success of several initiatives over previous years. Overall staff development is very good, and has been rewarded by the Investors in People award. Staffing levels have improved since the last inspection in information technology and art, but there remain insufficiencies in religious education.

122.The accommodation comprises a range of buildings dating back to 1932. The school was originally built to house 700 pupils, but the number is now almost double that figure. Over the past two years, the intake of pupils has exceeded the recommended number, which is overburdening the school site. The buildings have over 93 per cent usage, leaving very little room for flexibility. Lack of social areas and the health and safety issues associated with overcrowding have a negative impact on standards and the progress pupils make during their five years at the school.

123.Many teachers, including those in modern languages, science and geography, teach outside their subject areas, and need to transport heavy boxes of resources across the school in order to prepare their lessons. Some rooms are cold, damp, poorly ventilated and overcrowded. This causes discomfort as well as adversely affecting learning. In child development lessons, for example, pupils must sit in their coats during lessons or have the room heated by an antiquated overhead system, which is so noisy that teachers and pupils cannot communicate effectively, destroying opportunities for learning. Further examples of poor teaching spaces are the science laboratories. In some, there have been no changes in the design and fittings in the room since 1932. Large groups of up to 34 pupils are taught in a converted bike shed with a concrete floor; a miserable situation only made workable by the efforts of the teacher and pupils. They have painted the room and units to reflect their study of the solar system. Opportunities for staff to meet and work collaboratively are affected by the lack of adequate staff work areas in the departments. This is made worse by a staffroom that is barely ten square metres. Senior managers double up on room use, but this impacts negatively on their whole-school role and makes the organisation of documentation very difficult. Staff briefings have to be held in the hall, as the staffroom cannot accommodate the full staff.

124.Toilet facilities present even more difficulties for pupils. Over 600 girls use a toilet space of five cubicles, some of which have door bolts missing. Pupils regularly queue throughout the lunch or break time to use the facility. In some cases, pupils feel intimidated by this situation and do not use the toilet during the day. This health and safety feature impinges on pupils' comfort, and in turn has a negative impact on learning. The findings of the inspection support the concerns of many parents about the lack of toilet facilities for their children.

125. Similarly, a lack of appropriate accommodation makes lunchtime stressful in the school. The meals service assistants do well to organise pupils and make the best use of the 132 seats available those purchasing a school meal and those with a packed lunch. The mealtime is inappropriately rushed, and there are long delays when batches of pupils are held in classrooms waiting for table space. This situation reduces the opportunity for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities.

126. The school has recently had a health and safety audit that condemned the broken up and dangerous play space. Car parking on the play area severely reduces the amount of hard play space available for break and lunch-time activities. It adversely affects lessons in physical education, because the courts are poor quality.

127. The overwhelming efforts of teachers and non-teachers to improve their working areas ensure that the problems in accommodation are minimised wherever possible. Staff self-help groups have scrubbed, painted and put up attractive displays of pupils' work in order to improve the learning environment. Nevertheless, there are problems that cannot be covered up, and display is often ruined by leaks of rainwater. This occurs particularly in the wartime shelter that has been converted into two classrooms for teaching English; they pour with condensation and are very cold in winter.

128. Action since the last inspection to modify the buildings has been slow because the school has had to fund developments themselves. The shared-access sports hall is a highlight of the site, and another significant improvement is the conversion of an area of the school into a 'history museum'. A site audit has forecast that £700,000 would be necessary to modify the site into an effective learning environment. Next term the technology department's new building is to be started, and more funding has been made available by the local authority to improve science facilities. The school has also funded the conversion of a set of garages into a three room art block.

129. The provision of resources throughout the school as a whole is adequate, because of prudent management by staff and their willingness to make and use their own resources. However, some weakness in the level of resourcing in certain areas has an unfavourable impact on the progress of some pupils.

130. Textbooks are generally up-to-date and in reasonable condition. There are shortages of textbooks in design and technology, child development, history, religious education, science and in information technology in Year 7. In art, many of the books available to pupils are the personal possessions of their teachers. Work in geography is limited by a shortage of atlases. In French and German, pupils' progress in reading is restricted by the lack of a range of authentic documents in the target languages.

131. There is only just sufficient equipment in design and technology, where it is old but well maintained, and in physical education, where some is in poor condition. In music, there are insufficient percussion instruments, and in history, geography and modern languages there are insufficient videos and some lack of overhead projectors. In science, shortage of equipment affects the type of work pupils can do in Year 7. In art, access to photographic equipment and pottery equipment is restricted, narrowing the range of activities for pupils. In drama, lack of equipment limits pupils' progress. The ratio of computers to pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now 13:1. Most of the equipment is recent and well

maintained. It is in constant use throughout the day by pupils in lessons, before and after school, in the lunchtime and occasionally on Saturdays. A range of suitable software is being acquired and there is access to the Internet and Superjanet. However, there is still insufficient access to this equipment for some departments, including art and music.

132.The provision of specialist equipment is good for pupils with special education needs.

133.The library has recently been re-located to provide greater space and to link access to books and electronic data systems, in line with the school's 'Learning to learn' programme. The book stock has been reviewed appropriately and older material removed. Consequently, the ratio of books to pupils at 4:1 is inadequate and well below the recommended number. It is being supplemented by loans from the local school library service, and a start has been made to build up stocks of electronically stored data. Book provision is adequate for design and technology, art, geography, physical education and science. The fiction and poetry section for Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, but there is a lack of suitable reading materials for pupils with special educational needs. Provision is limited in mathematics, languages and fiction for Key Stage 4. Good use is being made of the information technology equipment in the learning resources centre by all departments, but only limited use is being made of the book facility. Some departments bring groups or whole classes to work and encourage pupils to work there independently, but this is not consistent across all departments. Older pupils do not make enough use of the fiction sections.

134.As at the last inspection, the school continues to make effective use of resources beyond the school with visits to museums and theatres, use of local sporting facilities and foreign language exchanges. In addition there are good links with companies in design and technology and science. The use of the Internet for the Comenius project and Superjanet to link the school with the Cameroons has added a global dimension to pupils' experiences.

134. The efficiency of the school

135.The efficiency with which the school deploys its financial resources is satisfactory. The present school development plan, inherited by the new headteacher, lacks rigour in its costings, and the finance committee of the governing body was not sufficiently involved in its development or its monitoring in recent years. Figures are given for costs of different elements of the development plan, but these are not broken down in sufficient detail, making it difficult for the governing body to monitor spending in an informed way. However, the latest planning, in its early stages of development, shows that these weaknesses are being addressed. An effective mechanism now exists for a planning cycle that involves dialogue and discussion between the governors, senior management and subject departments. The finance committee meets at least once per term and at others times as necessary. The bursar is a member of this committee, and there is good and detailed discussion of the current financial situation at each meeting.

136.Income per pupil is very low relative to the average for schools of this type. Spending on teachers is also below average, but the cost of educational support staff to assist pupils with special educational needs is high. It is more than three times the national average, but not all of these staff are used efficiently for maximum impact on the learning of designated pupils.

137.Satisfactory use is made of teaching and support staff. Teachers have secured particularly effective professional development in information technology through the provision of 30 notebook computers for use. In some curriculum areas, there is a need to improve links between development plans and associated requirements for staff training. For example, professional development in mathematics is not related to the development plan. All departments make good use of the available resources of books and equipment. The accommodation is used as efficiently as possible, in spite of substantial difficulties of cramped space and difficult working conditions.

138.Financial control and administration are good. The bursar, who is a member of the senior management team and the governing body's finance committee, monitors day-to-day spending efficiently using a local authority template. She is well placed to advise on the way departments are handling their finances.

139.Particular attention is paid to tracking expenditure on maintenance of the very old buildings. Regular reports are made to the finance committee, and there is an effective three-way link between the bursar, senior management and governors. In this, the bursar plays an important professional role in advising governors of the financial implications of their planning decisions. The most recent audit of the school's finances in 1998 considered the systems to be good. The two issues raised in this report related to the declaration of governors' and staff pecuniary interests and the administration of the school fund. These issues have now been satisfactorily addressed. In the context of the school and the way its finances are managed, the low unit cost, the quality of education provided and the progress made by pupils, the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

139. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

139. English

140. Standards of attainment on entry are lower than national expectations. Boys significantly underachieve at the end of Key Stage 2 in English compared with girls and with national figures. In Key Stage 3 tests in 1999, 56 per cent of pupils at Malet Lambert reached Level 5 or above, which is below the average nationally. However, by the end of Key Stage 4, 61 per cent achieved grades A* - C in English Language, which is above average compared with schools nationally. In literature 58 per cent achieved grades A* - C. The trend over the last three years is moving steadily upwards.

141. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory overall and are often good. Pupils listen well and have the confidence to take part in oral work and presentations. They show sound debating skills, and in a Year 9 lesson on 'Romeo and Juliet', this allowed good exploration of theme, motive and character.

142. At Key Stage 4, standards of speaking and listening are good overall, and standards of pupils with high attainment are very good. Good standards were especially apparent in a Year 11 formal debate on 'Corporal Punishment'. They enable pupils to attain highly in other aspects of English. For example, in a lesson on Simon Armitage's poetry, the high quality of the discussion helped pupils identify aspects of language, structure, and presentation. A low attaining year 10 group made progress in understanding dramatic effects, devices and structures in 'Shirley Valentine', partly as a result of their relatively good discussion skills.

143. Standards observed in classrooms and in students' work indicate that writing skills are slightly below average at the end of Key Stage 3, but average at the end of Key Stage 4. Key Stage 3 pupils write expressively for a range of audiences. They adapt their style appropriately for formal tasks, such as some kinds of letter writing, reporting or recording. They are fluent at writing stories or personal writing expressing feelings or emotions. However, there are areas of weakness in the technical aspects of writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Lower attaining pupils use techniques from the literacy strategy well to help them to structure their writing, including writing frames and story boarding. All pupils redraft their work and frequently refer to dictionaries.

144. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment in writing is slightly above average overall. Higher attaining pupils write with confidence, clarity and lucidity. Examples of redrafted coursework demonstrate that pupils are able to use the drafting process to improve the structure and content of their work. Higher attaining pupils produce folders containing a broad range of work of consistently high quality, especially on the media studies and poetry assignments. Some lower attaining pupils manage to produce imaginative work appropriate to the task, which clearly indicates an understanding of audience. Unfortunately, their work shows continuing difficulties with spelling, punctuation and grammar.

145. Standards for reading are in line with national standards at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 3, most pupils generally read fluently, explore vocabulary, and refer to textual evidence to support a viewpoint. Pupils also demonstrate the ability to retrieve and select appropriate information, as in a lesson on 'Reynard the Fox' and 'Stormy Day', where pupils of all abilities shared selected information. Lower attaining pupils in a Year 9 lesson on 'The Wave' successfully reflected on how the central character 'changed'.

146. By Key Stage 4, pupils are able to distinguish between particular genres with confidence and control. For example, a Year 11 group studying 'To Kill A Mocking Bird' compared an actual trial transcript with the literary text in order to establish historical context. Lower attaining pupils in a lesson on 'Mice and Men' demonstrate the ability to identify a passage from the text suitable for a film.

147. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. This is partly because teachers explain learning objectives clearly and share the assessment criteria with the pupils. Tasks are appropriate for pupils at different levels of attainment; they are challenging and well focused. Pupils make best progress where they are actively involved and work on short, well structured tasks, as in a Year 10 lesson on 'I Wanna be Yours' and another Year 10 lesson on advertising where 'purpose and audience' became a central feature. Good use of questioning and feedback allows pupils to make very good gains in understanding, as was seen in a Year 9 lesson on 'Midsummer Night's Dream'. Good pace, high expectations of pupils, stimulating well planned lessons, and extended plenary sessions are all features of lessons where progress is good or very good. Progress is less assured where time is not managed as effectively and the lesson objectives are not kept in focus. Pupils with special needs make better progress when supported by a teaching assistant, but this support is not always available. Several low attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 still find the work difficult, especially in reading where they make slower progress.

148. Pupils' attitudes are good at both key stages. Pupils always respond in a mature and positive manner when offered opportunities to take responsibilities, such as providing feedback from a discussion group or leading a drama improvisation. Pupils are co-operative with each other and teachers; warm, relaxed relationships are combined with a businesslike approach to their work. They are able to sustain concentration when working, and behaviour in the classroom is very good. Almost all pupils display a capacity to work independently, moving from one activity to another with the minimum of fuss. Pupils show an enjoyment of the subject and appreciate the work of their teachers. Work in their folders and on wall displays is well presented and attractive, demonstrating a positive commitment to learning.

149. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Expectations of pupils are high, particularly in low attaining groups. Planning is excellent throughout, with lesson objectives and assessment criteria clearly identified and shared with pupils. However, there is a weakness in the lack of subject specific targets set for special needs pupils. All pupils are given homework regularly, and work is generally marked carefully. As a result of the marking, individuals are set helpful targets, linked to the improvement of content and structure. However, grading is inconsistent at Key Stage 3 between the literacy group, bridging group and main stream lessons, resulting in some confusion.

150.Strengths lie in a well qualified, hard working and committed department and in enthusiastic, incisive leadership. The department planning is excellent, and the schemes and strategies are well evidenced in the work of the teaching team. There is already evidence that standards improve in English from a weaker starting point on entry. The relatively recent additional strategies of a 'bridging group' and discrete literacy lessons are well directed towards making the work of the department more effective

151.There are weaknesses in the accommodation, some of which is cold, damp and noisy. Such features interrupt pupil concentration and sometimes affect progress. Some rooms have insufficient space for effective group work and impede the use of information technology. Book resources are low, but are enhanced by excellent 'home produced' booklets.

Literacy

152.A clear policy statement outlines the purpose of the literacy strategy. This strategy is managed by a senior teacher, the head of English and a teaching assistant. The strategy is understood by most subject tutors, some of whom reinforce literacy well in their lessons. There are discrete, timetabled literacy lessons in Year 7, and withdrawal from a second foreign language in Year 8 and 9 for pupils who still need extra support.

153.Pupils in both key stages are helped by their teachers, when necessary, to read and comprehend, to extract information and use referencing skills. A notable exception was a Year 7 mathematics class, where pupils were observed having difficulty reading the text. Pupils are aware of audience and appropriateness of style in their writing. There is generally a good standard of accuracy and presentation. There is evidence of redrafting and manipulating of text in English, history and information technology. A few subject departments make good use of the library to build pupils' independent learning skill, but further use is required across the school. Specialist vocabulary is identified and explained in art, design technology, science and history. Key technical words and criteria for good presentation are displayed in many subject classrooms.

153. Mathematics

154.Results in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The attainment of girls and boys is approximately equal, although boys perform better at the highest levels. Results have been improving, and the figures for 1997 to 1999 show that performance in mathematics has been consistently above that in English and science. On the basis of the lessons observed, the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 3 is above the national average, and pupils demonstrate a good foundation of number work, which they can transfer to other parts of the curriculum. They have a growing awareness of statistical representations and measures. However, their investigative work is not so well developed, in part because of problems with literacy skills.

155.The results of the 1999 GCSE mathematics examination saw a decrease in the number attaining grades A* - C from the level of 1998. The number who attained an A* - C grade was below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. However, the average point score increased slightly and remained broadly in line with the national average.

On the basis of the lessons observed, the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 4 is in line with national averages, and pupils show an increasing familiarity with algebra, especially with regard to manipulating and solving equations. Their work with practical equipment, such as rulers, protractors and compasses, is not so well developed. Their ability to use and apply mathematics, especially for boys, remains a weakness as in Key Stage 3, because of their problems with literacy skills.

156. In Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress over time and in lessons. Nevertheless, curriculum continuity between the primary and secondary phase is weak because of a lack of information on pupil attainment on entry. Progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory, although the pace is slow in some lessons and the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall.

157. The response of pupils in both key stages is good. They show an interest and enthusiasm for their work, and want to do well. They concentrate on teacher explanations and apply themselves willingly to their studies. Pupils respond well to challenges when they are presented, and persevere when difficulties arise. They show increasing confidence in their work. They develop their independent learning skills when encouraged to do so, but teachers do not offer such opportunities often enough.

158. Teaching is good at Key Stage 3. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They have high expectations of pupils' work and standards of discipline. In a Year 8 class of pupils with special educational needs there was good planning, tailored to individual needs. Activities matched pupils' abilities and there were suitable resources. The teacher had high expectations, and used praise well to motivate and encourage. In some lessons observed, however, planning does not take account of the whole attainment range, and other lessons lacked challenge, especially for those with higher attainment.

159. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. The best lessons demonstrate a balance of teacher exposition and pupil activity, with good use of questioning. In some lessons, however, there are low aspirations for pupil success, and the lesson is dominated by too much teacher exposition. For instance, a teacher talked for 50 minutes in one lesson observed. Pupils' work is not marked frequently enough in some classes. The quality of the marking is also variable, ranging from mere ticks on the page to useful diagnostic marking, with clear information on what pupils must do to improve.

160. The subject curriculum meets statutory requirement and the curriculum provision at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient continuity between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 because little attempt is made to ascertain what pupils know and can do on entry. The curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory, although some pupils do not experience a sufficient range of practical, investigational and problem solving activities. Some homework tasks give too much emphasis to finishing off work and revising for tests.

161. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses. Marks are recorded in individual mark books, and end-of-module test results are recorded on the departmental database. However, this information is not recorded in terms of National Curriculum levels, and so is not as helpful as it could be to teachers in ascertaining what pupils need to do to improve. Department documentation provides the

rationale and objectives of assessment as well as the criteria to be used for assessing work in information technology within mathematics lessons. The assessment of pupils with special needs is supported by individual education plans, which provide targets for pupils' improvement. Nevertheless, too many targets concentrate on presentation rather than subject specific skills.

162. Pupils' literacy skills in mathematics are not developed consistently, and practice across the department is variable. Good practice was observed when a pupil's description of parallel lines was challenged by the teacher, who insisted on a precise and accurate description. In another lesson, key words were highlighted on the board and time was spent in helping pupils understand their meaning. By contrast, in a few lessons, poor spelling (especially of words like symmetry and sequences) are not checked or corrected by the teacher. Pupil's progress is sometimes inhibited, especially for the boys, by their inability to communicate in writing in their GCSE coursework.

163. The leadership of the department is good, and already provides a vision and ethos for the department, which is long overdue. The new head of department has already identified the department's strengths and areas for improvement. There is a department development plan that provides a useful agenda for improvement, although many aspects are still to be addressed. Senior managers in the school have monitored the department, and so have identified the need for a greater variety of approaches to teaching and learning.

164. All members of staff are suitably qualified, and many of them have been in post for a number of years. Departmental office space is inadequate, and poor ventilation and insufficient natural light in some rooms are not conducive to teaching and learning. The department has recently benefited from the purchase of new textbooks. Staff improvise and make good use of a limited stock of resources, although the lack of rulers, protractors and compasses must be addressed.

165. The department has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection report. Nevertheless, pupils still do not necessarily experience a sufficient range of practical, investigational and problem solving opportunities. They are still not sufficiently encouraged to understand their responsibilities in the learning process. As recognised in the last report, there is still a need for a wider variety of teaching strategies and more challenge for pupils of all abilities.

165. Numeracy

166. Pupils attain satisfactory levels of competence in dealing with numeracy across the curriculum. In Key Stage 3, pupils meet tessellations in art by looking at random and repeat patterns. They use graphs to analyse data from market research in design and technology. Pupils weigh and use scaling to adjust recipes in food technology and, in textiles, they test predictions about the strength of fabric. In Key Stage 4, pupils use scaling in art. They plot points, draw lines of best fit and calculate the mean of a set of readings in science. They substitute numbers in formulas. Those with highest attainment change the subject of a formula as well as find acceleration, using the gradient of a velocity-time graph, and distance by calculating the area under a graph.

166. Science

167. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in science is close to the national average. In the 1998 national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, the number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 5) or above was close to the national average. However, the number attaining the higher levels (27 per cent) was just below the national average. In 1999, the number attaining the expected level was the same as in 1998, but the number attaining higher levels fell to 17 per cent. In spite of this recent fall, attainment overall has remained close to the national average since the last inspection, and the performance of higher attaining pupils has improved on the levels noted at that time. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' attainment in science is close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 3. There is no identifiable difference between the performance of boys and girls.

168. In lessons at Key Stage 3, there is a wide range of attainment across all four attainment targets. Skills in experimental science and investigation develop more slowly than in the other attainment targets but, by the end of the key stage, all pupils have developed practical skills in line with expectations. Pupils with high prior attainment have a sound scientific vocabulary that they use effectively in their writing and in discussion with teachers and other pupils in lessons. They have some knowledge of atomic structure. They know that heat energy corresponds to an increase in the motion of particles, and have a good understanding of the process of photosynthesis. Pupils with average attainment can identify some variables that might affect solubility, but not all support their predictions from their knowledge and understanding of the related theory. Low attaining pupils have difficulty in expressing their ideas in technical words, but can distinguish between continuous and non-continuous variables. Some produce very well presented written work.

169. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national average. In the 1999 examination for the General Certificate of Secondary Education, 45 per cent of pupils achieved at least grade CC, just below the national average of 47 per cent. Results in 1998 were above average, with 53 per cent achieving grade CC or better. In terms of the performance of boys and girls, more boys achieved grade CC in 1998 but more girls achieved at least grade BB. GCSE results are consistently above results in other subjects in the school over time. There has been no significant trend over recent years, with results varying about the national average.

170. As in Key Stage 3, there is a wide range of attainment in lessons. For example, high attaining pupils show a good understanding of the complex vocabulary of biology and discuss intelligently the part played by chromosomes in inheritance. They determine the distance travelled by an object by calculating the area under a velocity-time graph. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils with average prior attainment have learned that chemical reactions proceed faster at higher temperatures because of the increased energy of the particles. Low attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, cannot effectively retain facts and need constant support in their learning. For example, they need prompting as to what a fair test is. Nevertheless, some work well above expectations in making, recording and graphing a set of results in an investigation on reaction rates.

171. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Key Stage 3. From below average attainment on entry to the school, the same pupils achieve

results in the Key Stage 3 tests close to the national average, and add value to their

knowledge, understanding and skills. Progress was good in the majority of lessons seen in Key Stage 3 and never less than satisfactory. Good progress was made when lessons were well structured, with a range of activities matching the prior attainment of all the pupils in the class and, therefore, meeting their needs. For example, in an introductory lesson on variation to a class of Year 7 pupils, all pupils made good progress as a result of a well-paced lesson in which pupils with special educational needs were particularly well supported. They made at least as much progress as others in the class because they were given appropriate material, attractively presented, and very good but discreet teacher support during a practical activity.

172. Progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. By the end of the key stage, all pupils achieve the GCSE results to be expected from their attainment at the end of the previous key stage. Only one lesson was seen in which progress was unsatisfactory, and it was good or very good in about one third of lessons. As in Key Stage 3, very good progress results from sharply focused teaching. In a practical lesson on rates of reaction, a group of pupils of very low prior attainment made progress well above expectations as a result of enthusiastic teaching, firmly committed to pushing pupils beyond their own expectations of themselves. The effective use of short-term targets for pupils, set in language they can understand, and constant questioning and individual support during the practical session was a major factor contributing to the very good progress in this lesson. In contrast, a similar group of pupils made unsatisfactory progress in a lesson in which there was a lack of structure and poor focus on the needs of pupils. Apart from the quality of teaching, the almost universally positive attitude of pupils and the good relationships between them and their teachers makes a significant contribution to their progress.

173. Pupils are friendly and cheerful, showing a good deal of interest and a sense of enjoyment in their work, particularly in Key Stage 3. There was a lively and enthusiastic atmosphere in a 'Thinking Science' lesson in Year 7. A large class of Year 9 pupils, working with bunsen burners in an over-crowded laboratory, showed a responsible attitude to the use of potentially hazardous materials. Relationships between pupils and teachers and the behaviour of all pupils in the laboratory are good, apart from one or two instances in Key Stage 4, where poor lesson planning led to inattention. Pupils respond well in class discussions, and many speak confidently about their work both in and out of lessons. There is some variation in the quality of presentation of written work, and there are cases where poor literacy skills affect attainment and progress in science. Nevertheless, some good examples were seen from pupils at all levels of prior attainment. This includes some high quality coursework in experimental science, in which word-processing had been used very effectively. The use of computers and library facilities for independent study in science is developing well.

174. Teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. One very good and one unsatisfactory lesson were seen. Of the rest, almost two thirds of the lessons in Key Stage 3 are good and one third satisfactory. These proportions are reversed in Key Stage 4, where one third is good and two thirds are satisfactory.

175. All teachers are well qualified, and there is a good spread of experience in the department. In the large majority of lessons, teachers have a good awareness of the prior attainment of their pupils and plan accordingly, which helps to ensure that all pupils make progress. Lesson planning is satisfactory in Key Stage 4 and good in Key Stage 3. For example, a Year 8 lesson in poor and cramped accommodation was deliberately heavily structured to allow all pupils to successfully carry out an experiment to separate sand and salt.

All pupils made good progress in a lesson on predator-prey relationships because of the teacher's good subject knowledge, which led to a confident delivery and good extension material for higher attaining pupils. In one or two lessons in Key Stage 4, there is insufficient awareness of the needs of the pupils, and the content is not always linked well enough to previous lessons or the work to follow. Teachers use a good range of teaching styles and methods. Most lessons are varied, with smooth transition between different activities, for example, from practical work to class discussion then to written work. Good use is made of question and answer sessions, both at the beginning and end of lessons to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a lesson on viruses and bacteria, the progressive building up of a word bank of technical terms on the board consistently reinforced complicated language for a class of low attaining pupils. In almost all lessons, objectives are clearly stated at the beginning and progress towards them is reviewed at the end. In this respect, there has been a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are managed well, and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect. Marking of pupils' work is generally effective, but there are some inconsistencies in the extent to which pupils are given advice as to how to improve.

176. The curriculum meets statutory requirements across all the attainment targets. There is a continuing programme of revision of schemes of work that has led to more interesting and varied approaches in Years 7 and 8. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Although the provision of specialist in-class support is patchy, there is some good use of differentiated material and good support from class teachers, particularly where schemes of work have been recently revised. As much use as possible is made of information and communication technology, but the provision of hardware and software is limited. Although improved since the last inspection, this does affect the progress pupils make in related aspects of the course. Assessment procedures are good, with effective end of unit tests used in Key Stage 3 related to national curriculum levels. There is a good database of pupil records kept throughout both key stages, and each teacher has an up-to-date profile of each pupil in the class. The results of assessments are used effectively in the grouping of pupils according to prior attainment. The department makes good use of its analyses of external test and examination results to further develop the curriculum.

177. The management of the department is very good. Policies are clearly defined and there is a keen desire to raise standards. Monitoring of the work of the department is developing well. It includes monitoring of teaching and marking, and good records are kept of the outcomes. There have been some good recent initiatives in the department such as the introduction of 'Thinking Science' (CASE) in Key Stage 3. The present development plan is linked to the school development plan and, although costings are not very detailed, there is a good sense of essential priorities addressed by a good staff development programme.

178. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The eight laboratories are in two different areas of the school, which leads to some inefficient duplication of resources. One laboratory, a converted bicycle shed in poor condition, is so small that there are limitations on the practical work that can be carried out in it. Only a very good display of pupils' work in this room brings it near to an acceptable learning environment. A significant number of lessons have to be taught in normal classrooms, where the lack of facilities inhibits effective delivery

of the curriculum. There is adequate specialist equipment for the teaching of science, but there are insufficient books. Pupils are not issued with any textbooks to take home, and class sets of books in laboratories often have to be divided between more than one class. In respect of the provision of books and accommodation, there has been no improvement since the last inspection. The technical staff, although smaller in number than average, provides a very good service to support the work of the teachers.

178. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

179. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 3 meets national expectations, and over 25 per cent of pupils attain at higher levels.

180. Standards at the time of the last inspection were judged to be variable and often below capability. As a result, the school set targets for improvement and made changes to provision that have had a positive influence on pupils' standards of work. Additional funding has enabled resources to be strengthened and matched to pupils' needs. This has led to a general improvement at Key Stage 3. Schemes of work have been revised and more emphasis has been placed on assessment. All pupils make good use of a sketchbook to record their developing ideas or new techniques. Nevertheless, some pupils still experience problems in finding inspiration and letting their imaginations run freely, which restricts their development.

181. Since the last inspection until 1998, GCSE results in art were in line with or above national averages. Results in the 1999 examinations were lower than those in 1998. Overall standards are not as high as they should be in examinations but were appropriate in lessons. Analysis of the data from examinations indicates that girls' attainment is better in art than in other subjects, but boys' attainment in art is below that in other subjects. Many boys in Key Stage 4 do not see the urgency or the importance of the theoretical thinking and recording that needs to support their practical art work. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils presently in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. They are working at a level above that reached by pupils who took the examination in 1999.

182. Pupils with special needs make good learning gains in art. They often work at an effective imaginative level, but their grades are reduced by the requirement for reflecting, thinking and recording, which they find difficult.

183. Progress in Key Stage 3 is good, despite provision being below the recommended curriculum time. Pupils bring a sketch or painting from their previous school and answer a questionnaire about art, which enables teachers to have starting point for planning in Year 7. This is still an informal base line and not yet used to measure the value-added affect of art in the school. All pupils have equality of opportunity in the planned curriculum. The effective assessment method used engage pupils in the process of analysing their own work and helps them to improve standards. Progress in understanding was good, for example, where pupils worked on a tonal grid to develop their observational drawing of a shoe. Pupils in Key Stage 3 were encouraged to work on the design of a hybrid animal, but the constraints imposed by the size of the working space and the challenge of scale and detail required by the task was overwhelming. Many of the group were not able to meet the challenge. Very good work

was evident in the autumn theme. Pupils experimented with the concept of pattern: random, repeated and concentric. Classical music played in the background enhanced the spiritual dimension of this work. Pupils were encouraged to appreciate the wonders of nature and they fully understood the beauty of patterns in nature and their commercial potential in design.

184. Progress at Key Stage 4 continues to be good, and pupils use more sophisticated processes. Over time, pupils learn how to make sensitive and constructive criticism. They learn about the lives and work of contemporary artists, building on the work started in Key Stage 3. They link their school art with experiences wider afield. During lessons, pupils improve their observational skills, using sketching as a research tool for looking more intently and effectively developing their personal response. They struggle with the research and development side of their work.

185. There is a range of very good work that addresses cultural techniques in art. Examination work under the title 'Africa' shows a sensitive and carefully planned response to the topic. The final outcome on display is an inspiration to many pupils.

186. The range of techniques has broadened since the last inspection. Textile art and design is a strength, but 3D work and photography are constrained by the lack of equipment and space and computers.

187. There are many examples of good behaviour and positive attitude. Most pupils are good listeners and well motivated. Pupils enjoy collaborative work and sharing ideas to develop their work. They benefit from effective assessment discussions with their teachers. The level of attainment of a minority of Year 9 girls and boys in Key Stage 4 is affected by the difficulties they have in understanding the need for effective recording, research, evaluation, exploration and experimentation. Art club and Saturday workshops help to enrich pupils' skills.

188. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with very good teaching in eighty per cent of lessons and sound teaching in twenty per cent. Teachers are confident and aware of their subject beyond school. Reliable parent volunteers with personal qualifications and experience enrich pupils' learning and support many lessons. Teachers have clear expectations. The importance of observation is expressed through the regular use of sketchbooks and the production of a viewfinder to home in on specific areas of a sketch or picture. Teachers are good role models, and provide good examples of respect for others' work and ideas. Planning has clear direction and builds on previous learning, but teachers' records vary in detail across the department. The best teaching includes questions that probe understanding, innovative teaching strategies that capture pupils' interest and imagination. It includes time targets to break a task into manageable slots, and challenging face-to-face assessment that reviews ideas and developments to improve final outcomes

189. Teachers make good use of computers and create strong links to literacy, numeracy and science. However, the department has minimal computer facilities, and this restricts developments with digital images.

190. Management of the department is effective, with good support and monitoring of the work of the teachers. There are good links to the community. Local 'friends to the school' give resources to the department to assist with the pressure on consumable materials, but these resources also constrain the curriculum as they can dictate developments in art. The rich inspiring displays in the department have a low profile in the rest of the school, which diminishes the whole-school impact of art.

Design and technology

191. Attainment of the majority of pupils at Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. Teacher assessments indicate that the attainment of approximately one fifth of the pupils is above expectation. Inspection findings confirm these assessments. The previous report highlighted that standards were below expectations. There is an improving picture, which can be attributed to the common approach across the department to the way that the subject is taught. Making remains the strongest attainment target.

192. Attainment at Key Stage 4 was described as variable in the last report. There has been a fall in GCSE results between 1998 and 1999. In 1998, 44 per cent of candidates attained grades A* - C at GCSE, whereas 34 per cent attained these grades in 1999, in line with the general reduction in attainment in examination performance across the school, resulting from a relatively weak cohort in Year 11. However, in 1998 the results in this subject overall were just below the average for the school as a whole. In 1999, pupils attained slightly better overall in design and technology than their average grade for all other subjects.

193. The main reasons for the lower overall results, apart from the weaker cohort, have been low results in resistant materials, where there was a difference between the predicted grades and the final results – the final results being lower than estimated. A detailed analysis of the statistics and the pattern of results has revealed a range of reasons for the 1999 results. Many of the problems, such as coursework overload and the under performance of boys have already been reviewed and resolved. A damp, cold, poorly equipped department further adds to the problems.

194. Pupils with special needs attain well in comparison with their other subjects. They enjoy making, which in turn has a positive effect on their designing. Nevertheless, weaknesses in applied literacy and numeracy skills still present problems for these pupils.

195. Progress at Key Stage 3 is good overall, with a percentage of very good progress. The link with Key Stage 2 in the primary schools gives teachers a clearer understanding of the base line entry in terms of national curriculum levels. Teachers' planning builds successfully on pupils' prior experience. Pupils are treated as individuals, which focuses on personal standards. Pupils with individual education plans benefit from additional subject-specific targets that promote independent learning. Pupils are 'creamed off' from the two half years providing higher ability groups. These groups are regularly reviewed, and the work on the mechanism project in Year 9 systems and control was a witness to this success, including pupils using computer-aided manufacturing processes. Pupils can cut, shape and join a range of materials and ingredients and their planning allows for modification as their work progresses. Pupils in Year 9 classes are divided into mixed gender teams, so that boys and girls work together in designing and making.

196.Those classes with lower ability pupils tend to be smaller, which improves the teacher to pupil ratio. Teacher impact on progress is good because assessment and feedback to pupils is a strength of the department. Pupils' work is always assessed after it is completed, but teachers share too little of their assessment judgements with individual pupils as their work progresses to help them to improve.

197.Although there is good use of National Curriculum levels, pupils do not use the content of the levels as a personal motivator. GCSE style of analysis and planning to match criteria has been successfully introduced to the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

198.Progress at Key Stage 4 is good. It is clarified by effective independent and innovative target setting, which draws pupils into a commitment to the targets they set, which are displayed for all to see. A wide range of good experimental work and analysis is used to establish knowledge and understanding. Work on recipes is well planned. Pupils test their recipes so as to make decisions on the properties and functions of ingredients. They make estimations and predictions in a process that leads them to understand how commercial recipes are developed. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and they make good progress in learning how to organise and plan their work in all areas of design and technology.

199.The marking sheets for pupils' projects include helpful teacher comments to help pupil's modify their work where necessary. Pupils have knowledge of the manufacturing process. Displays of good photographs, for example as used in textiles, illustrate the way a factory system works.

200.Practical work shows increasing sophistication in the tools and equipment used. Regular evaluation helps pupils to decide on improvements they need to make in their final product. A minority of Year 11 boys has a poor attitude to their work. They do not see the value of well planned and presented design work, and this is having a negative effect on their progress, leading to a similar picture to the previous report. Reports to parents are generally informative, but more emphasis is placed on effort than subject content.

201.Pupils are generally confident and keen designers. Attitudes and behaviour are good in both key stages, though pupils in Year 11 have some minor problems in attitude to designing. Personal development is good, as pupils are taught how to research, evaluate and handle data. The department has limited access to computers, which limits the development of applied information technology. Relationships are good. Pupils can attend clubs to enhance their designing and making.

202.The quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding teaching. At Key Stage 3, half the teaching is good, a third very good and the rest satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, half the teaching is very good, a quarter good and a quarter satisfactory.

203.Teachers have a wide range of skills and experience that have built a strong team. Additional support is given by volunteers who dedicate time each week to technology classes. One volunteer has been supporting the department for 22 years. Teachers are effective specialists, with a pride and enthusiasm in their skills that are conveyed to pupils and help to benchmark the standards expected. Well-established safety routines are embedded in

classroom practice. However, the recent whole school risk assessment did not identify some of the potential hazards in resistant materials, where pupils crowd around powered equipment. Teachers have high standards and their expectations are clear. These are highlighted by very good displays that celebrate pupils' successes. For example, the effective displays in graphics, food, systems and control, textiles and resistant materials are also used to improve the very poor environment of the department. Teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of their pupils, consistently reflecting on prior experience to underpin the now learning. High flyers are challenged, and teachers plan work 'outside the comfort zone'. Nevertheless, some pupils still find it difficult to take deadlines seriously. Teacher feedback and assessment are very good. Criteria sheets are used for all projects, enabling pupils to have a clear idea of the whole design and make process. Pupil management is very good and good discipline is a stated expectation in the department policy.

204. Management of design and technology is very good. Teachers feel empowered to develop as individuals as well as part of a team. They train and share good practice together, strengthening the overall department. The structure of the classrooms affects learning. They leak. They are cold, depressing and Victorian in style, which does not prepare pupils for the technological age in which they live. Members of staff try very hard to minimise the impact of the classrooms. They have been involved in the planning of a new technology block that is giving them renewed enthusiasm to cope with the present conditions.

205. The effective planning work done with the main partner primary schools is exemplary. The link is funded by British Aerospace and has given an opportunity for useful design and technology development work in the primary school. This has a positive influence on the transition from the primary to the secondary curriculum.

Drama

206. Drama is taught by a well-qualified and enthusiastic team of English specialists in Key Stage 3. It forms an integral part in the teaching of English, and encompasses the development of many drama skills including improvisation, 'hot-seating', role play and 'freeze frames'. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards in reading and interpreting drama are sound, with pupils able to identify character, plot and dramatic devices in their texts.

207. Drama is offered as a limited option in Key Stage 4 and is taught by a very experienced and well-qualified drama specialist. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are slightly above average. No group has yet taken a GCSE examination in the subject because it is a relatively new course at the school, with the first group now in Year 11. Pupils perform well. They are able to work independently, maintaining personal records which reflect their own feelings and personal progress in drama. Well-organised group work is a particular strength. Pupils are able to negotiate and collaborate before roles are cast and improvisations or cameos performed. A good example of this was observed in a Year 10 lesson, where pupils were trying to sequence a five-scene performance in which gesture and intonation were central features of their work. Pupils generally take pride in their work and are confident, purposeful and understand the assessment criteria.

208. The accommodation for drama is unsatisfactory and inhibits progress. The furniture has to be moved, which shortens the lesson time by ten minutes and creates the wrong atmosphere. Alternative provision, which does not have desks in place, is damp, dark and very small. There is also a lack of dramatic lighting or sound system in this area, which will limit the development of further theatrical skills.

Geography

209. At the end of Key Stage 3, about 50 per cent of pupils achieve National Curriculum Level 5 or above, which is close to the national average. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment is satisfactory overall. Standards have been sustained at this level since the last inspection.

210. Progress overall at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, with over a quarter of pupils making good progress or better. Pupils make good progress in their enquiry projects, with about 13 per cent of pupils producing very good work on topics such as Tourism in the Lake District, Development in Kenya, and Floods in Bangladesh. They use secondary sources, identify problems and consider conclusions. This work on enquiry projects is a noteworthy improvement since the last inspection. Graphical skills are well developed and the presentation of work improves steadily. The development of written work and oracy is satisfactory; place knowledge is variable within teaching groups, but it is satisfactory overall.

211. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment overall is satisfactory. In 1999, 37 per cent of pupils gained grades A*-C. This is five per cent below the 1998 figures and reflects problems with coursework. In 1998, 42 per cent of pupils achieved grades A*-C, which was ten per cent below the national average. Girls out-perform boys at GCSE, but there is an underlying trend of improvement for boys. In 1998, boys' results were nine per cent below the national average for boys whilst girls' results were twelve per cent below the national average for girls.

212. Pupils make good progress overall at Key Stage 4. Progress is good in enquiry and coursework, as well as in note-taking, presentation and annotation. Satisfactory progress is made in graph work, writing skills and oracy. Key Stage 4 pupils also show good progress in the use and understanding of geographical terms.

213. Pupils behave well in class. Most concentrate well on tasks; they listen to the teacher and each other, work well in groups and pairs, and there is a good rapport between pupils and teachers. Despite some crowded classrooms, pupil behaviour and respect for property is invariably good.

214. Teaching is good or better in over 55 per cent of lessons, and it is never less than satisfactory. This shows good improvement since the last inspection. This reflects well on departmental working practices because three of the eight teachers in the department are not geography specialists. In lessons, tasks have time limits; resources are varied and usually well organised. Teachers hold pupils' concentration with brief question and answer sessions for the whole class. Nevertheless, most classes contain pupils from across the range of attainment, and more use could be made of material more closely matching each level of attainment.

215. All lessons incorporate praise and positive encouragement of all pupil contributions. In addition, there are certificate awards for 'Geographer of the Year' and 'Outstanding Geographer'. Pupils understand lesson objectives, and most teachers briefly review learning at the end of the lesson. All lessons have varied tasks, and this was very effective in a Year 10 lesson with a banded ability group. The lesson began with a discussion followed by a word-matching exercise, then a short video followed by more discussion and finally pupils worked on descriptive words for a photograph of road building in Amazonia. Throughout the lesson there was either a lively buzz of activity or a quiet determined concentration that involved all pupils. In another Year 10 lesson, four pairs of pupils used an overhead projector and gave informative presentations to the whole class on population change in four different countries. The class asked questions and listened to the answers, which stimulated further discussion.

216. Curriculum progression is incorporated into the schemes of work. For instance, enquiry projects in Key Stage 3 include work on Italy, Kenya and Amazonia. This work is developed in Key Stage 4 when Italy and Kenya are used to illustrate development issues and Brazil is used to illustrate urban migration problems. However, provision for fieldwork is poor. There is a little use of the playground in Year 7 and a brief study of industrial development in Hull in Year 10, but this is a minimal amount with little enrichment value. Assessment units include varied tasks at Key Stage 3. In both key stages, there is assessment at the end of units and marking of classwork with grades for effort. Homework is set regularly. The quality of marking of pupils' work varies. The best is very good because it includes not only praise but also noteworthy comment and constructive criticism. In other instances, there are two or three sentences of vaguely encouraging comment or useful criticism but not both. Work in books is marked, but effort grades are not always given. Procedures for assessment are in place, but are not always effectively implemented.

217. Currently there is no subject leader and the department is led by the head of history. Departmental leadership is enthusiastic, providing good support and monitoring for the subject. Specialist geographers provide the detailed input, and there is a commitment to good planning, the implementation of plans and the achievement of high standards. Working relationships are good. Geography is taught in 19 rooms, which impacts on resource use and availability. There are insufficient textbooks at both key stages for pupils to use one each, even in class. There are only 2 sets of atlases, which limits their use and thus the development of pupils' place knowledge. Video monitors and overhead projectors are also in short supply. There is, however, a good supply of 'in-house' teaching materials. Access to information technology equipment is limited, and, although an information and communication technology unit is included in the scheme of work for Year 9, not all teachers are able to use it. Library provision is good and the library loan service is well used for enquiry projects.

History

218. The proportion of A*-C grades achieved by those pupils who were entered for the GCSE examination in 1999 was 43 per cent, which was below the national average and below the results of the previous year. In lessons and in work seen, attainment is higher than this for the current cohort and it is now close to average overall at the end of Key Stage 4. Attainment has improved since the last report.

219. At the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of the majority of pupils is above national expectations.

220. By the end of both key stages, pupils attain well in the department's declared aim of fostering independent learning, and there is a strength in those elements of the National Curriculum that involve the critical evaluation of sources. There is above average attainment in those lessons in Year 9 relating to the sinking of the Titanic, and in those in Year 10 on Nazi propaganda.

221. The large majority of pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all the requirements of the National Curriculum. In Key Stage 3, they gain in knowledge and understanding of Roman Life and Customs, Tudor Times and the loss of the Titanic, as well as in the skills of handling historical evidence. In Key Stage 4, pupils gain skills in examination techniques as well as increasing their knowledge and understanding of Nazi Germany and 'Crime and Punishment' over several centuries. Good group work helps them to develop collaborative skills, and they acquire the skills needed to make progress in their work independently of the teacher.

222. The department has some good mechanisms to promote and measure the progress made by individual pupils. This was particularly noticeable in the measures taken to increase literacy as well as historical skills. Awards for independent learning, effort and achievement motivate pupils to make progress. The pupils with special needs make appropriate progress through sensitive teaching, suitably adapted materials, modified teaching strategies including a 'bridging group' and, on occasion, in-class support.

223. In all the observed lessons, pupils were well behaved and co-operative. Their relations with teachers and fellow pupils are good, and they respond well to the good teaching they receive. Pupils respond well to the good displays in most history rooms, and the effective use of music that helps to create a positive learning atmosphere.

224. The teaching is good or very good in equal proportions in both key stages. It is characterised by good subject knowledge and good planning involving the use of timed activities. Good classroom organisation is a consistent feature, along with a good brisk pace and purposeful styles of delivery. A large part of the strength of the teaching is the common, consistent approach to the learning process. Methods are suitably adapted to achieve different objectives. Some good group work leads to the development of independent learning skills. Critical evaluation of documents goes beyond the usual comprehension exercises, and asks pupils to interpret and prioritise their answers. Teachers make good use of display, artefacts, clubs, visits and other resources. They make good use of the teaching bases, though the best of these are cramped and some other rooms are not helpful to effective teaching, particularly at Key Stage 3. Some items of audio-visual equipment are needed and the timing of information technology sessions could better fit the points in the history programme where they are needed most.

225. Very good leadership and management underpin the good teaching. This can be seen from the energy and vision that have characterised recent improvements and the progress made since the last report. The 'Community Museum' that history teachers have opened in the school, for instance, is a valuable resource for cross-curricular work. It is also used effectively for community use by feeder schools as well as being a very important aid to

effective teaching in the history department. Since its opening, it has led to further improvements in standards. Since the previous inspection, the good features have been maintained and there is clear evidence of well planned, sensible strategies to improve the effectiveness of the good and very good teaching which currently takes place.

Information technology

226. At Key Stage 3, attainment based on teacher assessments for 1999 is above national average levels overall. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The results are an improvement on those of 1998, with higher levels of attainment overall, and the level of attainment of girls improving to the level of boys. Work seen during the inspection confirms that attainment at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall. The teaching of information and communications technology only occurs in Year 7, and the remainder of the delivery is through other subjects. In discrete information and communications technology lessons in Key Stage 3, pupils can identify multifunction keys and the parts of a computer. They understand the purpose of the Alt and F keys on the keyboard and can input replies to questions on screen. They understand how to save and store their work. When seen in other subjects, some higher attaining pupils know how to follow increasingly complex procedures for drawing geometric shapes and for number functions in Logo. They understand how to build increasingly complicated procedures for teaching the turtle how to add, subtract, divide and multiply numbers. All members of middle-attaining groups can produce a programme to control a buggy. They are able to load the programme into the buggy, showing understanding of the logic involved, whilst some pupils produce more complicated programmes. In classes of lower attaining pupils, many are able to remember some German words about parties, which they have been taught. They use them in a 'Desktop Publisher' to make a party invitation, combining graphics and text. Most pupils understand the words on the invitation, and match them with appropriate images. Some progress to making the inside of the card. Others find difficulty in reading the instructions on the wizard, and have to be prompted to recollect the German words they require.

227. Delivery of the programme of study for Key Stage 4 is planned to be totally cross-curricular. Pupils' progress was good in the limited observations possible during the inspection. However, progress is unsatisfactory across the key stage because the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements and, therefore, there are skills that are not learnt. As a result, standards of attainment are unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 4. There are strengths in attainment and provision in information and communications technology within physical education, where pupils construct observation forms for use in coaching sessions. There are also strengths within personal and social education, where pupils construct their personal statements for their Records of Achievement and make good use of an information and communications technology module. There are no variations in attainment by gender or ethnicity.

228. At Key Stage 3, pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and some make good progress. Links are made with primary schools to ensure that there is progression in pupils' learning. These have a positive effect on attainment, increasing levels of achievement on entry. In the limited observations at Key Stage 4, pupils were seen making good progress in assembling their personal statements, but this does not carry across all attainment targets. Pupils with special educational needs using information and communications technology make

similar progress to their peers in both key stages. Some variation in rates of progress is seen between mixed ability classes in Key Stage 3, but this is to be expected with the low attainment at entry at Key Stage 2 from a very wide range of schools. Good progress is seen in simple programming skills and Logo procedure building. Where there is variation, higher rates of progress are encouraged by different tasks that match different levels of attainment. Some pupils progress more slowly because they lack the literacy skills needed to read the often-complicated instructions on the DeskTop publisher. Boys and girls make the same progress. Information and communications technology teaching makes a contribution to social development of pupils as they learn the impact of technology upon society.

229. Pupils' attitudes are good overall, and they have a very positive attitude towards learning. There is a high level of interest in information and communications technology tasks and they work diligently. There is good development of pupils' capacity for personal study. Pupils compete to answer in question and answer sessions, and work well in a variety of group sizes, showing good consideration for each other. They show a good level of respect for the expensive equipment used.

230. Teaching is good overall in Key Stage 3. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Planning for lessons is good and is underpinned by a good strategic plan and a good Key Stage 3 scheme of work, which integrates elements into other subjects such as mathematics, science, design and technology and history. The good teaching is characterised by a prompt brisk start, often with a question and answer session. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils. A good pace and direction are maintained. Standards of discipline are consistently high. There is good deployment of learning support assistants, some of whom are parent volunteers, who have completed a course in information and communications technology at the school. There is good use of praise and encouragement. In general the use of time and resources are at high levels, making an impact on teaching. At Key Stage 3 there is a good scheme of assessment, which makes good use of information and communications technology, and pupils are given useful feedback

231. Leadership of the subject is good. There is effective team building, and a collegiate approach to decision-making. There is a strategic plan that extends to three years, and it is appropriately monitored, well prioritised, regularly evaluated and updated. Monitoring of teaching, planning and work in progress is carried out with a great deal of support for the team. The provision of computers is below national levels, but the use of a set of laptop machines increases efficiency, and makes an impact when these machines are used in classes. The laptops, 37 in all, are being used very effectively to increase the confidence of staff. This is making an impact on teaching, and the project is being very well managed, with regular audits of outcomes and effectiveness. A large amount of good work is being undertaken to obtain delivery of information and communications technology in all subjects. All departments are making a determined effort and working with information and communications technology staff to identify areas for development. The approach is backed up by a modern network system and peripheral equipment. The Learning Resource Centre sets a good standard, making a pleasant working environment. Its high rate use before and after school shows that it is obviously valued by staff and pupils alike. There is access to the Internet, with software to prevent access to unsuitable sites as well as anti-virus protection. There are many extra-curricular activities, some on an international scale and others involving pupils' families. Two well-qualified technical officers work hard and are an integral part of the team. Nevertheless, the curriculum for Key Stage 4 does not meet statutory requirements

and needs further development. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last report.

Modern foreign languages

232. The school has expanded its provision in modern languages well since the previous inspection. In line with statutory requirements, all pupils learn one language, either French or German, at both key stages. In addition, some pupils in Year 10 have recently been given the possibility of adding a second or third language to their GCSE studies, from the choice of French, German or Spanish,

233. At Key Stage 3, standards have improved steadily over the last three years and are now a little above the national average. Attainment is satisfactory in all lessons. At Key Stage 4, the percentage of pupils gaining A*- C grades in GCSE examinations fell in 1999 compared with 1998. From being above the national average, results fell to below the national average in French and to well below average in German, as a result of a weak year group going through the school. However, girls achieved better results in both languages than in their other subjects. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is now in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 4, and it was satisfactory in all lessons observed.

234. Standards of attainment in the four skill areas are satisfactory overall. Standards are best in listening. Pupils are used to hearing both French and German used with increasing complexity for genuine communication, not just for routine classroom business. Consequently, by the start of Key Stage 4, they are already developing higher level skills such as using context or applying prior knowledge to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar material. A Year 10 group of pupils, learning German as their second language, used their language skills well to understand a conversation of an exchange student with their host family in Germany. In reading, by Year 9, higher and average ability pupils can scan longer passages that are based on known topics, but contain much unfamiliar material, and pick out important details. In French, for example, during their study of festivals in France and Britain, they are able to read a passage on festivals around the world quickly and pick out accurate information. Their experience of reading material, however, is narrow, based mainly on their course books rather than a wider range of authentic documents. Pupils in Key Stage 3 can answer their teachers' questions satisfactorily in French and German. They communicate well in pairs as, for example, in a Year 8 French class, where they arranged their social diary for a week, noting details of time, place and event.

235. The most able pupils in Year 11 converse easily with their teacher, discussing their weekend engagements and using past tenses accurately. Their pronunciation is good. One or two highly motivated pupils are already trying to use their limited language in Spanish to express their own ideas. However, as they get older, few develop the confidence to adapt or extend their dialogue to their own purpose, using what they have previously learnt in new, unfamiliar situations. As noted at the time of the last inspection, speaking remains weak for some pupils, particularly boys of average and lower attainment. Pupils produce a good variety of written work from Year 7 onwards on suitable personal themes, such as my pets, myself, my favourite personality. Their work is neat and they take great pride in redrafted work. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils use a good range of vocabulary and idiom, as, for example, in an amusing piece on family disputes. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils have improved the style and content of their writing suitably to include a range of tenses and some

opinions. Often, however, even at this level, their use of basic grammar is inaccurate. Boys of average or lower attainment, in particular, have difficulty in writing well at any great length. A lack of basic literacy skills is depressing the attainment of a significant number.

236. Pupils' progress overall is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the progress of higher and lower attaining pupils has improved with the introduction of ability grouping for the teaching of both languages from Year 8. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress generally. Those who receive additional, individual support in class make better progress than those who receive no extra support. Girls continue to make better progress than boys. However, in the past two years, in German in particular, boys have achieved better GCSE results than boys nationally.

237. Pupils generally behave satisfactorily in lessons in both key stages. They show respect for each other and for their teachers. They often co-operate well in tasks made difficult by cramped and overcrowded conditions.

238. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all languages. It is good or very good in half of lessons at both key stages. Teachers are fluent and are very effective in expanding their use of the target language in line with their pupils' development. Some teachers have good skills in information technology, and all are undertaking further training. They are beginning to incorporate the appropriate use of this technology into their teaching. They require high standards of behaviour and attainment from their pupils. These are achieved because they plan their lessons carefully, introducing a sufficient variety of graded activity into each lesson and communicating the purpose of each activity clearly to their pupils from the start. However, at times, the restriction placed on them by the limited accommodation makes the choice of certain activities unsuccessful. An example was when group work was unsuccessfully attempted across all four skill areas at the same time with a large class of Year 8 pupils. Occasionally, particularly when working with lower attaining groups on writing tasks, teachers do not maintain the interest of their pupils sufficiently well. All teachers set relevant homework. Some teachers mark their pupils' books with great care, including comments for guidance and setting targets for improvement. They ensure that pupils complete their assessment booklets. However, this good practice is not consistent across the whole department.

239. The department is a well led, supportive team of committed teachers. They collaborate effectively in planning. They are beginning to use assessment information to influence their teaching, and to monitor and evaluate standards of teaching and learning routinely to ensure consistent progress by pupils of all abilities. They use their resources prudently. However, the accommodation is inadequate and hinders the progress of pupils. Language rooms are too small to accommodate large classes comfortably, and a substantial number of foreign language lessons is still not taught in these specialist rooms.

Music

240. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 show that pupils' attainment is well below the national average. In the 1999 GCSE results, 41 per cent of pupils entered achieved A*-C grades, and all achieved grades within the A* - G range. The 1999 results were similar to those of 1998, but the grades were distributed more evenly. The 1999 A*-C

results for music are just below the school average, but well below the national average. Since the last inspection, attainment has improved. There has been a slight overall improvement in GCSE grades over the last four years.

241. Evidence of the present inspection indicates that the attainment of pupils presently in Key Stage 3 is average.

242. Pupils in Year 7 enter the school with a variety of musical experiences. Some pupils have reached the standard expected at the end of Key Stage 2, but the most are below that standard. Overall, they have an acceptable knowledge of rhythmic and pitch notation. They have experience writing and working from graphic scores, and are familiar with the concept of using written and graphic scores as a means of storing compositions for repeated future performances. Pupils in Year 8 are able to use musical terminology accurately, and identify which of a simple three-part piece is being played by following the score and listening to the part played on the piano. Pupils in Year 9 have experienced listening to and composing twelve-bar blues chord sequences, and transfer this experience to ragtime. They can define 'vamp' and 'syncopation', and identify syncopation, tempo changes and irregular rhythms in a previously unheard piece of music.

243. Present attainment in Key Stage 4 ranges from satisfactory to very good, but is average overall. The variation is largely due to the differing instrumental abilities of the Year 11 pupils, some of whom have above average levels of skill. In Year 10, pupils already have a portfolio of compositions, and are able to tackle listening questions similar to those found in the GCSE examination. Pupils in Year 11 have a wide range of instrumental abilities, and use their knowledge well to tackle practice examination questions.

244. Progress in Key Stage 3 for pupils of all ability is good. Progress in Key Stage 4 is also good.

245. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work in Key Stage 3 are good overall. They come to music lessons with positive attitudes. There are opportunities for composing and performing in most lessons, and pupils look forward to these practical activities. This observation is supported by the number of pupils who regularly return to the department at break and lunchtime to complete work begun in class. Behaviour in class is good. Pupils settle down quickly at the beginning of the lesson and listen attentively to the teacher. They raise their hands to answer questions, and generally wait to be spoken to before answering. They are generally courteous to the teacher, and treat the instruments and furniture with respect. Pupils who visit the department during break and lunchtime often use the keyboards and computer unsupervised, and can be trusted to do so responsibly.

246. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work in Key Stage 4 are good. They are initially reticent to answer questions. However, during practical activities they talk fluently about their compositions and their music making. They have developed very good personal study skills and do not waste any time during lessons, either in the classroom or when working on a practical activity.

247. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in almost half the lessons. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is good overall, with about 66 per cent good and 33 per cent very good.

248. On a few occasions when the lesson is otherwise satisfactory, the teacher does not let the pupils gain new experiences for themselves, or does not ensure sufficient variety of tasks in a lesson. Since the last inspection, both the teachers in the department have remained at the school and have successfully addressed many of the issues raised in the last report. Work appropriate for pupils at different levels of attainment now features as a regular heading in teaching plans. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good, and this gives them confidence when explaining tasks or devising strategies for pupils to experience a musical concept for themselves. Teachers express their expectations clearly. Pupils have individual targets in the front of their exercise books, to which teachers refer when observing composing or practical activities. Expectations of higher attaining pupils now match their abilities, and the pupils realise the standard of work expected from them. In response to the previous report, the department has examined its assessment procedures. A scheme has been devised that enables the outcomes of assessment to modify teaching methods, to provide feedback on the scheme of work, and to indicate pupils' progress. Regular meetings are held to monitor the results of assessment and to use them to inform future planning. Homework is set in accordance with school policy, to reinforce, extend or complement classwork. It is set on a regular basis for pupils in Key Stage 4, but not for those in Key Stage 3.

249. The scheme of work for both key stages has recently been revised to include those changes that are being introduced nationally, together with the results of lesson evaluation. A number of extra-curricular activities take place in the school, including wind band, singing ensembles and orchestra. Instrumental tuition is provided by Hull Music Service, which provides lessons for seventy pupils in woodwind, brass, strings, and percussion.

250. The music rooms have not been decorated since 1985, and there is no carpet on the floor. The windows have rotten frames, and many of them have no blinds or curtains. It is the quality of the displays, pupils' work, photographs of concerts, and other aspects of the curriculum that enlivens the otherwise grim working environment. Owing to the increase in class sizes since the last inspection, there are now not enough pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments. This is especially the case when two classes are taught at the same time. When all the keyboards are functioning, there are just enough for pupils to share one between two, but some have narrow keys that are difficult for older pupils to play. There is one desktop computer and one laptop in the department, but this is not enough to meet the statutory requirements for the use of information technology in music in Key Stage 3.

Physical education

251. In the 1998 GCSE examinations, 52 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C grades. The 1999 results showed a marked improvement. 64 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C grades, which is well above the national average of 51 per cent and better than all other subjects in the school. Boys outperformed girls in both years, and the gap between boys and girls has widened. Attainment of girls has been sustained and that of boys has improved significantly since the last report and the finding of the inspection is that the pupils in examination groups in Year 11 are maintaining the standards set in the 1999 examinations.

252.They have a good knowledge of anatomy and physiology, and are able to plan and evaluate a fitness programme. Most boys and girls use the correct terminology and are confident in their written work. Girls have average skills in hockey and a good knowledge of the rules and tactics of the game. The school has targeted the theory section of the GCSE examination. Attainment levels have been raised successfully through strategies, which include workbooks and the involvement of parents.

253.The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not take the GCSE examination. Nevertheless, they achieve in line with national expectations. The boys are reasonably fit, and the girls have average skills in badminton, basketball and aerobics. Most pupils know how to warm up and stretch effectively. Pupils in Year 10 taking the Certificate of Achievement Junior Sports Leadership course understand the criteria for effective leadership.

254.The attainment of pupils meets national expectations overall at the end of Key Stage 3. In football, boys have good basic skills. In dance and in gymnastics, boys and girls work well together and plan effectively in small groups. Boys use their imagination in composition, but need to improve their quality of movement. Girls have better body tension, learn gymnastics sequences quickly and many perform with confidence. When playing basketball, girls and boys have good footwork and passing skills, but an inability to find space in the game results in these skills breaking down. The attainment of some individual pupils and teams is very good. They achieve well at district and county level in football, netball, hockey, rugby and athletics.

255.Progress at Key Stage 3 is sound. Pupils come to the school with little or no knowledge of netball, basketball and dance. They gradually acquire the new skills involved and make satisfactory progress. Progress is best in performance skills. Pupils make less progress in planning and observing the performance of others. This was a weakness reported in the previous inspection, and some teachers do not set enough tasks to develop pupils' skills in these aspects. Progress at Key Stage 4 is sound. Girls and boys are beginning to work more independently. They devise their own fitness programme and develop critical observation skills. The progress of pupils of different abilities is encouraged by the use of appropriate equipment and teaching in ability and gender groups. However, the strategy of giving different tasks within each teaching group would further help the progress of all pupils. At Key Stage 4, pupils would make better progress if there were well established units of work to guide teaching. The division of pupils into ability groups helps the progress of boys more than that of girls. Girls divide into two groups because there are only two female members of staff, but boys are able to work in three groups of much smaller numbers. This provides unequal opportunities for the girls and their rate of progress is slower than that of boys.

256.Most pupils are keen and interested. They regularly participate in their lessons, behave well and have good relationships with their teachers. They wear the school physical education uniform so that they look smart and well turned out for their lessons. The number of pupils, more boys than girls, who opt to study GCSE physical education shows their interest in the subject. They are enthusiastic about the many extra-curricular activities provided by the department. They play for school teams and outside clubs in a competitive and confident manner.

257.The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Two lessons seen during the inspection

week were unsatisfactory, and almost half of lessons were good. In the good lessons, teachers share the lesson intention with the pupils, and give an appropriate balance to all strands of the National Curriculum. They give pupils opportunities to practise skills independently. Sharing of this good practice would be beneficial to the department. Teachers have good specialist knowledge of activities, but not all have full understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and how to implement it. In one unsatisfactory lesson, pupils made insufficient progress because work was repetitive and no new skills were developed. In the other unsatisfactory lesson, work was inappropriate for the ability of the pupils. Teaching could be improved overall if teachers gave more independent learning tasks, differentiated tasks within the ability groups, and addressed all three strands of the national curriculum in the appropriate balance. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching has improved overall since the previous inspection. Expectations are higher, and teachers circulate well to extend higher attaining and help lower attaining pupils.

258.The management of the subject is sound. The Certificate of Achievement Junior Sports Leaders course is a very good initiative that helps to meet the national criterion of developing the leadership qualities of pupils at Key Stage 4. The organisation of the curriculum in single gender ability groups is often a successful strategy. However, the present curriculum does not provide equality of opportunity for girls or continuity and progression of pupils. Not enough teachers are allocated to girls' lessons because the staff available have part-time contracts. The two-week timetable means that some pupils have three lessons in one week but only one in the week that follows. The same teacher does not always teach some girls for the same activity.

259.Assessment is in place and is ready to comply with the new curriculum. End of Key Stage 3 assessments have taken place and the results have been reported. The comprehensive analysis of GCSE results, the commitment to extra-curricular activities, and the attainment levels of pupils in GCSE groups are strengths of the department. Most issues raised in the previous inspection report have been addressed successfully. Teachers now have higher expectations and the attitudes of pupils are more positive. The indoor accommodation is good, but there is no suitable surface on which to play hockey because the courts are small, very uneven, frequently under water and in urgent need of repair.

Religious education

260.The school has not effectively addressed the key issues of the previous inspection report, concerning low standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, and lack of coherent provision for the Agreed Syllabus to be taught at Key Stage 4. The department still has a number of serious weaknesses.

261.At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainments are still below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus, and they are well below them at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, of the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country, and of the ways in which religious beliefs influence the lives of those who hold them, is unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 3, and poor at the end of Key Stage 4. Their knowledge and understanding of religious language, ideas and symbols, and their skills in applying religious insights to their own experience, and that of others, are equally under-developed at the end of both key stages.

262. At Key Stage 3, most pupils make at least satisfactory, and in most instances, good progress in individual lessons. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, they made good gains in understanding the differences between synagogue worship in Orthodox and Reform traditions of Judaism. Such progress in lessons is not, however, maintained over time, and progress over the whole of the key stage is unsatisfactory. There was no opportunity to observe progress in Key Stage 4 lessons during the inspection week, but overall progress is poor.

263. This unsatisfactory to poor attainment and progress over time is a consequence of several serious shortcomings in the school's provision for the subject, most of which were identified in the last inspection report. Provision at Key Stage 3 worsened following the last inspection, when, for a period of two years, religious education was not taught to pupils in Year 9. It was reintroduced in June this year.

264. There is still no coherent provision for the subject to be taught at Key Stage 4. The time allocated to teaching it is still too low for pupils to study it in the breadth and depth necessary to reach appropriate standards of attainment. The timetabling arrangement means that there are gaps of six-months between the units of work. As a result, pupils do not build on their prior attainment or make appropriate progress over time. There is still too much reliance on non-specialist teachers, with lessons delivered by nineteen form tutors, none of whom has received any in-service training in the subject.

265. There was no evidence during the inspection week on which to judge the response of pupils or the quality of teaching at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3, however, the response of pupils was at least satisfactory, and it was good in half of lessons. It has improved since the previous inspection, as a consequence of improved teaching. The majority of pupils come to lessons keen to learn, settle down quickly to their work, and sustain concentration well. They are keen to ask and answer questions. They listen with respect to each other's views and opinions, as for example, in a Year 9 lesson on arguments for and against the existence of God. Pupils behave well, and enjoy good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They are provided with good opportunities for developing skills of collaborative working, through paired and small group activities. They are not, however, given sufficient opportunities for developing skills of independent learning, research and enquiry, or for extended writing.

266. At Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is at least satisfactory overall and good in the large majority of lessons. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have a good grasp of the subject, know clearly what they wish pupils to learn, and share their aims with them. A good example was seen in a Year 9 lesson on Christian belief in a loving and personal God. In good lessons, teachers present pupils with challenging tasks, such as evaluating the arguments for and against the existence of God in a Year 9 lesson.

267. Teachers use a wider variety of activities than at the last inspection. Methods include paired and small group work, with pupils reporting back to the class, as in Year 8 work on the features of the synagogue. The range of activities possible is, however, constrained by the cramped classroom accommodation. Good use was made of artefacts, for instance when a Year 8 boy demonstrated the wearing of the Tallit, Tefillin and Yarmulka in work on Judaism. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils, and manage their behaviour well. Homework

is set regularly and marked conscientiously.

268. Where teaching is less strong, teachers are less secure in their knowledge of the subject. In some lessons, there is a temporary loss of focus and momentum, and some tasks, such as drawing and labelling, are insufficiently challenging.

269. The quality of leadership and day-to-day management of the subject has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be ineffective. It is now satisfactory. The department is managed by a committed and enthusiastic teacher, who has moved the subject on in a number of respects, within the constraints imposed by school policy. At Key Stage 3, she has developed good quality schemes of work for the new Agreed Syllabus. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment have been improved and are now satisfactory overall.

270. To raise standards of attainment, the school should meet the statutory requirement to make sufficient and coherent provision for the Agreed Syllabus to be taught effectively at Key Stage 4. It should also review staffing at Key Stage 4, with a view to reducing the over-reliance on non-specialist teachers, and, where they are used, to increase their expertise and effectiveness through appropriate in-service training.

Media studies

271. Media Studies is taught very successfully throughout Key Stage 3 as an integral part of English. Pupils develop an understanding of all aspects of media texts, and become skilful at identifying features such as audience and purpose, bias and the difference between fact and opinion.

272. In Key Stage 4, media studies is now offered successfully as an option. Groups are large and enthusiastic. Pupils make good progress. Attainment is above average overall, and they are well on course to attain A* - C grades at GCSE in the first year that the school has entered pupils for the examination. A particularly exciting lesson in Year 10 gave pupils a simulated experience of journalism. Just before a broadcast, a late 'newsflash' necessitated a change in the running order of the radio programme that pupils were involved in producing.

273. Teaching is good. Clear lesson objectives are set and assessment criteria are shared with pupils. There is a brisk pace and an effective use of time. High expectations are a feature of teachers and pupils alike. Pupils are articulate, analytical and confident in their use of audio-visual equipment. Some have already been involved in the production of two professional videotapes.

274. Resources are good. Editing facilities, digital cameras, cam-corders and texts are used well. However, accommodation is poor; lack of space and poor acoustics inhibit more adventurous and exploratory work.

Child development

275. By the end of Key Stage 4, levels of attainment in both 1998 and 1999 were similar in percentage though the size of the 1999 cohort was considerably larger. In terms of A*-C grades the pass rate was 36.7 per cent in 1998, falling to 32.7 per cent in 1999. For grades A*-G, the rate was 97 per cent in 1998, increasing to 98.1 in 1999. Though no national comparative statistics for child development are available, the A*-C results are below the national average for all GCSE subjects. In contrast, the recorded rates for A*-G are above national average figures for all subjects. All pupils following this subject are female.

276. The attainment of present Key Stage 4 pupils is below average overall, though a significant minority are working at a level of GCSE grade C or above. Most pupils can perform basic tasks but they are less skilled in developing their work and for many, their analytical skills are under developed. In a Year 11 lesson where pupils were working on their research projects, all pupils were able to develop a mind map outlining key issues that might be investigated and many were able to develop this into an action plan. However, only a few were able to identify a range of issues beyond the obvious. For example, pupils looking at kitchen and garden safety realised that tools present a potential problem, but the quality of floor covering and paving was not listed. Once pupils had identified critical areas, most lacked knowledge about how to proceed with their research task and the lack of access to computers for word processing, e-mailing and access to the Internet further hindered attainment.

277. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. It is good in lessons where teachers are prepared to challenge the pupils' knowledge and understanding and when teachers avoid offering solutions to problems. Pupils are making sound progress in their use and understanding of key terms and they are becoming increasingly sensitive to the health and safety needs of various client groups. Satisfactory progress is also being made in recognising the need to design special toys for some groups, such as people suffering from various forms of sensory impairment. Some higher attainers are making good progress in their use of appropriate language. In a Year 10 lesson on conception, one girl referred to the cervix being dilated. Such levels of oracy are indicative of good progress.

277. In all lessons behaviour is at least good. Pupils settle well, show respect for their teachers, take pride in their work and are usually attentive. Given the length of lessons and the poor teaching accommodation, most pupils retain their concentration for most of the lessons. Indeed, the behaviour of a Year 10 class in particularly cold and dark room was outstanding. They also show a pride in their work, respect property and are developing an ability to work both independently and collaboratively. Pupils are polite and they respect the views of others. In class discussions the views of others were never derided.

278. In all lessons, teaching is at least satisfactory and is satisfactory overall. In 40 per cent of lessons it is either good or very good. Teachers plan well, are enthusiastic and manage both pupils and time well. In better lessons, they have high expectations of pupils and regularly challenge their knowledge and understanding. Where lessons are less effective, they tend to adopt a more didactic style providing answers rather than trying to elicit solutions from the pupils. Much emphasis, especially in Year 11, is placed on research projects with continuation tasks frequently being set for homework.

279. Child development is a popular GCSE option. Though staffing for the course is satisfactory, the working conditions and level of resources provided to staff are poor. Many lessons are conducted in unsuitable rooms. There is a lack of display space and, in one room, the heater cannot operate when whole class teaching is taking place because the noise is overpowering. This room is also cold, dark and unattractive. There are also insufficient textbooks and pupils' attainment is adversely affected by the restricted access they have to computers. Such restrictions hamper the quality of research work that they are able to undertake.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

280. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

280.The inspection was undertaken by a team of 14 inspectors, including a lay inspector, each of whom was in the school for between two and five days, a total of 54 inspection days.

281.Observations were made of around 180 lessons, covering all areas of the compulsory curriculum and the additional subjects taught at the school, including personal and social education. In total, there were over 200 hours of lesson observation, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work. The work of every teacher in the school was inspected at least once, and for the large majority a number of times. Inspectors also observed registration sessions, assemblies and extra-curricular activities. The work of pupils across the age and ability range was closely scrutinised by the whole team. Discussions were held with a selected sample of the pupils about their views of the school and also, informally, with many other pupils during the inspection week. Discussions were held with all members of staff, including administrative assistants, classroom support teachers and assistants. A meeting was attended by 36 parents, who shared their views on the school with the inspection team. The responses to the 112 parents' questionnaire returns were analysed in detail.

282.All of the school's documentation, including the policies for the curriculum, attendance and financial data, was scrutinised closely both before and during the inspection.

283.DATA AND INDICATORS

284. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y11	1355	17	132	127

284. Teachers and classes

284. Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	71.90
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	18.85

284. Education support staff (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of education support staff:	16
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	470

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes: 76.3

Average teaching group size:	KS2	26
	KS3	23

284. Financial data

Financial year:	1998-1999
	£
Total Income	2622779.00
Total Expenditure	2566278.00
Expenditure per pupil	1958.99.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	71533.00
Balance carried forward to next year	128034.00

284. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 1355
 Number of questionnaires returned: 112

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	23.2	67.9	5.4	3.6	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	32.4	56.8	8.1	2.7	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	13.1	55.1	16.8	13.1	1.9
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	25.9	53.6	8.9	10.7	0.9
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	30.6	48.6	7.2	12.6	0.9
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	33.6	50.0	10.0	3.6	2.7
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	20.9	47.3	21.8	9.1	0.9
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	14.5	50.9	11.8	16.4	6.4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	27.0	45.9	16.2	9.9	0.9
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	18.0	55.0	16.2	7.2	3.6
My child(ren) like(s) school	34.8	50.9	8.0	4.5	1.8