

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOMFIELD SCHOOL

Enfield

LEA area: Enfield

Unique Reference Number: 102056

Inspection Number: 184529

Headteacher: Mr I Lucas

Reporting inspector: Dr R G Wallace
1050

Dates of inspection: 29 November – 3 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707942

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wilmer Way Southgate London N14 7HY
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G Cole
Date of previous inspection:	13-17 March 1995

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Mrs G Riordan, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; attendance; support, guidance and pupils' welfare; partnership with parents and the community
Dr R Andersen	English	
Mr M Beale	Mathematics	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr C Parsons	Science	Staff
Mr J Allum	Art	
Ms J Watson	Design and technology	
Mrs S King	Geography	Learning resources
Mr R Grogan	History, religious education	
Mr R McKenzie	Information technology; business studies and economics	
Mrs M McElroy	Modern languages	Curriculum and assessment; equal opportunities
Mrs J Davis	Music	Accommodation
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

The GCSE results are well above the national average and the school was one of the most improved in the country in 1999.

The school is strongly led by a headteacher who has been the main influence in transforming its reputation.

Most pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning.

A high proportion of teaching is good or very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

The Sixth Form has not been as successful as the rest of the school, although it is now receiving strong direction.

The planning of the school's development has been less formal than is now needed for the next phase of the school's growth. The governors have not played a strong enough part.

Some subjects of the National Curriculum are not taught to all pupils at Key Stage 4 as required by statute: design and technology, a modern language and IT.

There are important weaknesses in science which need to be remedied without delay.

The library is a poor facility for such a large school.

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

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has continued to build on the improvements noted in the last inspection report. Its academic standards have risen. Demand for places at the school has increased. It has made good progress since 1995.

The school has responded well to most of the key issues in the last report. There are more GNVQ courses in the Sixth Form. Monitoring of teachers' work has increased. Faculties have a reasonable degree of flexibility in their use of allocated funds. Some weak aspects have been remedied. Matching of work to the different attainment levels of pupils in the same class is now common. The health and safety concerns noted have received attention. Two aspects have received insufficient attention. Although there has been considerable expenditure on computers, IT is not taught sufficiently to most pupils at Key Stage 4. Although the teaching of religious education is much stronger now, other subjects are still not making sufficient contribution to the pupils' spiritual development.

The school has the capacity to make further improvement. The new headteacher, who takes over as this report is issued, and the Governing Body understand their respective roles in leading the next phase of the school's development.

Standards in subjects

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

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

The 1999 Standard Assessment Task (SAT) results were below the national average overall but above average when compared with similar schools. The mathematics results were better than those in English and science. There was a significant gender difference, with the girls doing almost as well as girls nationally, but the boys not doing as well as boys nationally.

There has been a significant upward trend in GCSE results in recent years. In 1999 63% of the pupils achieved grades A*-C in five or more subjects, compared with 48% nationally. The school has more than doubled its percentage since the time of the last inspection and is now in the top quarter of schools nationally. Results in all three core subjects were above the national average. The A* indicates that, when compared with similar schools, attainment at GCSE in 1999 was very high.

A Level results have improved gradually over the years but not sufficiently. Many pupils are not achieving at A Level the results that they should on the basis of their GCSE results. The school acknowledges this and sees it as the major problem to be tackled in the coming years. Some appropriate steps to raise attainment at A Level have already been taken.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	Music and geography	Science
Years 10-11	Good	Art	Science
Sixth Form	Satisfactory		
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		

A high proportion (a little over half) of teaching is good or very good, with all but about 7% of the total being at least satisfactory. There is good teaching in all subjects. Teaching is best at Key Stage 4. There is less of the good teaching in the Sixth Form than in other years. The unsatisfactory teaching is sometimes of single lessons by teachers whose other lessons are satisfactorily taught, but there is more unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics, balanced by some good teaching, and in science. The unsatisfactory teaching in science is in part by temporary teachers who are not managed well enough to ensure that they provide value for money, but it is not confined to such teachers.

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: most pupils are keen to succeed and have good attitudes in lessons. Behaviour around the school is good, if boisterous.
Attendance	Satisfactory: attendance rates are above the national average. Attendance by some Sixth Formers needs to be improved.
Ethos*	Very good: the school has a clear focus on raising standards in a context of good relationships.
Leadership and management	Very good: the headteacher provides strong and successful leadership, supported by senior staff, teachers and other staff. The governors now have a greater awareness of the role that they should play.
Curriculum	Satisfactory overall, but with some important weaknesses at Key Stage 4 where the provision for design and technology, modern languages and IT does not comply with the National Curriculum.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good: arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as a second language are both good.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development; unsatisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good: there are sufficient appropriately qualified staff, except in science; resources are generally good, except that there are insufficient computers and the library is in a poor condition; accommodation is about to be very good with the opening of the extension.
Value for money	Satisfactory: the school uses an above average income to achieve results that at GCSE are well above average, with a high proportion of good teaching and mostly well-behaved pupils, but with well below average results at A Level.

**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

- The school is welcoming and responsive.
- Its values and attitudes are beneficial to their children.
- Its extra-curricular activities are valued.
- Parents approve of the pupils' behaviour. They were aware of a serious matter a year ago and approved the school's handling of it.

What some parents are not happy about

- There were some criticisms at the meeting about
- Concern was expressed about the behaviour of said that staff were vigilant at the school gate and

No factor in the parents' questionnaire attracted more than 13% disapproval and most attracted much less. Parents in their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting were strongly supportive of the school. The inspectors endorse that judgement. They also confirm that, whilst the standard of marking is generally satisfactory, there are some inadequacies. Pupils confirmed to inspectors that there is some bad behaviour on buses. Inspectors were unable to find first-hand evidence of this, but note the pupils' view that the school takes it seriously. The inspectors confirmed the views of parents that the headteacher and others are regularly at the gates of the school as pupils leave.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The school is making good progress. It should now:

- raise standards in the Sixth Form (paras 9,12,13,16, 22, 25, 28, 29, 41, 48, 85, 104, 107, 113, 140, 147, 169 and 179) by:
 - * ensuring that pupils entering A Level classes have a reasonable prospect of success and are encouraged to take the alternative courses offered if this is not the case
 - * ensuring that teachers who need to do so acquire an understanding of the needs of A Level teaching whilst they build their experience
 - * continuing the recent higher expectation of Sixth Form pupils regarding attendance and academic discipline
 - * extending the school's limited value-added data to include those with national comparisons, so that staff can have a better understanding of national standards and so that senior managers can monitor improvements more closely;
- develop more rigorous planning and monitoring procedures (paras 37, 66 and 78) by:
 - * incorporating a detailed published school development plan as part of the annual planning cycle
 - * involving the governors, as well as all staff, in the creation of the plan
 - * using this plan, with its targets, as the basis for regular and demanding dialogue between senior managers and other staff
 - * monitoring classroom activities, such as teaching, setting of homework and marking, in order to ensure that these make a full contribution to the school's aim of raising standards;
- comply with the requirements of the National Curriculum, because it is a statutory requirement, (paras 33, 60, 68, 147, 151 and 174) by providing:
 - * design and technology courses for all pupils at Key Stage 4
 - * modern language courses for all pupils at Key Stage 4 unless they are formally disapplied from the National Curriculum
 - * access to the National Curriculum in English for Year 7 pupils following the corrective reading course
 - * IT at Key Stage 4, so that all pupils are able to develop their skills across all of the IT aspects statutorily required and have adequate opportunities to practise those skills in their

subjects

- * religious education in the Sixth Form for those who want it;
- improve the library (paras 69, 75, 77 and 153) by:
 - * greatly increasing the stock of books and other learning materials
 - * improving access to IT
 - * improving the learning environment
 - * appointing a librarian or manager to upgrade it as a major contributor to learning;
 - raise standards in science (paras 8, 9, 11, 29, 31, 32, 37, 38, 41, 70, 77 and 103-108) by:
 - * ensuring that the faculty is managed in order to achieve coherence in the approaches of all teachers
 - * improving the quality of teaching
 - * relating science, where possible, to the pupils' own experience and to their learning in other subjects
 - * marking pupils' work more rigorously, so that the pupils may know how to improve it
 - * supervising the work of supply teachers, so that they always contribute to their pupils' learning and the school gets better value for money.
 - **Other points for consideration**

In addition to the above key issues, the governors may wish to consider these other matters when drawing up their Action Plan:

- * the contents of the governors' annual report do not cover all the items required by statute (para 62)
- * there is a little unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics (paras 31, 99 and 100)
- * not all subject schemes of work are complete and effective (para 37)
- * whilst provision for special educational needs is a strength overall, there are some aspects that need attention (para 62)
- * despite recent investment, the number of computers is insufficient to meet the school's needs

(paras 74 and 77).

* opportunities to develop the pupils spiritually are not sufficiently taken in several subjects and there is little curriculum planning to encourage this (para 46)

* there are a few minor health and safety matters that need attention (para 52).

INTRODUCTION

• Characteristics of the school

1. Broomfield School is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-18. At the time of the inspection there were 1,262 pupils at the school, with 74 more boys than girls. A high proportion of the pupils are from ethnic minorities. Most of the pupils come from the London Borough of Enfield, with about half coming from four Enfield primary schools, and about a fifth of the pupils coming from the London Borough of Haringey. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is currently similar to the national average, but has varied greatly in recent years.

2. *The school aims* to enable pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding and confidence to:

- reach their full potential
- make informed and reasoned choices
- develop awareness and respect for themselves and others
- actively participate in and contribute to a changing society, both within and beyond school.

3. *The targets* agreed with the local education authority for the year 2000 are:

- 49% of pupils achieving grades A*-C in 5 or more subjects at GCSE
- 98% of pupils achieving grades A*-G in at least one subject
- an average points score at GCSE of 37.

• **Key indicators**

4.

Attainment at Key Stage 3²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	115	89	204

• National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	54	83	60
	Girls	52	47	29
	Total	106	130	89
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	53.3(66)	65.3(55)	44.7(50)
	National	64(65)	63(60)	55(56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	10.6(26)	34.7(33)	13.6(18)
	National	23(35)	35(36)	20(27)

• Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	66	75	68
	Girls	51	46	50
	Total	117	121	118
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	57	59(52)	58(62)
	National	N/a(62)	N/a(64)	N/a(62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	15	23(19)	30(21)
	National	N/a(31)	N/a(37)	N/a(31)

2

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4³

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	98	84	182

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	60	93	98
	Girls	56	81	83
	Total	116	174	181
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	63(39)	98(94)	100(97)
	National	47.8(44.6)	88.4(89.9)	93.9(95.2)

Attainment in the Sixth Form⁴

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:	Year	Male	Female	Total
	1999	26	44	70

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A Levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A Levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	N/a	N/a	12(8.3)	0	0	0(2.7)
National	N/a	N/a	N/a(17.6)	N/a	N/a	0(2.8)

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of <i>such students</i> who achieved these qualifications:	Number	% Success rate
School	7	71%
National		N/a

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

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

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	6.2
	Absence	National comparative data	7.9
	Unauthorised	School	0.6
	Absence	National comparative data	1.1

•

•

• Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	59
	Permanent	4

• Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	12.1
	Satisfactory or better	93.2
	Less than satisfactory	6.8

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

5. The standards achieved by the pupils vary greatly by age group. There has been a very big improvement in results at GCSE, but not in Key Stage 3 Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) and at GCSE Advanced Level.

6. The 1999 SAT results, taken at the end of Year 9, were below the national average overall and in both English and science. In mathematics, the pupils' achievements matched the national average in all ways: the average points score, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and higher, and the proportion reaching Level 6 and higher. There was a particularly low proportion of pupils reaching Level 6 and higher in English. When compared with the results of similar schools (comprehensive schools with high proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals), the results were above average overall, average in English, above average in science and well above average in mathematics. The 1998 results showed considerable variation by gender. In English there was a wide gap, similar to that found nationally, between girls and boys, with girls doing much better than boys. In mathematics and science, contrary to the national results, the girls did better than the boys. Overall, the boys at the school are not doing as well as boys nationally, whilst Broomfield girls are doing almost as well as girls do nationally. As boys outnumber girls in most year groups, this has a significant effect on the school's overall results. There has been no significant trend in Key Stage 3 SAT results during the last few years.

7. Attainment at GCSE in 1999 was very high. 63% of pupils achieved grades A*-C in five or more subjects, well above the national average of 48%. This was the school's best result ever, with more than double the proportion of pupils achieving such results as did so at the time of the last inspection. The results placed the school comfortably in the top quarter of schools nationally and in the top 5% of similar schools. The school came 27th in the national list of the most improved schools at GCSE in 1999.

8. Within these overall excellent results there were considerable variations by subject. The three core subjects of English, mathematics and science all achieved A*-C rates that were higher than the national rates by 10% or more. In the humanities there was a great contrast between geography, with a very high proportion of pupils entered and results that were much higher than the national average, and history with fewer entries and results that were below the average. The modern language results were much higher than the national average but, whereas most pupils in most schools take at least one foreign language, this was not the case at Broomfield where the school was in breach of the National Curriculum and entered only 63% of last year's Year 11 for any modern language (apart from another 19% entered for the languages of their homes, without tuition from the school). Evidence for 1998 GCSE results indicates that pupils entered for design and technology, drama, English literature, French, German, geography and sports studies did significantly better in these subjects than in the average of all their other subjects. Pupils entered for English language, business studies, double science, physics and sociology did worse in these subjects than in the average of all their other subjects. Similar evidence from the school for the 1999 GCSE results shows that pupils did significantly better in biology, geography, drama and sports studies than in the average of all their other subjects. Pupils did significantly worse in English literature, design and technology (resistant materials and graphics) and history than in the average of their other subjects. GCSE results in recent years have shown a rising trend at a much faster rate than the national average.

9. The average points score for pupils taking two or more GCE A Level subjects was higher in 1999

than in previous years, and than at the time of the last inspection, but still well below the national average. The school's own data indicates that pupils with average attainment at the start of their courses achieve appropriate A Level grades, but that higher-attaining pupils do less well at A Level than they should. Overall, pupils do not make sufficient progress between GCSE and A Level. Music, theatre studies and sociology have enabled pupils to do well at A Level. Taking 1998 and 1999 results together, the subjects where the results have been below the school average for progress from GCSE to A Level were the three sciences, history, German, economics and technology.

10. Pupils were entered for GNVQ examinations at Intermediate and Advanced Levels in 1999. 63% of the pupils taking Intermediate courses completed all units, with a high proportion of merits and distinctions. Of the nine pupils following Advanced Level courses, five completed all units, four with merit.

11. The attainment of pupils overall as observed in school during the inspection was a little below the standard expected nationally. There is a wide spread of attainment in the present Key Stage 4, especially in Year 11, but on average, attainment is higher at this stage than in the rest of the school. There is no variation by ethnicity in attainment. The tight structure of some lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 is helpful to pupils with special educational needs who benefit from the frequent revision and consolidation of knowledge. Targets for pupils with special educational needs neglect their weaknesses in mathematics. Attainment overall does not vary greatly between subjects, although it is rather lower in design and technology and in science than in other subjects.

12. Attainment in A Level classes in the Sixth Form is mostly at or below the standard expected for these courses. There are several reasons for this. The successful drive for improved GCSE results, and particularly the emphasis on examination requirements and techniques, has been achieved in part at a cost to the pupils' fundamental understanding. The understanding of concepts, quite a strong feature of the GCSE sociology lessons, has not had a sufficient emphasis in most subjects. In mathematics, for example, the pupils do not acquire sufficient basic understanding of principles to be able to use their understanding to tackle new problems or to choose between methods. In modern languages the pupils have not used the language at Key Stages 3 and 4 sufficiently to allow a smooth transfer to A Level work; this is now changing. Good attendance has not contributed in the past as it must to higher attainment in the Sixth Form, but this too is now being tackled. In a few subjects there is a need for staff with previous experience of A Level teaching. More rigour is being introduced into the management of the Sixth Form and the seeds of improvement have already been sown.

13. Standards of literacy are mostly satisfactory. The pupils generally speak clearly and are often lively and articulate in discussion when this is clearly focused by the teacher. Listening skills vary, with some pupils in the early years careless in their understanding of what they hear. Reading is mostly adequate for access to the curriculum, with satisfactory comprehension of texts and some expressive reading aloud. Much attention is given by the school to the development of basic reading skills, but some of the higher reading skills are not being adequately developed for abler pupils. There are weaknesses in writing, with many pupils making mistakes even when copying, and minor errors of spelling and grammar persist until pupils are in the Sixth Form.

14. The pupils' number skills are mostly satisfactory when they are working on paper, but they are generally given one method to use without necessarily understanding how it works. The practical use of mathematics, a requirement of the National Curriculum, does not receive sufficient attention, and the pupils are often at a disadvantage when confronted with unfamiliar problems.

15. Information technology (IT) skills are much higher at Key Stage 3 than at the time of the previous inspection, and they are higher in Years 7 and 8 than in Year 9. The use of IT for measuring, a National Curriculum requirement, is inadequately covered at Key Stage 3 and this is a weakness. At

Key Stage 4 the level of IT skills being reached depends very much on whether pupils have a personal interest or are amongst the third of the pupils in Year 10 who follow an IT course. The majority of pupils at Key Stage 4 (two-thirds in Year 10 and all in Year 11) do not have IT tuition that is planned systematically to develop their skills across the National Curriculum required range. There is also insufficient use of IT in most subjects. Attainment is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4 and the school is also in breach of statutory requirements.

16. The pupils are making mostly good progress in lessons and satisfactory progress over time at Key Stages 3 and 4. This is the result of good teaching and good attitudes by the pupils, although in Year 9 the school's normally high standard is qualified by unsatisfactory attitudes in almost a fifth of lessons. Homework makes an important contribution to good progress, particularly at Key Stage 4. Many pupils attend the homework clubs arranged mainly for Year 11 pupils. Progress in GNVQ courses in the Sixth Form is good. Progress in A Level lessons is mostly satisfactory. There is no variation in progress by ethnicity. Pupils with English as a second language generally make good progress. In a Year 7 class, five pupils who were at an early stage of learning English, made good progress in acquiring oral and listening skills as a result of the teacher's clear understanding of their needs, and encouraging approach, good preparation and the use of appropriate resources. There is evidence of solid progress by many pupils with special educational needs. The satisfactory progress made over time at Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form is not as good as the progress made in lessons. That is because many pupils do not retain knowledge over long periods. In the Sixth Form many pupils have not acquired earlier in the school the capacity to study independently as required at A Level. Low retention by pupils is overcome at Key Stage 4 by frequent revision.

• **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

17. Pupils enjoy learning, concentrate well in class and take pride in their work. In more than half of lessons their response to teaching is good or very good, and in most of the rest it is satisfactory. The majority of parents consider that pupils are enabled to achieve a good standard of work and that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect. Pupils are able to persevere with challenging tasks and gain confidence from discussing their ideas. They respond well to opportunities to investigate topics for themselves. Teachers sometimes control their learning more tightly than is necessary and most pupils are able to work more independently. The pupils are prepared to contribute to class discussions and co-operate well in group work, respecting each other's points of view and offering constructive comments.

18. The pupils' conduct around the school, while sometimes boisterous, is generally responsible. Most pupils observe the code of conduct. They are supportive of each other, polite to adults and helpful to visitors. In a culturally diverse community, relationships between pupils and with staff are good and contribute to an effective learning environment. Most pupils prefer to collect credit slips and certificates of achievement and to avoid sanctions. Exclusions were quite high in 1998-99, with more girls involved than is usually the case in most schools. They were used, in several cases, to indicate the unacceptability of bullying, including some incidents that took place outside the school. The school regards a fixed-term exclusion as a cooling-off period in which problems can be explored and as a signal to pupils and their communities that the boundaries of behaviour have been crossed. Pupils and parents agree that all such incidents are dealt with quickly and efficiently by staff. Parents commented about bad behaviour on public buses and at bus-stops, and pupils confirmed that this does occur. The pupils were also clear that the school takes this seriously, and inspectors confirmed what parents had already told them about the headteacher and other staff being very prominent in their presence outside the school at the end of the day.

19. The pupils' personal development is fostered in many ways. There are many opportunities for them to reflect systematically on their approaches to learning. They write personal statements for annual profile reports, records of achievement and college applications. This is underpinned by a system of

monitoring individual pupil progress (MIPP) which enables pupils to agree and review a set of targets with their form tutors. They develop their abilities and acquire new skills through sport, music and drama productions and a range of other extra-curricular activities. They grow in self-reliance through work experience in Year 10 and the Sixth Form and by participating in school visits, field trips and language exchanges.

20. Many pupils take up opportunities to accept responsibility and show initiative. Sixth Formers become mentors to lower school forms, organise charity events and take part in initiatives such as Young Enterprise. Pupils act as team captains and stewards at school functions and take on challenges such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. In all years they raise funds for charities and, as elected representatives, put forward the views of their fellow-pupils to the school council.

- **Attendance**

21. The school achieves attendance levels above the national average. Attendance in class during the inspection week was generally satisfactory, although in some years the continuity of learning was affected by the absence of different pupils on different days. During a sample week in October 1999, only one form in the school achieved full attendance while, in Year 9, a quarter of the pupils were absent at least once during the week. Monitoring systems are effective in maintaining consistent levels of attendance. The school values the work of its education welfare officer and the improved co-operation with officers in the neighbouring borough from which many pupils travel.

22. In the Sixth Form, registration takes place in lessons more often than in tutor groups and, in some subjects, poor attendance is giving cause for concern. The school hopes that improvement will follow from measures which have been recently introduced, including electronic registration in the Sixth Form centre.

23. Punctuality to school is barely satisfactory. Traffic congestion is a continuing problem that accounted for a third of late arrivals during inspection week. Almost as many pupils, however, gave unsatisfactory reasons for their lateness. During the sample week, more than a third of pupils in Years 9 and 11 were late at least once.

24. Punctuality to lessons is mostly good. Teachers are active in the corridors between lessons and the completion of the new building should ease congestion in several areas of the school.

- **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

- **Teaching**

25. The overall quality of teaching is good. 93% of lessons are taught satisfactorily or better. In about half the lessons the teaching is good or better. Teaching is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3 and much better than in the Sixth Form. There was some good teaching in all subjects.

26. Good planning, with precise time allocation for tasks, positive and critical comments on the pupils' work and good direction of learning were the features of a Year 10 English lesson that enabled the class to achieve at an appropriate level. Similarly good planning, including a good sequence of activities with the teacher switching in and out of role, enabled Year 9 pupils in a drama lesson to learn from the teacher's example, and group work was well managed by the teacher's enthusiasm rather than the application of rules, which were taken as read. Year 9 pupils made good progress in a mathematics lesson on prime numbers as a result of the teacher's brisk and confident manner which ensured that a

good lesson plan generated a very good working atmosphere in the class; time limits for the completion of work were set, and the homework was planned to build on the classwork. Quick recall and consolidation of previous knowledge are effectively used as the starting point of lessons by many teachers; this got a Year 11 biology lesson on homeostasis off to a good start, followed by an activity that consolidated and applied knowledge and enabled pupils to reach above-average attainment levels for GCSE.

27. Although there are occasions when there is ineffective use of support staff for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, there is more often good liaison between class teachers and these staff. An example was in a Year 10 food technology class where the joint planning of the lesson ensured the full participation of the pupils. Providing extension work for abler pupils is a good feature of much teaching and this was evident in a very well-taught IT lesson. Very detailed planning enabled the Year 9 pupils making a book cover and using mail merge to make good progress, with the abler pupils moving ahead at a much faster rate. A similar approach, of planning work to meet the needs of different pupils, was evident in a very well-taught Year 9 history lesson on the suffragettes. Detailed planning and different tasks enabled pupils of varying attainment to make good progress. Sound subject knowledge and the use of modern methods are also features of the good teaching. Both were evident in a very well-taught geography lesson. Year 11 pupils worked in the lesson at the standard expected for GCSE when learning about the spiral of decline in Wakefield; the teacher introduced the video well and then used it to bring out the learning points. Similarly, the effective teacher of a Year 8 French class had pupils using an overhead projector to play a game to reinforce their vocabulary about clothes and colours. The lesson was conducted at a very good pace, almost all in French, including the instructions, and the pupils made very good progress. Most teachers are quick to check that pupils are paying attention. This was evident in a well-taught Year 8 religious education lesson, where a quiet word brought pupils back to the task. Groups of pupils worked well together and the teacher brought the learning points together for the whole class at the end. There is much good physical education teaching with progressive development of skills as in a Year 11 lesson on tactics in rugby. More complex passing skills were developed, with pupils required to think why some tactics had failed.

28. Teaching in the Sixth Form is not generally as good as at Key Stages 3 and 4, but there is still some very good teaching. A Year 12 art class produced good work on historical and cultural themes, following a visit to the British Museum. The teacher's subject knowledge and understanding of the research and design process were strong, the expectations of what pupils can achieve were high, and the pupils benefited from challenging questions and targets. An A Level music lesson was very well taught to Year 12 pupils. Several effective related methods were used in quick succession, including aural work, a video to explain displacement of beat and the provision of stimulus for composition.

29. The marking of pupils' work is generally making a satisfactory contribution to their progress. Marking is mostly of a much higher standard at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. It is rare for any teachers to use the symbols required for the correction of basic errors as laid down in the staff handbook. Marking is very good in English, geography, art and religious education. In IT teachers provide helpful advice both in lessons and in writing on completed work. In some subjects marking is inconsistent. In mathematics, for example, it is done well by two teachers and poorly by two others. In science there is good verbal feedback, especially on homework at Key Stage 4, but it is too variable overall to be satisfactory. In design and technology, marking is good at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form where it is used as part of target-setting, but it is not of the same quality at Key Stage 3. In physical education there is insufficient advice on how pupils may improve their work. In modern languages marking is good in French and otherwise satisfactory. In history, marking by two of the teachers is unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the Sixth Form there is insufficient comment on the texts of essays.

30. Homework is set regularly and is a particularly strong feature of Key Stage 4. There is good use of

extension work for abler pupils, for example in art and sociology. The school also provides very good opportunities in departments, including the learning support department, for homework to be done in school with teachers on hand if help is needed.

31. The unsatisfactory teaching seen in 7% of lessons is in part the result of individual weak lessons given by teachers who otherwise teach satisfactorily. There is more unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics and science than in other subjects. Some of the unsatisfactory teaching in science is by supply teachers who are science specialists but make no attempt to teach, merely sitting at the front whilst pupils go through the tasks set. This is an aspect of unsatisfactory management.

• **The curriculum and assessment**

32. At Key Stage 3 the curriculum is broad and balanced. The pupils are taught all the National Curriculum subjects and information technology and drama for adequate amounts of time. The statutory requirements are met for most pupils. The National Curriculum has not been disapplied for Year 7 pupils withdrawn from English lessons for corrective reading, although they are not following it. Whilst the school feels that it is meeting the most essential needs of these pupils by this method, it recognises that more needs to be done to ensure that the pupils move as quickly as possible to the stage where they do have equality of access to the full English curriculum. The information technology (IT) lessons at Key Stage 3 provide a good grounding in basic skills; however, whilst there is good use of information technology in some subjects, such as music, design technology and English, other subjects such as mathematics and geography do not use IT sufficiently and its use in science is unsatisfactory. This is a weakness that the school needs to put right.

33. At Key Stage 4 all National Curriculum subjects, sociology, drama and business studies are offered. The school's curriculum philosophy has at its core the desire to cater for its pupils as individuals. It constructs the Key Stage 4 option blocks only after the pupils have selected their preferred subject choices. This does sometimes result in some imbalance, despite the school's interview and advice systems; for example, most unusually a small number of pupils have chosen to study two design and technology subjects. More seriously, the school is in breach of statutory requirements for design technology and modern languages, as these are not taught to all pupils, indeed only some 60% of pupils studied a modern language in Year 11 last academic year, and there were no disapplications. About a third of Year 10 is currently taking an information technology course. There is no discrete provision for the other pupils at Key Stage 4 and insufficient use across the curriculum. As at Key Stage 3, statutory requirements for information technology are not met. This was a key issue for the school in the last inspection report.

34. Another key issue in the last inspection was that the school should continue to develop the Sixth Form. It has done so. There are A Level courses in all the National Curriculum subjects, business studies, economics, sociology, theatre and sports studies. To these have been added GNVQ courses at advanced and intermediate levels in business, health and social care and leisure and tourism. The school's equal opportunities working party has been instrumental in the consultation and development process of, in particular, the school's vocational and social curriculum at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form.

35. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. These include curriculum-related school visits, journeys abroad and homework and other clubs. There is a good range of activities available to all pupils at lunchtime and after school in physical education, and the department is working with some success to raise the number of girls participating. The pupils' successes in sports, and in particular in football, are well recognised by the school.

36. At Key Stage 3 religious education and personal and social education (PSE) are taught on a carousel basis by a team of teachers, with some integration of the two planned. There is satisfactory provision for religious education at this key stage. At Key Stage 4 statutory requirements for religious education are not met in Year 11, but new arrangements in Year 10 bring the curriculum into line with the requirements. In the Sixth Form, last year's ethics course in Year 12 took less than half the recommended time over the key stage. Plans have been made to provide religious education through three one-day conferences which would meet the time requirements, but these are not yet concrete. More generous provision at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form was a key issue for the school in the last inspection report. All the necessary elements of the PSE programme are in place in the planning, but delivery is uneven. Careers education is satisfactory, with good links to the careers service.

37. In many subjects curriculum planning is satisfactory and sometimes good, but it is also sometimes unsatisfactory. In physical education a scheme of work needs to be provided in the Sixth Form. At Key Stage 4, while appropriate activities are in place, the scheme is the same for Years 10 and 11, with insufficient progression. In history, schemes of work are being revised at Key Stage 3 but exist at present only for the autumn term. Planning in science is satisfactory at Key Stage 4 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form, with a need for more consistency of approach and method, and schemes that cater for the needs of pupils of varying attainment. Planning in mathematics is based on a commercial scheme that is itself satisfactory, but the department does not adequately cover all of the attainment targets in its teaching.

38. There is substantial curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs both in terms of in-class support and withdrawal, mainly targeted at the core subjects at both Key Stages 3 and 4. There is mixed-ability teaching at Key Stage 3, with the exception of mathematics in Year 9 and setting only in mathematics, English and science at Key Stage 4. A key issue in the last report was that the school should continue to match work to the pupils' abilities, reconsidering grouping arrangements where necessary. Many subjects now cater satisfactorily for the individual needs of most pupils and there is good practice in some subjects such as modern languages. In science, the curriculum structure provides for equality of opportunity, but the quality of teaching limits this for some pupils and one Key Stage 3 class has had eleven temporary teachers. There is open access to the Sixth Form in science once the school's minimum entrance requirements have been met, but pupils are not always well supported thereafter. In mathematics, pupils in the mixed-ability groups in Years 7 and 8 are often not working at appropriate levels because of weaknesses in the use of assessment data.

39. The school's policy on assessment is a good one, with an emphasis on the clarity of learning objectives and the need to make these known to the pupils. There is an expectation that targets will be set for all pupils, with records of the pupils' progress through subject and tutor profiles.

40. In most subjects the procedures for assessing the pupils' progress are good. The history department is moving from an unsatisfactory system at Key Stage 3 of a single end-of-year examination which decides the pupils' National Curriculum levels. The department plans to introduce a series of common and moderated tasks to supplement the end-of-year examination. In religious education the system is satisfactory, but the department is working at sharpening the focus of its assessment, with skills more clearly identified. In geography there are too few opportunities for pupils to reach the highest levels in assessments and a greater use of short answer and regular testing would help pupils' longer-term knowledge recall. At Key Stage 4 in design technology, while assessment arrangements are good, there is some confusion over National Curriculum grades and school grades on the pupils' work. In physical education and in modern languages assessment arrangements have improved since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 3.

41. At Key Stage 3 in English and mathematics there is insufficient use of Key Stage 2 data to inform planning. In science, while some good use is made of data to highlight value-added trends, identify

strengths and encourage greater effort from the pupils, this is not consistent across the department and insufficient use is made of the information at the curriculum planning stage, for instance to identify gaps. Good verbal assessment, which feeds directly into performance, is regularly given in music and physical education. In geography assessment is used well to inform planning. In many subjects, the use made of the information gained from assessments is better at Key Stage 4 than it is at Key Stage 3 or in the Sixth Form. At Key Stage 4, there is very good use of assessment data to set targets for pupils in modern languages and good use in design technology, art, business studies and English. There is regular self-assessment by the pupils in many subjects. The senior management team's interviews of all Year 11 pupils and the monitoring of individual pupils' progress (MIPP) by form tutors are very positive aspects of the school's assessment system and an important part of its drive to raise standards at Key Stage 4.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

42. The provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. This has a considerable impact on the development of a harmonious and orderly environment in the school, where the contributions and achievements of all pupils are valued. The pupils are provided with a good understanding of their role in society and are provided with opportunities to develop the skills needed to make informed choices.

43. The emphasis placed on the moral development of the pupils throughout the school is supported by the teaching in many faculties. This aspect is actively supported through the material taught and the approaches adopted by staff. Teachers are sensitive when teaching about moral issues, but are also prepared to tackle them vigorously. In a Year 9 geography lesson, for example, images of people in developing countries, showing poverty and malnutrition, were used not only to encourage a debate but also to ensure that empathy with people in such circumstances was achieved. The consideration of right and wrong figures prominently in religious education teaching and many moral issues feature in the GCSE course. Themes and materials used in English and drama, such as prejudice, bullying and lying, as well as the study of Shakespearean drama and *The Crucible*, provide good opportunities for the discussion of right and wrong actions and their consequences.

44. Very good provision is also made for the pupils' social development throughout the school. The PSE programme and the recently introduced ASDAN course enable pupils to consider the role that they can play in society. Many Sixth Form pupils undertake voluntary activities in the community and support Year 7 and 8 pupils in lessons. A strong contribution to the development of social awareness is made through both English and drama teaching. Themes such as communities under threat from developers, age and physical handicap are tackled in drama, while materials and texts used in English include topics such as drugs and AIDS. Other texts used offer varying viewpoints on society and present a view of widely differing societies. Aspects of citizenship are considered in the study of politics and the growth of democracy in history. A particular feature of lessons in most subjects is the use of group work to foster social and co-operative skills, these being further supported and extended in extra-curricular activities.

45. Very good opportunities are provided for the pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage of peoples from throughout the world, while appreciating the culture and customs of a multi-cultural Britain. Theatre trips, visits by theatre companies to the school and the participation of pupils in local and national literary events, make an important contribution to their cultural development. Large numbers of pupils are involved in annual drama productions. Visits to local places of worship enable pupils to develop an understanding of the major religions. The festivals of these religions are studied and pupils are encouraged to bring traditional clothes and artefacts to help to emphasise their traditions and customs. The use of Indian, Indonesian, Chinese and African music provides further opportunities for pupils to consider cultures other than their own. Pupils study the

history of the black peoples of the Americas and have a coursework assignment in history on apartheid in South Africa. There is a good focus in geography on teaching about people from other cultures, while the extensive programme of field trips provides opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of different areas of the United Kingdom.

46. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development was identified as a weakness by the last inspection. It remains so. The school does not provide a daily act of worship, and assemblies that take place generally have a moral or social theme, not a spiritual dimension. Although religious education teaching gives pupils the opportunity to reflect on religious beliefs and values, and the material used in English helps to prompt the pupils' consideration of their own and others' values, little contribution is made by other curriculum areas. The school recognises this weakness but has not seen it as a major priority for development since the last inspection.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

47. The strong pastoral system is central to the school's care for and encouragement of its pupils. Heads of year and form tutors remain with their year groups as they progress through the school, getting to know well both pupils and their families. Parents find the school approachable and are quickly contacted by staff with any queries or problems which arise. A wide-ranging monitoring system enables year teams to record pupils' progress and offer support for their work and personal development. From Year 8, pupils are involved with their form tutors in target-setting and review. Staff hold lunchtime or after-school workshops in most subjects and incident sheets relay information from subject to pastoral teams. Activities are planned for morning form times to develop the pupils' knowledge and skills, although sufficient time is not always allowed for these to take place.

48. The Sixth Form tutor system has not been fully effective in recent years, and registration has more often taken place in lessons. The formation of a strong tutor team, together with developments such as the refurbishment of the Sixth Form centre and the new electronic registration system, aims to provide improved working conditions and a stronger network of support and guidance.

49. Guidance for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as a second language is good. There is some duplication of effort for staff in the target-setting and review of procedures for all pupils and for those with special educational needs. All pupils benefit from MIPP. Alongside that, there is the record of pupil progress and concern (ROPPC) for pupils at Stage 1 of the SEN Code of Practice and individual education plans (IEPs) prepared by the SEN co-ordinator. Much duplication is the result.

50. Pupils and parents praise the induction procedures for pupils entering the school and the information which is available as they make their subject choices in Years 9 and 11. A new programme of PSE is in the process of development; the planned schemes of work cover appropriate elements, including sex and health education. The programme alternates with religious education lessons, more of which were taking place during the week of the inspection. While the few specific PSE lessons seen were good, it is not possible to comment on the pupils' experience of the whole programme. Effective presentations of topics which contribute to the pupils' personal and social education are also given in assemblies. An appropriate careers programme with good links to the careers service offers support from the time of subject choices in Year 9. The majority of pupils undertaking two weeks' work experience in Year 10 achieve 'outstanding work experience' certificates for favourable comments from their employers and a well-written daily log.

51. The school celebrates its pupils' achievements in many ways, through announcements in assemblies and newsletters, involvement in extra-curricular activities and attractive displays of work. A system of

credit slips rewards outstanding work and progress, while pupils gain certificates for effort and achievement which they receive in assemblies and at lower and upper school presentation evenings. The school has a range of sanctions for unacceptable work and behaviour. Effective procedures are in place for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Child protection measures are handled effectively by designated teachers, and members of staff are aware of the procedures to be followed. A counsellor comes into school regularly to help with appropriate problems. The school appreciates the support and guidance offered by a range of outside agencies in its work with pupils and their families.

52. Suitable procedures are in place for dealing with illness, accidents and emergencies. Arrangements for school journeys follow appropriate guidelines. Measures for ensuring health and safety are generally effective. A good standard of cleanliness has been maintained despite the difficulties of building work. The problems of congestion in narrow corridors mentioned in the last inspection report will be largely overcome by the design of the new building. Its completion will allow other measures to be put in place, such as the upgrading of emergency exit signs and the reintroduction of regular fire drills. A longer-term problem has been caused by heavy equipment on the school playground, where dips in the surface and exposed manhole covers form potential hazards for pupils. Inside the school, unprotected radiator spikes were seen in several corridors.

• **Partnership with parents and the community**

53. Parents are supportive of their children and the school. Most come regularly to consultation evenings and school events. The parents' association is run by a small committed group who organise social events, at the same time raising funds which are used to enhance the school environment. Refreshments provided for parents' evenings and school productions are greatly appreciated, notably at the recent international evening.

54. Communications with parents are informative and courteous, by means of regular news-sheets, letters about specific events, telephone calls and pupils' homework diaries. While most parents feel well informed about their children's progress, fewer feel that they have a clear understanding of what is taught. More curriculum information would be welcomed to enable parents to support their children's learning more effectively at home. Parents speak favourably of the annual progress reports. In most subjects teachers provide a helpful analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and suggest quantifiable targets for their development.

55. Firm links are maintained with the many primary schools from which pupils transfer into Year 7. Those within the immediate area use the school library and playing fields and attend rehearsals of school productions, while Year 11 theatre studies pupils take their Christmas plays out to the primary schools. The school makes extensive lettings of its sports facilities, while community groups meet regularly for educational and cultural purposes. Contacts with the business community increase as many Year 10 pupils nominate their own work experience placements. Through recent membership of the North London Chamber of Commerce, the school has become involved with a range of local contractors, some of whom have entered into sponsorship arrangements.

• **Assessment of special educational needs**

56. As at the time of the 1995 inspection, the effective classroom work of support staff working with pupils who have special educational needs is a strength of the school. In many instances, subject teachers also have a clear understanding of the differing needs of pupils in their classes and reflect this in their planning and practice. The school's documentation complies with the Code of Practice but there are some inefficiencies in the maintenance of information about some pupils and important information is not always shared with staff promptly enough.

57. The school uses various means to assess pupils' special educational needs and these work well in practice. A quarter of the pupils in the school have been identified as having special educational needs. A third of these are at Stage 1 where responsibility lies with subject teachers to prepare and maintain records of pupil progress and concern. IEPs are prepared for the remainder but some of these have been shared only recently with subject teachers. The school has recently prepared and distributed summary sheets for all pupils in Years 7 and 8. These sheets represent a manageable system for sharing important information, such as reading ages and brief descriptions of learning difficulties. They are not comprehensive, however, and do not include targets from IEPs or the stage of pupils' English learning where English is an additional language. There is no coherence between the school's system for target-setting and review by form tutors, and that consequent on IEPs.

58. 18 pupils have statements of special educational needs, low in comparison with the national average. Statutory requirements are met and the staffing resources supplied in response to these pupils' needs are properly and effectively deployed.

59. Support staff work well to help pupils with special educational needs in classrooms. This work, whilst focused on specific pupils, often extends to helping other pupils. On one occasion, a learning support assistant helped a pupil with a statement by giving him the opportunity to work responsibly on his own whilst observing closely from a distance. The boy took this opportunity and participated fully with other pupils in the class.

60. Support staff also teach a corrective reading programme at Key Stage 3. This course is highly structured and requires good concentration by pupils and respect by them for the contributions of others. The teachers' knowledge of their pupils, good preparation and pace of delivery ensure that pupils do make progress both in lessons and over time. In Year 7, the pupils following this course are withdrawn from English and consequently are denied access to the National Curriculum in English.

61. At Key Stage 4, two support options are offered; pupils may select one, and very occasionally two, of these as an alternative to a further GCSE course. Pupils in these groups value the support provided. The needs of the pupils are known by staff who work successfully to encourage and to motivate them. Pupils work steadily and responsibly, responding to the respect shown to them by staff and the help provided. This help relates directly to the examination courses being followed. On one occasion, a support teacher, who had been helping two boys in a GCSE physical education theory lesson, was able to build on this in a subsequent support lesson.

62. The accommodation available for the learning support faculty is poor and there is insufficient space for all the pupils' records to be held in a single location. Some teaching has to take place in rooms far from the main teaching room. There is no designated administrative support for special educational needs. Not all pupil files are maintained well and there is a need to be more systematic and rigorous. Similarly, the faculty has produced some useful documents for both staff and parents but these are not automatically distributed to those who would benefit. A key issue in the 1995 inspection was the need to monitor and evaluate teachers' performance. Over a year ago, the faculty produced a staff monitoring and evaluation policy; it has not been implemented. It is a good policy but valueless until put into practice.

- **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**
- **Leadership and management**

63. The school has been led strongly and with an emphasis on raising achievement, particularly at GCSE, for the last ten years. The headteacher has been the key figure in the school's success, has led it with vigour and imagination and has received increasing support from senior and other staff. The governors have supported the changes that have been made.

64. Monitoring of classroom work is carried out regularly by heads of faculties. Managers and individual teachers are accountable for the standards that they achieve with pupils, related to schemes of work and assessments of pupils' work including examination results. Much analysis of data takes place and this is used to plan improvements.

65. The school's aims, except that of a balanced curriculum at Key Stage 4, are consistently promoted and largely achieved. The values promoted by the school are evident in the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils and are appreciated by parents.

66. Development planning in the school takes the form of a strategic plan, with more specific and short-term targets. Dialogue between senior managers and teachers responsible for subject faculties and pastoral matters is the means of agreeing goals and assessing the achievement of targets. Records of agreed objectives and their implementation are kept. By this means the separation of overall school aims from those of sectors of the school is avoided. This approach has been beneficial during the most recent phase of the school's progress, but now needs to be developed into a more formal annual planning cycle, supported by more rigorous dialogue between senior and middle managers. At present the scrutiny of faculties by senior managers does not detect weaknesses, such as the failure of learning support to implement 18-month-old procedures for monitoring within the faculty. Some necessary changes have been implemented in science, but without the intended beneficial consequences. There also needs to be greater involvement by the governors in planning and monitoring the work of the school. Leading governors understand this and have the capacity, within a valid appreciation of the different roles of governors and managers, to adopt a more prominent presence in the school.

67. There is a very strong commitment to raising standards in all aspects of the school's work and this has borne fruit in the good attitudes of most pupils, the high level of teaching quality and the improving examination results at GCSE and A Level. Positive attitudes prevail in the school. Relationships are good, on the basis of expectations fulfilled. There are no infringements of equal opportunities.

68. There are some serious infringements of statutory requirements. Design and technology and modern languages are not taken by all pupils at Key Stage 4. Some pupils benefiting from the reading recovery provision do not take part at all in English lessons in Year 7 and are thus excluded from the National Curriculum. IT skills are not developed systematically for many pupils in Year 10 and for any pupils in Year 11. Assemblies do not comply with statutory requirements for worship. Planning for the provision of modest religious education in the Sixth Form is embryonic at best. Year 11 pupils do not have sufficient coverage of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education, although this will be remedied from next September. There are several omissions from the governors' annual report to parents.

· **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

69. The ratio of pupils to teachers is very good and much lower than the national average. The amount of time that the teachers spend actually teaching is also relatively low. There is a good number of teachers to deliver the curriculum. A small number of teachers were absent from school at the time of the inspection through ill-health and were expected to remain so for some time. There is also a vacancy for a science teacher being covered by supply staff. These staffing difficulties are having an adverse impact on the quality of the learning and progress of some pupils in science. More generally, most teachers are well qualified for the subjects that they teach. The number of teachers qualified to teach

religious education has increased since the previous inspection. There remain some non-specialist teachers in this subject, but they are effective in their work. This is not the case in mathematics, where a lack of subject expertise limits the effectiveness of non-specialist teaching. There is a satisfactory number of support staff, including technical support in subjects such as science and IT, as well as administrative staff. They are effective in enabling the school to function efficiently. There was no librarian at the time of the inspection as a result of a very recent resignation. The library is in a poor state and needs effective leadership to achieve a transformation. Staffing levels for the support of pupils with special educational needs are adequate, but routine administrative work is insufficiently systematic.

70. The arrangements for staff development are good, although the outcomes are more variable and sometimes, as in science, unsatisfactory. The school's professional development programme, through classroom observation and discussion, is very effective in some subjects, such as geography. There is very clear evidence of the positive impact of the programme on the motivation and expertise of the teachers concerned. In science the strengths, weaknesses and development needs of teachers have been identified, but subsequent support and training have had too little impact on classroom practice. Other subjects, such as art, need to undertake a more focused evaluation of the effect of training on the quality of their work. Newly qualified teachers are inducted well into the school. They appreciate the support and guidance received from their mentors and their training programmes. Other experienced staff who are new to the school also follow an induction programme. Some would welcome more individual support and guidance. Overall, the effectiveness of professional development is satisfactory.

71. There have been significant improvements in accommodation since the last inspection. A major building programme is due to be completed this term. Once the new building is fully operational most subject areas will be well housed. The exception is special educational needs. There are plans to release some of the vacated rooms in the old building but it is not clear whether the teaching of special educational needs will continue to be undertaken in various locations around the school. Many subjects will have suites of rooms with an office space and adequate storage. Insufficient space for the teaching of art was affecting standards at the time of the last inspection. There are new, larger rooms providing the space necessary to teach art effectively.

72. The school has a programme for refurbishing the buildings. This is essential for bringing all areas up to the same standard. Several corridors have been painted and the fitting of carpets has helped to improve the environment. The external appearance of the building still requires some attention and cars are still being parked on very limited playground space. The surfaces of the hard play areas are poor, unsafe in parts and in urgent need of attention. At the time of the last inspection barbed wire was used around the all-weather pitch and this has all been removed. The girls' changing rooms are in urgent need of repair. The new music suite is very good with both practice rooms and studios giving real flexibility for teaching. During the inspection week loud music did make an impact upon the teaching in adjacent rooms and those above and below. There is a lift shaft in the new building but no lift. Access to the new building for people with disabilities will be possible once the funding for the lift has been agreed but even then wheelchairs will not have access to some parts of the old building. Good display work in areas such as modern languages, art, English, music and physical education is helping to create a positive working atmosphere

73. Most subject departments receive generous financial support and are adequately resourced with books and equipment. Some departments, including English, geography and music, use high quality materials devised by staff. Pupils sometimes have textbooks to take home, such as in modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3, science, history and sociology, but most departments that use texts regularly within the classroom give worksheets or tasks that require no resources for homework. The school has a wide range of audio-visual resources and good use is made of these.

74. The ratio of pupils to computers is 12:1, compared with the national average of 8:1, and is

inadequate. There is limited access by subjects to the school IT facilities, limited departmental IT facilities in art and insufficient graphic calculators in mathematics. Music makes good use of old computer stock in their technology room and has appropriate MIDI equipment.

75. The library is currently inadequate, being disorganised, understocked and underused. At the time of the inspection there was no librarian, following a resignation, and the school was taking the initial steps to find a replacement. There is a useful plan for improvements when another librarian is appointed. Some departments, such as music and art, have created their own library resources for pupils. Security systems have been partially installed. There are insufficient computers to support electronic-based learning within the library, and the printer and photocopier were not working during the inspection week.

· **The efficiency of the school**

76. The school's income per pupil, once allowance has been made for its former grant-maintained status and the higher income received by London schools, was still significantly above the national average in the last financial year. The income per pupil is less in the current year, but still above average. This allows the school to have a favourable ratio of pupils to teachers and high expenditure on learning resources.

77. Financial planning is properly based on the projected curriculum, with innovations costed as supplements to the usual allocations to faculties. Faculties have considerable flexibility in determining the use of resources. The provision of books and equipment is for the most part satisfactory and reflects the school's priorities. There are two aspects where this is not the case: the library is amongst the worst seen by inspectors, and the provision of computers, although much improved recently, is still inadequate for the needs of such a large school. The use of staffing is appropriate, although specialist science supply teachers are not properly deployed, sometimes choosing to mind rather than teach classes, without being required to do the job for which they have been engaged. The school has been very imaginative in its planning of major building extensions, taking the opportunity to re-model existing accommodation and to widen corridors. It will soon have very good accommodation.

78. Financial planning has been strongly led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, with the governors largely endorsing their plans. The school has yet to benefit from the rigorous scrutiny of such plans that governors with experience outside education can bring to the task. Financial controls are sound. Ear-marked funds are properly used.

79. The school has an above-average income. Its pupils enter with average attainment and from a broadly average social background. There is a high proportion of good teaching and the pupils behave well. Examination results are very good at GCSE, average in Key Stage 3 tests and below average at A Level. The school is giving satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

80. The proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 and higher in Key Stage 3 Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) in 1999 was below the national average. The proportion attaining Level 6 and higher was well below. Both figures show a decline from 1998 and were below comparable results in mathematics and science. The 1999 average points score in the 1999 SATs was below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. This result was, again, worse than those in mathematics and science, and marks a significant drop from 1998. In 1998, girls outperformed boys by a margin similar to that found nationally.

81. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is below average, overall, although above average in some lessons. Pupils generally speak clearly. In group situations discussion and argument is often lively and relevant. Answers to teachers' questions are normally brief but accurate. In Year 8 especially, listening is not sufficiently careful or well sustained. The pupils' reading aloud of their own or printed work is largely accurate, though not always sufficiently clear in Year 7. Some expressive reading occurs in Years 8 and 9. Understanding of material is mainly satisfactory. By Year 9, pupils can competently locate references in a text. Most pupils write in sentences, although sometimes without appropriate punctuation. Most pupils in Year 7 write as they speak, with little awareness of appropriate register. Lower-attaining pupils' weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar persist into Year 9. Paragraphing and organisation of material remain a problem for most pupils throughout the key stage. Average and higher-attaining pupils write more thoughtfully and interestingly, with better control of their material and a growing vocabulary. A few write confidently in a range of forms. Wordprocessing and redrafting of work usually improve technical accuracy. There is no difference in attainment between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds.

82. The proportion of grades A*-C at GCSE in English and English literature in 1998 was below the national average. 1999 results showed an improvement in English and a decline in English literature. Girls outperformed boys in both subjects. In 1998 pupils entered for English did significantly worse in English than in the average of all their other GCSE subjects, but significantly better than the others in English literature. Girls did better than boys in all comparisons. School data shows that those entered for English literature in 1999 did significantly worse than in the average of all other subjects.

83. Key Stage 4 attainment is about average, although below average or well below average in some lessons. The pupils' oral work is more confident overall, although pupils still tend to respond as briefly as they can. Informal small-group discussion is well focused and profitable. Reading aloud is basically accurate and conveys meaning. Knowledge and understanding of material are variable: where it is unsatisfactory, pupils frequently are unsure about detail. Much writing is basically competent, often quite well structured. Lower-attaining pupils' work is often poorly presented, limited in vocabulary and style. Basic punctuation of sentences is still occasionally lacking. As at Key Stage 3, some pupils cannot copy accurately. Writing about literature is sometimes insufficiently developed and detailed. The best work is well organised, technically assured and contains some perceptive personal responses to literature. Most pupils try hard with their writing, and redrafting usually improves its quality.

84. The proportion of pupils attaining grades A-E in 1998 in A Level literature was below the national average, as was attainment of the highest grades (A-B). Boys outperformed girls in both respects. 1999 results marked an improvement on 1998. School data shows that in both years pupils doing English literature made progress between GCSE and A Level that was a little less than it should have

been.

85. Sixth Form attainment is about average. Pupils working in small groups do not all contribute equally in discussion. Girls are more confident than boys in Year 13, boys more so than girls in Year 12. Pupils lack confidence generally in expressing their own opinions. While they have a sound grasp of the main features of their texts, the pupils' detailed knowledge is much less assured. Written work shows appropriate development from Key Stage 4. Much is sound, though in all but the best there are still small weaknesses of expression, spelling and sometimes of basic English. Some Year 12 pupils produce high-quality creative writing, but others lack development. By Year 13 most can analyse and synthesise, and the best writing is clear, confident and mature in style.

86. Progress is broadly satisfactory at all stages, though less marked among lower-attaining pupils. Low levels of prior attainment reduce the speed of work and pupils' confidence, although poor attitude also had a bearing in one Year 9 class. The pupils' generally positive attitude to learning makes a major contribution to their progress. During lessons, Year 7 pupils were increasing their knowledge of a text and their understanding of how figurative language enlivens description; or they were improving their reading skills through reading aloud. Others in Year 8 were gaining useful experience in writing for a specific audience. Year 9 pupils were starting to appreciate the importance of sound to poetry or how they could trace changes in a character's behaviour during a single scene. Gains over time in writing were visible in all years, though confined mostly to average or higher-attaining pupils. Some writing in Year 8 is better organised and more successfully sustained than in Year 7. Key Stage 4 progress over time is satisfactory: writing improves in maturity and scope. In lessons, some Year 11 pupils were developing techniques of close reading and applying them. The teacher's structuring of one Year 10 lesson ensured that all pupils were deepening their understanding of characters and motivation, while in another Year 11 lesson pupils made steady progress in studying narrative because of good relationships with their teacher. Low levels of attainment impeded some progress, and the absence of support in one Year 11 lesson resulted in some pupils adopting an indifferent attitude. Those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress when supported in class or withdrawn for intensive work. Sixth Form pupils make satisfactory progress, more evidently in writing than in classroom activity. Essays show growing ability to use evidence and quotations effectively, and to express ideas clearly.

87. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory in all years and make a major contribution to progress. In many Key Stage 3 lessons pupils are attentive and remain on task well. Occasionally they are slow to settle to work, but always do so. The quality of pupils' involvement sometimes improves as lessons progress in Year 11, and even when pupils are highly teacher-dependent they remain well motivated overall. Group work demonstrates effective collaboration and sometimes perseverance. Lower-attaining pupils occasionally show little initiative and lack sufficient concentration. Relationships with teachers are uniformly very good: mutual respect is evident. In the Sixth Form a significant majority of pupils are prepared to leave initiatives with the teacher.

88. Teaching quality is satisfactory overall and good at Key Stage 4. The teachers' knowledge of their subjects is very sound and planning of schemes of work and lessons always thorough. Teachers share lesson objectives with pupils at the start of lessons, but rarely revisit them at the end. Teachers regularly use material matched to different levels of attainment and mark written work systematically, accurately and consistently: comments are frequently extensive - particularly at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form. Targets for improvement are regularly set. Appropriate homework is set regularly. Expectations of work and behaviour are high, and teachers involve many pupils in class oral activities. Lessons are almost always well managed and provide orderly environments for learning. Small weaknesses include slightly over-generous marking of one Year 7 class's work, reducing a Year 9 class's attentiveness by spending too long on one activity, and a lack of encouragement to more pupils to contribute to discussion in Year 12.

89. The faculty has responded constructively to most of the issues in the previous report. Informal target-setting has been introduced at Key Stage 3. Work on raising expectations of attainment is in progress. Greater emphasis is being placed on presentation and planning of work, and lesson planning has become more widespread and in some cases more accurately timed. The faculty now needs to contribute its expertise to literacy initiatives being planned, and to accelerate the revision of Key Stage 3 schemes of work to ensure more widespread incorporation of ICT, and to make continuity and progression more explicit. Improving the quality of pupils' writing early in Key Stage 3 is another priority. The faculty should also consider how to link targets on pupils' IEPs more closely with its own language targets for individuals. Strategic planning is not currently well developed: targets need reducing in number and outcome, and review should be more precisely focused. The monitoring and support of teaching needs to become more formalised in order to meet requirements of greater accountability.

Drama

90. Drama is taught as a discrete subject throughout the school, within the framework of an effectively functioning creative arts faculty. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in 1998 was well above national averages, though in 1999 this figure suffered a decline. Pupils entered for drama in 1998 did significantly better than in the average of their other GCSE subjects. School data shows the pattern repeated in 1999, though not quite so successfully as in 1998. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A-E in A Level theatre studies in 1998 was below the national average, as was that of pupils attaining the highest grades. Figures for 1999 show an improvement in both categories. School data shows that in both years pupils entered for theatre studies made good progress between GCSE and A Level.

91. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is average. Pupils can assume roles rapidly and many show appropriate imaginative projection. They can create drama which carries conviction and improvise dialogue to match situations. Key Stage 4 attainment is above average. Pupils have a good grasp of some basic concepts and learn genre conventions quickly. Prepared improvisation work shows effective use of body language and dialogue. Attainment in the Sixth Form is about average. While Year 13 pupils found the language of their text difficult and showed little imaginative involvement or confident use of drama skills, Year 12 pupils responded to a challenge with energy and imagination, experimenting with different combinations of elements to create a montage. Progress across the years ranges from satisfactory to good, largely the product of the pupils' own enthusiasm and the high quality of teaching. At Key Stage 3 the pupils develop skills of role-play and collaboration, as well as learning how to explore issues through drama. Good progress at Key Stage 4 was characterised by the pupils' growing understanding of genre conventions and a deepening of their knowledge of drama skills. Sixth Form pupils were increasing their appreciation of a text or using a series of artefacts to create a piece which expressed feeling powerfully.

92. Attitudes range from satisfactory to very good. At Key Stage 3 pupils are attentive and collaborate well, quickly becoming involved in work. Key Stage 4 pupils work in groups with considerable independence: respond well to the teachers' suggestions and comments, and show commendable levels of seriousness and commitment to work in progress. They listen well to each other's ideas. Year 13 pupils work purposefully and attentively with some enjoyment, but lack confidence. Year 12 pupils respond with confidence and enjoyment to a challenging task, being prepared to experiment and collaborate fruitfully and very well in drawing on earlier knowledge and experience.

93. Teaching quality is very good, rarely only satisfactory. Lessons are thoroughly planned, and very efficiently managed. Expectations of attention and behaviour are high. A very good lesson in Year 9 made effective use of the teacher-in-role. The teacher moved easily in and out of role which helped to point the pupils' attention in several directions during the course of the lesson and presented them with problems for resolving in their drama. Pacing was brisk, a series of activities well managed, and pupils

effectively controlled in a variety of working situations. The teacher's enthusiasm and energy provided powerful motivation for pupils. Overall, the teachers' knowledge is assured and relationships with pupils excellent. Objectives, presentations and explanations are clear, sometimes supplemented helpfully by practical examples. Teachers use open-ended questions and evaluation very effectively.

• **Mathematics**

94. SAT results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were in line with the national average and well above those in similar schools. This was an improvement over results in 1998. The pupils' results were above those in English and science. There have been some differences in results by gender, with girls doing better than boys in both 1997 and 1998, the reverse of the national picture. Comparative data is not yet available for 1999. Standards in the current Year 9 as observed in lessons and from an examination of pupils' work, are generally similar to those achieved in the 1999 SATs. GCSE results have improved considerably over the last five years. Following a slight fall in standards in 1998, there was a considerable rise in 1999 when 65% of pupils achieved a grade A*-C against 48% nationally and 27% in the year of the last inspection. Girls achieved better results than boys in 1999. The improvement in the 1999 results at GCSE reflected the good results achieved by these pupils in the 1997 Key Stage 3 SATs. Standards are lower in the current Year 11, and GCSE results are unlikely to reach the same high levels in the summer 2000 examinations. Results at A Level in 1999 were below the national average. Although this was an improvement from 1998, standards at A Level have been consistently below average and pupils have not made the progress expected. Standards are similar in the present Year 13. There has been a large increase in the number of pupils studying mathematics at A Level in the current Year 12.

95. Pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress in the development of mathematical skills and techniques in Year 9 and at Key Stage 4. The clear explanations, brisk teaching and positive attitudes of the pupils contribute significantly. Teachers have a clear idea of what they teach and are able to motivate pupils and put across new ideas. This enables pupils to achieve the good standards reported at GCSE. Teachers concentrate on mathematical techniques and ensuring that the pupils have plenty of revision and practice in preparation for examinations. Most pupils respond well to this teaching and work hard to achieve the highest possible results. This was seen to particularly good effect in a Year 9 top set, where pupils were learning how to find prime factors. The lesson was well planned with the main teaching points displayed on the board at the start. A very good working atmosphere enabled the teacher to introduce confidently the techniques needed, and the attentiveness of the pupils helped them to understand the new ideas and make rapid progress.

96. Progress is slower in Years 7 and 8 and is unsatisfactory in some classes. This is largely because insufficient account is taken of the pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 and information gathered from tests and other assessments when planning activities to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Teaching and tasks tend to be pitched at the middle of each class with a limited challenge provided for higher-attaining pupils and insufficient opportunities for weaker pupils to consolidate their skills before moving on to the next task.

97. Standards of numeracy are sound overall throughout the school. The pupils calculate accurately using written methods with whole numbers, decimals, fractions and percentages. There are weaknesses, however, in the pupils' mental recall of basic number facts. Although calculators are not allowed in Year 7, insufficient attention is given to the improvement of mental arithmetic skills. Many pupils, including higher-attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 and some at A Level, resort to the use of the calculator for the most straightforward work.

98. Progress in other aspects of mathematics is satisfactory overall. Algebraic manipulation is given suitable attention, and skills and techniques are satisfactory. Pupils handle, interpret and represent data

with increasing confidence and higher-attaining pupils can evaluate and explain the results that they obtain. Year 7 pupils were observed considering the language associated with probability and could decide whether an event was likely or unlikely to occur. By Year 11, pupils can use tree diagrams to identify associated possible outcomes of independent events and calculate their probabilities. Pupils develop a good understanding of the properties of shapes with many using trigonometry at Key Stage 4. The targets for pupils with special educational needs are rarely based on weaknesses in numeracy; however, pupils in lower sets from Year 9 receive good support from classroom assistants and other teachers enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

99. The concentration by teachers on the development of mathematical skills and techniques is at the expense of the teaching of the use and application of mathematics in solving problems and in investigations. Pupils are assessed in this aspect, and although the commercial scheme used has many practical tasks and activities to support the pupils' use of mathematics, teachers tend to omit these. This further limits the challenge available for higher-attaining pupils and also results in the slower development of the pupils' mathematical understanding. The limited opportunity to undertake extended mathematical investigations and practical activities has an impact at A Level as pupils are unused to drawing on a wide range of skills and techniques when solving the more complex problems occurring at this level. This slows progress and is a factor in the lower standards being achieved at A Level.

100. The positive attitudes of the pupils enable lessons to take place uninterrupted and support the progress that they make throughout the school. Pupils respond quickly to their teachers and settle to tasks with the minimum of fuss. They are attentive and concentrate well for long periods. They respond well to their teachers' questioning and participate with enthusiasm during introductory and plenary sessions. A particular feature is the care which pupils take over the presentation of their work. This supports the accuracy of the answers that they obtain from graphs and when drawing mathematical diagrams. Homework is undertaken diligently, although the lack of opportunity to undertake extended pieces of work such as investigations restricts the development of independent study skills.

101. Teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school, although there is some unsatisfactory teaching, and some weaknesses in otherwise well-taught lessons reduce their quality. Teachers demonstrate confidence in their teaching, flexibly adapting their teaching to tackle any misconceptions and using well-directed questioning to draw out ideas from the pupils. Lessons move forward at a good pace and the better lessons include effective plenary sessions to recap what has been learnt. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher made good use of revision questions at the start to recap recent learning, to provide consolidation of examination techniques and to evaluate the pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The main teaching activity was carried out at a good pace. Questioning kept pupils on their toes, the teacher using this effectively to gain and retain the attention of the pupils. The pupils worked hard on the revision questions and noted carefully any mistakes that they had made. Weaknesses in teacher expertise resulted in a Year 10 lesson being unsatisfactory. The teaching was aimed far too low for the pupils and required little thought from them. In some classes, teachers use a limited range of methods, rarely providing practical, investigative or group activities.

102. Standards at GCSE have improved considerably since the last inspection. Some areas for development have emerged for consideration alongside the implementation of the new National Curriculum from September 2000. The use and application of mathematics receive insufficient attention and these skills are not developed systematically as pupils move through the school. The teaching methods used in the mixed-ability classes in Years 7 and 8 do not enable all pupils, and the higher-attainers in particular, to make consistently satisfactory progress. Consideration also needs to be given to the implications of the daily mathematics lessons in feeder primary schools for the Key Stage 3 curriculum alongside the development of a school numeracy policy.

Science

103. Results at Key Stage 3 SATs in 1999 were below the national average. They were below those in mathematics, but above English. They were above the results in similar schools. Girls performed better than boys in both 1997 and 1998. The proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades at GCSE rose significantly in 1999 and was well above the national average and results at the time of the previous inspection. Results in the coursework component, covering experimental and investigative science, were particularly strong. In 1998 the pupils' performance in science was significantly below the average of their other subjects, but was broadly equivalent in 1999. Performance in physics and the physical processes aspect of the double award GCSE was lower than other aspects. Results at A Level also improved from 1998 to 1999, although they remain well below national averages. In both years the pupils did much worse in all three sciences than they should have done on the basis of their GCSE results.

104. More pupils are working at or above the expected level at Key Stage 3 than at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils in Year 9, for example, can classify substances as solids, liquids and gases. Higher-attaining pupils can compare the arrangement and movement of particles in solids, liquids and gases. Attainment overall, though, remains below that expected at Key Stage 3. Attainment in lessons at Key Stage 4 is below the 1999 GCSE results and is more in line with the national average. Pupils in the Sixth Form are working above the level shown by the 1999 A Level results, but attainment has yet to reach the expected level. The pupils' basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, are generally secure and support well their learning in science. Practical and investigative skills are also satisfactory. More opportunities are needed for the pupils to develop their IT skills in science, particularly to measure, collect and analyse scientific data.

105. The pupils make unsatisfactory progress through Key Stage 3. Progress is unsatisfactory in a large proportion of lessons, resulting directly from weaknesses in teaching. There is also a need to ensure that the curriculum is better matched to the needs of pupils. Progress is also unsatisfactory in a relatively high proportion of lessons at Key Stage 4. The higher proportion of lessons where progress is good or very good at this key stage, together with the organisation and structure of the curriculum, means that progress overall is satisfactory. Progress is satisfactory or better in most lessons in the Sixth Form, but overall progress over longer periods of time is unsatisfactory. Many pupils find it difficult to make the transition from GCSE to A Level and have not developed the necessary study skills to a sufficiently high level. Good progress, as in a Year 8 lesson starting to explore the Earth in space, or very good progress, as in a Year 11 lesson on the function of the kidney, occurs in about a third of lessons and is the result of effective teaching. There is no evidence of variation by gender or ethnicity. Pupils with special educational needs make comparable progress to their peers. Their progress in individual lessons is usually enhanced by the presence of learning support personnel.

106. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are well motivated. They behave well and listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They are polite and courteous. Many pupils enjoy science. Their attitudes are best when, as in a Year 9 lesson on states of matter, they are expected to offer their ideas, opinions or explanations. In many lessons the teacher fails to build upon the pupils' positive attitudes and, although they remain co-operative, their interest and enthusiasm is not sufficiently developed. In nearly a quarter of lessons, mainly at Key Stage 3, but also at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form, this deteriorates and pupils lose concentration and motivation. This unsatisfactory response results most usually from weaknesses in teaching.

107. Teaching is unsatisfactory. There are examples of unsatisfactory, poor or very poor teaching at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the Sixth Form. There is a particularly high proportion at Key Stage 3. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs when pupils are not well managed and there is insufficient challenge and rigour to the lesson. None of the characteristics of satisfactory teaching are present in poor or very

poor lessons. There are also less significant weaknesses in other lessons that are satisfactory overall. In these lessons the teacher does not capture the pupils' interest, by relating ideas to everyday examples for instance. The teacher's own enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject are not evident. Insufficient use is made of models and analogies. Questions are too limited and do not require the pupils to apply their ideas to new contexts. Sometimes the methods and approach used are satisfactory, but a greater variety is needed over a sequence of lessons. When teaching is good or, as in a Year 10 lesson investigating the action of pepsin on protein, very good, there is a clear focus on learning and developing the pupils' understanding. Questions are used effectively to review, consolidate and then apply ideas to new contexts. A good pace is injected through a lively and stimulating approach. Expectations are high, the pitch of work is appropriate and the pupils are provided with a good challenge. There are some examples of effective marking and good feedback and review of homework in lessons. Much, though, is slight and has insufficient impact on learning. The quality is too variable and therefore unsatisfactory.

108. The department has to cover the work of two teachers, because of illness and a vacancy. This is contributing to a lowering of standards. There is, in any case, little sense of a common approach between science teachers and far too much inconsistency in their work. They do not function as an effective team. Much of what the department needs to do to improve has been identified. Some action has been taken in response to this, but it has not been successful. Management of the department has had too little impact on the weaknesses present and is therefore unsatisfactory.

· **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

· **Art**

109. Art at Broomfield School is an established and successful subject providing a satisfactory standard of attainment at Key Stage 3 when judged against the requirements of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 4, a good standard of attainment is achieved in GCSE. The pupils entered for art in 1998 achieved the same in this subject as in the average of their other subjects. The schools' GCSE pass rate for art was in line with the national average for the subject. In 1999 standards improved to above the national average for art and pupils did better in art than in the average for their other subjects. In the Sixth Form in 1998 and 1999, all pupils who were entered for GCE A Level art and design passed, but only 25% and 20% respectively achieved A*-C grades, which sets attainment below the national average.

110. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is satisfactory in investigating and making and in acquiring knowledge and understanding. Since the last inspection the department has introduced work in a wide range of three-dimensional media, and this has contributed to an improvement in the attainment of all pupils. Year 7 is taught as a foundation year when activities using colour, line, tone, pattern and texture are undertaken. Pupils gain an appreciation of the cultural dimensions of art in Years 8 and 9 through learning skills and techniques with paint, pastels, collage media, and a good range of three-dimensional materials. They are also successfully extended through drawing and design development exercises. Despite this, only a minority of higher-attaining pupils are extending their work to the higher levels required by the National Curriculum. This is due to insufficient focus and unsatisfactory levels of concentration during lessons. Good homework was seen in pupil's sketchbooks in all years of the key stage.

111. By the end of Key Stage 4 levels of attainment are currently good, with GCSE pass rates above the national average. The work seen in Years 10 and 11 was good with some very good elements. The ability of pupils to interpret and extend the themes on which they work is developing rapidly and is contributing to the quality and standards within the key stage. The majority of pupils are becoming skilled in the use of a wide range of two and three-dimensional media and this enables them to respond very effectively to the topics given to them. The styles of several 20th century artists including Henry

Moore and Giacometti are effectively contrasted and used by pupils to extend their forms of expression. The resulting sculptures show a depth of research, modelling, knowledge and understanding of artistic styles rarely seen in schools.

112. Currently in the Sixth Form there are satisfactory standards of work in observational drawing, design drawing, painting, relief work, textiles and personal studies. The quality of expressive painting and composition is variable, demonstrating that not all pupils have acquired the full range of techniques and skills required to achieve higher grades.

113. Progress is good for all average and lower-attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 with the effects of the extended scheme of work enhancing the breadth of study undertaken by all pupils by the end of the key stage. Drawing from observation is taught regularly and is used to develop design-based studies. This is sometimes complemented by the use of secondary source materials which help pupils to work effectively with a wide range of images drawn from Eastern and Western cultures. Further use of this material to support pupils' work as it proceeds would help many achieve clearer images and improve the quality of their work. Despite some unco-operative pupils in Year 9, good progress is being made by most pupils towards the end of the key stage, but higher-attainers do not always achieve the quality of work that they might because they are given limited extension activities with insufficient challenge. Support materials require further development to ensure that the design stages of the project are amplified by the increased use of research. In Years 10 and 11 where pupils have chosen to take the subject, progress is good in Year 10 and very good in Year 11 with increasing numbers of pupils evolving their own style of working. Satisfactory progress is being made by pupils with special educational needs, with all achieving their potential. Their work is differentiated by task, support and outcome. Very effective monitoring and assessment are also providing pupils with clear feedback on their achievements and targets for continued improvement. Classwork and homework are thoroughly marked and written comments made which contain advice and tasks which will raise the standard of the work. Very good oral feedback is also given during lessons and pupils are clear about how to improve their work. Homework is effectively integrated into the topics being studied during art lessons and all pupils keep good quality sketchbooks which serve as an illustrated record of their progress through a variety of drawing, writing, designing and research activities. In the Sixth Form not all pupils work consistently throughout the two years of the course and, as a result, many achieve grades at the lower end of the range. Despite this, the majority go on to art foundation courses and subsequently obtain places on degree courses at colleges of art and universities in a wide range of art specialisms.

114. There were no discernible differences in attainment and progress by pupils of different ethnic backgrounds owing to the school's successful equal opportunities policies and the broad cultural contexts taught through art; however, boys do not achieve the same quality of GCSE passes in art as girls.

115. The pupils' attitudes in almost all lessons are good. Most pupils are attentive during explanations and demonstrations by teachers and settle down to work quickly; however, some pupils at Key Stage 3 are given to lapsing into general conversation which hinders their progress and affects their concentration. In one teaching group in Year 9 the pupils were difficult and unco-operative. Despite this, the teacher concerned persevered and maintained a positive working atmosphere. In all other teaching groups personal, creative and expressive development is very good and pupils collaborate very well with each other, behaving sensibly and responsibly. A good example of this was seen in a Year 10 lesson on lino block printing where a group were repeat printing African mask designs using colour layering and re-cutting techniques. Pupils of all abilities achieved a very good fabric banner with excellent colour use and accuracy in registering their prints, mainly as a result of the high levels of concentration that they maintained throughout this difficult process.

116. The quality of teaching seen in the department was satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and ranged from

satisfactory to very good at Key Stage 4. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen at Key Stage 3. The three members of the art department form an effective team and they work together at a high professional level. In the Sixth Form the teaching is good. The teachers' subject knowledge is very good with complementary backgrounds in both the fine and applied arts. At Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form, teachers' expectations of their pupils are high. They organise and manage lessons very well and ensure that pupils understand what is required of them. Lesson planning is very good with learning objectives clearly identified in teachers' notes, but these are not always communicated to pupils at the start of each lesson. The use of IT is limited to a small amount of research and investigation and is unsatisfactory. The department has recently acquired a networked multi-media computer and scanner, and has now identified IT training as a priority in the next phase of its development plan.

• **Business studies and economics**

117. Attainment in GCSE business studies was significantly better in 1999 than in the previous year. *A-C grades were in line with the national average, although still below the school average. Results in GCE A Level business studies showed a significant improvement over the previous year and were ahead of the national average. In GNVQ intermediate business, a good proportion of merits and distinctions were achieved. Examination results from the small A Level economics group were poor.

In all lessons observed, across the range of courses, attainment was satisfactory. GNVQ pupils were on work experience but work in progress and completed work demonstrated at least satisfactory and often good attainment. In Year 10 GCSE business studies pupils were demonstrating a sound understanding of marketing issues and devising good questionnaires for a market research exercise. In a Year 12 business studies lesson pupils were able to predict the nature of a business from an analysis of various ratios.

118. Progress in business studies is mostly good. Pupils can apply their knowledge to a range of business issues, making reasoned judgements and developing sound hypotheses. In economics satisfactory progress is being made. Admission policies have changed and the current A Level economics group, although mixed in ability, does contain some strong candidates. In GNVQ, progress is at least satisfactory and often good, although IT skills have to be developed from a low level on entry to the courses.

119. Teaching on these courses is at least sound. In the best GCSE and A Level lessons teaching is good or very good. Objectives are clear and shared with pupils, subject knowledge is good with emphasis upon correct terminology. In A Level business studies a very lively teaching style elicits a very good response from pupils. GNVQ folders contain appropriate assignments, which provide challenge and enables pupils to progress to the higher levels. In several lessons pace could be more brisk, to help to keep all pupils on task and maintain progress. Business studies courses have access to IT facilities which are used well. The use of IT in economics needs to be further developed.

120. At Key Stage 4 the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are often very good, particularly where lessons have a brisk pace. Pupils are keen to be fully involved, answering questions and offering pertinent comments. In an afternoon lesson where the pupils' attitudes were satisfactory overall, a minority of pupils had difficulty maintaining appropriate levels of concentration. In the Sixth Form there is a willingness to answer questions and offer comments. In A Level business studies lessons there is a high degree of involvement from classes which work with enthusiasm.

121. The courses are effectively planned. A new head of department was appointed this year. A detailed analysis of recent performance has been used effectively to inform planning, and schemes of work have been rewritten or revised. The department has worked hard to minimise the effect upon

pupils of long-term staff absence. Good links are maintained with the local business community. The operation of a school bank is now built into the new scheme of work for GNVQ and a large and successful Young Enterprise group includes pupils from across the Sixth Form in addition to those taking business studies.

Design and technology

122. Overall attainment has improved since the last inspection in 1995. In 1998 GCSE results for graphics were just above the national average and they were close to average in resistant materials. In both these subjects pupils attained better than in the average for their other subjects. Food technology results were well below the national average. In 1999 results for graphics remained good and grades for resistant materials improved. Food technology results improved but are still below average. In all three subjects pupils' GCSE grades were worse than the average for their other subjects. Attainment at A Level is well below average and the grades have been declining over the past three years. Current predictions indicate that results will continue to decline this year.

123. Teacher assessments for end of Key Stage 3 to parents have suggested attainment which is above average for the past two years. Evidence from the inspection indicates that these assessments were too generous. Overall, pupils attain average levels by the end of the key stage. By the age of fourteen they have sound drawing skills. They use techniques such as orthographic and isometric representation and apply them well in later design projects, for example in their textiles designs in Year 9. Pupils use a range of hand and machine tools confidently to shape and finish products made from textiles, wood, metal and plastic. They apply their understanding of electronics to make a burglar alarm and use mechanisms such as cams to produce movement in a mechanical toy. Pupils cook some simple dishes including scones and sausage rolls and have some understanding of the balance of nutrients needed in a healthy diet.

124. At Key Stage 4 the school does not meet statutory National Curriculum requirements as design and technology is optional. About a third of boys and half the girls choose a GCSE course. A Certificate of Achievement is taken by a few pupils. The coursework element of GCSE examinations accounts for 60% of marks. Many pupils take advantage of the after-school clubs which teachers provide to support pupils needing help with their coursework. The need to use temporary workshops for the past 18 months while the new accommodation was being built has meant that pupils have less time in fully equipped workshops, and the club time has been a valuable compensation for this loss. Attainment in textiles, offered as a GCSE course for the first time, is good. Pupils apply their drawing techniques to design fabric and they combine creative ability with sound practical skills. The good use of target-setting and individual mentoring of pupils by teachers across the faculty motivates pupils and helps them to understand what they need to do to improve their work. The time spent on this is paying dividends in improved attainment.

125. Pupils come into Year 7 with little prior experience of designing and making and make sound progress in both across the key stage. In Year 7 they make a windmill from a construction kit then use a computer to write a sequence to control its movement. They work confidently in small groups solving problems of making, testing and writing instructions. Pupils learn about the properties of metal, and Year 8 make attractive patterns for jewellery which they cast in pewter. In food technology pupils learn to manage their time efficiently to prepare and cook a snack meal such as a beefburger and apply their knowledge of ingredients to make changes to traditional recipes to suit particular tastes. Good teaching of design gives to pupils an understanding of its importance in every aspect of life, from interior design to advertising, packaging or car design and they learn how to develop initial ideas to the end of the finished product. Pupils with special educational needs and lower-attainers make sound progress because they are well supported in lessons by the class teacher and sometimes by an additional teacher or a Sixth Former. Higher-attaining pupils produce well-finished artefacts and spend time on

presentation, but with no more challenging work set for them, their progress is not as good as it might be.

126. Progress through Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and sometimes good. This is because there are frequent checks to ensure that pupils keep up to date with their work and those who fall behind are given additional support. Good individual mentoring and target-setting are effective in matching expectations to prior learning. Teachers give every pupil encouragement to reach the higher levels, not making a decision about tier of entry, for example, until the final stage of the GCSE course. Progress in the A Level course is unsatisfactory. Pupils in the current Year 13 began the course after completing a variety of GCSE courses, some of which do not lead naturally to the A Level course. They are making slow progress towards completion of their major projects. Progress of pupils in Year 12 is better and pupils began the course with better preparation at GCSE level.

127. The attitudes of pupils in lessons is at least satisfactory and is often good. They enjoy making things and almost always come to lessons ready to work hard. Behaviour is good, particularly given the cramped working spaces in temporary workshops pending the completion of the new accommodation. Pupils at both key stages collaborate well and share equipment as well as ideas willingly.

128. Teaching is always satisfactory and there are good or very good features in almost half the lessons. Planning, management and relationships with pupils are good; for example, in a small fitness room temporarily serving as a workshop, Year 9 pupils were able to make very good progress in completing their clocks, working safely and quickly. Teachers' good knowledge of the technologies enables the school to provide a wide variety of courses. Assessment at Key Stage 4 is good but the same standard has not been applied yet to Key Stage 3. Prior attainment is not used to devise targets and work is set at levels appropriate for the average and below average with differences only in outcomes. Homework is used well and the commitment of staff giving time to pupils outside lesson time is a strength of the department.

• **Geography**

129. GCSE results for 1999 were a significant improvement on those of previous years. In 1999 78% of pupils gained A*-C grades against a national average of around 56%. In 1998 results were 50.9% compared with a national average of 51.5%. Both the 1998 and 1999 results show that pupils entered for geography did significantly better in this subject than in the average of all their other subjects. Good teaching has helped attainment to improve. Teachers have run additional coursework and revision classes and have integrated examination questions into the schemes of work.

130. At A Level in 1999 the overall pass rate was 75%, with only 5% achieving a higher A-B grade, well below the national average of about 38%; a quarter of entrants did not obtain a result. In both 1998 and 1999, pupils did worse at A Level than they should have done on the basis of their GCSE results. In lessons observed pupils were attaining in line with national expectations. Results are likely to improve because teachers have now gained more experience of the examination syllabus and are enabling pupils to work at higher levels.

131. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. In the lessons observed at GCSE and Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment was also broadly in line with the national average. There is a balance of knowledge, understanding and skills taught with opportunities for consideration of attitudes and values of different groups of people written into schemes of work. Year 7 pupils have a basic level of Ordnance Survey map skills, Year 8 have completed a unit on Italy and pupils have good location knowledge of Europe and can explain the differences between the north and south of Italy using choropleth maps. By Year 9 pupils are able to explain coastal processes and can describe and explain

the formation of landforms and coastal protection seen on their recent fieldtrip.

132. Pupils with special educational needs attain well because of the quality support staff and the use teachers make of differentiated resources. In one Year 8 lesson one of the support staff used a torch and globe to demonstrate differential heating on the earth's surface to a group of less able pupils, and motivated and challenged the pupils so that they made excellent progress within the lesson. The most able pupils in each class, including A Level groups, do not achieve at the highest levels, and strategies need to be developed to ensure that these pupils are completing extension exercises and tackling more complex tasks. For example in a Year 9 lesson on population change pupils had differentiated card statements which they placed on a complex graph showing changes in birth and death rates. Although this allowed all pupils in the widely mixed-ability class to make progress, the most able pupils completed the task quickly and then wasted time listening to the teacher go over the work for the benefit of others before they copied the graph and statements into their book.

133. Standards of literacy are currently satisfactory, with speaking and listening skills better developed than written skills. Pupils in one Year 7 class built up a detailed picture of the use and abuse of water in pupils' lives through the teacher's skilful question and answer technique. This allowed all pupils to contribute and to build on each other's answers so that explanations of more complex uses of water, such as irrigation and hydro electricity, were understood. There are too few opportunities for able pupils to write at length and for all pupils to work independently. The pupils have sufficient number and graphical skills to support their work in geography and graphs are normally well understood. The department is beginning to use IT to support pupils' learning in geography and this is an area that needs development. In Years 7 and 8 pupils use Excel to draw graphs and present data while Year 9 pupils research two volcanic eruptions using the Internet.

134. Pupils at each key stage make satisfactory and often good or very good progress both in the lessons observed and over time. The pupils make good progress because of the brisk pace of lessons and well-resourced teaching. Resources are used effectively to stimulate pupils as demonstrated in one Year 9 lesson where the teacher used a range of images of people in developing countries, showing poverty and malnutrition. The teacher challenged the class with the question 'Why would you want to bring a child into a world like this? Isn't it immoral?' and then proceeded to encourage debate while also ensuring that understanding of people in such circumstances was achieved. Year 11 pupils were motivated by a short video clip from the film *Brassed Off* which set the scene for their lesson on the impact of pit closures in Wakefield. Their understanding through the film and teacher resources was rapid and enabled them to complete written explanations of the complex concept of a spiral of decline. Differentiated worksheets are built into schemes of work and teachers have a good knowledge of the learning abilities of their pupils and give support accordingly.

135. Pupils behave well and their willingness to concentrate and to help each other creates a purposeful atmosphere for learning. Fieldwork and extra-curricular visits are strengths of the curriculum. The good progress made by pupils is also due to the effective, enthusiastic teachers who work well as a team. The teaching observed during the inspection was always at least satisfactory. It was good or very good in more than half the lessons and is strength of the department.

136. Concerns about the use of homework and assessment at the last inspection have now been tackled. Teachers use and mark homework effectively with useful targets set. Varied assessment tasks are used at Key Stage 3 and pupils are clear about the assessment criteria and how to improve their work.

· **History**

137. GCSE results in history have been below the national average in the last three years. The 1998

results were below the national average. This was also true in 1999 and, although more pupils achieved the higher grades, pupils entered for history did not do as well as in the average of all their other subjects.. A Level results were well below the national average in 1998 but improved greatly this year. They were still below the national average, however, and the pupils did not do as well as they should have done on the basis of their GCSE results.

138. At Key Stage 3 attainment is in line with national expectations. Year 9 pupils studying the First World War are able to detect the propaganda in wartime posters and cartoons. They can make notes from different sources of information and use them to produce reports on the events leading to war and life in the trenches. Some pupils lack the literacy skills to be able to write accurately and at length. There is not much opportunity for them to investigate aspects of the period for themselves, nor to examine different interpretations of people and events. Most pupils know their facts, having to learn them regularly for tests.

139. At Key Stage 4 the attainment of pupils in Year 11 is in line with national expectations. Pupils preparing for the mock examinations showed good knowledge and understanding of the crises in the Cold War. They are well trained in examination technique and source analysis but some have difficulty combining information in the sources with their own knowledge of events in a short essay. In the coursework assignment on the Sharpville massacre most pupils have examined the evidence thoroughly and reached considered conclusions.

140. In the Sixth Form attainment in Year 13 is below national expectations. Pupils are producing sound argument in their essays but not supporting it with sufficient evidence and developed analysis to achieve the higher grades. Some pupils have difficulty over essay style which affects the incisiveness of the points that they are trying to make. Their logs of work on their personal study show a satisfactory standard of research on the project.

141. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in the subject at Key Stage 3. Progress of both higher and lower-attaining pupils is being greatly assisted by tasks set at different levels, which is a regular feature of the lessons. Year 8 pupils are making good progress with enquiry skills, learning to question the reliability of sources such as official portraits of Elizabeth I and producing their own leaflets on the Tower of London following a recent visit. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Year 10 pupils have gained a secure knowledge of the Russian Revolution and are making thorough preparation for their first coursework assignment on Nazi Germany. In some lessons pupils are passive learners for long periods of time, which slows their progress. A well-planned revision programme, with extra lessons before examinations, is helping pupils to consolidate their learning. Progress is satisfactory in the Sixth Form. Year 12 pupils have made a good start at A Level, developing a discursive essay style and showing ability in finding out information to present to the group. Year 13 pupils are making the required progress on their personal study.

142. Attitudes towards the subject are positive across the school. Pupils express their interest in the studies and get involved in class activities. They take a pride in their work, much of which is neatly presented. They are keen to do well and many attend the extra sessions to revise for examinations. Pupils maintain their concentration, even when the teacher's exposition is prolonged. Homework extends their personal study skills but opportunities for investigating topics for themselves are limited. In general, the pupils are very well behaved in lessons. Relationships among pupils and with their teachers are conducive to learning in an atmosphere of mutual respect. There is little opportunity for working collaboratively in small groups. Sometimes the emphasis on teaching does limit the opportunity for individuals to take responsibility for their learning and show initiative.

143. The quality of teaching is good in just over half the lessons and satisfactory in all. All the teachers have a good command of their subject and are able to put it across in an interesting way and at

the right level for their pupils. There is a tendency to concentrate on imparting information rather than providing a variety of ways in which pupils can learn. The teachers are good managers, who organise their pupils' work efficiently and get on well with them. They set clear objectives for lessons and provide materials to suit pupils at different levels of attainment in the subject. Marking of work is variable but generally unsatisfactory, as it often fails to offer clear guidance on how pupils may improve. Assessment has not been based on the subject criteria set down in the attainment target for history to any great extent. Homework is set regularly and is appropriate, helped by the fact that all pupils are issued with a textbook.

144. Since the last inspection, there has been little development of the subject until quite recently. Currently, the schemes of work are being revised by the team, to cater more effectively for different levels in the mixed-ability classes. New common assessments are in the process of being introduced to test more accurately pupils' progress in the range of skills identified in the National Curriculum. History is now working within the humanities faculty and exploring common concerns, such as how to improve literacy levels. There is a willingness to share good practice amongst the humanities teachers that is supporting the development of the subject.

Information technology

145. All candidates passed A Level IT in 1999 but none attained the higher grades. Attainment in the A Level IT examination has been below the national average.

146. The IT curriculum at Key Stage 3 now includes IT lessons for all pupils and this is having a significant impact upon standards. In IT lessons attainment is at least average and often good with pupils quickly moving on to more advanced applications. In a Year 8 class, mail merge was used by pupils to produce personalised stories for younger children, which included, for example, the names of family, friends and pets. These skills are being used by some subjects across the curriculum to good effect but there is scope for more use of IT, particularly in mathematics and science where its use for measuring is insufficiently developed.

147. At Key Stage 4, GCSE IT has been introduced as an option, but not yet examined. A third of Year 10 pupils now follow this course. Attainment in IT lessons is at least average and often good. Pupils are progressing well and building upon skills and knowledge gained in the IT course which was taught for the first time when they were in Year 9. Groups of pupils on the examination course in Year 10 were using a range of software to produce effective multi-media presentations about IT. Cross-curricular provision is not yet planned at Key Stage 4. The majority of pupils do not receive their entitlement to an adequate IT curriculum at this key stage. As in the last inspection, the school is still not meeting requirements for all at this key stage. In Year 11 and in Sixth Form lessons where IT is used, attainment is often constrained by the lack of progress made in previous years before the introduction of new IT provision.

148. When pupils are using IT there are usually high levels of concentration; they are well motivated, diligent and keen to produce a good standard of work. They are able to collaborate well in groups, organise tasks effectively and take responsibility for different aspects of the work where necessary. The popularity of IT lessons is reflected in the high demand for the new GCSE course.

149. Teaching in the discrete IT lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned within a detailed and progressive scheme of work. Activities are challenging and differentiated. For example, pupils were encouraged to extend their desktop publishing and presentational work by using scanners, a digital camera and the Internet. Good support is provided for pupils working individually at computers, and lessons are appropriately reviewed at the end.

Appropriate homework is set in all years. IT is used regularly in some subjects across the curriculum but there is still a need for more teachers to include IT in their schemes of work on a more regular basis. The IT department provides regular after-school training for colleagues and the school is beginning to plan for government-funded training of all staff.

150. There are five IT rooms and other computers. The ratio of computers to pupils is below the average for secondary schools. Consequently the increase in timetabled IT courses has put pressure upon existing resources, making it more difficult for the required development of cross-curricular IT.

• **Modern languages**

151. Since the last inspection the curriculum arrangements in modern languages have changed several times, most recently in response to a criticism in the report, and all pupils now learn two languages in Year 7. The pupils entered for GCSE in 1998 and 1999 have been able to study either French or German from Year 7. GCSE examination results have improved in both languages. They were well above national averages for the higher A*-C grades in 1998 and very good in 1999 with 81% of higher grades in French and 79% in German. The school enters a much smaller proportion of its pupils for a modern language at GCSE than do most schools and is in breach of statutory requirements at Key Stage 4. The pupils entered for French and German in 1998 did better in these subjects than in the average of all their other subjects. There have been small numbers of pupils studying either language at A Level in recent years, but the pupils entered for French in 1998 and for German in 1999 did worse in these subjects than in the average of all their other subjects. In French in 1999 they did significantly better and were well above the national average for the higher grades.

152. Observed attainment ranges from above to below average at all key stages, in mixed-ability groups of pupils. It is mainly average at Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form and above average at Key Stage 4 where work in exercise books and folders is often at a higher level than that observed in lessons. The pupils in Year 11 this year are unlikely to achieve results to equal those in recent years and the school is aware of this, although pupils may well improve on the attainment now observed once the department's tutoring and revision programme starts after the mock examinations. The use made by the school and the department of assessment information on individual pupils, with targets regularly monitored, has a very positive effect on attainment particularly in the course of Year 11.

153. Many pupils are able to understand short extracts from their textbooks with varying degrees of support and at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form a wider range of material is used to develop the pupils' reading skills. The departmental initiative, to encourage pupils at Key Stage 3 to read for pleasure as the National Curriculum expects, is very recent and would be helped by more reading material in the department or the library as well as the magazines which the pupils buy. Listening skills are good, as in a Year 11 German lesson where pupils demonstrated good understanding of both the gist and detail of a cassette about transport, through a good variety of well-graded and organised tasks. At all stages the pupils regularly listen to appropriate material on cassette. At Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form pupils are trained well in exactly how to listen and organise themselves for examination tasks as in two good lessons, one a Year 13 German lesson on travel and accidents and the other a Year 11 French lesson with a very clear focus on examination practice. Both of these lessons and many others contained some very good features, but in most lessons pupils' language and in particular their wider listening skills would be helped by their teachers using more and in some cases much more of the foreign language throughout their lessons. Many pupils are confident orally. They are able to ask and answer questions individually, to practise their language work in pairs and to take part in role plays at appropriate levels, often with some form of written support. Most pupils at Key Stage 4 regularly write short descriptions and letters, and the best work in the first draft of the coursework essays seen is of a very good standard, but a greater variety of well-graded tasks would help to develop the accuracy which many pupils lack. In the Sixth Form there is a good variety of work in both languages which, with good

diagnostic marking, is improving the pupils' writing skills, sometimes at a low level at the beginning of their courses.

154. At Key Stages 3 and 4 progress in individual lessons and over time is usually at least satisfactory and often good. At Key Stage 3 progress is occasionally unsatisfactory, because of deficiencies in teaching, mainly slow pace and insufficient varied oral practice. Most pupils in a Year 8 French group both enjoyed the fun element and made very good progress in a lesson on clothes, conducted mainly in French, where the very well varied and sequenced activities at several levels helped to meet the individual needs of the pupils within the group. At Key Stage 4 progress is occasionally unsatisfactory because of the pupils' attitudes. In the Sixth Form most pupils make satisfactory or good progress in individual lessons and over time, helped by their teachers' knowledge of their individual strengths and weaknesses. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the nature of the teaching.

155. At Key Stages 3 and 4 most pupils behave well, many because of their teachers' good class management skills. In almost half the groups at Key Stage 4 and in several groups at Key Stage 3, most pupils enjoyed activities and language games and were able to work productively in pairs or independently as in several Year 7 lessons where pupils moved around the room, asking and answering questions in French and German with good pronunciation and from memory, without any need for the teacher to intervene. In almost half the groups at Key Stage 4, while there was no misbehaviour, and relationships remained positive, a significant minority and occasionally the majority of pupils were chatty at the slightest opportunity when they were asked to work in pairs or individually and had to be kept on task by their teachers and on one occasion also the French assistante constantly circulating and working with individuals and small groups. In most groups adequate progress was made over the lesson, but mainly because of the teachers' efforts. In the Sixth Form most pupils are well motivated.

156. More than half the teachers in the faculty, including the heads of departments and the head of the faculty, have joined the school in the last three years. Teaching is rarely less than satisfactory, often good and occasionally very good. The main area for development, as already noted, is teaching in the foreign language, as required by the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 3 language games are often skilfully used to motivate pupils and provide vital oral practice. At Key Stage 4 and to some extent also in the Sixth Form there is a very clear focus on examination requirements. While the faculty works well together, individual teachers have their own styles and strengths, as already illustrated. The main strength across the teaching in the faculty is an awareness of the individual needs of pupils and in many lessons these are well met through carefully graded and varied tasks with a variety of support and extension material. Planning in this area is helped by new and differentiated schemes of work which the departments are still developing.

• **Music**

157. Attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the Sixth Form is in line with national expectations overall. In some Key Stage 3 classes a significant number of pupils are attaining at a higher level. Examination results at GCSE have been in line with national averages for the last two years. A Level results are good, but the small number of entries makes comparisons with national figures inappropriate.

158. At Key Stage 3 pupils are enjoying a well-structured, broad and balanced curriculum. They are able to interrelate performing and composing with listening and appraising as required by the National Curriculum. A successful and effective Year 7 lesson showed pupils engaging purposefully in singing an African song, then using the material as a stimulus for a group composition using the voice. Pupils are learning to use music technology well. In Year 9, through focused and informed teaching, pupils were using multi-track facilities to compose and arrange a piece of music with computers. As another part of the Year 9 curriculum, other groups were gaining good rhythmic drumming skills with the

unique opportunity to use four drum kits and other skinned percussion instruments simultaneously in some high level class tuition. All Year 9 pupils are benefiting from being taught in half classes and this is having a positive effect on their general musical attainment. A significant majority of pupils are able to engage in focused listening and answer questions about what they hear.

159. At Key Stage 4 the number of pupils taking music as an examination subject is increasing. Many of these pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, are supported in parts of their coursework by the use of the computer. Without this facility they would find elements of composition very challenging but with the aid of technology to support them they are achieving a fair degree of success. Aural appreciation skills are weak but listening and appreciation skills are being well developed by good teaching methods. In a Year 10 lesson each pupil was expected to select a listening extract and produce a set of related questions about the music for the rest of the class to answer. This excellent training is not only improving listening skills but also consolidating knowledge about the period of the music and its genre.

160. There are no Year 13 pupils this year but the Year 12 group has increased in numbers considerably. A few of these pupils have proven high quality instrumental or vocal skills, although others are performing at a much lower level. Pupils are starting to compose satisfactorily, using music technology. They are beginning to engage in research and analysis, although it is too early in the course to gain sufficient evidence of significant progress.

161. Attitudes to learning are generally very positive, although a small minority in some classes are less well motivated and this is constraining their learning. The significant majority who are committed to their work show enthusiasm and the ability to take responsibility for their own learning. There is good interaction in group or paired tasks and pupils can work collaboratively. Pupils show respect for their peers and also handle the instruments with care.

162. A significant amount of the teaching is good or very good and all but one lesson was satisfactory or better. The teaching is effectively supported by well-produced working booklets for every pupil at all key stages. Teachers enjoy a good rapport with the pupils and the trust that they place in them in respect of open access to the resources is repaid in full. The teaching in the small number of instrumental lessons observed was of a good standard.

163. The department's open access policy to all pupils means that a significant minority of the school population are able to benefit from extra-curricular opportunities. Music is a strength of the school, with its concerts and productions involving large numbers of pupils. The pupils' aesthetic development is nurtured by this active music department. With its new accommodation and excellent resources it is set for further growth in the future.

• **Physical education**

164. In the GCSE results this year 60% of pupils achieved grades A*-C, performing above the national average. Pupils entered for this subject did significantly better than in the average of all their other subjects. The GCSE results are an improvement on the previous year and have risen at a faster rate than the national average. GCSE results have improved significantly since the last inspection

165. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, meeting national expectations. In Year 9, both boys' and girls' attainment compares favourably with standards countrywide. In a Year 7 gymnastics lesson girls showed good body control and performed complex sequences when working on the floor. They thought about their movements and considered how to make their sequences more interesting. In a Year 9 boys' hockey lesson the pupils worked hard, performing skills efficiently and transferring the new

skills into a game very effectively. In both these lessons attainment was high because the teachers gave clear teaching points and challenged pupils' evaluative skills. In one trampolining lesson, the performance of Year 9 boys was unsatisfactory. Body tension and skill levels were poor because the opportunities to perform were limited by the size of class and just two trampolines. The very poor behaviour and irresponsible attitudes of several pupils in this group also contributed to the unsatisfactory performance.

166. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is satisfactory overall, although the performance of the girls is lower than that of the boys. Physical education was taught previously in mixed gender groups. This has been changed recently to single-sex lessons to help raise the attainment of girls. In one boys' Year 11 rugby lesson attainment exceeded the national expectation when pupils showed great maturity in their play and had a good understanding of tactical performance stemming from good teaching. In girls' games the basic skills have not been mastered. The lack of detailed long-term planning for much of Year 10 and Year 11 work does not enable pupils to reach their highest potential. Standards in lessons other than the GCSE classes at Key Stage 4 remain variable, as they were at the time of the previous inspection.

167. Sixth Form pupils are being entered for A Level examinations in the summer of 2000. These will be the first candidates for several years. Attainment in the Sixth Form core lesson is satisfactory. Football players are proficient and the karate group is achieving appropriately. A local coach supports this work most effectively.

168. There is a good range of activities open to all pupils at lunchtime and after school. There are representative teams in a variety of sports, and inter-school competitions involve a good number of pupils. The introduction of a gymnastics club is helping to increase the number of girls involved in extra-curricular clubs. Last season, boys and girls were successful in their district and county football competitions. Individuals have achieved county recognition in hockey, cricket, rugby and football. District representation has been achieved in athletics and basketball.

169. Pupils make good progress in most of their lessons at Key Stage 3. As they repeat the skills, they become more confident in games play and performance in girls' gymnastics improves as they share ideas. Many pupils are learning to play in a team as they move from practising skills into games. Consistently good teaching at this key stage is having a positive impact on progress. Unsatisfactory progress is rare but, when it does occur, it is the result of poor behaviour. Pupils at Key Stage 4 make good progress in many lessons. In boys' games the progress is good, following the firm foundations laid in Key Stage 3 and very good teaching. In girls' games lessons pupils are making progress but from a low starting point. Better long-term planning within Key Stage 4 will help to improve this situation. Progress in the Sixth Form is just satisfactory. A more structured programme and the introduction of the Community Sports Leaders' Award, as planned, will support progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, and where teaching includes a variety of differentiated strategies more able pupils achieve well.

170. Pupils enjoy physical education and the vast majority work hard, responding very well to the expectations placed upon them. Behaviour is good in all but one Year 9 group. In many lessons pupils are very enthusiastic and listen carefully. They work well together and are supportive of each other's performance. This ethos has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

171. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and overall it is good. Occasionally teaching is very good. When teachers use their specialist games knowledge together with a good range of teaching styles pupils are challenged very effectively. There is a need for some teachers to improve their knowledge and expertise in gymnastics and dance. All staff have high expectations, and delivery is brisk and purposeful. Teachers are enthusiastic and successfully motivate pupils. At the last inspection teaching

was sound overall; in this inspection teaching is good. Since the last inspection the balance of activities and assessment procedures have been improved. Pupils are clear about how they are being judged and value the feedback that they receive.

• **Religious education**

172. At Key Stage 3 attainment in religious education is in line with national expectations overall, although standards vary between the Year 9 classes. Systematic study of six major religions over the key stage, in blocks of time that amount to an average of one hour a week, equips pupils with a sound knowledge of religious beliefs and values. In their work on eastern religions, Year 9 pupils maintain a satisfactory standard of notes, describing and explaining the main aspects of the faiths studied. In a lesson on Sikhism, they were able to recall and compare Hindu beliefs on the caste system. They are developing investigative skills well through homework research. Some pupils lack the language skills to write at length, whilst others are able to produce good short biographies on the life of Gandhi. Pupils are able to connect with religious ideas when given the opportunity to reflect on them, such as using a Sikh mantra to inspire their own composition of words that have special meaning for them.

173. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below national expectation. In Year 11, religious education is provided as one of the modules in the diploma of vocational education course. The focus is on moral issues and the short time allocated does not permit the wider curriculum expected by the Agreed Syllabus. In their written work on the issue of abortion, pupils are able to put forward rational arguments on both sides of the debate, but the reference to religious teaching is often absent. The balance is better in Year 10, where pupils now have the equivalent of an hour a week, following the GCSE short course, which gives equal weight to the study of religion and moral issues. In lessons on the problem of suffering, pupils showed good background knowledge of religious teaching on the battle between good and evil and the ability to apply it in their discussion.

174. Religious education is not being taught in the Sixth Form this term. There are plans to arrange three day conferences for Sixth Form pupils during the academic year, which will fulfil the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. These plans were not concrete at the time of the inspection.

175. At Key Stage 3 pupils are making satisfactory progress. Year 7 pupils have a sound understanding of symbolism in religion and the importance of myths and stories for conveying religious meaning. Year 8 pupils are making good progress in their study of Christianity, producing some excellent projects, in the form of a Roman spy's investigation of *The Jesus Files*. Progress is more variable in Year 9 lessons. It was good in a lesson on Guru Nanak, that helped pupils to explore the nature of spiritual revelation, but unsatisfactory when pupils were given low-level tasks or confusing materials. Lower-attaining pupils are making satisfactory progress, helped by worksheets that meet their needs. Higher-attaining pupils progress well in open-ended tasks but there is insufficient extension work in written exercises to stretch them.

176. At Key Stage 4 pupils make satisfactory progress on the diploma course, motivated by the need to produce certain pieces of work to a satisfactory standard to obtain the certificate. Good progress is being made on the Year 10 GCSE course on deep questions about the existence of God and why people suffer. Discussion and debate are helping all pupils to gain understanding. The progress made in the supporting written work, both in the quality and amount produced, is no more than satisfactory overall. Lower-attaining pupils are finding it difficult to produce relevant and full answers to questions.

177. Across the school pupils display healthy attitudes to the study of religions and show respect for different faiths. Pupils take a pride in their work, presenting it neatly. There was particularly good involvement in the Year 7 work on myths, the Year 8 drama, inspired by Jesus washing his disciples'

feet, and the Year 10 debate on why God allows suffering. Pupils apply themselves well to tasks, even when the work is not set at the right level for them. Behaviour is good in most classes, the exception being some Year 9 pupils, who persisted in talking out of turn in one lesson. Pupils collaborate well on group activities, such as the improvised drama in a Year 8 lesson, moving into their groups without any fuss and participating enthusiastically.

178. The quality of teaching is good in just over half the lessons. It was unsatisfactory in two lessons, where the tasks set and materials used were inappropriate for increasing the pupils' understanding. The strength of the teaching lies in the use of a range of teaching methods that allows pupils to learn in a variety of ways, through story-telling, drama and discussion. Teachers gain the interest of the pupils by the clear and enthusiastic way in which they present their lessons. Questioning is used effectively to probe pupils' understanding and the activities often enable pupils to consider the relevance of religious teaching to their own lives. Teachers respond very positively to pupils' written work and, if anything, are too generous with their praise for seemingly modest effort. Some of the written tasks do not offer sufficient challenge to higher-attaining pupils. The criteria for assessing pupils' work tend to be general rather than specific to the subject. The teachers manage their pupils well and create the right atmosphere in which they can explore values and beliefs.

179. Since the last inspection a second specialist teacher has been appointed and the number of teachers involved in religious education reduced to a more manageable team of five. There has been a significant improvement in the amount of time for the subject, which now meets the recommendations in the Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 3 and in Year 10 on the newly introduced GCSE short course. When this provision carries through to Year 11, Key Stage 4 will also meet the statutory requirements. Arrangements for providing a basic entitlement to religious education in the Sixth Form are agreed but still to be planned in detail. The school is showing a commitment to developing the subject, which is shortly to be relocated to new accommodation above the humanities suite of rooms.

· **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

· **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

180. Fourteen inspectors spent 161 hours observing 248 lessons, covering all National Curriculum subjects and other subjects. Business studies and economics and the assessment of pupils with special educational needs were inspected as an additional requirement by OFSTED. The lessons observed were chosen to ensure a spread across subjects, year groups and ability levels and to embrace all teachers. Much data provided by the school in advance of the inspection was analysed and a commentary was prepared for all inspectors on the basis of this data. Much work by pupils was examined, both during lessons and otherwise. The work of representative pupils from all years was examined, in order to establish their standards and progress over time. Brief conversations were held with many pupils in lessons and around the school. Forms were observed during registrations and tutor periods. Inspectors observed assemblies and extra-curricular activities. Three governors were interviewed individually. Many formal and informal conversations were held between inspectors and staff. The headteacher and the registered inspector met at least once a day. The views of parents were sought at a meeting, by a questionnaire and by interviews. Their views were analysed, made available to all inspectors and conveyed to the chair of governors and the headteacher. Representative pupils were interviewed.

- **DATA AND INDICATORS**

181.

- **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
1,262	18	325	392

- **Teachers and classes**

- **Qualified teachers**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	79.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	15.8

- **Education support staff**

Total number of education support staff:	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	344.5

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	75.1
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	24
	KS4	20

• **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998-99
	£
Total Income	3,669,145
Total Expenditure	3,550,648
Expenditure per pupil	2,929.58
Balance brought forward from previous year	258,361
Balance carried forward to next year	376,858

PARENTAL SURVEY

182. Number of questionnaires sent out: 1,262
 Number of questionnaires returned: 273

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	21.3	62.1	8.9	6.5	1.2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	29.0	63.3	3.6	2.4	1.8
The school handles complaints from parents well	22.0	52.4	19.5	4.9	1.2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	23.7	53.8	9.5	10.7	2.4
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	41.9	40.7	6.0	10.2	1.2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36.7	49.1	4.1	8.9	1.2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	32.7	52.0	9.9	4.7	0.6
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	19.8	62.8	5.8	7.6	4.1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	28.4	54.4	12.4	3.6	1.2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	26.6	49.7	14.8	5.9	4.7
My child(ren) like(s) school	36.0	50.6	5.8	2.9	4.7

Other issues raised by parents

Parents in their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting were strongly supportive of the school. The inspectors endorse that judgement. Some parents were critical of some marking of pupils' work. The inspectors judge that, whilst the standard of marking is generally satisfactory, there are some inadequacies. Some parents commented at the meeting about bad behaviour on buses. Inspectors were unable to find first-hand evidence of this, but pupils did confirm to the inspectors that this does occur, whilst also expressing the view that the school took it seriously when notified. Parents confirmed that the headteacher and other staff are routinely at the school gates and beyond at the end of school.