

## INSPECTION REPORT

**Smestow School**  
Wolverhampton

LEA area : Wolverhampton

Unique Reference Number : 104389

Inspection Number : 184601

Headteacher : Mr Peter Hawthorne

Reporting inspector : Mr Peter Whitlam  
T3543

Date of inspection : 27 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707969

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

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

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

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

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

Tel. 0171421 6567

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Comprehensive
Type of control :	Community
Age range of pupils :	11 to 18
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Windmill Crescent Castlecroft Wolverhampton WV3 8HU
Telephone number :	01902 558585
Fax number :	01902 558586
Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr John Grant
Date of previous inspection :	November 1994

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Peter Whitlam	Registered Inspector	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Teaching
Alan Beckley	Lay Inspector	Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
David Darwood	History	Leadership and management The efficiency of the school
Carol Emery	Design and technology	The curriculum and assessment Equal opportunities
Chris Morris	English	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Valerie Taylor	Geography	
Dilwyn Hunt	Religious education	
Jenny Hazlewood	Information technology	
Mick Marks	Mathematics	
Peter Tidmarsh	Music	
Jacqueline Brookes	Physical education	
John Gopsill	Science	
Jim Kane		Special educational needs
William Goodall	Art	
Dennis Carty	Modern foreign languages	

The inspection contractor was:

Dudley Local Education Authority  
Saltwells Education Development Centre  
Bowling Green Road  
Netherton  
Dudley  
West Midlands  
DY2 9LY

Telephone: 01384 813722

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

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

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

### **MAIN FINDINGS**

Pages 7-10

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

### **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

Page 11

### **INTRODUCTION**

Paragraphs 1-9

- Characteristics of the school
- Key indicators

### **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

#### **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school** 48

Paragraphs 10-

- Attainment and progress
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
- Attendance

#### **Quality of education provided**

Paragraphs 49-84

- Teaching
- The curriculum and assessment
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
- Partnership with parents and the community

#### **The management and efficiency of the school**

Paragraphs 85-105

- Leadership and management
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
- The efficiency of the school

### **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

#### **English, mathematics and science**

Paragraphs 106-161

#### **Other subjects or courses**

Paragraphs 162-284

### **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

#### **Summary of inspection evidence**

Paragraphs 285-287

#### **Data and indicators**

Paragraph 288

## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

Strong leadership by the headteacher and governors gives the school a clear sense of direction and purpose.

- This school is caring. It has clear positive values and a very good ethos.
- Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good.
- Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good.
- The standard of pastoral support is good.
- Financial planning, control and management are good.
- The standards in extra-curricular activities are good.
- The work of the resource base for visually impaired pupils and their integration into the whole school are particularly positive features.
- Provision for social and moral development is good.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop a range of learning styles.
- II. There is a lack of sufficient challenge for pupils of different abilities.
- III. The school procedures are not always used for dealing with pupils with special educational needs.
- IV. Marking practices do not give sufficient guidance to pupils and assessment is not used adequately to influence teaching and schemes of work.
- V. Information technology is neither taught well nor organised well.
- VI. Provision for establishing pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
- VII. Monitoring procedures and the sharing of good practice are limited.

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

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school was previously inspected in November 1994. It has made progress in resolving most of the key problems identified, with varying degrees of success.

The length of the school day and the organisation of the lessons within it have been reviewed. Staff have been consulted and the timetable changed to reduce the number of single lessons. The length of the school day has not yet been increased but will do so during the next two years to accommodate more links at Post-16 level across the Local Education Authority. There is no evidence of any adverse effect of the current, shorter day on standards other than in attainment in information technology.

The policy for setting pupils has been revised and the arrangements for grouping changed successfully. Groups are balanced by number and gender. The parents and pupils are informed of the reasons for such groupings.

Book stocks within the library continue to be inadequate. The library has been relocated at the school's expense to reduce loss of books. Old stock has been removed and replaced with new. Arrangements have been made for buying more books. The importance of this resource has been recognised, but space allocated to it is still limited. There is still a shortage of books. Progress has been limited particularly because a bid for external funding has been unsuccessful.

A number of strategies have been implemented to involve more effectively the subject and pastoral managers in whole school developments. Key to this has been the Development management Meetings (DMM) at which staff are asked to discuss major school projects and developments. Staff speak very positively of this initiative.

The governors and senior management team now use criteria by which to judge the benefits of spending. These are based on improvements in achievement, pupil motivation and staff morale. Spending decisions are regularly considered by the governors.

The failure to comply with the legal requirement to provide a collective act of worship was raised as a key issue at the previous inspection. It continues to be an issue.

### Standards in subjects

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

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

Results in Key Stage 3 tests in 1998 were comparable with comprehensive schools nationally but are not quite as good as achieved in similar schools. Results in mathematics and science tests were better than those in English. In 1999, however, results in all three subjects are in line with national averages.

At GCSE the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\*-C grades is comparable with comprehensive schools nationally and with similar schools. Results have improved over the last five years on a slowly rising trend. This is a result of the school's efforts in careful planning, the improved use of assessment data and the sound quality of teaching.

The A-level results for 1998 were poorer than in previous years although they were much as predicted given the pupils' GCSE performance in 1996. The 1999 results are comparable with schools nationally.



## Quality of teaching

	<b>Overall quality</b>	<b>Most effective in:</b>	<b>Least effective in:</b>
Years 7-9	Satisfactory	Music, physical education, English, science.	Information technology, modern foreign languages.
Years 10-11	Satisfactory	Music, religious education, history, English, drama.	Modern foreign languages.
Sixth form	Satisfactory	History, music.	
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		

Teaching is satisfactory in nearly 90% of lessons and is good or very good in half of these. The area where teaching is generally unsatisfactory is in Key Stage 3 where 40% of the teaching of information technology within the subjects of the curriculum is judged to be less than satisfactory.

*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	Attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good. Relationships within the school are very good.
Attendance	Attendance compares favourably with national figures. Very good strategies are in place to minimise absenteeism and to work positively with disaffected pupils.
Ethos*	There is a very good ethos.
Leadership and management	Leadership and management in the school is good. There is a clear vision and goals are prioritised. The school can now move forward to further improve standards.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced at both key stages with a range of appropriate courses at Post-16. Statutory requirements are met except with regard to information technology and religious education at Key Stage 4. Extra-curricular provision is good.
Pupils with special educational needs	Support for Year 7 SEN pupils is very good. Within lessons staff do not always use the school procedures for dealing with the needs of special educational needs pupils.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the social, moral and cultural development of pupils is good but there is little provision for their spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing and resources are good across the school but library provision is still unsatisfactory. The number of pupils in school puts pressure on the available accommodation.
Value for money	The school provides sound value for money.

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

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>viii. The progress made by pupils.</li> <li>ix. The developing of pupils' self-confidence.</li> <li>x. Extra-curricular provision.</li> <li>xi. The welcoming, safe atmosphere.</li> <li>xii. Support for pupils with special educational needs.</li> <li>xiii. The quick response to parents' concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>xiv. No collective concerns were expressed.</li> <li>xv. One or two parents commented on was some uncertainty about the setting of</li> </ul>

Very few critical comments were made by parents. The inspectors' judgements match parents' overwhelmingly positive views. The school has a positive ethos and is welcoming. Homework is set, generally to the published schedule. The basis on which groups are set is clear and has the flexibility to allow pupil movement between the subjects of the curriculum.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To raise standards further:

1. Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - providing opportunities for a broader range of learning strategies, particularly research and investigative skills;
  - setting work that is appropriately challenging for pupils of different abilities;
  - following more consistently the guidance offered in the 1994 SEN Code of Practice to support the provision for pupils with special educational needs. (Para 54, 56, 66, 126, 128, 130, 132, 144, 147, 151, 162, 172, 181, 186, 198, 201, 211, 216, 265, 268, 276)
  
1. Raise the quality of teaching in information and communication technology by improving:
  - co-ordination of the subject across the curriculum;
  - teacher skills and confidence;
  - lesson planning;
  - assessment strategies. (Para 57, 59, 95, 165, 194, 211, 228, 232, 233, 235, 236, 239, 248)
  
1. Establish more effective monitoring, and subsequent dissemination of findings, by middle and senior management of:
  - pupils' learning;
  - the quality of teaching;
  - consistent application of procedures and practices across departments. (Para 62, 64, 89, 91, 188, 226, 240)

In addition to the key issues above the school should seek to improve:

1. the quality of marking so that pupils are better informed about what they have done well and what they need to improve; (Para 55, 90, 115, 156)
2. the use of assessment data and feedback to improve curriculum planning in Key Stage 3; (Para 67, 153, 171, 248)
3. provision for the spiritual development of pupils. (Para 63, 72, 116)

## INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

3. Smestow school is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive school with 974 pupils on roll, including 170 Post-16 students. It is of average size compared with comprehensive schools nationally. There are 497 boys and 477 girls. Pupil numbers have increased by more than 100 since the previous inspection. It is a popular, over-subscribed school. Demand for places has led to some overcrowding.
4. The school is located in the Tettenhall/Wightwick ward in the west of Wolverhampton. Pupils are drawn from more than twenty primary schools over a wide area. Approximately one third of the school population is dependent on transport to and from school. The school serves an area which contains a number of selective, independent and denominational schools with which it competes for pupils.
5. The intake of the school reflects a socio-economic range much broader than that of the locality of the school. Approximately two-thirds of the population live in wards socio-economically poorer than Tettenhall. 10.5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is broadly in line with the national average for comprehensive schools. 10.1% of the school population have English as an additional language. This is a high proportion which matches figures for Wolverhampton generally. Thirty-one pupils have statements of special educational need. Fourteen of these attend the visually impaired (V.I.) resource base and are fully integrated within the school. The proportion of statemented pupils (3.7%) is above the national average but this is due to the numbers in the V.I. resource base.
6. In 1998 80% of the pupils went from Key Stage 4 into further education or training and 6% into employment. At the end of the Sixth Form 74% left to proceed into further or higher education and 13% into employment.
7. Levels of attainment on entry to the school are broadly in line with national averages. Attainment at Key Stage 3, GCSE and GCE Advanced Level studies is also broadly in line with national averages.
8. The school's aims state that it is committed to having its pupils reach high standards, providing individual care and tuition of the highest quality and a wide range of development opportunities. The aims are under-pinned by the principle of equal opportunity.
9. The school's development plan identifies a range of major goals including the setting of appropriate, challenging learning targets, further improving teaching and learning and ensuring the provision of an appropriate curriculum at all key stages.
10. The school has set targets for pupils to achieve 50% of 5 or more A\*-C GCSE grades and an average points score at GCSE of 41 points in the year 2000. The school is confident the systems and strategies for this to be achieved are now in place.

## 9. Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 3<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	79	80	159

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	43	48	45
	Girls	62	53	45
	Total	105	101	90
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	66 (67)	64 (63)	57 (58)
	National	64 (65)	62 (60)	54 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	27 (22)	40 (34)	19 (21)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	40	55	50
	Girls	63	56	58
	Total	103	111	108
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	65 (72)	70 (75)	68 (69)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	59 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	26 (37)	41 (44)	35 (15)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

1

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

## Attainment at Key Stage 4<sup>2</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	85	81	166

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	34	79	80
	Girls	38	80	81
	Total	72	159	161
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	43 (44)	96 (95)	97 (95)
	National	48	88	95

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or

units and percentage of *such pupils* who achieved

all those they studied:

	Number	% Success rate
School	0	N/a
National		N/a

## Attainment in the Sixth Form<sup>3</sup>

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	30	26	56

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	19.3	14.7	17.2	0.6	2.3	1.5
National	N/a	N/a	18.1	N/a	N/a	3

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	0	N/a
National		79.1

2

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

3

Figures 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	8.9
Absence	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised	School	0.4
Absence	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school  
age)

During the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	31
Permanent	0

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	8
Satisfactory or better	90
Less than satisfactory	10

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

11. The attainment of pupils on entry to Smestow School is broadly in line with national averages and has remained close to national averages over the last three years. In 1998, attainment in English, on entry to the school was above the national average and well above for pupils attaining Level 5 or better. Attainment on entry in science and mathematics is in line with national averages. The number of pupils with special educational needs, excluding those in the visually impaired resource base, is broadly in line with national averages.
12. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 3 have been close to national averages in English, mathematics and science over the last three years. By the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 in English, mathematics and science was close to the national averages. At the higher levels of 6 and above mathematics results remained in line with national averages but English and science results were below average. In 1998, in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards at Key Stage 3 were close to national averages in science and mathematics but well below in English. This was due to the small number of pupils attaining the highest levels. The 1999 results show pupils to be broadly in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science.
13. The majority of pupils, regardless of ability or ethnic origin, make average progress throughout Key Stage 3 but the lack of appropriately challenging learning tasks in some lessons hinders the less able and more able in fulfilling their potential.
14. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with national averages and for pupils from similar backgrounds. There has been an increase from 41% in 1994 to 44% in 1998 of pupils gaining five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE. The proportion of pupils obtaining one or more GCSE passes at grades A\*-G is in line with the national average but slightly below that for pupils from similar backgrounds. The average total points score shows a slight rise from the previous inspection and remains close to the national averages and the average of pupils from schools of similar backgrounds. The overall trend is rising but at a slower rate than the national average. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls, nor for pupils from different ethnic origins. Most pupils attain appropriate standards in relation to their ability.
15. Progress from the end of Key Stage 3 to the end of Key Stage 4 is good when based on total average points scores. For the pupils taking GCSE examinations in 1998 the average points score was more than five points above the national average point score.
16. Standards of attainment at Post-16 were broadly in line with national averages in 1996 and 1997 but were well below national averages in 1998. Attainment in 1999 is again in line with expectations. Taking account of the previous GCSE results of students in 1996, A-level results in 1998 are satisfactory. The average points scores have fluctuated from 9.9 in 1995 to 18 in 1997. The 1998 average points score of 10.6 is well below the national average of 17.5. The 1999 A/AGNVQ average points score has improved to 17.2 for those taking two or more A-levels. Most Post-16 students are making satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
17. In English, attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with national averages. In Speaking and Listening (AT1) the most able pupils contribute confidently to discussion



and develop arguments in a well-structured manner. The least able pupils do not take account of the contributions of others when participating in discussions. In Reading (AT2) the most able pupils use inference and deduction and are able to identify varieties of possible meanings in texts. The least able pupils read for literal meaning only. In Writing (AT3), the most able pupils write in a variety of styles and forms whilst less able pupils are more limited in adapting style to purpose. Competency in spelling and grammar is in line with national norms.

18. Attainment in English at Key Stage 4 is in line with national averages for English language. In Speaking and Listening the most able pupils use a variety of registers as appropriate. In Reading, they are familiar with the features of different genres and are able to make personal and critical judgements that are illustrated with appropriate quotations. Boys at Key Stage 4 engage in less wider reading of fiction than girls. In Writing, the most able use a growing range of literary devices in their own work whilst the less able experience difficulty in structuring extended writing.
19. Progress in English over the key stage is generally sound, and often better than sound in individual lessons. Progress is characterised by the extent to which pupils make significant changes to their writing during the drafting process. Less able pupils tend to view drafting as little more than producing fair copies.
20. The development of literacy in subjects other than English and drama is limited. There are opportunities for small group discussions involving investigation and constructing hypotheses in science. In music pupils are required to describe their work and present findings to the whole class. In other subjects, oral work is mainly limited to answering questions. Listening skills are good but pupils are often only required to listen to the teacher and not to each other. Although pupils read competently, in most curriculum areas few opportunities are provided for extended and wider reading. Library provision is inadequate for pupils to pursue personal study in most subjects. In many areas there are few opportunities for extended writing. In geography, Year 10 pupils write narrative accounts of life after an earthquake in Japan and in art they write analyses of the work of artists. For much of the time, however, pupils are only asked to write short answers.
21. In mathematics, pupils' attainment is average overall. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils attain appropriate standards in number and algebra (AT2), shape and space (AT3) and handling data and probability (AT4). Standards at Post-16 are also average. Students acquire knowledge and skills in algebra, statistics and probability. They differentiate and integrate a range of functions using appropriate methodology. Throughout the school, pupils' investigative skills (AT1) are weaker.
22. At Key Stage 3 middle and lower attaining groups work effectively in using angle properties, points of the compass, rotations and calculating volumes. At Key Stage 4 pupils show good understanding when working out areas of shapes including circles, constructing graphs and using inequalities involving three lines. Post-16 attainment is reflected in the successful solving of quadratics, and using statistics. Throughout the school the major weakness is in investigative skills involving working independently.
23. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics at Key Stages 3 and 4 and good progress Post-16. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils make gains in knowledge and skills in number, algebra and graph work, using and applying these skills in different situations. Lower ability pupils consolidate their knowledge of number facts and operations, making greater use of numeracy skills in more complex situations. The progress of lower attaining pupils is sound at Key Stage 3 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4 due to an over-reliance on the teacher. Progress for higher attaining pupils at both key stages is inhibited because the work expected of them is sometimes too easy.

24. Most pupils are numerate. They recall number facts and show confidence in using these. Pupils construct and draw graphs and charts; good examples of the interpretation of graphs and charts occur in geography. Number skills are used appropriately in other subjects although there are rather fewer examples than is usual in design and technology and science. Opportunities for using and improving number skills are sometimes missed in history. Calculators are used appropriately, often for checking answers.
25. Attainment in science at Key Stages 3 and 4 is broadly in line with national averages for Level 5 and GCSE A\*-C. The previous under-performance of girls in GCSE is not evident in the 1999 results but under-performance overall at Level 6 at Key Stage 3 continues. A-level results vary greatly between science subjects and the calendar years and cannot be reliably compared with national statistics.
26. At Key Stage 3 most pupils make good progress in science during lessons and over the duration of each unit of work. At Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory. High attaining pupils do not make the expected progress at either key stage due to a lack of sufficiently challenging work. Post-16 students make good progress in their courses.
27. Attainment in information technology has not improved significantly since the previous inspection and is below national expectations and averages in Key Stages 3 and 4. Attainment in Post-16 GNVQ information technology is well below national expectations but all students who completed the course achieved passes.
28. Progress in information technology is unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils only consolidate their technical skills. Post-16 students show increased confidence in using software tools in a vocational context.
29. Attainment overall in design and technology is below national expectations at Key Stages 3 and 4. This was the situation at the previous inspection. With the introduction of material-specific examinations at Key Stage 4 there has been an improvement in the percentage of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades in resistant materials, graphic systems and child development but a significant drop in achievements has occurred in food and textiles in both 1998 and 1999.
30. Progress in Key Stage 3 is sound and, in some Year 7 lessons, is good. Across the key stage there are some weaknesses, particularly in designing skills, depth of knowledge and the understanding of materials. Progress in Key Stage 4 is sound. However, across the key stage progress is limited because pupils' planning skills remain undeveloped.
31. Overall, standards of attainment are satisfactory in history. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils reach levels comparable to national norms. They demonstrate good factual knowledge and understanding and are able to interpret a range of given source material. At Key Stage 4 attainment in lessons is satisfactory and although GCSE results are slightly below the national average, there has been a steady improvement since the previous inspection. Post-16 standards are sound.
32. Pupils make sound progress in history at both key stages and at Post-16. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have a good understanding of the concept of source materials. GCSE results show steady improvement over the last four years. Post-16 results in 1998 were satisfactory. Although results fell slightly in 1999, there were specific causes to do with the cohort and change in examination syllabus.
33. Standards of attainment in geography at Key Stages 3 and 4 have improved since the previous inspection. Results at GCSE are now comparable to those at national level. In 1999, 55% of pupils gained passes at A\*-C. By the end of Key Stage 3 the number of pupils achieving Level 5 is slightly above national averages. At Post-16 the number of

students gaining passes at higher grades is below the national average.

34. Sound progress is made in geography. Pupils generally are able to recall previous work, make progress in using data and can compare and contrast features and locations. There is also good progress in the presentation and accuracy of diagrams and maps.
35. In religious education the overall attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with locally agreed syllabus expectations. Pupils display a secure knowledge of Christianity, including some central beliefs, places of worship, festivals and forms of worship. Knowledge and understanding of other principal religions is, however, not secure. Attainment by those pupils involved in GCSE is broadly in line with national standards. GCSE grades since the previous inspection have been very similar to national averages, with a significant improvement in 1999. The attainment of pupils not involved in GCSE is unsatisfactory with insufficient time being allocated to the subject to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Attainment at Post-16 is well below national standards. The attainment of girls is significantly better than that of boys at Key Stage 4. Girls of Indian ethnic background achieve significantly higher standards than other pupils. Post-16 attainment shows a downward trend over the last two years. Pupils are making broadly the same progress they were achieving at the previous inspection.
36. Attainment at Key Stage 3 in physical education is in line with national expectations. Attainment in extra-curricular activities is good. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is slightly better than that at Key Stage 3, being marginally above national expectations. Progress at Key Stage 3 is good. It is less good in some lessons at Key Stage 4 but still marginally better than national expectations.
37. In music, attainment at Key Stage 3 is significantly above average compared to national expectations with girls attaining standards better than boys. Singing is well controlled rhythmically, is satisfactorily pitched and has adequate vocal projection. Pupils can maintain individual instrumental parts in ensembles. At Key Stage 4 attainment is in line with national averages. Performance and composition skills are generally above average; listening skills are comparatively weaker. Progress across both key stages is good because pupils have access to effective teaching and good resources. A good sense of musical structure develops through the use of notation and scores throughout both key stages. High attaining pupils produce balanced and well-controlled performances. Progress is particularly good among the significant number who participate in extra-curricular activities.
38. Attainment in art is satisfactory overall. It was in line with national expectations at the time of the previous inspection and continues so at the present time at both key stages. Post-16 attainment is above the national average showing gradual improvement over time. GNVQ standards are satisfactory. Generally sound progress is made by all groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
39. In modern foreign languages, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with national expectations. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is less secure being slightly below national expectations overall. Standards in German are improving but standards in French remain well below national expectations. Progress at both key stages is satisfactory and is better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4.
40. Overall progress of SEN pupils is sound but there is variation across different teaching groups. Progress among pupils at Key Stage 3 is good. Those pupils with a statement of special educational needs make better progress than pupils at earlier stages identified by the Code of Practice. There is some benefit, in terms of progress, evident from placement in sets with a favourable teacher-pupil ratio. They make sound progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening and numeracy skills. Opportunities to practise and

consolidate these skills are however sometimes restricted in the foundation subjects. Progress in numeracy is sound. Some examples of SEN pupils using and consolidating numeracy skills in geography and science were noted.

41. There is a similar pattern at Key Stage 4 where progress is generally good. As with Key Stage 3 the progress of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is better than those identified as being at earlier stages of the Code of Practice. There are examples of good teaching in science where pupils are well supported in practical activities resulting in high levels of achievement and good progress.
42. The few pupils at Post-16 who have identified specific learning difficulties make sound progress.
43. There is a range of factors which affects the progress of pupils with special educational needs throughout the key stages. The positive ethos of the school and commitment to including pupils has a positive impact on the progress they make. The organisation of the curriculum, and setting of pupils, particularly when enhanced by SEN support, is another positive feature. However, overall, there is insufficient SEN support available in class for pupils at the earlier stages of the Code of Practice, which impedes the progress of these pupils. The lack of consistency in the following of the guidance provided in the Code of Practice, coupled with inconsistent application of the school's SEN policy, also slows down the progress of pupils with special educational needs.

#### 42. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

44. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are good. The school functions as an orderly community. Behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. There is little evidence of vandalism or graffiti.
45. Pupils' responses are satisfactory in virtually all lessons. Pupils are attentive, remain on task and demonstrate a positive attitude to learning. Their work is generally well presented and they take care of books and equipment. When given opportunities, pupils collaborate well in lessons. In drama, there is very good evidence of negotiation and decision making by pupils of all abilities. In most lessons pupils work in mixed gender and mixed ethnic groups and support each other well.
46. Very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are a strength of the school. The concern shown by pupils for their visually impaired peers is a reflection of the overall ethos within the school. The active involvement of many pupils in fund raising for charity is another demonstration of the responsible attitudes taken by pupils throughout the school.
47. Post-16 students help younger pupils with reading and also carry out prefect duties conscientiously. Although there are few other roles of responsibility for pupils, they carry out allocated tasks in lessons sensibly and efficiently.
48. Pupils at all key stages understand the school's closely defined system of rewards and sanctions and, particularly at Key Stage 3, take pride in the commendations received. Although exclusion rates are average, many fixed term exclusions are for a small group of pupils. In the last two years there have been no permanent exclusions. Fixed term exclusions are fairly administered. Incidents of bullying are low and pupils feel strongly that bullying is not a problem in the school.

#### 47. **Attendance**

49. Attendance rates at Smestow School are generally in line with national statistics and often better in terms of unauthorised absences. Attendance is improved by the effective strategies to reduce absenteeism and disaffection introduced by the school in partnership with the Education Social Worker and the LEA Reducing Disaffection team. There has been good work completed with potentially disaffected pupils who have benefited from a more flexible education approach. The computerised school registers comply with statutory requirements and absences are followed up promptly by form tutors. Punctuality to lessons is good. The school has made good progress on improving attendance rates since the previous Ofsted report and this had a positive impact on pupil attainment and progress.

#### 48. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

##### 48. **Teaching**

50. The quality of teaching is sound or better in nine out of ten lessons. It is good or very good in half of these. There is equally good teaching in both key stages and Post-16. The quality of teaching matches that found at the previous inspection.

51. At Key Stage 3 teaching is most effective in music, physical education, English and science. At Key Stage 4 teaching is most effective in music, religious education, history, English and drama. At Post-16 music is taught most effectively.

52. Teachers are appropriately qualified and, generally, show good technical knowledge. Relationships between staff and pupils are often very good. Teachers manage groups very well, setting high expectations concerning behaviour in a businesslike but relaxed atmosphere. In the better lessons effective use of praise, humour and enthusiasm motivates pupils and helps them to sustain their concentration.

53. Good teaching is characterised by good planning. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils and effective use of questioning is used to develop understanding. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, close questioning of a lower ability group led the pupils to understand how certain descriptive terms may be used to reflect someone's dark, empty eyes and unhappy life. In these lessons a good pace is maintained with a well-managed variety of tasks flowing from one to another. In some lessons very good use of time limits stimulates a good working pace and promotes progress.

54. In the best lessons teachers give informative feedback and clear explanations pitched to the ability of pupils. For example, in a Year 11 history lesson the teacher referred to the performance of the local professional football club to help pupils distinguish between fact, opinion and judgement. Pupils are also given opportunities to express personal views and evaluate those of others, such as in a Year 7 religious education lesson where pupils were asked to write about 'My idea of God'. In the very best lessons, pupil independence, initiative and insistence on good standards feature highly. There is insufficient sharing of such good practice within and between departments of the school.

55. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by the failure to specify lesson objectives and share them with pupils. There is a lack of clarity and purpose in the tasks set. There is too much teacher directed work with little opportunity for pupils to develop their own ideas through discussions or work independently. In these lessons the tasks set are often descriptive and insufficiently challenging for high attainers. Individual needs are insufficiently addressed. The quality of teaching in these lessons did little to improve pupil progress and attainment.

56. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment to help pupils make progress is

unsatisfactory in the majority of departments. Marking is varied, with much of it simply an acknowledgement that work has been seen. Diagnostic comments and targets for pupil improvement are often absent or lack reference to any criteria that can be aimed for. Homework is set regularly but, in many instances, involves simply finishing off work.

57. Where there is support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) it is satisfactory with some very good examples. In these lessons teaching is based on a good knowledge of individual needs. Clear explanations are given amplifying essential points and questioning is conducted in such a way that pupils arrive at solutions themselves. Unsatisfactory support for pupils with special educational needs is characterised by inconsistent use of individual education plans. Some teachers lack an awareness of which pupils are included on the SEN register.
58. Teaching was least effective with regard to information and communication technology. This is taught within other subjects but planning and teacher expectations focus on the host subject to the neglect of learning objectives for information technology. There is no reference to ICT review at the end of the lesson. Many teachers lack competence and confidence in using and teaching information technology. The teaching of ICT generally lacks a relevant context and variety in teaching styles. Sometimes, too high a standard is expected. All of this adversely affects pupil attainment.

#### **57. The curriculum and assessment**

59. The curriculum throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and Post-16 is broad and balanced and adequately prepares pupils for the next stage of their education. All National Curriculum subjects are offered, together with appropriate attention given to health, drugs, careers and sex education. At Post-16 a range of 'A' and AS Levels and GNVQ at Advanced and Intermediate levels are offered. The collaboration with neighbouring colleges for effective and efficient delivery of Post-16 courses is being reviewed and developed. Statutory requirements are met in most subjects. However, ICT at Key Stages 3 and 4 and religious education for all at Key Stage 4 do not meet the legal requirements of the National Curriculum. This situation existed at the previous inspection, as did non-compliance with the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship.
60. At the previous inspection the amount of teaching time was less than that recommended by the Department for Education and Employment. Following staff consultation some adjustments were made in the time allocation for modern foreign languages but the length of the school day remains the same. There is no evidence to indicate that this has a negative impact on standards of attainment within subjects, except for ICT which is delivered across the curriculum through subject teaching. There has been no additional time allocated to subjects in order to deliver the ICT aspects. This has a detrimental effect on standards of attainment and progress in ICT.
61. At Key Stage 3 pupils follow a common curriculum which is appropriate to their needs. Most teaching is done in sets. This arrangement generally has a positive effect on standards, though the needs of the most able are not consistently met in all areas.
62. At Key Stage 4 pupils have a common core of GCSE courses and select from a range of options. Combined courses in Business and Food and Business and Graphics have been introduced within the design and technology area in response to preparing pupils for Business Education which is a growing area at Post-16. A range of A-level courses are on offer, intermediate and advanced GNVQ options are also available. The take-up and staying on figures for most courses is sound.
63. The overall management of the curriculum is the responsibility of the deputy heads together with heads of departments. The decisions about the curriculum and its delivery

are made jointly between SMT and middle managers and its effective implementation is the responsibility of heads of departments. Monitoring of the implementation of policies and of effective classroom practice is weak. There is more evidence of heads of department monitoring teacher planning and pupil progress, but there are a number of curriculum areas where this is still unsatisfactory.

64. At Key Stage 3 and 4 and Post-16 a programme of personal, social and moral education is provided. The planned content is appropriate and supports pupils' personal development. Provision for spiritual development of the pupils is poor. The breadth of the curriculum and pupils' personal development is enhanced by a good enrichment programme of extra-curricular activities including sports, drama, out of school trips, residential courses and concerts.
65. There is equality of opportunity for all pupils in most curriculum areas. Planning for continuity and progression is inconsistent in all subject areas. Pupils for example have little critical and contextual understanding in art and a narrow experience of the use of materials in design and technology in Key Stage 3. In physical education schemes of work need to be revised to ensure that pupils have equal access to the current National Curriculum specified for the subject.
66. Access to the curriculum for pupils with visual impairment is good. Pupils are fully integrated with adaptations and modifications creatively and sensitively implemented. The pupils receive a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum that is enhanced by good support and an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities. Where appropriate, pupils with visual impairment have the support of a 'mobility officer' who plays an important role in ensuring access and promoting independence.
67. Statutory requirements for SEN are fully met and arrangements made for the annual review of statements and liaison with parents and other professionals are very good. Procedures for the ongoing assessment and monitoring of pupils' needs are good, with appropriate attention given to ensuring continuity and progression. Although the school gives appropriate regard to the 1994 Code of Practice, procedures are not always consistently applied.
68. Since the previous inspection the school has produced a policy statement on assessment and established a framework of practice upon which the more effective use of assessment to inform teacher planning can develop. Summative assessment is sound in all subjects except ICT. Formative assessment in English, geography and music has a positive impact on classroom practice. In science and physical education there is some evidence of pupils being involved effectively in self-assessment. The effective use of assessment procedures is, however not general across the curriculum. The school is making increased use of relevant assessment data from Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and GCSE to inform curriculum planning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
67. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
69. The school aims make explicit reference to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. In addition, there is a strong commitment to the promotion of self-esteem and a shared purpose among pupils as part of an educational partnership.
70. The provision made for the social and moral development of pupils is good. Much of this is delivered on curriculum enhancement days where a wide range of appropriate topics are addressed which include stereotyping, environmental issues, vandalism and homelessness is covered. Little overt follow-up work is carried out in tutor time. In many areas of the curriculum social and moral issues are effectively taught. In history the social life of different peoples and changing social conditions are studied. In geography Year 10

pupils consider the effects on local people of natural disasters. The topic of racial prejudice is covered effectively in English where Year 10 pupils write diaries recording Tom Robinson's trial in 'To Kill a Mocking Bird' and in drama where pupils perform 'Ooh Aah Showab Kahn'.

71. Environmental issues are central to much work in science. At Key Stage 4 in religious education emphasis is given to matters concerning wealth and poverty. An extensive range of residential activities also provide good opportunities for social development. Although pupils consistently demonstrate their social responsibility around the school, there are few positions or roles of responsibility that pupils are able to undertake before they enter the Sixth Form. In lessons staff set a good example for pupils and pupils accordingly show respect for the views of others.
72. Cultural development is well addressed in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. In music Key Stage 3 classes took part in the national Sony writing initiative, 'Voice in Promise', and professional musicians worked with pupils. In English pupils are offered opportunities to visit the theatre and enter poetry competitions. In art, pupils visit art galleries and museums. Wider, multi-cultural perspectives are encouraged through the study of world music styles, in the different ethnic influences in food, the cultures of North America Indians and the Islamic civilisation in history and the consideration of religious diversity in religious education.
73. There are few examples of how the curriculum enhances pupils' spiritual development. In religious education opportunities are provided for pupils to consider the nature of God and to reflect on their own experiences and beliefs. In tutor time, however, there are no planned opportunities for periods of reflection and there is no daily act of collective worship. Assemblies do not include regular opportunities for spiritual consideration. Most subject areas do not provide planned consideration of spiritual issues and there is no overall school approach to this issue.
72. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
74. The procedures for monitoring pupil progress and personal development in the school are good. There is an effective reporting system and two parents' evenings are held per school year. This is enhanced by a student planner for day to day recording use. There is a school system which enables pupils to plan their own progress. This is advanced in some areas but capable of further sophistication in others. There is a good pastoral system in the school. Form tutors, year heads and senior management give a high quality of support. Pupils and parents expressed confidence that any problems they have are satisfactorily addressed by the teaching staff. It is evident that there are very good relationships in the school between pupils and pupils and staff. There is a good Discipline and Behaviour policy. Rewards are recognised and valued by pupils at all levels in the school. There is also an effective sanctions policy that is appropriately graduated and recorded. This is implemented consistently throughout the school with an emphasis on maintaining good and responsible behaviour. No incidents of harassment or bullying were witnessed during the inspection.
75. The school has adopted the LEA policy on Child Protection which is supported by adequately trained and experienced staff. All staff are aware of Child Protection issues and the procedure for alerting the designated person. There have been some improvements in the administration of a school policy regarding health and safety procedures since the last report but this is at an early stage in its implementation. Safety meetings have been held with appropriate key personnel to deal with the new system of health and safety reporting. Staff in hazardous areas of the school have had adequate training and there is a system of risk assessment along with adequate provision for building and electrical safety. There are appropriate levels of training and expertise in first



aid and adequate arrangements exist to deal with pupils' medical problems.

76. Several health and safety issues need to be addressed by the school. These relate to the poorly sited computers in several rooms. Tables are too small for effective working; computers are too close together; there is lack of ventilation and shading from daylight and there is no proper trunking for loose-laid electrical cables. There has been no policy developed for the safe use of computers by pupils in the recently refurbished library nor is there a 'firewall' for the computer with access to the Internet. The external footpath, which is the main access point to the school presents another and separate matter. It is uneven along most of its length with some hazardous potholes immediately in front of the school.
77. This is a caring school, exemplified by a number of features. The welfare of pupils is provided through the home-school agreement, the 'Raising Achievements Programme', the School council and the Mentoring programme. All of these projects are working well. The School Council offers the opportunity for pupils to take some roles of responsibility. The Raising Achievements Programme, which is linked to pupils' potential success, is showing promise as a means of raising standards when it is fully operational. A good mentoring programme has been introduced. Volunteer pupils are trained in the skills of mentoring and then can assist and support younger pupils. Visually impaired pupils are well integrated into the school and their welfare is assured by all staff and pupils. Although not observed during the inspection, the school holds special awareness days for pupils on subjects such as sex education, substance abuse and other personal and social awareness issues. On these days the school makes effective use of many visiting specialist speakers, such as representatives of the police and RSPCA. The welfare of all pupils is assured by the use of visiting specialists and experts as appropriate. These include the Educational Psychologist, the Education Social Worker, the Reducing Disaffection team and other professionals with whom the school has established good links. Pupil entry into the Sixth Form is decided by reference to published criteria. There are adequate links to higher and further education.
78. There is a good careers department which is supported by an external careers advisor. The LEA operates a system of careers advice provided through an independent private career service. The school has been allocated a member of staff from that company. Careers advice is available to pupils from Year 9 and there is effective liaison with staff and specialists as pupils move further up the school. A very good system of work experience exists for Year 10 pupils. Particular attention is paid to pupils on vocational education courses to ensure their progress to higher GNVQ levels. In Year 11, all pupils are interviewed by the careers adviser who also attends parents' evenings.
79. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly sports. All pupils are offered the opportunity of residential experience and there are many examples of school-organised educational and vocational visits. The pupils have set up Midbank, their own bank, which they staff and manage well in partnership with a local national bank.
80. The provision the school makes to promote the health, safety and general well being of its pupils is generally good with few exceptions and has been enhanced since the previous Ofsted inspection.

## **79. Partnership with parents and the community**

81. There are adequate channels of communication between parents and the school. There are two parents' evenings for each year group and the annual reports contain comments for each pupils' development. The school Prospectus complies with statutory requirements although there is insufficient detail about the charges and remission policy, or the handling of complaints. Parents state they are welcomed into the school but there is little evidence of parents contributing to the education of pupils except through the Parent Teacher Association. The PTA arranges fund-raising activities and supports the school at Parents' evenings and events. Some arrangements have been made to increase parental involvement through strategies like the 'Matrix of Involvement' document which is completed by parents of Year 7 pupils.
82. The school has many links with the community and local industry. There is limited use of the school facilities in revenue raising initiatives. Examples of community and school initiatives include Finchfield and Castlecroft Community Enterprises (FACE), the 'Groundwork' energy project, 'Wheelspin', 'Crimestoppers', and anti-bullying projects. There are several good links to local commerce and industry including the very good GNVQ scheme of work with the Wolverhampton Marks and Spencer department store which involves elements of marketing, display and advertising. The school has applied for Chartermark status, the result of which was pending at the time of the inspection. There is an effective careers advisory system and a very good work experience scheme using existing links to commerce and industry and parental involvement. The school and pupils are involved in many fund-raising activities, such as, 'Children in Need'.
83. There are good links with the feeder primary schools including induction days as well as day-to-day liaison. There are also effective links with further and higher education providers.
84. There are many extra-curricular activities. These include sport, such as the Soccer 2000 coaching scheme and the links with the local Lawn Tennis Club. Opportunities for personal development are offered through the school provision of the Duke of Edinburgh award at Bronze and Gold levels. The school arranges many successful trips and visits of an educational and developmental nature, including residential trips for all years. Examples of these are the Year 7 Shropshire field project, Year 8 to Normandy visit, Year 9 the Lake District, Year 10 Outward Bound and a Post-16 geography visit. The school also promotes cultural exchange through the 'People to People' Ambassador scheme, in which students host visitors from the USA.
85. The school's work is positively enhanced by its links with the community, including employers who offer work experience. Also, the school positively promotes its pupils' contribution to the local community through charity work and voluntary service. The provision of links with parents and the community have improved since the previous Ofsted report.

## **84. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **84. Leadership and management**

86. The positive leadership of the headteacher provides a clear educational direction and purpose for the school. He works effectively with the governing body and the senior management team, who share a common philosophy which values individuals and seeks to promote both high academic and personal standards. Together they have established a positive vision and ethos. Efforts have been made since the previous inspection to involve middle management in the development of the school which has made a significant

contribution to improving staff morale.

87. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations. It works effectively through appropriately constituted committees. The governing body is extremely committed, experienced, able and hardworking. They have a strategic view of the school's development, are well informed and actively involved in the life of the school.
88. Consultation and discussion takes place during school development planning. The governing body receives regular reports from the headteacher and heads of department, as a means of monitoring the work of the school. They carefully evaluate results, identify successes and areas of concern. This information is used to identify priorities and set targets for the school development plan. They also involve themselves in writing policies when they feel they can actively contribute. For example, they are involved in shaping the school's anti-bullying policy and the home/school agreements.
89. Senior managers support the headteacher very well and make a positive contribution to the implementation of school policy. They are influential, in particular, through carrying out their role in monitoring subject departments development plans (DDPs) and in setting subject targets and determining priorities.
90. There is a clear framework for monitoring progress towards targets. There are, however, presently only limited management procedures by which improvements in classroom practice may be achieved.
91. A wide range of data is gathered and analysed by the senior management team. The creation of a centrally located attainment record provides a good foundation on which to build further improvements. Currently, however, there is no consistent use of data at departmental level. There is insufficient guidance from the senior management team concerning policy and practice. This is particularly evident with regard to marking and special educational needs provision.
92. Middle management is generally sound. Parents commented positively on the pastoral system as being a strength of the school and this is confirmed by the inspection. Relationships between pupils and teachers are a feature of the school and help instil confidence amongst the pupils. Subject documentation is satisfactory, although some departments need to review their practices. The recently drawn up guidelines on the use of data analysis are clear, but the implementation of these guidelines varies in effectiveness. The monitoring of teaching and learning also varies in effectiveness, often relying on informal chats and discussions. Since the previous inspection middle management have been given greater opportunity to become involved in the development of school policy through the DMM. This group provides a useful forum to discuss and plan whole school strategies.
93. The key priorities of the school are identified in its school development plan. This has success criteria, timescales and resource implications. The school aims are clear, comprehensive and reflected in the overall ethos of the school. There is a clear statement of pupils' entitlement and reference to academic as well as more general social, moral, spiritual and cultural aims. Pupils respond positively to the school. They like attending and feel valued. Equal opportunity issues are explicitly addressed through the school's aims and generally translated in policy and practice.
94. Parents gave overwhelmingly positive comments about the school.
95. Statutory requirements are met with the exception of collective acts of worship, ICT and religious education at Key Stage 4.

**94. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

96. Almost all lessons are taught by staff with appropriate subject qualifications and there are no areas of the curriculum where lack of appropriately qualified staff has an adverse impact upon standards. There are appropriate induction procedures for new staff and newly qualified teachers feel very well supported by the school. Inset and professional development opportunities are allied to development plan priorities. There are, however, deficiencies in Inset programmes. Mathematics Inset has not been directed towards remedying perceived weaknesses and subject teachers responsible for delivering ICT have had insufficient professional training. The quality of technical support in science, and design and technology, has a positive impact on pupils' standards. The level of technical support has improved since the previous inspection. Formal appraisal of staff does not take place and departmental evaluation is at an early stage of development.
97. Accommodation is for the most part adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. The site has been considerably improved since the previous inspection as the result of extensive refurbishment. The two music rooms are, however, poorly located as they are not adjacent to each other. Some English and design and technology rooms are too small for large teaching groups. There are not enough specialist rooms for humanities. The relocated library is too small for the size of the school. Rooms are generally well maintained.
98. The level of resource provision is good overall. The pupil/computer ratio is in line with national averages and is much improved over the last three years. The number of books in most departments is at least satisfactory and the range is very good in a number of areas. The school has identified inadequate library stock as a major issue and is currently improving the range and number of books available, but this is still a weakness. There is also a lack of equipment for the teaching of textiles. Capitation for resources is formula funded and every department currently receives sufficient funding.

**97. The efficiency of the school**

99. The finance and general purposes committee maintain a close overview of the budget through regular meetings and the review of detailed briefing papers prepared by the headteacher and through sound monitoring procedures. Governors are well informed and fully involved in the decision making about budget allocation.
100. Priorities are clearly identified within the School Development Plan (SDP) and, as far as possible, costed. Appropriate success criteria are set out. In some areas, for example Post-16 provision, precise costings are still dependent upon negotiations with other Post-16 providers. The finance and general purposes committee regularly reviews developments and considers cost implications. It has also begun to monitor the impact of spending on standards, a welcome innovation, since the previous inspection. There is a clear budget strategy to improve the school's facilities through prioritised capital development schemes. This has led to a new library, new staff room, conversion of the old library into teaching areas and repairs to some roofs and windows as well as improved disabled toilet facilities.
101. Income and expenditure per pupil are about average for comprehensive schools. Staffing costs are low yet the pupil/teacher ratio is broadly average for similar schools as is the amount of contact time. The school has deliberately allocated a higher proportion of its budget to learning resources compared with similar schools. This has allowed departments to replace inadequate learning resources, increase the number of support staff and also allowed ICT equipment to be upgraded. All of this has had a positive effect in improving pupil learning and in maintaining staff morale.

102. The school's business manager provides very effective planning and monitoring of income, expenditure and cost effectiveness. She keeps the headteacher fully informed about the budget through regular meetings and detailed reports and projections. Together, the governors, headteacher and business manager provide very good financial management.
103. The most recent auditor's report highlights many areas of good practice. Those areas requiring further action have been dealt with systematically. Most were put into place with immediate effect following the audit; a few are still being worked upon. The business manager has also provided clear guidelines to middle managers on how to achieve best value. School administration is very good. Non-teaching staff give good support to teachers, both in day-to-day administration and in the control of budgets for departments.
104. Effective use is made of staff and non-contact time is allocated appropriately to help those with managerial responsibilities. The amount of money spent on professional development and advice is broadly average for comprehensive schools. Accommodation is limited and, at times, this adversely affects the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the accommodation is effectively used although more could be done to explore community usage. Overall provision of resources is good and this makes a positive impact on pupil standards.
105. The budget for special educational needs is clearly identified and appropriately spent on staffing and resources.
106. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils are what might be expected for schools of this type in this area. Pupil attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national averages and the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school and their attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Unit costs are about the average for comprehensive schools and standards achieved are in line with national figures. Attainment is broadly in line with that of similar schools. Financial planning and control is good, effectively supports educational developments and makes a positive contribution to the work of the school in raising standards. Taking all these factors into account the school provides sound value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **105. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

#### **105. English**

107. Overall, attainment in English is satisfactory. Attainment in national Key Stage 3 tests is marginally above the average for Level 5 and above but below the average for higher levels. GCSE English Language results were lower than normal in 1998 but are in line with national averages in 1999 and show a considerable increase in the higher grades. Results at A-level are close to national averages. Although girls considerably out-perform boys, this matches the national pattern. There is no significant difference in attainment between different ethnic groups.
108. In ATI (Speaking and Listening), by the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils listen carefully to what others have to say and adapt their contributions in discussions accordingly. By the end of Key Stage 4, the most successful pupils use an increasing range of registers and are able to use standard English where appropriate.
109. In AT2 (Reading), by the end of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils read for meaning beyond the literal and understand the authors' intentions. At Key Stage 4 they understand the effect of linguistic and stylistic devices. A Year 11 class reading Examination Day immediately commented on the change in time and the portentous note achieved merely by changing the name by which a character was addressed from an abbreviation to the full version. At both key stages, the lowest attaining readers only identify surface meanings.
110. In AT3 (Writing), by the end of Key Stage 3 the most successful pupils adapt their writing for a wide range of formats. By the end of Key Stage 4 they are able to use a variety of literary techniques and styles.
111. At Post-16, A-level students are able to sustain arguments and incorporate new concepts and vocabulary into their own spoken and written work. They are able to combine personal and critical responses to literature and justify these with detailed references to the text.
112. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. It is characterised by the extent to which drafting is used to significantly revise the text as opposed to merely producing a fair copy and also by the extent to which pupils vary their style according to purpose.
113. Pupil response in lessons is never less than satisfactory and is good or better in the great majority of lessons. Pupils are well motivated and attentive. They listen attentively and collaborate well when given opportunities to do so. A Year 8 group working on an assignment on the history of language negotiated all the decisions on the structure of the passage and always accepted the majority verdict. Very good relationships between pupils and staff are a strength of all English lessons.
114. All the above features make a positive contribution towards raising pupils' standards of attainment.
115. The quality of teaching is good or very good in nearly two thirds of lessons. Teachers throughout the key stages regularly stated objectives clearly, and made good use of questions to further pupils' understanding. Teachers' positive approach and good management of pupils ensures that there is an atmosphere conducive to working well in all years. There is a consistently appropriate choice of texts and good supplementary material. A Year 10 class analysing scenes from the film of "Romeo and Juliet" were given excellent resources so that they were immediately able to use the specialised vocabulary

of film criticism. In the best teaching very precise time-limits were given so a good working pace was maintained. In lessons where this did not happen, pupils controlled the pace themselves. In some instances at Key Stage 4, assessment criteria are confused so that pupils are uncertain of what is required of them. The needs of special educational pupils are always taken into account but the number who receive support in lessons from the SEN department is low.

116. Assessment is usually accurate in terms of levels awarded. Markers' comments are always positive and recognise achievements. However, comments do not always explain how pupils can make improvements.
117. The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Extra-curricular activities such as theatre visits and poetry competitions make a positive contribution to the cultural development of pupils. Social and moral issues are effectively included in many lessons but spiritual development receives much less attention.
118. Resources within the department are good. Accommodation is satisfactory but some rooms are too small for group work. The management of resources and accommodation is very efficient.
119. The good leadership and management of the English department is reflected in the good morale and corporate ethos. Sensible priorities have been set and strategies introduced to address issues that emerged from the previous inspection.

#### Drama

120. Twelve months ago drama was introduced as a discrete subject at Key Stage 4. This area of the curriculum has been very well managed and the introduction of a new option has been very successful. Attainment in both Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory for pupils of all abilities. Pupils are able to discuss and evaluate their own performances and those of others using appropriate terminology. Their ideas on staging are imaginative and original and they are able to give considered reasons for their choices. The quality of teaching is never less than good and involves challenging tasks, frequent interaction between teachers and pupils and very clear objectives for each lesson. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject, respond well to opportunities to demonstrate independence and are supportive of each other. Departmental planning is very thorough and takes account of whole school priorities and cross-curricular issues. Resources which were adequate for the introductory year now need to be expanded to allow the skills of staging and lighting to be practised by pupils.

#### Literacy in other curriculum areas

121. The development of literacy in subjects other than English and drama is limited. There are opportunities for small group discussions involving hypothesis and exploration in science and in music pupils are required to describe their work and speak to the whole class. In other subjects, oral work is mainly limited to answering questions. Listening skills are good but pupils are often only required to listen to the teacher. Although pupils read competently in most curriculum areas few opportunities are provided for extended and wider reading. Library provision is inadequate for pupils to pursue personal study in most subjects. In many areas there are few opportunities for extended writing. In geography, Year 10 pupils write narrative accounts of life after an earthquake in Japan and in art they write analyses of the work of artists. For much of the time, however, pupils are only asked to write short answers.

#### 120. **Mathematics**

122. Overall, pupils' attainment in the 1998 Key Stage 3 tests, GCSE and A-level examinations is average. Compared with similar schools, attainment is average. Key Stage 3 test results and GCSE examination results have not significantly improved since the last inspection although there was a slight rise in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher A\*-C grades this year (1999). A-level results have also improved this year. There is no variation in attainment between different ethnic groups.
123. In the lessons observed and over the longer term - by the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 -attainment is average. Pupils attain appropriate standards in number and algebra (Attainment Target 2), shape and space (Attainment Target 3) and handling data and probability (Attainment Target 4). Inspection evidence shows standards at Post-16 (A-level) are also average. Students acquire knowledge and skills in algebra, statistics and probability; they can differentiate and integrate a range of functions using appropriate methods. Throughout the school, pupils' investigative skills (Attainment Target 1) are weaker. They have difficulty making progress in this regard because they become too reliant on instructions from the teachers.
124. Pupils are mostly numerate. They recall number facts and show confidence in using these facts. Pupils construct and draw graphs and charts. Good examples of interpreting graphs and charts occur in geography. Number skills are used appropriately in other subjects although there are rather fewer examples than is usual in design and technology and science. Opportunities for using and improving number skills are sometimes missed in history. Calculators are used appropriately, often for checking answers. A whole school numeracy policy is currently being written.
125. Pupils' reading and writing skills are adequate for learning mathematics. When they are given the opportunity to talk about their work their understanding of concepts improves. For example, Year 7 pupils with special educational needs took part in a productive discussion about how data might be used. Pupils use ICT skills effectively, particularly in the use of spreadsheets. At Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form graphical calculators are used effectively to draw a range of graphs and use statistical functions. Problem solving skills are weaker although these skills improve in the Sixth Form.
126. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and good progress Post-16. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils make gains in knowledge and skills in number, algebra and graph work. They use and apply these skills in different situations. They begin to construct charts, tables and graphs of increasing complexity and can interpret their meaning. Lower ability pupils consolidate number facts and operations, making greater use of numeracy skills in solving more complex problems. The progress of lower attaining pupils is sound at Key Stage 3.
127. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils build on the knowledge and skills learned in Key Stage 3. However, good progress in many topics is hindered because there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply this knowledge and improve their independent learning skills. Pupils begin to rely on too much help from the teacher, which causes some difficulty for pupils who have to cope with Post-16 teaching where they are expected to learn more by themselves.
128. The progress of the higher ability pupils at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is limited because work covered is sometimes too easy, particularly at the beginning of lessons.
129. At Post-16, pupils consolidate algebra skills and use them effectively. They apply previous knowledge about probability when dealing with combinations and permutations and make good use of their understanding of calculus when dealing with problems of differentiation and integration.



130. Pupils' responses in lessons are sound. Throughout the school, pupils show interest in their work. Enthusiastic teaching helps motivate pupils. A minority of pupils show signs of boredom and behave badly because they are required to listen to very lengthy explanations or question and answers sessions which are too long. Behaviour in lessons is mostly good. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy and know right from wrong. There are too few occasions when pupils are able to take responsibility for their own learning or take the initiative and this hinders the development of their investigative skills. When given the opportunity, pupils help and support each other in class. Good examples of pupils' collaborative work were seen at Key Stage 3 in practical lessons on finding the volume of a classroom and at Key Stage 4 when using spreadsheets. All of these positive qualities contribute to improving pupils' social skills and attaining higher standards. The way pupils learn and respond in lessons has improved since the last inspection.
131. The quality of teaching has not significantly improved since the last inspection and is sound overall. Teaching is good in A-level classes. Teachers provide clear explanations that help students understand what they are doing. A good knowledge of the subject particularly in A-level classes gives students the confidence to ask questions when they run into difficulties. Teachers expect good behaviour and pupils are generally well managed. Relationships with pupils are sound and appropriate homework enables pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4, to extend what they do in class. A wide range of resources is used including computers, textbooks, worksheets and practical equipment which contributes towards maintaining pupils' interest in their work. The pace of lessons is sound. These positive qualities contribute towards pupils attaining higher standards.
132. Weaknesses in teaching include providing too many instructions at the beginning of lessons; pupils sometimes obliged to listen for very long periods. Marking provides pupils with little information about how they might improve and some work remains unmarked. Both failings demotivate pupils. Day-to-day assessment is unsatisfactory. Work given does not always match the abilities of pupils and this inhibits their progress, particularly the progress of higher attaining pupils. At Post-16, assessment of pupils' work is used to plan appropriately challenging tasks and activities.
133. Examples of the best teaching include one lesson at Key Stage 4, where a middle ability group responded very well to the teacher's enthusiasm and vigour when they used computers to draw straight line graphs. In an A-level lesson on probability, standards were high because pupils were given appropriately challenging tasks. In a Year 7 class, teaching plans enabled work to be set which matches the abilities of pupils with a special educational need and which consequently improved their estimating skills and their confidence.
134. The department's curriculum is sound overall. The curriculum on offer at Post-16 is good because of the variety of courses offered which include GNVQ core skills, A-level mathematics and further mathematics and a very popular retake class. Good planning in Post-16 lessons also helps the students to use knowledge and skills learned at Key Stage 4. Statutory requirements are met. The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes effective use of computers, particularly the use of spreadsheets. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the curriculum. Schemes of work have been rewritten and are now more useful than they were during the last inspection.
133. **Science**
135. At both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, attainment in science has been broadly in line with the national average, and the average for similar schools, for the past three years.
136. At Key Stage 4, GCSE results in 1998 were broadly in line with national averages for all pupils with 44.7% achieving A\*-C grades. Until 1999 girls performed less well than boys

and their performances were below the national average for girls; they now achieve results which are comparable with the national average for girls.

137. In Key Stage 3 tests in 1998 58% of pupils achieved Level 5 or above with 21% achieving Level 6 or above (compared to national averages of 56% and 27% respectively). The performance of boys and girls were similar and in line with the overall national averages. The results from 1999 show the same pattern.
138. At A-level the overall results have shown a steady improvement over the past three years with 89% of entries gaining pass grades in 1999.
139. The performance of pupils from different ethnic or social backgrounds are in line with the overall pattern and pupils achieve comparable results in both practical and theoretical aspects of science.
140. The vast majority of pupils have good speaking and listening skills. Pupils are competent in reading and writing within the limited range of tasks set. Most pupils show competency in numeracy skills; for example, Year 11 pupils were able to successfully transpose a variety of equations during a lesson on electrical energy. Most pupils are able to set up data-loggers, unaided, in order to collect data and then use a data-logging program to print off results. However, pupils' skills in the use of other information technology are not well developed.
141. At Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in the subject during lessons and over a period of time. This progress is helped to a significant extent by the learning objectives of each unit of work being given to the pupils at the start of the unit of work and being accessible to pupils during the unit
142. At Key Stage 4 and A-level, pupils make satisfactory progress during lessons and over the period of the unit of work.
143. Pupils are making similar progress to that observed in the previous inspection and there is no difference between the progress of boys, girls, and pupils of different ethnic background.
144. High attainers do not make the progress expected due to the lack of opportunities to undertake individual and open-ended work. When the opportunity is given the pupils respond positively to the challenge. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on photosynthesis pupils learned the function of the stomata and were able to extend their knowledge by discussing the reasons why the underside of the leaf appeared to have more stomata.
145. The vast majority of pupils are well-behaved in lessons and most concentrate on their work throughout the lesson. Nearly all pupils work with interest and have good relationships with each other and with their teachers
146. Many pupils ask questions and most will answer questions with the confidence that their response will be seen as a positive contribution to learning by staff and fellow pupils. All work well collaboratively in a variety of groupings and show a full awareness of, and adherence to, safety procedures. Apparatus, books and the structure of the laboratories are all treated with respect. The combination of these factors leads to a secure and supportive learning environment for the pupils
147. Although pupils are given limited opportunities to develop personal study skills or to show initiative many show these skills when given an opportunity. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on invertebrates low ability pupils responded well in group work when asked to discuss the features of a variety of animals.

148. Overall, teaching contributes in a sound manner to the standards achieved in Key Stage 4 and Post-16 and makes a good contribution to the standards achieved in Key Stage 3. Teaching was satisfactory or better in over 90% of the lessons observed.
149. Characteristically, lessons are well planned regarding content, and the use of time. They are conducted at a good pace, include a variety of tasks for the pupils to undertake and the transition between tasks is well managed. Practicals are mostly illustrative rather than investigative. Pupil management and relationships are good. Expectations of good behaviour are high.
150. The needs of SEN pupils are met through the use of additional work sheets which are part of a published scheme.
151. Most lessons are teacher-led with little opportunity for pupils to develop their own ideas, discuss concepts or work independently. Questioning of pupils is of the closed one word or short answer type. Open ended questions are used to stimulate discussion of ideas in the better lessons; for example, in a Year 10 lesson on energy pupils were asked to think about the different theories regarding heat energy which have been held over the last two centuries.
152. In many lessons what is expected of the high attainers is too little so that the work set is not sufficiently challenging. For example, a lesson on Ohm's law was not extended to include a graph plot of the results which would have allowed a quantitative, rather than qualitative, conclusion to be drawn.
153. Good use is made of a variety of types of homework to reinforce learning.
154. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are assessed by end-of-unit tests with the results being used to set pupils according to science attainment. Periodically the settings are revised. The procedures for assessing pupils are good and include them being involved through self-assessment of some of their own work. The use of assessment data to evaluate outcomes with reference to boy/girl/all, ethnicity, is not yet fully developed. Pupil and departmental target setting are also in the early stages of development and tend to be predictive of results rather than to enable challenging targets to be set. Assessment data is not used on a day-to-day basis to assist planning.
155. The departmental marking policy is adhered to with the best marking showing corrections of the work and suggestions outlining how improvements can be made. A minority of marking merely shows the work has been ticked as an acknowledgement that it has been seen.
156. The planned and delivered curriculum meets statutory requirements and all pupils have access to it.
157. Contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development are limited in science teaching but the many opportunities for group work provided by the schemes of work make a major contribution to pupils' social development.
158. The quality of the leadership of the department has had a positive effect since the last inspection. An evaluation of the courses offered has been undertaken and new courses effectively introduced. Teaching reflects the school's ethos and takes place in a relaxed but purposeful environment.
159. There is a clear, carefully monitored development plan for the department which includes references to responsibilities, outcomes and time scales. Workable policies exist for all of

the work of the department and, in the main, are implemented conscientiously by staff.

160. The whole department is involved in the monitoring of pupil performance. Monitoring within the department is informal with respect to marking, policy implementation and teaching styles. There is no formal procedure for the sharing of best practice.
161. All laboratories are in good condition and contain lively and relevant displays of pupils' work. Careful use of the budget has ensured that apparatus and book resources are adequate for courses up to GCSE although there is some shortage of expensive demonstration equipment for A-level courses. Consumables are used sensibly to conserve supplies. Apparatus and books are well looked after so that their useful lifetimes are extended. Teaching staff numbers and qualifications match the requirements of the planned curriculum and the quality of technical support is high.
162. The main factor which has a significant positive effect on the standards is the good relationships which exist between staff and pupils. This leads to the establishment of a trusting and purposeful environment in which learning can take place. The main factor which has a negative impact on standards is the limited range of teaching and learning styles employed which limit the opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills and to examine ideas in science in depth. This leads to a lack of challenge in the work set for the most able which prevents them progressing to the full extent of their capabilities.

#### 161. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

##### 161. **Art and Media Studies**

##### 161. **Art**

163. Attainment in art is satisfactory overall and is in line with national expectations, as it was reported to be in the previous inspection report. By the age of 14 pupils are achieving satisfactory standards in art, craft and design. The percentage of pupils judged by the school to be achieving, or working beyond, the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 is high. Work in progress and in pupils' folders is closer to the national averages, with girls attaining higher standards than boys. Pupils are completing the introductory modules of the art department's planning, and are involved in simple exercises based on the formal elements of line, tone and texture. Although these are producing teacher directed and predictable responses, work in folders and on display indicated that competent and interesting work in painting, ceramics and print are eventually completed over the key stage.
164. By the age of 16 pupils are achieving satisfactory standards in their art lessons. In the previous inspection they were judged to be good. The GCSE A\*-C grades are above the average for pupils of the school but around the national averages nationally. The pupils' average points score is above that attained by the same pupils in other subjects. Year 11 pupils are producing individual and well researched pieces based on 'mythical, magical, mysterious', where they are selecting from cultural and historical examples to produce their own images. Other groups are working on more theoretical themes such as different viewpoints of a composition or tonal paintings from observation of still life. These groups are producing more predictable and teacher-led responses.
165. Standards in the Sixth Form are good overall in art and craft, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Students are achieving A-level grades that are above the national average, but the GNVQ work is limited in scope matching the national expectations at

intermediate level, but below expectations at advanced. This is partly because of the closely controlled activities that are directed and researched by the teacher. The GNVQ course is delivered in a very similar manner to the A-level and intermediate and advanced pupils are taught similar units at the same time. Both these factors limit the attainment of GNVQ students, although they are appropriate for A-level students where the introductory modules in the formal elements are giving a good basis for further, more personal development later in the year.

166. Literacy and numeracy in art are generally sound, but attainment in ICT is poor in all key stages. In the previous inspection it was reported as 'showing promise', but there is little work using ICT of any merit now. It is intended that the national curriculum for ICT is delivered through subjects, although it is evident in the planning, in practice this is not happening. It is constrained by a lack of specialist hardware and software and by a lack of teacher expertise.
167. Attainment Target 2 of the National Curriculum for art - knowledge and understanding - is not met in sufficient depth in Key Stage 3. There is a concentration on the formal elements of Attainment Target 1, Investigating and Making. Examples of research and personal responses were not seen in Key Stage 3. It is the beginning of the year and classes are being taught introductory modules in traditional fine art processes, which is the main work of the department. Exercises on perspective could be enhanced and made more accessible to Year 9 pupils by using Vermeer, Magritte or Van Gogh to explain interior space, instead of treating the concept as a mathematical formula.
168. There is a similar picture in Key Stage 4 and Post-16, where there is a concentration on basic art exercises with little reference to the critical and contextual objectives of the syllabuses, which are addressed more as aspects of art history than anything else. There is a lack of challenging independent study by the more able in many classes, but there are no significant variations in attainment between pupils of different ethnicity or background.
169. An analysis of the GCSE results indicates that boys and girls are attaining the same standards. This is unusual, and closer analysis reveals that girls are attaining higher in three of the four groups in 1999, but in one group the girls attained very poorly.
170. Achievement over time in Key Stage 3, and at GCSE, have remained static at around the national averages. A-level results have steadily improved. Progress in lessons and over time is sound. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them.
171. The overall standard of teaching in art is sound. It was described as 'positive' in the previous report. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good, as is their planning. However, teachers spending only part of their time teaching art lack the support to enable them to deliver a wider range of specialisms. There is no focussed Inset or support for their teaching, or for ICT Inset for any of the teachers.
172. The use of marking for day-to-day monitoring of progress and attainment is good in all classes, but the use of the results of the assessments to inform the planning process for the art curriculum is weak. Records are good, and the reports are informative and well written. Expectations of pupils are high, especially in Key Stage 4 and A-level and particularly of the amount of work and presentation. The teaching of pupil independence and personal response is not extensive in Key Stage 3. Homework is used well, linked to classwork, and extends the work done in class.
173. The effect of the subject leadership is positive, with clear direction being given to the department, but structured support is inadequate for those teachers spending only part of their time teaching art. The ethos in which the subject is taught reflect the school's aims

clearly, with a commitment to high achievement, in an effective learning environment. There are stimulating resources and displays around the school. There is excellent technical support in art which enables teachers to concentrate on their teaching roles. ICT facilities are poor and the library stocks are inadequate to support sixth form work.

**172. Media studies**

174. Pupil standards in media studies are good. This is a new A-level course and was very successful in its first examination in 1999. All students passed, many with good grades, the students' points scores being very high. The present Year 12 and 13 are also attaining good standards, particularly in their theoretical work. Their practical work is satisfactory, but is limited by resources and accommodation, having to be completed in classrooms shared with the school's general video and sound equipment. Projects on the portrayal of youth in the tabloid press and an analysis of a television documentary produce responses of a high standard from the students. Their personal research and awareness is developing well, along with their written essays.
175. There is much more scope for personal work and individual comment. Students analyse texts and plan responses with increasing awareness and sensitivity, exemplified when they plan their own short pieces for production.
176. Teaching is good overall but support for delivery of the more practical elements of the syllabus is needed.
177. Subject leadership is positive but greater whole school structured support is necessary for this new area of the curriculum. The school's aims are reflected in the ethos within which media studies is taught. There is a commitment to high achievement within an effective learning environment. However, development is constrained by the staff having to provide their own technical support and the need to book whole school resources due to the lack of subject resources. This will impact further as numbers increase. Provision for ICT and library book stocks is poor.

**176. Design and technology**

178. Pupil attainment by the end of Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Post-16 is below national averages. In Key Stage 3 girls achieve better than boys but the difference is minimal at the end of Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4 in 1998 the new suite of GCSE examinations produced variable results below national averages. The results for attainment in 1999 show an improvement in graphics, systems and resistant materials. However the results in food technology and textiles are significantly below expectation. Attainment was also below average at the previous inspection.
179. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 competently and safely apply a range of practical skills and are able to select appropriate tools and materials for tasks. However, knowledge and understanding of materials and the application of the design process is unsatisfactory. Listening skills are good with pupils responding well to instructions. Pupils are eager to participate verbally in lessons, when opportunities arise during question and answer sessions.
180. Information technology skills are weak in Key Stage 3 but there is evidence of improved capability in Key Stage 4 particularly in computer-aided design and control technology. The application of numeracy skills is weak at Key Stage 3 but improves in Key Stage 4.
181. The progress of many average and lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 is sound. Lack of challenge in tasks set and limited differentiation in teaching inhibits the progress of pupils capable of higher attainment. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from peer

support and paired working and their progress is sound. Progress in Year 7 lessons observed was good but progress in Year 9 was generally unsatisfactory. Progress throughout the Key Stage is weak particularly in designing, researching and evaluation skills. A number of pupils produce coursework of a good standard at Year 11. Evidence at Key Stage 4 indicates that whilst pupils are making sound progress within lessons, progress over the longer term is unsatisfactory, partly due to inadequate grounding in designing and making skills at Key Stage 3.

182. The Post-16 design and technology course is delivered jointly to Years 12 and 13. Limited observation opportunities suggest that sound progress is made in lessons.
183. Behaviour in lessons is good, as are pupils' relationships with teachers and each other. Pupils co-operate well and are capable of good levels of application and concentration. There is evidence, particularly in practical lessons, that when pupils are sufficiently challenged they are able to work independently which results in good progress and increased attainment.
184. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said they enjoyed their design and technology lessons and enthusiasm for the subject was very evident in Year 7 and in many Year 8 lessons. Pupils work well collaboratively in pairs and groups and there were several examples of pupils supporting others who were experiencing difficulties with their work.
185. Overall, teaching is sound with some examples of good teaching. Only a minority of lessons were unsatisfactory. Teaching is marginally better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4.
186. Good relationships with pupils and constructive teaching support is a feature in the department. In better lessons teachers ensure that pupils are focused on their work and that the tasks and pace are appropriate to their ability. Many lessons lack challenge, pace and differentiation which limits the attainment and progress of higher attaining pupils. There is a limited range of teaching strategies used within the department which hinders the development of independent learning skills by pupils. Detailed lesson planning which produces clear learning objectives is not consistently achieved across the department.
187. The Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curriculum offers a good range of material experiences coupled with sound opportunities to develop and apply a variety of practical skills. However, the lack of detailed joint planning for the modular Key Stage 3 curriculum results in poor continuity and progression of the curriculum across the individual years and across the key stage, particularly with regard to design skills. Pupils' depth of knowledge and understanding is also weak. This has a negative impact on standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. Lack of detailed planning in Key Stage 4 also has a negative impact on standards of pupil attainment and progress. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The department has assessment procedures in place, but in practice the design and technology criteria are insufficiently detailed to enable formative assessment to be carried out effectively across all material areas.
188. Teaching supports pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Teachers encourage respect for property and personal safety. Pupils interact well and support each other, particularly those pupils with visual and academic special needs.
189. In a Year 9 textiles lesson and a Year 8 food lesson cultural and ethnic diversity were encouraged. The Head of Department has only been in post for an academic year but has a clear vision and direction for the department and has a good awareness of the key areas of weakness identified during the inspection. Monitoring of procedures and practice are weak across the department. Procedures to secure improvement are in place but as yet these are underdeveloped.

190. The department is adequately resourced with basic equipment and a range of consumable materials. However, there is a lack of appropriate equipment to teach textiles and equipment is limited in electronics. This has a negative impact on standards and progress. Accommodation for teaching textiles is inappropriate. Teaching areas for resistant materials, graphics, systems and electronics are small and this problem is further exacerbated by room layout and the existence of large furniture and equipment. This creates difficulty for pupils and teachers. Movement in rooms is restricted and access to resources is difficult. Refurbishment of the food rooms since the previous inspection has created a positive learning environment for pupils. The school has appointed technician support for food technology since the previous inspection. The interest and involvement of the food technician and in supporting teachers and pupils produces good results. Similar support in resistant materials was also observed.

#### 189. **Geography**

191. Standards of attainment in geography at GCSE level have steadily improved since the last inspection. In 1999, 55% of pupils gained passes at A\*-C which is above the provisional national average and is a significant improvement on the previous year. Passes at grades A\*-G have consistently been above 90%, except this year, when 87% gained passes at A\*-G. However, this has been offset by the recent successful introduction of the Certificate of Achievement where pupils attain levels which are appropriate for their ability. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards of attainment have also improved and the number of pupils at Level 5 and above is comparable to national standards.

192. At Post-16, the number of pupils gaining passes at higher grades is below national levels but all pupils who were entered for the exam gained passes at A-E. Current evidence suggests that pupils are now achieving results in line with national expectations.

193. Since the previous inspection, standards of attainment have improved. These improving results reflect the department's improved methods of assessment, changes made to the curriculum, and to the quality and deployment of resources. These have had a positive impact on raising standards.

194. On entry to the school pupils show very varied standards of attainment in this subject but by the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils are able to accurately describe geographic features, have an awareness of different and similar characteristics and understand how changes in the landscape affect peoples' lives and activities. At Key Stage 4 most pupils can identify the consequences of change, and can compare and contrast regions of the world. Evidence in written work also shows that pupils have developed a good appreciation of, and empathy for people who are caught up in natural disasters. In lessons seen in Year 10 pupils understood the impact of volcanoes and earthquakes on peoples' lives. More able pupils were able to clearly explain the causes of volcanoes and had a good command of the appropriate vocabulary. At A-level, enquiry skills are well developed. Pupils can identify sequences of movements and follow logical arguments using geographic terminology with confidence. They are also able to fully explain phrases such as 'demilitarisation', 'demography', 'sustainable lifestyle'.

195. Pupils listen well and their speaking and reading skills are at appropriate levels to meet the needs of the subject. Pupils generally write well although most of their work consists of short paragraphs and sentences. There were some notable exceptions. For example, pupils wrote enthusiastically and at length about life in Glasgow during economic decline and produced work on display about 'My day as an American Indian'. Pupils are able to construct and interpret bar charts, line graphs and scattergraphs. In fieldwork studies, pupils are able to take measurements, can represent and interpret data. The use of



information technology is encouraged and is indicated in the department's schemes of work. However, it is not used in any systematic, planned way to enhance teaching and learning and this is a weakness in the department.

196. There are no significant differences in the levels of attainment between different ethnic groups. Levels of attainment for boys and girls are almost the same, although nationally the attainment levels of boys is lower than girls.
197. Sound progress is made at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4, and at A-level. Low ability pupils and pupils with Special Educational Needs make good progress at Key Stage 3, as do pupils who are Visually Impaired. Pupils are generally able to recall previous work and make progress in using data and comparing and contrasting features and locations. There is also good progress in the presentation and accuracy of diagrams and maps. In Year 8, following a video on Limestone scenery, pupils made good progress in understanding weathering and had a good recall on previous lesson on 'onion weathering'. In Year 9 lessons progress was made in comparing data and understanding the relationship between rainfall and relief. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils had a good recall on previous work done in Key Stage 3 on Volcanoes and built on their knowledge and understanding. At Post-16, pupils make progress in identifying and prioritising information to apply to situations. A good example of this was seen in a lesson where past exam papers and 'model' answers were closely examined. The effective use of this technique has improved since the previous inspection and has had an impact on raising standards.
198. Least progress is made when the task set is simply to transpose information from a text book to a chart without any interpretation required or any other explanation given about the purpose of the activity. This impedes progress, especially for higher attaining pupils. These pupils make less progress than other pupils, particularly when they complete the work that has been set and additional higher level tasks are not readily available.
199. There are no marked differences in the progress of pupils from different ethnic groups but boys progress at a faster rate than girls at Key Stage 3.
200. Behaviour in most lessons is good. In many lessons there were good levels of concentration and even when there were external distractions they settled quickly to their work. Relationships with staff and with each other are good. Pupils are generally supportive of each other and when given the opportunity, work well together. Evidence of this was seen in the written accounts, and when talking to pupils about their field trips. Pupils show respect for their exercise books, text-books and wall displays, all of which are in good condition. Pupils' attitudes to learning have a positive impact on learning.
201. The quality of teaching is at least sound and often good. When teaching is good, at both Key Stages and Post-16, lessons have a clear purpose, are well planned, well paced, and contain a variety of relevant tasks. In these lessons standards of discipline are high and pupils are effectively engaged in making progress towards clear goals. A good example of this was seen in a Year 7 lesson when pupils were identifying features of the British Isles. The lesson was well paced, contained a variety of techniques to reinforce learning, and effective use was made of a video. In a Year 11 class, good use was made of open questions, relevant analogies and clear explanations of river erosion were given. Where aspects of teaching are least effective, lessons lacked pace and there was insufficient challenge in the work set for high attaining pupils, impeding their rate of progress.
202. The department contributes well to pupils' social, moral, and cultural development. Typical examples are the considerations given to the plight of migrant Mexicans in America, problems of inner city living, and the moral and social dilemmas of population growth and control. Good opportunities for social development, of particular note, are the

many opportunities that the department provides for fieldwork including residential fieldwork. The department makes little contribution towards pupils' spiritual development.

203. The department has two specialist teaching rooms in which the learning environment is improved with displays which celebrate pupils' work. The subject is, however, taught in twelve other rooms, many of which pose considerable difficulties and distractions for staff and pupils. These conditions have a detrimental effect on learning in this subject, impede progress and have a negative impact on standards.
204. With the exception of information technology, resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. Resources are good for Visually Impaired pupils. However, the resources in the Library are limited, and in view of the growing popularity of geography at Post-16, there is a lack of sufficient quality and quantity of texts.
205. The department is well managed and effectively led. Staff in the department are beginning to make more effective use of data gathered through assessment and this has had an impact on raising standards. However, monitoring and associated procedures for evaluating and disseminating good practice are not developed.
206. The department has responded well to the issues raised in the previous inspection and standards of attainment have improved.

205. **History**

207. Overall, standards of attainment are satisfactory, although lower than national averages at Key Stage 4. By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils reach Level 5 or above, in line with national expectations. Pupils demonstrate good factual knowledge and understanding of history. They are able to make comparisons between different periods. For example, a Year 8 group could distinguish some of the key differences between the style, design and interiors of medieval and Tudor houses. They are also able to describe how people in the past often had different viewpoints and values. For example, a Year 9 middle ability group recognised that attitudes to hygiene and environment were very different during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to what it had been before or what it is today. They recognised that attitudes are linked to people's knowledge, the community they come from and economic circumstances. Pupils are able to use a range of given sources and evaluate their usefulness in answering historical questions. Opportunities for more extended individual research is more limited. Pupils' understanding of chronology is unsatisfactory, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Whilst most pupils can organise different events in history into chronological order they are less secure in understanding the concepts of AD and BC.
208. At Key Stage 4 GCSE results at grades A\*-C are below national figures but have shown steady improvement since the previous inspection. For grades A\*-G results are in line with national figures. In 1999 all pupils entered achieved a GCSE grade. There is no significant difference between girls' and boys' attainment. Pupils can extract relevant data and information from sources and organise historical information to meet the needs of coursework. They are less secure in recalling key historical facts.
209. Post-16 standards are generally sound although average point scores are lower than national averages. With the exception of the 1999 results all students for the past 5 years have secured an A-level grade. Students make good use of historical sources and are able to identify different interpretations in history.
210. History makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy. Pupils encounter a range of printed reading materials. There is also evidence of a range of writing techniques being developed, although opportunities for sustained oral/discussion work are limited.

211. Although pupils use numerical data in, for example, basic graph work and timecharts, these are fairly low level activities and opportunities for more challenging tasks are missed.
212. Although the department is expected to teach aspects of ICT there is no policy or practical detail within documentation. There is evidence of word processors and databases being used but the department has received relatively limited training and it is unclear how ICT within history is assessed as part of a whole school policy. The department does have software packages such as for example Medieval Realms and CDROMs on the world wars. Easy access to computers is still a problem for pupils and, as yet, there is no direct link to the Internet for Post-16 research. Inevitably, therefore, the overall contribution to teaching and learning made by the use of ICT is unsatisfactory.
213. Overall, pupils at Key Stage 3 make sound progress although for some SEN pupils the lack of in-class support is a limiting factor. Visually impaired pupils make good progress. On entry to the school pupils have encountered a wide range of learning experiences in history. Many have a poor grasp of chronology, others have difficulty in handling source material. By the end of the key stage the majority can handle a range of different historical sources, and can identify differences and similarities between different periods.
214. By the end of Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils' work is well constructed showing sound analysis of evidence. Progress is generally sound and GCSE results show progress in reaching higher levels of attainment since the previous inspection. Progress Post-16 is sound. Some pupils find the transition from GCSE to A-level quite difficult but the department does provide careful guidance on key political concepts. For example, a Year 12 history group were observed discussing the work of Marx and the impact on political theory of Darwin and Hegel.
215. Pupils show an interest in their work and generally show high levels of concentration. They listen attentively to teachers, stay on task and, when the opportunity is given, collaborate well with one another. They are curious about the past and show an enjoyment of history, as the take up rate of the subject at GCSE and A-level makes clear. This positive attitude has a beneficial effect on standards.
216. The quality of teaching is sound and often good. Explanations are clear and well pitched to the ability of the pupils. Staff make good use of pupils' background and experiences to explain specific concepts and to check understanding. For example, in a Year 11 group, the teacher used reference to the performance of Wolverhampton football team to help distinguish between fact, opinion and judgement. Questioning techniques are good. Teachers show a genuine interest in their pupils and clearly have a love of the subject which does much to motivate pupils and sustain concentration. At times, however, the nature of some tasks is not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able. Planning is thorough and lessons are well structured using a range of sources. For example a Year 8 class looking at the key characteristics of Tudor houses were given literature on how 'estate agents' describe property, a range of pictures of Tudor properties, primary source material, and a video extract. These exemplified a range of different styles of writing and helped focus attention and interest as well as providing a stimulating learning activity.
217. At times, however, teachers talk too much and pupils find it difficult to take in the quantity of information given. This adversely affects learning. Staff rarely identify learning objectives and as a consequence it is difficult for pupils to 'review' how well they have achieved within lessons. The department has introduced differentiated targets for different ability groups but these are rarely referred to in lessons and, if they are to be useful and effective, need to be more precisely specified for each unit of work.

218. Marking is thorough. There are clear criteria for awarding marks in the departmental documentation. At times, however, comments in books relate to literacy skills at the expense of history skills. Both are important to pupils if they are to understand what aspects of their work need improvement.
219. Staff maintain good records when monitoring pupil progress. Their assessment judgements made at the end of Key Stage 3 levels are over generous. The department has produced a range of working guides to support pupils' learning. At Key Stage 4 these are generally well structured and effective.
220. Overall the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. This is most clearly seen in the improvement in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Post-16 results over time.
221. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Girls and boys achieve broadly similar results at GCSE. Staff are supportive of SEN pupils – particularly those with visual impairment. There are sets of targets for different ability groups although these are rarely 'personalised' to meet the needs of individual pupils. Staff are aware of IEPs but little reference was made to them during lessons.
222. The department has established a good system for tracking pupil progress. They appropriately use Key Stage 2 English data as a starting point and check performance through specific assessment tasks. These are related to national curriculum levels. The records also indicate whether individuals meet or exceed class targets. There is some evidence of planning to meet the needs of different abilities but there is still, at times, insufficient challenge for SEN and more able pupils.
223. Assessment is sound. Staff analyse data in relation to component parts of the syllabus at Key Stage 4 and Post-16. This is used to inform planning and teaching. There is, however, less evidence of this happening at Key Stage 3. There is also only limited analysis of performance by gender and ethnicity.
224. The history department arranges a range of field visits, including residentials in collaboration with the geography department. These do much to enrich pupils' learning experiences and positively effect attitudes and standards. Reports to parents are good although presently no specific targets for improvement are included.
225. The department contributes positively to pupils' social, moral and cultural development. Relationships are good. This is in part achieved by the effective use of humour, anecdotes and praise. Staff provide good role models for pupils. In particular, social and moral issues are identified through the provision of studies of social life of different people in changing conditions such as, for example the changing face of Wolverhampton 1750-1800. Visits to Wenlock Edge, the Yorkshire dales as well as local field studies all contribute to pupils' social development and environmental awareness. Sympathetic understanding of other cultures, their life styles and points of view are developed through topics on the North American Indians and Islamic civilisation. There is, however, less explicit work on spiritual issues within history. There are some examples of teaching when pupils are expected to discuss beliefs, and understand points of view. They are also encouraged to value each other and each others contributions in class. However, overall, opportunities are missed. There is no specific reference to this aspect of the curriculum in the department's documentation or schemes of work.
226. The department is led by an experienced manager. He has a team of staff who share a teaching philosophy and are good ambassadors for their subject. Departmental documentation and schemes of work cover most key areas. However, although generally sound they need to be reviewed. They do not, for example, clearly identify the key content

of history, nor the departments plans for ICT development in relation to teaching and learning in the subject.

227. Staff have their own individual strengths but there is currently no programme of classroom observation whereby staff can review current practice and develop strategies for further improvement. Pupils work is monitored and there is some moderation of assessment. There are, however, no records of the outcome of this work or whether it has any impact on teaching and learning.

228. The staff are well qualified and have many years of teaching experience between them. Accommodation is extremely limited. There are only two dedicated rooms which mean there is a lot of movement to other rooms across the school. This results in carrying and sharing texts and resources, delays the start of lessons and restricts the range of teaching strategies used. This was an issue identified in the previous inspection report. Staff do well with the space they have. Learning resources are good. There is a wide range of materials, including videos and artefacts. Use of high quality visual stimulus, such as for example posters and photos, is less apparent however. Access to ICT is improving and most staff are reasonably ICT literate but few good quality software programs are available. The department has produced a range of 'home grown' materials which vary in quality and effectiveness. Resources are well organised and managed within the restraints of the accommodation available.

## 227. Information technology

229. Since the previous inspection, information technology has ceased to be offered as a discrete subject in Key Stages 3 and 4 and is now taught in a range of subjects across the curriculum. The school does not meet national curriculum requirements to teach the 'handling information' aspect of information technology. There are insufficient planned opportunities within subjects for pupils to gain competence in the use of ICT. Attainment has not improved since the previous inspection.

230. Attainment in information technology is below the national expectation in Key Stage 3 and this situation does not significantly improve during Key Stage 4. Attainment by Post-16 students who study GNVQ information technology at intermediate level is well below national expectations, with students achieving unit certificates only.

231. Opportunities for communicating information are varied but unsystematic. Activities for modelling and control in technology and mathematics are planned. Pupils lack opportunities in information technology lessons to develop competence in reading, speaking and listening. In Key Stage 3 composition and extended writing by word processing is encouraged in English. In history, pupils combine words and graphics to prepare posters on Cholera. In Key Stage 4, pupils increase their capabilities using desktop publishing and electronic databases to provide leaflets for younger pupils on social/moral issues. In Year 8 mathematics pupils use spreadsheets to understand mappings and sequencing, and in Year 9 to solve algebraic problems. Although there are no significant patterns of attainment in terms of gender, ethnicity, ability or background, there is not enough time spent on using information technology to raise achievement to the highest levels for all. Those pupils without home computers are particularly disadvantaged.

232. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress in communication information and modelling in relation to their ability, but unsatisfactory progress with regard to control and handling information. In Key Stage 3 progress is satisfactory in only 60% of lessons. In Key Stage 4 pupils grow in confidence and make satisfactory progress when they are given sufficient challenge. They make good progress towards independent learning in 20% of lessons. Progress is unsatisfactory in 20% of lessons. Post-16 students make

satisfactory progress in mastering the key skills of information technology in GNVQ.

233. Pupils of high and average abilities make less progress when compared with others of similar attainment because they do not use the full range of ICT software and many of their teachers lack confidence in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs have good support and make satisfactory progress in communicating information.
234. Many subjects, including English, history, modern foreign languages, religious education and geography provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their word-processing skills. Mathematics lessons support development of modelling skills, science addresses data logging and in design and technology, pupils make satisfactory progress with control skills and apply their knowledge of graphics for industrial purposes. In Key Stage 4, in religious education, pupils make good progress developing research skills and applying information at increasingly complex levels. There is unsatisfactory progress when pupils work on low level tasks which lack purpose and which make little demand on the application of prior knowledge. When pupils share computers many are not busy and progress for some is unsatisfactory. There is no significant difference in progress between boys and girls and pupils of different ethnicity.
235. Pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are good, the majority of pupils are enthusiastic and sustain concentration. Pupils use home computers to produce coursework but the computer room is under-used for learning at lunchtimes. There is good collaborative pair work in history and in a Year 7 word-processing group. Pupils' attitudes have a positive effect on standards.
236. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in only 60% of lessons at Key Stage 3 but is generally satisfactory at Key Stage 4. There are instances of very good but also unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching to Post-16 students is good. Many teachers across the curriculum lack professional knowledge and confidence in using information technology and this impedes standards their efforts to improve standards of teaching and learning.
237. The best teaching stems from a good level of knowledge and understanding of information technology. A good range of activities both at and away from computers, presents pupils with the opportunity to become autonomous users. Weak teaching leads to confusion about what ICT is for. Pupils are given lengthy keyboard activities on low level word-processing tasks. The lack of sufficient challenging tasks for both able and average attaining pupils is evident. Many lessons lack learning objectives for information technology and its application is rarely reviewed at the end of lessons.
238. Teachers of pupils with special educational needs are confident users of information technology and provide a good level of support.
239. There is no policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within the ICT curriculum. The National Curriculum requirements for pupils to explore the social, moral and economic implications of information technology is not addressed. When pupils are given responsibility to work collaboratively they respond well. The more able pupils give valuable peer support to weaker colleagues.
240. Subject lessons devote insufficient planned time to the teaching of information technology. This is particularly so when teachers lack confidence and competence in ICT use. Data handling is not yet implemented. Access to the Internet has only recently been made possible. Pupils have no opportunities to evaluate their use of software for specific purposes. These factors have a negative impact on standards attained.
241. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in information technology across the curriculum are weak and fail to ensure that pupils develop the skills, knowledge and

understanding of information technology that they have a right to. There is a lack of resources to support independent learning. These weaknesses in planning and implementation are having an adverse effect on standards.

242. There are four well-equipped computer rooms, although in three of these there is hazardous trailing electric cabling and poor ventilation. One lacks window shading. There is a satisfactory computer to pupil ratio of 1:9. Computers and printers are up-to-date and technical support ensures a good standard of maintenance of computers and help for less experienced teachers. There are not enough displays of pupils' work or other materials which encourages interest in the subject. The information technology rooms are well managed and provide a positive learning environment which favours high standards of achievement.
243. Since the school implemented a cross-curricular framework for teaching and learning information technology there has been insufficient training for all teachers involved to become competent in this rapidly evolving subject. The information technology curriculum lacks strategic planning and standards have not risen as high as anticipated.

### **Modern foreign languages**

244. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national expectations and this is reflected in teacher assessments. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment is below national expectations. In GCSE in 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving French A\*-C grades was well below national averages, but numbers of pupils achieving A\*-C grades in German are at national averages. Pupil attainment over time show an improvement at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 French results A\*-C have remained consistently well below national averages, whilst German A\*-C results show an improvement between 1997 to 1999. Girls do better than boys at both key stages in line with the national trend. There is no significant difference in attainment by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils show confidence in listening and reading, but find more difficulty with speaking and writing at the higher levels. Pupils' capability in the use of information communications technology are below national expectations. There has been no improvement in attainment since the previous inspection. Analysis of the problem has been conducted, but there has been no effective action to remedy it.
245. Progress at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is satisfactory or better in three-quarters of lessons. Progress is rarely reviewed at the end of lessons. More able pupils and some low attaining boys are not making the expected progress. However, good progress was observed in a Year 9 French lesson where pupils were enthusiastically working in groups producing a weather forecast. A great deal of target language was being used with the final versions being videoed and pupils involved in peer assessment of the end result. Good progress was also evident in a Year 8 German lesson where pupils were actively engaged in using and learning vocabulary to say what their hobbies are. The lesson was conducted extensively in German with learning gains reviewed at the lesson end.
246. Pupils generally behave well, are courteous and trustworthy and show respect for others feelings. Pupils show interest in their work. They sustain their attention when listening to teacher input and taped extracts. Pupils are currently not given enough opportunities to work collaboratively and to take responsibility for their own learning.
247. At Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 teaching is satisfactory or better in three-quarters of lessons. Expectations of pupils are not consistently high and the work set for the more able pupils lacks challenge. These teaching weaknesses impede pupil progress. Where good teaching was seen it reflected good planning and learning activities to engage and motivate pupils. For example, in a Year 9 French lesson pupils prepared a weather forecast for videoing. Enthusiasm, pace, pupils' engagement, independent working and

problem solving were good features of the lesson. In poor lessons there was only outline planning with unclear learning objectives and poor pupil management. Teaching meets the needs of SEN pupils with the teacher being aware of IEPs although the objectives lack detail which limited their value.

248. Teachers set an example in their interactions with pupils in terms of social and interpersonal skills where respect and care are manifest. Currently, there is a Year 8 study visit to Normandy which is a testimony to the dedication of modern foreign languages staff.
249. There are no planned opportunities for the progression of Information Communication Technology skills through the modern foreign languages curriculum. The use of assessment data to inform decision making in curriculum planning is in the early stages of development. There is evidence of target setting but this is not specific enough to enable progress to be assessed and feedback to pupils to be given.
250. The head of department leads by example. She demonstrates a commitment to seeking high achievement for all pupils. An effective learning environment is, however, not being consistently maintained. There is no evidence that teaching is evaluated to improve performance and raise standards. There is no evidence of the use of GCSE data to evaluate teaching performance. The relatively high proportion of part-time staff (57%) together with the substantial number of personnel changes since the previous inspection creates a number of leadership and management challenges.
251. Learning resources are adequate. Displays in corridors show time and thought has been given to the creation of an environment as conducive to learning as possible. All the issues raised in the previous inspection report have been tackled.

## **Music**

252. The attainment of pupils in music at the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils can sing in tune and maintain individual parts in instrumental and vocal ensembles. Many perform confidently with an awareness of other players and are able to interpret moods and styles correctly. Composing and performing are well integrated well as one activity, so that by the end of Year 9, pupils play their own attractive group arrangements of popular tunes like 'In the Mood' and 'Rock around the Clock'. They use various forms of notation to help them work out the pitch of notes, and higher attaining pupils read music with rhythmic accuracy.
253. The overall attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is about average. Although the number of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in 1998 was slightly below average compared to the national subject level, the number gaining A\*-G grades was above the national level. This level of achievement has been maintained since the previous inspection. Attainment in lessons matches examination results. By the end of Key Stage 4, levels of performing and composing are generally above average, but aural skills are below average. Compositions are well structured and range from single line melodies to fully harmonised songs and instrumental pieces. Performances cover a wide range of musical styles and abilities up to a high level - about grade 6 (Associated Board).
254. A significant number of those pupils in the school who have extra instrumental lessons do well in external practical examinations at all levels.
255. Most pupils make good progress at both key stages because of effective teaching and the good resources available. At Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils develop skills which enable them to play competently and maintain individual parts in vocal and instrumental groups. Average and lower attaining pupils increase their performing and composing skills by using a variety of tuned and untuned instruments in group music-making, successfully



combining short melodies with basic rhythms and chords. All pupils learn to sing. For example Year 8 classes were learning to relate Caribbean words and melodies to a mixture of calypso rhythms to create and perform a class composition. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress by participating fully in group-activities. Visually impaired pupils make particularly good progress. One pianist regularly accompanies string players during their instrumental lessons, and some pupils have recently successfully completed GCSE music courses. Pupils generally make good progress according to their individual skills at Key Stage 4. All high attaining pupils perform expressively to a good musical standard and compose in coherent and mainly conventional musical phrase structures. Progress in aural skills is generally less than satisfactory. The music department is currently addressing this issue by providing more opportunities for listening to music at both key stages.

256. Attitudes to music are very good. There is much enthusiasm in the school for both individual and group music-making activities. The take up for GCSE is good, and group sizes of those involved are larger than in many similar schools. Behaviour, generally, is good. Most pupils take an interest in their work and share musical ideas well when collaborating in small groups. There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers. Pupils are provided with frequent opportunities to rehearse music on their own and take responsibility for their own performances. This extends beyond class activities. For example, the well-attended keyboard club enables pupils of all abilities to learn at their own pace effectively. There is a good response generally in the school to extra-curricular music, and a significant number of pupils enhance their progress by participating in the wide range of vocal and instrumental activities which are available.

257. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in a significant number of lessons. Music is taught by experienced musicians who understand pupils' musical interests and needs. Lessons are well planned to include a variety of practical activities closely related to attainment targets. In the best lessons, teachers skilfully use pupils' ideas and adapt them to create music for the whole class to perform. For example, rhythmic chord patterns suggested by a pupil in a Year 9 class were immediately incorporated and developed into a whole class improvisation in Blues style. Discipline is good, generally. It is very good in the majority of lessons, where creative enthusiasm is controlled and productive. Teachers provide good role models. Attention needs to be given to the suitability of tasks for some of the lowest attaining pupils. The imminent introduction of information technology into the music curriculum is planned to provide access for these pupils as an alternative to the more traditional routes.

258. Certain features of the accommodation are unsatisfactory. Whilst the two music rooms provide adequate teaching space generally, they are poorly sited with regard to each other. There is insufficient storage space for vulnerable instruments. The provision of cupboards makes the teaching area too cramped. At present, pupils are not always able to practise music undisturbed by other noise, and they frequently balance large instruments on their knees or practise on the floor.

259. Music is a popular subject in the school and the department is well co-ordinated. Since the previous inspection, good standards of music making have been maintained and the variety of resources has been increased. The application of computer technology and its inclusion in all aspects of the music curriculum has yet to be achieved.

## 258. **Physical education**

260. Attainment overall is slightly better than national expectations. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve the same standards as pupils in other schools countrywide, although the end of key stage teacher assessment revealed a decline in standards between 1998 and 1999. In a Year 9 badminton lesson all the pupils are able to start the game by making

use of different serves, knowing which service is most appropriate. Pupils are also beginning to plan their position on the court successfully. At least half of a Year 9 group demonstrate precision and fluency in their stroke technique. In basketball and netball lessons Year 9 pupils' ball control is good. During a Year 7 rugby lesson pupils achieve good and sometimes very good standards in basic skills, after just a few lessons. The pace in most games lessons gives pupils time for pupils to practise what they have learned and to develop new skills. Teachers challenge pupils effectively in good lessons.

261. In Key Stage 4 attainment is above national expectations. In a Year 10 soccer lesson the whole group demonstrated consistently good control of the ball as well as effective team play. As part of the Junior Sports Leaders Award course pupils in another Year 10 lesson taught warm up exercises, very successfully, to the rest of the class. At the end of the key stage many pupils achieve appropriate standards in hockey, canoeing and badminton. In both key stages good teaching is having a positive impact on pupil attainment.
262. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. Pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with visual impairment, attain standards in line with their ability. Attainment in extra curricular sport is good with individuals achieving national standard in girls' football and judo. Approximately 43% of all pupils take part in extra curricular sport in a typical year. A considerable number of pupils reach county, district and regional standards in athletics, cricket, netball, cross-country, tennis, dance and badminton. Attainment in the activities seen during the inspection week was good. Extra curricular activities are a strength of the department, recognised by the award of Sportsmark in 1998.
263. Since the previous inspection little or no improvement has been achieved in pupils' ability to evaluate their own work and that of others but attainment has been maintained. Schemes of work have not been fully updated to reflect the current National Curriculum requirements and have remained the same since the previous inspection. The raising of pupil attainment is dependent on the application of current national curriculum programmes of study.
264. Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. In a considerable number of lessons in this key stage pupils make good progress and in one Year 7 rugby lesson pupils' improved confidence and understanding is very good.
265. At Key Stage 4 pupils make better progress than pupils do in many other schools. However, the progress in Years 10 and 11 is not as good as the progress pupils make in Key Stage 3. Because of the lack of appropriate challenge, progress was unsatisfactory in a Year 11 hockey lesson and in a Year 10 short tennis lesson. In contrast pupils make good or sometimes very good progress in Year 10 trampolining, soccer and athletics.
266. Girls and boys make similar progress even in lessons where they have had less experience of that activity. In a Year 11 hockey lesson boys were able to transfer games skills learned in Key Stage 3 to the new activity. Pupils with visual impairment make satisfactory progress.
267. Pupils' response to physical education is usually good and often very good. They enjoy lessons, behave appropriately and respond enthusiastically, even in poor weather conditions. Pupils' response has a positive impact on standards they achieve. When pupils are required to work without direct supervision they do so supporting each other and concentrating on the task. Pupils take pride in their appearance, changing into appropriate kit for all activities.
268. The quality of teaching is good, overall. On two occasions, one in each key stage,

teaching is very good, challenging pupils' to raise their performance as well as improve their understanding. Generally, teachers are secure in what they teach, helping pupils to improve and to achieve high standards. Teachers enjoy positive relationships with pupils often making good use of humour. On many occasions the intentions of the lesson are shared together with a recapitulation of the last lesson, providing pupils with a positive focus. The few unsatisfactory lessons were characterised by insufficient teacher planning and too much teacher talk at the expense of activity. Giving pupils more responsibility in lessons and setting tasks that meet the needs of all pupils is inadequately developed. Insufficient opportunity is given by all teachers for pupils to observe and comment on their own work and that of others. Staff provide excellent role models for their pupils in their appearance and their own sporting expertise.

269. Assessment procedures are complex and time-consuming with self-assessment requirements adversely impacting on activity time. The commitment of pupils and staff to extra-curricular activities is outstanding with strong contacts with local sports clubs enabling pupils to continue sporting activity outside school.
270. The department is well led within a demanding context of most of the other subject staff having other whole school responsibilities, some at a senior level. Some monitoring of subject teaching occurs. This is beneficial but needs to be on a more frequent basis. A comprehensive, well-structured subject development plan and departmental handbook contribute positively to consistent practice and further development.

**269. Religious education**

271. Standards of attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with locally agreed expectations. In Key Stage 3 all pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons and in the longer term. The attainment of pupils involved in the GCSE course by the end of Key Stage 4 is broadly in line with national averages. GCSE results since the previous inspection have been consistently very close to the national average. The most recent results, however, have seen a significant improvement with nearly three-quarters of the pupils entered achieving an A to C grade. The attainment of pupils not involved in the GCSE course is unsatisfactory. Key Stage 4 pupils make satisfactory progress in the general religious education lessons but as they experience only a total of twenty lessons, there is insufficient time to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus or achieve the standards of attainment locally expected. The attainment and progress of Post-16 students generally is satisfactory. Groups at Post-16 are too small for comparison with national standards.
272. By the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of girls is slightly better than boys but not significantly so. By the end of Key Stage 4, however, significantly more girls choose to follow the GCSE course and more girls achieve higher grades. Girls who have an Indian background also achieve significantly higher grades than other pupils. Pupils reading, writing, speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. Attainment since the previous inspection has improved overall.
273. Most pupils have a reasonably secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They show particular strengths in being able to give a reasonable accurate account of some important Christian beliefs like the Golden Rule, the Resurrection and the Incarnation. They are able to use specialist vocabulary such as Holy Communion, Baptism and Crucifixion. However, many pupils' knowledge and understanding of principal religions other than Christianity is not secure. Pupils confuse information about one religion with another. They have a weak grasp of why symbols and ceremonies in faiths other than Christianity are significant and tend to volunteer generalised answers, such as for example, 'It's their religion'. They have difficulty making use of specialist vocabulary associated with religions other than Christianity. For example, they do not confidently use

words like Salat, Ramadan, Qur'an, Khanda, Kirpan or Guru.

274. The majority of pupils behave very well. They listen effectively, stay on task and respond to questions. The teacher nearly always initiates questions and pupils' responses are often limited to one-word or a short phrase. Generally, pupils show a satisfactory level of interest in their work. Occasionally they show a more engaged involvement in the lesson. For example, when using drama they perform their own version of a New Testament parable. Given an opportunity pupils are willing to work independently. For example, pupils in Key Stage 3 undertake a summer project studying topics such as local churches, Lichfield Cathedral and Islam. Pupils do work well together, although opportunities to do this are insufficiently developed. They form constructive relationships with one another and there is invariably a courteous and polite relationship established with teachers.
275. Overall, the quality of teaching in all key stages is satisfactory. Sometimes it is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject being taught. The teaching makes a satisfactory contribution to raising standards. Where teaching is good, lessons have pace, variety and activities that engage the pupils and require them to think about their own response. For example, pupils in a Year 10 lesson were invited in pairs to briefly discuss, record their thoughts and feedback to the whole class their ideas on the value or otherwise of the belief in Papal infallibility. Shortly after this activity another opportunity for pupils to develop their thinking was provided when pupils were similarly asked to discuss, record and feedback their thoughts on having an all male clergy.
276. Teaching did not contribute so successfully to pupil's learning when extensive use is made of teacher led and whole class exposition. Assignments are often merely descriptive or not set in a context that stimulated or engaged the pupils. Pupils were asked to undertake work without any preliminary discussion or guidance that would enable them to judge what would be a successful outcome. For example, pupils in Year 9 were asked to write a modern version of the parable of the Prodigal Son but there was no preliminary discussion about why it is hard to say sorry or circumstances in which it is difficult to forgive. Insufficient use is made of a variety of resources. Extensive use is made of worksheets. Assignments are often focussed on learning facts about religion rather than questions and tasks that would encourage pupils to understand the content of lessons.
277. The department is well led and well organised. Meetings take place regularly ensuring that all members of the department, are well briefed and very effectively supported. The two specialists co-operate well and together make a very effective team. The addition of a second specialist to the department has already made a valuable contribution to raising standards particularly in Key Stage 4. The department makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. The work of the department in the area of spiritual development is satisfactory. However, no progress has been made in remedying the inadequate time allocation at Key Stage 4 in order to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Although there is a commitment to high standards there is an insufficient range of teaching strategies for understanding and reflective skills to be developed. Generally however, the department has responded well to the issues raised in the last inspection. Progress has been made developing a stock of artefacts, increasing the availability of textbooks, improving the accommodation by establishing two specialist rooms and ensuring TV and video equipment is more conveniently available. Very good progress has also been made encouraging and developing pupils' ICT skills.
276. **GNVQ**
278. In 1995, as part of its plan for the development of Post-16 education the school introduced GNVQ courses. These have been enhanced and extended in subsequent years to

currently include Leisure and Tourism (Intermediate), Information Technology (Intermediate and Advanced), Health and Social Care (Intermediate and Advanced) and the STEP (Smestow Tertiary Education Programme) foundation subjects of Skillpower, Wordpower and Numberpower. Numbers of candidates have increased from 30 to the current 50. In 1998, all of the candidates who completed the course achieved a qualification at intermediate level including many with Merits and several Distinction awards through the City and Guilds awarding body.

279. In the key skills, attainment is good and pupils make sound progress. A particular strength of the programme is the good progress in the candidates' development of techniques for independent working and personal research, which is reflected in their steadily improving planning skills and their interesting and varied portfolios.
280. The programme of GNVQs at the school is enhanced through the use of visiting speakers such as the Environmental Health Officer, community leaders and links with business. In the Midbank project, which is a partnership with a local bank, the candidates interview pupil 'employees' and 'managers' for the bank and then operate it on behalf of all pupils at the school. Industrial visits have included Boulton Paul Engineering, Cadbury World, Eurodisney and Granada studios. Students who complete the Leisure and Tourism Intermediate course are encouraged to also take the Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA).
281. Pupils respond very well to the course and readily recognise their own progress. They use their personal action plans to good effect. They work conscientiously and purposefully with commitment and concentration, although at times the pace at which they work could be faster. Pupils take great pride in their work, in the presentation of their portfolios and course work. They are able to take feedback from teachers and assessors and work steadily towards successful completion of their coursework. The pupils work well together in groups and independently, co-operate effectively and contribute well to discussions. Their portfolios show evidence that they can carry out appropriate investigations and surveys. Most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress, but one pupil was found to be seriously behind in completing the Units of the information technology course.
282. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, although the pace of course work is sometimes allowed to become slow. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and, in the best lessons, there is good use of questioning to promote discussion. Planning, including that for homework, is very thorough. Effective matching of work to pupils' abilities takes place through the nature of activities offered. As several levels are occasionally taught together, the school should take care to sufficiently differentiate tasks to meet the needs of advanced level pupils. Group work is well managed and time is generally used effectively. Good use is made of pupils' own experience.
283. There is strong and effective leadership of GNVQ courses from the Head of Design Technology Department. As GNVQ work develops, the school should ensure that all staff delivering GNVQ subjects are appropriately qualified. There are several staff qualified as internal verifiers and vocational assessors, but the low number of these reduces flexibility and strength in provision of quality programmes. The courses are appropriately monitored, through the use of knowledge checks, and there is good use of data to track and predict individual pupil progress in the completion of Units in the awarding of grades. The internal verification and co-ordination of the courses is very effective and well integrated within the school year. A quality framework audit was carried out in 1997 which enabled staff to identify strengths and weaknesses in the department. This resulted in several enhancements to the programme such as the Midbank project.
284. The accommodation for GNVQ work is satisfactory, being mainly carried out in the Sixth Form area, although there is limited designated classroom space. The resources for

learning are good.

285. Having been introduced since the previous inspection, the programme of GNVQs has made significant progress, and makes an important contribution to the breadth and balance of the curriculum and in providing worthwhile opportunities for pupils to achieve external qualifications.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **284. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

286. The inspection was carried out by a team of 15 inspectors. During the week 212 lessons or part lessons were observed. All full-time, part-time and peripatetic staff present during the week were observed at least once and many were observed for several lessons. In addition, inspectors attended assemblies, registrations, tutorial time and a representative sample of extra-curricular activities.
287. Planned meetings were held with members of staff with management responsibilities, the chair of governors with other governors and a member of the parent teachers association. Inspectors looked at the written work of many pupils and all the available work of a representative group of pupils from each year group. Planned discussions were held with groups of pupils from each year group and informal discussions with many more during lessons and other activities. A pupil from Year 7, 9, 11 and a student in Year 13 were accompanied by an inspector to lessons for one day.
288. Prior to and during the week of the inspection, a large sample of documentation provided by the school was analysed. The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 27 parents prior to the inspection and considered 554 responses from the parents' questionnaire. Meetings also took place with the staff and some governors prior to the inspection.

288. DATA AND INDICATORS

287. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	974	39	80	103

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	59
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked each week	430

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	74.2
--	------

Average teaching group size:	
KS3	23
KS4	21

Financial data

Financial year:	1998-99
-----------------	---------

	£
Total Income	2,205,257.00
Total Expenditure	2,240,958.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,305.51
Balance brought forward from previous year	76,596.00
Balance carried forward to next year	40,895.00



## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

974

Number of questionnaires returned:

554

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	16.9	70.6	7.6	4.2	0.7
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	34.2	58.0	4.2	2.9	0.7
The school handles complaints from parents well	19.4	59.6	16.1	3.4	1.5
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	19.9	64.1	10.2	4.9	0.9
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	21.4	65.4	6.6	5.7	0.9
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	25.8	64.9	7.1	2.0	0.2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27.2	55.6	13.0	3.8	0.4
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	21.3	62.9	8.2	6.5	1.1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	19.7	62.1	13.2	4.4	0.6
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	15.0	63.3	15.9	4.4	1.5
My child(ren) like(s) school	31.7	54.9	8.2	4.3	0.9

### Other issues raised by parents

One or two parents commented on homework schedules not being followed. One or two were also uncertain about the setting arrangements.

### Summary of responses

A very high proportion of returns were received. They supported the ethos, work and staff of the school overwhelmingly.