

INSPECTION REPORT

Teign School
Newton Abbot

LEA area: Devon

Unique Reference Number: 113557

Inspection Number: 184615

Headteacher: Mr Alan Pritchard

Reporting inspector: Tom Ferris
4344

Dates of inspection: 1 – 5 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708088

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: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Chudleigh Road
Kingsteignton
Newton Abbot
Devon
TQ12 3JG

Telephone number: 01626 366969

Fax number: 01626 335723

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Wain

Date of previous inspection: 14 – 18 November 1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Tom Ferris, RgI		Attainment and Progress Teaching Leadership and Management
Sally Hall, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, Behaviour and Personal Development Attendance Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare Partnership with Parents and the Community
Rosemary Tong	English	Curriculum and Assessment Efficiency of the School
Paul Metcalf	Mathematics	
Laura Lindsay-Clift	Science	Equal Opportunities
John Adams	Design and Technology	Accommodation
Margaret Chilvers	Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	
David Martin	History	Resources
Helen Feasey	Geography	
Geoff Grigg	Modern Foreign Languages	
Patricia Curtis	Art	
Celia Holland	Music	Staffing
Caroline Runyard	Physical Education	
Graham Langtree	Religious Education	Pupils' Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Development
Ken Stevenson		Special Educational Needs
Antony Boyden	GNVQ	

The inspection contractor was:

Dorset School Inspection Services
Education, Libraries & Arts

Dorset County Council
County Hall
Dorchester
Dorset, DT1 1XJ
Telephone number: 01305 224529

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

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

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school 1 - 7
- Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

- Attainment and progress 8 - 22
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 23 - 26
- Attendance 27

Quality of education provided

- Teaching 28 - 37
- The curriculum and assessment 38 - 46
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 47 - 52
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 53 - 58
- Partnership with parents and the community 59 - 63

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management	64 - 75
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	76 - 83
The efficiency of the school	84 - 89

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science	90 - 113
---	----------

Other subjects or courses	114 - 207
----------------------------------	-----------

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence	208
---------------------------------------	-----

Data and indicators

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The well above average performance of the pupils at GCSE and in the national tests in Year 9.
- Well above average attainment in science, geography and drama.
- Good quality teaching in most subjects that supports and challenges pupils to do their best.
- Very good leadership from the headteacher with a strong focus on improving attainment and on maintaining the school's very positive ethos.
- The early identification of pupils who are underachieving and positive action to help them improve.
- Very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development.
- Strong relationships based on mutual respect.
- The consistency in the teachers' approach in encouraging and ensuring good behaviour.
- Very good links with the community that enrich the learning of many pupils.
- Very good support and guidance for the pupils in their personal development.
- The extensive range of extracurricular activities that enrich the experience of many of the pupils.
- The very efficient use of resources.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Well below average attainment in German at Key Stage 3 and 4 and in Spanish at Key Stage 4.
- II. Patchy provision of information and communications technology [ICT] across subjects.
- III. Insufficient time for music at Key Stage 3 and for religious education at Key Stage 4.
- IV. The overstretched provision for GNVQ in the Sixth Form which results in too many different levels being taught in the same class.
- V. Inadequacies in the management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

This is a good school, one that is continuing to improve. Its many strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in 1994. The results in English and mathematics in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have shown good improvement. The previously good attainment in science has been maintained. There has been rapid improvement in the GCSE results over the last two years, much faster than the national rate of improvement. At A-level there was very good improvement in the pupils' results in 1999. The proportion of good and very good teaching has also improved.

The school made a good response to the outcomes of its last inspection. It has successfully addressed most of the issues identified then. The criteria for the grouping of pupils are now clear. The issue of insufficient time for history, geography and science at Key Stage 3 has been resolved. The monitoring of standards by senior managers is now a strength. Work in the school's 'development circle' discussion groups is beginning to share effective teaching practice. There has been some improvement in assessment though weaknesses remain at Key Stage 3 and in the wide range of different grading systems used. The school has not found an effective means of meeting the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

The school's targets for 2000 have already been exceeded. With its clear focus on raising the pupils' attainment, on monitoring progress and on the analysis of pupil performance data, the school is well placed to continue its good improvement.

Standards in subjects

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

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Key</i></p> <p><i>well above average</i> A</p> <p><i>above average</i> B</p> <p><i>average</i> C</p> <p><i>below average</i> D</p> <p><i>well below average</i> E</p>
Key Stage 3 tests	A	A	
GCSE examinations	B	A	
A/AS - levels	C	-	

In the 1999 national assessments at the end of Year 9, the school's results in English and mathematics were well above average. In science they were above average. Judged on the points scores of all the pupils across all three subjects, the results were well above average. This was so when compared both with all schools nationally and with schools that have a similar intake of pupils. In 1998, the results were well above average in science and above average in English and mathematics. First-hand evidence from the inspection shows that the oldest pupils currently in Key Stage 3 are clearly working above the nationally expected levels in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art and in religious education. They are working below the expectation in German, music and information and communications technology. In the other subjects standards are in line.

In the GCSE examinations in 1999 the results were well above average in science, geography and in drama. They were above in English language, French, mathematics, environmental studies and in physical education. Overall the results were above the average compared with all schools nationally and well above compared with schools that have similar intakes. The weakest results were in German and Spanish and in business studies [all well below average]. Girls performed better than boys, the gap being slightly greater than the national difference. This is in the context of much improved performance by the boys in 1999. The girls simply improved even more! First-hand evidence from the inspection confirms this overall picture of standards with the one exception that attainment in business studies is much improved.

At A-level in 1999 the pupils' average points score was towards the top of the average range and was much improved compared to 1998. The results in geography, English, physics and mathematics were all

well above average. They were above in French. In most other subjects they were in line with the average. In business studies and in the Advanced GNVQ courses they were well below. Currently, however, the pupils studying at GNVQ Advanced and in business studies are performing at average levels.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	English, mathematics, science, history, geography, religious education, drama.	German
Years 10-11	Good	English, mathematics, science, history, geography, French, drama, physical education, business studies.	German, Spanish.
Sixth form	Good	English, mathematics, physics, geography.	-
English	Good	-	-
Mathematics	Good	-	-

The teaching is good. It was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of the lessons seen in the inspection, good or better in 61 per cent and very good in 23 per cent. A key feature in the strength of the teaching is the very focused and effective preparation of the pupils for external examinations. The main characteristics of the best teaching include very good expertise in the subject; effective questioning to extend the pupils' thinking; high expectations; stimulating activities and resources; infectious enthusiasm for the subject. Key features in the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching (6%) include: unclear objectives; work not well matched to the pupils' previous learning; slow pace; and, very occasionally, difficulty with discipline.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Relationships very good.
Attendance	Good. Very little unauthorised absence. The pupils like coming to school.
Ethos*	Very good. Strong commitment to high standards in work and behaviour.
Leadership and management	The headteacher provides very good direction. Some very good management in subjects, e.g. science and geography. Pastoral leadership strong.
Curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Good breadth. Lack of time in religious education for the older pupils and in music for the younger. ICT in subjects also a weakness. Good range of courses in Sixth Form but too many to handle effectively in GNVQ.
Pupils with special educational needs	The pupils generally make good progress, despite weaknesses in management of provision. Most teachers match the work well to these pupils' needs in lessons.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual sound. Cultural good. Moral and social very good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing and accommodation good. Level of resources satisfactory.
Value for money	Good. The school adds good value in Years 8 to 13.

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

The parents' views of the school

--	--

The inspectors endorse the parents' positive views. The setting of homework is generally good. However, there is some inconsistency in keeping to the planned provision of one per subject per week for the younger pupils. Inspectors would also agree that more rapid progress could be made in Year 7 and that parents would benefit from more detail of the curriculum in advance.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

1. Improve the provision of ICT by:

- ensuring that all pupils in Key Stage 4 are able to extend their skills;
- ensuring that all pupils in all years receive good opportunities to develop and apply their skills across subjects;
- ensuring that all subjects make a coherent contribution;
- improving monitoring of provision and standards;
- improving the range of resources available in subjects.

(See paragraphs 11, 21, 30, 40, 71, 75, 77, 83, 148, 151, 152 and 154.)

1. Improve standards in German and Spanish by:

- improving the teaching of German at both key stages and of Spanish at Key Stage 4;
- improving the management of each language.

(See paragraphs 11, 14, 15, 29, 38, 71, 156, 157, 157, 162, 165, 166 and 168.)

1. Improve the provision for music and religious education by:

- providing more time for music in Year 9 so that the pupils can build on the satisfactory progress they make earlier;
- providing more time for religious education at Key Stage 4 so that the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus can be fully met.

(See paragraphs 40, 168, 188.)

1. Improve the provision of GNVQ courses in the Sixth Form by:

- reducing the number of options provided in order to ensure that there are no longer too many different levels being taught in the same group.

(See paragraphs 17, 39, 71, 199, 201, 202 and 203.)

5. Improve the management of special educational needs by:

- implementing a rigorous process for the development and review of individual education plans (IEPs), based on a more thorough assessment of needs;
- setting targets that provide clearer guidance for the teachers and learning assistants in planning work for these pupils.

(See paragraphs 22, 36, 46 and 72.)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- achieving better consistency in setting homework for the younger pupils (see paragraph 31);
- achieving a faster start in Year 7 in English and mathematics (see paragraphs 41, 95 and 102);
- basing assessment at Key Stage 3 more consistently on the National Curriculum criteria (see paragraphs 45 and 68);
- improving the quality of reports to ensure they give a clearer picture of progress in relation to national standards or expectations (see paragraph 60);
- improving development planning in some subjects (see paragraph 70);
- ensuring statutory requirements are met in respect of information to parents and improving further the quality of assemblies and collective worship (see paragraphs 47 and 74).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1.The school serves the village of Kingsteignton to the north of Newton Abbot in Devon. Approximately half of the pupils come from the town. The others come from the surrounding rural area or from outside the school's catchment area. There are currently 1,281 pupils, 627 boys and 654 girls. The school is of above average size. It has increased considerably since its last inspection in 1994, both because the Sixth Form is fully in place and because of its growing popularity.

2.The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are more favourable than unfavourable. Two pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and there is one pupil for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 10.8 per cent is below average. This places the school in the above 9 per cent and up to 13 per cent bracket for comparison with similar schools. The inspection team judges that this is the correct band for the school. The grades comparing the school with schools in similar circumstances are therefore based on this. Only once in the last four years has the school's figure for free school meals been as low as 9 per cent.

3.The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. In the 1999 national tests, taken in the primary schools, the current Year 7 pupils gained results that were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The school does not have reliable figures for previous years but considers the current Year 7 to be slightly better than previous intakes.

4.There are currently 230 pupils [18%] with special educational needs in the school. This figure is slightly above the national average. Thirty-seven pupils [2.7%] have statements of special educational needs. This is broadly in line with the national average. The main needs catered for are specific learning difficulties [dyslexia], moderate learning difficulties and physical difficulties.

5.The school's main aims are to:

- .. achieve our personal best;
- .. recognise and develop strengths;
- .. care for, and respect, people and property;
- .. create a secure and enjoyable learning experience;
- .. prepare for adult life in a changing world.

1.The school's current priorities, as outlined in its development plan, are to:

- .. continue the exploration of teaching and learning styles;
- .. improve monitoring and evaluation;
- .. use ICT more extensively in the curriculum;
- .. improve literacy.

1.The school has set itself the target for 2000 of 56 per cent of the pupils achieving at least 5 A* to C grades and an average total points score of 40. Given the school's overtaking of this target in 1999, it is the governors' intention to revise these targets.

7. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	104	120	224

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	83	77	61
	Girls	112	82	79
	Total	195	159	150
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	87 (63)	71 (62)	67 (55)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	47 (28)	40 (38)	25 (23)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	81	81	57
	Girls	104	87	64
	Total	185	168	131
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	83 (81)	75 (79)	58 (71)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	40 (48)	41 (45)	34 (36)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	28 (30)

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	80	113	193

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	58	79	80
	Girls	63	110	112
	Total	121	189	192
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	63 (54)	98 (98)	99 (100)
	National	48 (46)	88 (88)	94 (93)

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	5	80
National		*

Attainment in the Sixth Form²

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

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	9	22	31

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	19.5 (12.9)	18.3 (14.8)	18.7 (14.1)	5.0(2.5)	4.0 (2.4)	4.3 (2.4)
National	* (18.2)	* (16.9)	18.2 (17.6)	* (2.7)	* (2.9)	* (2.8)

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

Number	% Success Rate

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

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

qualifications:

School	19	63
National		*

* National percentages for 1999 that were not available at the time of publication of the report.

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	93.1
	National comparative data	91.0
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.5
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	1
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	23
Satisfactory or better	94
Less than satisfactory	6

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

2.The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests, taken when they were in primary school, the pupils currently in Year 7 achieved average results in English and mathematics and above average results in science.

3.At the end of Key Stage 3, the school's results in the 1999 and 1998 National Curriculum tests were well above average compared with both the national results and with those achieved by similar schools¹. In 1999 the pupils achieved well above average results in English and above average results in both mathematics and science. In 1998 the science results were well above average while those in the other two subjects were above. In both years the average points score achieved by the pupils [the best indicator of a school's results as it takes into account the performance of all its pupils] was well above average. In 1998 the girls performed relatively better than the boys in English and science.

4.Overall, and considering the pupils' attainment on entry, these results represent good progress by the vast majority of the pupils and very good progress by some. Good teaching in science in all three years and in Years 8 and 9 in the other two subjects is a key factor that explains these good results. First-hand evidence from the inspection indicates above average attainment in lessons and in recent work in all three subjects. It is well-focused preparation for the tests that makes the difference between the attainment in lessons and the eventual test results. In science, for example, the department feels that it may not have prepared the pupils for the changes in the tests in 1999 quite as well as it had done previously.

5.In the other subjects, first-hand evidence from the inspection indicates that attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is above the expectation and that the pupils' progress is good in history, geography, art and religious education. Attainment is in line and the pupils' progress satisfactory in French, Spanish, physical education and in design and technology. It is below the expectation in music and ICT mainly because of the reduced amount of time available in Year 9; as a result the pupils make less progress than they should in these subjects by the end of the key stage. Attainment is well below the expectation in German in which weaknesses in the planning and in some of the teaching are the key factors; as a result, the pupils make less than satisfactory progress.

6.Compared with all schools nationally in 1999, the proportion of the pupils who achieved at least five A* to C grades [63%] was well above average. The pupils' average total points score was above average, just below the threshold for "well above". The percentage of the pupils attaining five or more A* to G grades, a good indicator of how a school is doing by its average to below average pupils, was also well above average. Only one pupil failed to achieve at least one GCSE grade. Compared with similar schools, the 1999 results in GCSE were well above average on all the key indicators [five or more A* to C grades; five or more A* to G grades; one or more A* to G grades; and the average total points score]. Given the pupils' attainment on entry, these are very good results, representing good progress by the vast majority and very good by some. The boys achieved results that were above average for boys nationally; the girls' results were well above the national average for girls. The gap is slightly greater than the national difference.

7.At the time of the school's previous inspection in 1994, 47 per cent of the pupils achieved at least five A* to C grades. In the following years there was no trend in the school's results. In the last two years,

¹ Schools with between 9-13 per cent of their pupils eligible for free school meals.

however, improvement has been considerable and at a faster rate than the national improvement. From the evidence of the inspection, the pupils currently in Key Stage 4 are maintaining this improvement. The school exceeded its target for 1999; indeed, the school has already exceeded its target for the year 2000 and it is the governors' intention to revise this upwards. The key factors in the improvement have been the leadership of the headteacher, better teaching and exam preparation and close monitoring by senior managers of the progress of individual pupils.

8. In 1999, the pupils achieved well above average GCSE results in science, geography and drama. Results in English literature were also well above average: however, only a relatively small number of mainly higher-attaining pupils are entered. In English Language, mathematics, French, music, environmental studies and physical education the results were above average. Consistently good teaching, including very focused exam preparation, and good to very good management explain these results. Of the other subjects, average results were achieved in design and technology, history and art; below average in media studies; and well below average results in German, Spanish and in business studies. Weaknesses in the planning and teaching explain the poor results in German and Spanish; mid-year staffing changes exacerbated the problem in both media and business studies.

9. First-hand evidence from lesson observation and from the scrutiny of the pupils' recent work indicates that high standards are being maintained at Key Stage 4 in science, geography and drama. This evidence also indicates that the subjects with above average results are sustaining this level of performance. The three subjects in which there is clear improvement compared with the most recent GCSE results are history, art and business studies in all of which the work of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 4 is now above average. In the religious studies GCSE group, standards are also above average. In all of these subjects the pupils are making good progress. Spanish and German standards remain well below average and the pupils' progress unsatisfactory.

10. In the 1999 A-level examinations the pupils' average point score increased from 14.1 to 18.7, from below average to the upper end of the average band. The key reasons for this were a stricter and more realistic recruitment policy and improvements in the teaching, including exam preparation. Well above average results were achieved in English, mathematics, physics and geography. In chemistry and German the results were above and in French, biology and art they were in line with the average. They were below average in psychology and well below in business studies. First-hand evidence from the inspection largely confirms the above picture. The best progress continues to be made in English, mathematics, physics and geography. In two subjects, however, there is clear improvement by the current pupils: in French where standards are now above average and in business studies where they are now in line.

11. In the General National Vocational Qualification [GNVQ], results at Advanced Level were well below average in 1999. To a large extent this is explained by over-optimistic recruitment. Results at Intermediate Level were above average. In the current groups the picture is reversed. Standards at Advanced are now in line with the expectation; at Intermediate they are below. The former is largely explained by better recruitment in terms of the pupils' ability. The latter is explained largely by the practice of combining Advanced [single and double award] and Intermediate pupils in the same teaching groups. As a result the work is too often not well matched to their needs and they receive too little direct teaching.

12. In English the vast majority of the pupils make good progress in all years. Reading is a particular strength. By the end of Year 9, reading is strong; most pupils read from a wide range of authors. The pupils' skills in reading and listening are good and many can justify a point of view. Standards in writing are satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, most continue to read widely and are able to explore themes in literature and to analyse language, for example in poetry. Their writing improves, though for some this is still marred by errors of punctuation and spelling. Extended writing by girls is often better than

that of boys. In the Sixth Form, most of the pupils are attaining very good standards in writing and show good levels of understanding in the literature that they are studying.

13. In mathematics also, the vast majority of the pupils make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 3, almost all of the pupils have a good foundation in number work and can apply this, for example, to fractions, decimals and percentages. They have a good understanding of shape. By the end of Key Stage 4, the more able have developed a good understanding of, and skill in, algebra and are able, for example, to solve simultaneous and quadratic equations. They have become familiar with key concepts in geometry, trigonometry and probability. The less able have a satisfactory grasp of number work for their age and have a basic knowledge of shape, space and measures. In all years, and at all levels of ability, the pupils' skills in more investigative work, whilst satisfactory, are nonetheless weaker.

14. In science, almost all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. At Key Stage 4, most make very good progress. By the end of Key Stage 3, most have a good knowledge of science facts; the more able have a good understanding of important concepts such as reactivity in metals. By the end of Key Stage 4, almost all have consolidated and extended their knowledge and understanding. Those studying for A-level apply complex concepts with confidence. In all years most undertake investigative tasks proficiently.

15. In information and communications technology [ICT], the pupils' progress is good in Years 7 and 8. It then tails off in Year 9 in which there are no timetabled ICT lessons and in which provision across subjects is patchy. As a result, standards at the end of the key stage are below the expected levels. The progress of those taking ICT to GCSE is satisfactory. For the other two-thirds of the pupils, progress depends too much on personal interest, the availability of equipment at home and whether or not their subject teachers provide opportunities. Additional courses in the Sixth Form enable many to improve their skills.

16. The overall progress of pupils with special educational needs in the subjects of the curriculum is good. It is very good in science. They also do better than is often seen in French, geography and history. In relation to their individual education plans [IEPs] most improve their reading skills. Progress in writing, including spelling, is, however, often less than satisfactory. Progress toward targets in areas such as numeracy and personal organisation is also often unsatisfactory for the younger pupils. The basic problem is that the targets in the IEPs are too imprecise. As a result, the teaching and other support for these aspects lack a sufficiently clear focus. The most able pupils in the school generally make good to very good progress.

22. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

17. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good and have a beneficial effect on their attainment and progress. The pupils are generally enthusiastic about their work and enjoy lessons. During a discussion with inspectors, one of the younger pupils said that during the holidays he had missed coming to school! The pupils settle to work quickly and listen attentively to their teachers. This was seen in a Year 7 English lesson, when pupils sat enthralled as the teacher re-told the story of the mythical 'Seal People'. Boys and girls respond equally well to the challenge of their teachers' questions. The pupils are able to solve problems and generate ideas and are confident to ask for help in clarifying points they do not understand. They are able to select resources and use equipment responsibly, for example when conducting scientific experiments. The pupils' presentation of their work is generally good and they show pride in their finished tasks. Pupils with special educational needs also have positive attitudes to their work.

18. The pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. Only in a very small number of lessons was the behaviour of some of the pupils less than satisfactory. This reflects the findings of the previous OFSTED

inspection. The school operates as an orderly community. The pupils behave very well in assemblies, in the dining hall and at lunchtime when they are allowed to stay in certain classrooms without close supervision. They have a clear understanding of the school's code of conduct and generally respond well to the system of rewards and sanctions. They are trustworthy and generally show respect for school property. There were no permanent exclusions during the previous year and the number of fixed-term exclusions was much lower than in similar schools.

19. Relationships throughout the school are very good and are a major strength. The pupils are friendly and relate positively to one another. The physically disabled pupils are well integrated into the school community. The pupils collaborate well, working well together in groups. They support each other in the lessons and older pupils volunteer to help in lower school lessons. The pupils trust and respect their teachers and respond well to humour in lessons. The pupils are helpful and courteous to visitors and talk to them with confidence. Relationships between the pupils with special educational needs and the learning support assistants are good.

20. The personal development of the pupils is very good. It is a major strength of the school. The vast majority of pupils are proud of their school; the older pupils recognise that they have developed in confidence. For example, the Year 10 pupils who trained as 'peer mediators' and now offer a confidential counselling service for Year 7 pupils said that their training and work had increased their communications skills and self-esteem. The pupils participate with enthusiasm in a wide range of outdoor activities such as Tens Tors expeditions and short courses in windsurfing and skiing. Many pupils are willing to take responsibility and show a capacity to use initiative. For example, the members of the upper school council put forward ideas about the aims of the school, including what became number one in the school's list of aims: 'To achieve our personal best'. The pupils raise money for charity. The Year 10 pupils organise events for 'Matty Day', to commemorate the life of a former pupil. The pupils are willing to listen to what others have to say. In a social educational lesson, the pupils expressed their views on relationships and teenage pregnancies, without fear of ridicule. Their knowledge of citizenship is enriched through the active participation in the Teignbridge Student Council by some Sixth Form pupils. A mutual respect has grown up between pupils and a local Veterans group as a result of a history department event.

26. **Attendance**

21. The pupils' attendance is good; this judgement broadly reflects the findings of the last inspection. Parents state that the vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. The attendance rate of 93.1 per cent is above the national average. The unauthorised absence rate of 0.5 per cent is below the national average. Nearly all pupils are punctual; lessons start and finish on time. Attendance rates are maintained as pupils progress through the main school. For example, it is just as good in Year 11 as in Year 7. This has a beneficial effect on their attainment and progress.

27. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

27. **Teaching**

22.The overall quality of the teaching is good. This is a key factor in the mainly above average performance of the pupils and the good progress they make. Of the lessons observed in the inspection, 94 per cent were judged to be at least satisfactory, 61 per cent to be good or better and 23 per cent to be very good. Compared with the last inspection this represents a significant increase in the proportion of good or better teaching. There was no significant difference in the quality of the teaching in either key stage or in the Sixth Form. Within Key Stage 3, however, there were fewer lessons in the good and very good categories in Year 7. This was mainly due to the relatively slow start in English and mathematics. The year with the highest proportion of very good teaching was Year 13 in which one in three lessons were judged to be in this category. The teachers' enthusiasm and expertise and the added focus of the external assessments are the key factors in this.

23.There is good teaching in almost all subjects. The teaching is most consistently good in science, geography, drama, history, mathematics [after Year 7], French, religious education, physical education, business studies and in information and communications technology [ICT]. It is weakest in German at both key stages and in Spanish at Key Stage 4. The subjects with the greatest variation are English and that part of the school's personal and social education programme taught by tutors. In both areas a relatively high proportion of good and very good teaching is accompanied by slightly more unsatisfactory teaching than in other subjects.

24.The teachers' knowledge and expertise in the subjects they teach is good. It is particularly so in English, French, mathematics, science, geography and art. Only in religious education at Key Stage 4 does the small amount of non-specialist teaching have some adverse impact on standards. The teachers' expertise in ICT is good in the specialist teaching in Years 7 and 8 and in the GCSE course. It is, however, weak across the curriculum.

25.The teachers' expectations are appropriately high in the majority of lessons. They are very high in science, drama and geography. They are too low in German and in Spanish at Key Stage 4. Overall, the teachers' planning is good. Weaknesses identified in the last inspection in relation to matching the work appropriately, especially to pupils of average ability, have been largely overcome. In all but a very few lessons the teachers' discipline and management of their pupils are good. They use their time well and generally select resources that are both appropriate and stimulating. Their day-to-day assessment of how their pupils are doing and their feedback to them is satisfactory overall. It is very good in science and good in mathematics, geography, art, physical education and religious education. It is weak in German, Spanish and in design and technology. The planning and setting of homework is generally good, especially at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form. Most teachers set good quality tasks for homework. This is particularly so in science and history. Nevertheless, not all teachers manage to keep to the planned provision of one homework per week in most subjects at Key Stage 3.

26.The key features of the best teaching [seen in approximately one lesson in five] are:

- very good knowledge of, and infectious enthusiasm for, the subject;
- high expectation of the level and quality of the pupils' participation in the lesson;
- effective questioning;
- very clear objectives;
- stimulating resources;
- brisk pace.

1.Several examples of very good teaching illustrate these features. In a Year 11 English lesson, the teacher held the pupils spellbound with an anecdote on racial prejudice before leading on to a challenging task requiring the pupils to read between the lines and to analyse the language in "To Kill a Mocking Bird". The pupils made very good progress in the lesson in developing sophisticated reading skills. In a Year 8 drama lesson based on the Dartmoor legend of Jan Reynolds, the teacher's

enthusiasm and very effective methods [based on “freeze – show – discuss”] led to very good gains in understanding character and in developing role-play. In a Year 13 geography lesson, based on earthquake risk and hazards in Japan, the teacher’s very good knowledge of the specific topic, the ability to bring out the human side of the consequences for vulnerable people and the choice of stimulating resources [including a case study of the Kobe disaster] enabled the pupils to make very good gains in their understanding of both the science of prediction and the actual impact on people.

2. In the relatively small number of less than satisfactory teaching seen [6%] the key factors are:

- objectives that are not clear enough;
- work not well matched to the pupil’s previous learning;
- slow pace;
- [in some] difficulty in managing the pupils’ behaviour and in getting them involved in the lesson.

1. For example, in a Year 8 German lesson, the teacher’s unsatisfactory planning led to the pupils being asked to carry out tasks for which they had not been adequately prepared. Low expectations, particularly, but not only, in conducting the lesson almost entirely in English, plus insufficient opportunities for the pupils to practise the new language, led to only very minimal progress. In a Spanish lesson in Year 10, the teacher’s difficulty in controlling some of the boys in the class and a choice of resources that were too difficult led to little being achieved.

2. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally good in the subjects of the curriculum. Most teachers match the work well to the needs and previous learning of the pupils. For example, in a lesson in Year 9, the teacher posed quick-fire questions to specific pupils helping them to recall what they had learned in the previous lesson and moving them quickly on to the new work for the day. In English at Key Stage 3 the match of the work to the pupils’ specific needs is a relative weakness, leading to sound, rather than good, progress. Overall, however, the strength of the teaching to these pupils is a key factor in the generally good progress they make. This is generally in spite of, rather than because of, the quality of the pupils’ individual education plans. Too often these contain targets and strategies that are too vague to provide clear guidance for the teaching.

3. The learning support assistants provide good support. They have very good knowledge of the pupils’ difficulties and generally give effective and sensitive help, encouraging pupil self-organisation and supporting the learning of the subject content. For example, in a geography lesson the assistant intervened quickly to support an identified pupil who was beginning to lose concentration, checking that he understood what he had to do, helping him to get started and ensuring that his and others’ learning was not disrupted. The intervention of the learning support assistants is occasionally less effective when they have not been informed in advance of the lesson plan and their role in it.

37. The curriculum and assessment

38. The school provides a sound curriculum which is balanced and broadly based for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. It offers a suitable range of opportunities, including additional studies for pupils in the Sixth Form. After allowing for the statutory demands of the curriculum, the school uses the time at its discretion appropriately. It provides additional time for core and foundation subjects, opportunities for drama, tutorial work and environmental studies in Key Stage 3 and a range of options and social education in Key Stage 4. The provision of personal and social education, including sex education and appropriate attention to drug misuse, is good.

1. In the Sixth Form the number of A and AS Level subjects has been reduced but there is still a reasonable choice and a wide range of GNVQs on offer. However, the organisation of GNVQ courses

is not satisfactory because pupils working at different levels are grouped together and the teachers are unable to meet the wide range of demands within the group. This is currently under review.

2. In most respects, the curriculum meets statutory requirements. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully resolved the shortage of time in Key Stage 3 for history, geography and science. However, in the current timetable there is insufficient time for music to cover the programme of study. In Key Stage 4 there is insufficient provision for ICT and not enough time allocated for religious education. This inevitably has a negative impact on the standards achieved and in neither subject are statutory requirements fully met.

3. All pupils have equal opportunity to learn and make progress. The criteria for the setting of groups have been reviewed since the last inspection and there are teaching groups of similar ability and prior attainment in most subjects. Teachers make good use of this organisation to plan suitable work for all levels of ability and base their planning appropriately for pupils to make progress through the National Curriculum programmes of study. In English and mathematics not enough attention is paid to the work pupils at all levels have undertaken in Key Stage 2. This means that some pupils are marking time in Year 7, repeating work from their primary school.

4. The curriculum largely meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. In English, however, planning for pupils with special educational needs is not closely enough matched to their needs to enable them to make more than satisfactory progress. The withdrawal of some pupils for individual and small group work is carefully planned so that it does not disrupt their other studies.

5. In physical education all the traditional sports are well represented. Outdoor and adventurous activities are a strength at Key Stage 4. Activities include climbing, canoeing, caving, skiing, camping and hillwalking. Pupils also participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and in the Ten Tors event. The school has a very good programme of sports clubs and teams. The overall participation rate is high, at approximately 50 per cent of the pupils, and the school has been awarded the Sports Mark for this programme. There is also a very good range of extra-curricular activities in the arts. These include dance and art clubs, choir, orchestra, junior band, wind ensemble, string group and jazz band. Additionally, there are clubs in French, engineering, computing, technology and science. The pupils also have good opportunities to undertake a range of visits and to extend their learning in a good variety of contexts beyond the school.

6. The careers programme is good. It is carefully planned and pupils are well informed about the range of options open to them. Work experience in Years 10 and 12 contributes significantly to preparing the pupils for the next stage of their lives.

7. Assessment is satisfactory, although there are weaknesses in the procedures for assessing progress in Key Stage 3. At the time of the last inspection, assessment was described as inconsistent and the school was encouraged to share practice in this area. There has been some sharing and productive debate about assessment but pupils still receive a variety of grades and marks and the school policy does not give enough guidance to staff to ensure that all subjects take a similar approach. In some subjects, for example science and physical education, there are good systems for ensuring regular and accurate assessment. In others, such as mathematics, not enough attention is paid to regular and accurate assessment against the criteria and levels of the National Curriculum in Key Stage 3. Practice is generally better in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form where examination work provides clear guidance for assessment. Most subjects make good use of the information they gain from assessment to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

8. Assessment for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The procedures for assessing

the needs and the progress of pupils lack rigour and parents are not sufficiently involved. However, the annual review process for pupils who have statements is thorough and meets the statutory requirements.

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

9. At the time of the last inspection, statutory requirements for collective worship were not being met. This is still the case. Assemblies observed by inspectors were well planned and of a satisfactory standard. For example, Year 10 and 11 assemblies on the ideal citizen highlighted the importance of self-esteem and confidence. In some assemblies, however, there was little time for personal reflection and the impact of the key messages was lessened by too many notices.

10. The school does not have an overall policy for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and few subjects include these aspects in their planning. However, there are some examples of good practice in each aspect.

11. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There are very good opportunities in religious education. For example, in Year 7 the teachers enable the pupils to reflect on their own feelings and relationships. In Year 10 they are helped to reflect on their values and the moral choices they make. In personal and social education (PSE) there are helpful and sensitive opportunities for the pupils to consider issues of loss and bereavement. Opportunities elsewhere in the curriculum for spiritual development are limited.

12. Provision for moral development is very good. In science, the pupils consider issues of caring for the environment and energy conservation and in geography they consider the importance of people's values. In design and technology moral issues are an important feature of the child development course. The quality of relationships in the school highlight strong moral development. In religious education the pupils show a mature approach to issues of prejudice and racism. The PSE programme, particularly through the effective use of visitors from organisations such as Alcoholics Anonymous and the Samaritans, provides valuable opportunities for pupils to consider important ethical issues.

13. Provision for social development is very good and is a strength of the school. The pupils exercise responsibility in a range of ways, for example peer mediation in Year 10 to help pupils resolve conflicts. Through the various pupil councils they have been actively involved in developing anti-bullying policy and strategies. The school's wide range of extracurricular activities, trips and residential visits also supports the pupils' social development.

14. Provision for cultural development is good. In religious education the pupils develop a good understanding of the main religions represented in the United Kingdom. Their understanding of Judaism is enriched by visits to a synagogue and the Holocaust Memorial Trust. The Key Stage 3 history curriculum features a study on black peoples. In geography the impact of earthquakes in Turkey was sensitively explored through the medium of the Turkish press. In art the pupils show a good understanding of other cultures, for example in their work on Islamic architecture patterns and African textiles.

52.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

15. Overall, the school's work in supporting and guiding its pupils has a positive impact on the standards achieved. Parents who attended the meeting before the inspection expressed the view that the school provided good help and support for their children.

16. The school is successful in fulfilling its aim to care for and respect people. The school's pastoral system is very effective in providing a support mechanism for the pupils' personal welfare. Heads of

year are committed in their role of caring for their pupils. The staff are approachable, know the pupils well and value them as individuals. The continuity of care is enhanced by form tutors and heads of year remaining with their tutor groups for two or three years. Lunchtime supervision is well managed. Good links with primary schools ensure that the transfer and induction of new pupils is as smooth as possible. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from their tutors, their class teachers and the learning support assistants.

17. The school's procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic progress and personal development are very good and are a major strength. Senior managers closely monitor the pupils' attainment and progress. Staff then work closely with pupils when difficulties have been identified. Helpful information in the form of termly interim reports is prepared by subject tutors. This alerts senior managers and parents to areas of concern.

18. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are good. There is a clear attendance policy which gives detailed guidance to staff on following up absences. There are good links with the education welfare officer who meets with heads of year each week. Attendance in lessons in the Sixth Form is closely monitored. Sixth form pupils are allowed to come to school in time for their first lesson of the day and leave when their lessons have finished. Their attendance is recorded through the 'signing in/out book'. This is effective in enabling the school to know who is on-site and who is not.

19. The measures to promote discipline and good behaviour are very good and are a major strength of the school. The school operates as an orderly community. The ethos of good behaviour is reinforced in lessons and by the example of pupils and adults working in the school. This is underpinned by a very clear code of conduct. Detailed procedures for sanctions and rewards are printed in the pupils' diaries and are displayed around the school. Heads of year monitor inappropriate behaviour and pupils value the system of merits and certificates. Pupils and staff were involved in drafting the anti-bullying policy. The school has, however, not drawn up a policy on the use of control and restraint of pupils.

20. The school's arrangements for promoting the health, safety and general well-being of the pupils are generally satisfactory. The school has good links with health professionals such as the school nurse. A regular multi-agency group, which includes the pastoral team, meets regularly to discuss pupils who have serious problems. Procedures for child protection are sound. A deputy headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection but has not received any recent training. The school has a useful policy for staff; awareness training is included in the induction programme for all new staff. A good number of staff are qualified in first aid. Appropriate procedures are in place for giving medication and caring for pupils who are ill or injured. The school pays due attention to health and safety. Staff in each department carry out termly audits of specific areas and undertake risk assessments; governors also make checks. Health and safety concerns raised in the last report have been fully addressed. Various minor concerns were brought to the attention of the administration manager and heads of departments during the inspection.

58. Partnership with parents and the community

21. The life of the school is enriched by its relationships with parents and the community. These links have a beneficial effect on the pupils' learning. The school has sustained and developed the good practice reported at the time of its last inspection.

22. The quality of information which the school provides to the parents is satisfactory. Termly newsletters are of an appropriate standard and inform the parents of future events and celebrate the school's successes. The parents of new pupils are very well informed through a useful prospectus, meetings and the opportunity of a personal interview with the headteacher. However, the prospectus and annual governors' report do not contain all the information that they should, including some

required information on the provision for special educational needs. The parents are invited to two consultation evenings with staff. These provide valuable opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss their children's progress. The parents receive useful interim reports, which highlight strengths and areas for concern, and a detailed pupil annual report. Although broadly sound, the reports do not always give parents a clear picture of their children's attainment in relation to national expectations or standards. The parents of Year 9 and Year 11 pupils receive appropriate information about the options available at the next stage of their children's education. Some parents who attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting said they received little information in advance about the curriculum, which made it a bit more difficult to support their children's learning at home. It is the view of the inspection team that parents would benefit from more detail of the curriculum in advance.

23. At the parents' meeting and in the questionnaire responses, parents expressed the view that they found it easy to approach the school with queries or problems and that concerns were taken seriously.

24. The parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. The parents made significant contributions to the drafting of the home/school agreement and most have signed the adopted contract. The active Friends of Teign School organises fund-raising and social events. The school values the help offered by parents to assist in the library and with extracurricular activities such as Ten Tors. Although most parents view and sign the homework diaries the potential of the diaries for quick, direct communication between teachers and parents is not used as much as it is in some schools. The involvement of parents in the annual review of statements of special educational need is appropriate. Their involvement in the review of progress towards targets in their children's individual education plans is less effective than it should be because of the lack of precision in the plans.

25. The school's partnership with the community is very good. It is a major strength. These links make a very positive contribution to the pupils' attainment and personal development. The school makes very good use of visitors to enrich the curriculum. For example, a serving prisoner talked to older pupils about his life in prison and his drug addiction. Year 8 pupils interviewed retired service personnel as part of their independent research into the Second World War. There are very good links with local employers which enable pupils to prepare for the world of work and life after school. All Year 10 and Year 12 pupils undertake work experience. Some local businesses assist with mock interviews and GNVQ pupils benefit from good quality work placements. Some teachers also undertake beneficial work placements. The school is a member of the Teign Valley Academic Council and there are good links with feeder primary schools for the transfer of the Year 6 pupils. There are established curriculum links in science and a music teacher regularly takes singing lessons at feeder primary schools. There are, however, few curriculum links in other subject areas. The pupils take part in sporting competitions and participate in the local carnival. The school makes good use of the local environment for field studies, residential visits and outdoor pursuits. There are established links with the local church and pupils raise money for various charities. Sixth form active participation in Teignbridge Student Council has resulted in pupils having a better understanding of local government.

63. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

63. Leadership and management

26. The overall quality of leadership and management in the school is good. It is having a positive impact on both the standards being achieved by the pupils and on the quality of their education.

27. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He has a clear vision for the development of the school. This is based on the establishment and maintenance of a strong ethos, on continuous improvement in the performance of the pupils and on strong links with parents and the community. In 1996 and 1997 the school's GCSE results were disappointing. The current strong focus on

improvement has developed in part as a positive and determined reaction to that disappointment. Out of discussions with the teaching staff, with governors and with pupils emerged a coherent and ultimately effective strategy. Key elements of this have been: enhanced analysis of national and local comparative data on pupils' performance; an extensive programme of mentoring of individual pupils; intervention in areas of weakness, both subjects and, at times, individual teachers not performing as well as they should. In this strategy the headteacher has been well supported by senior managers and governors. The positive results of the overall strategy are clearly seen in the considerable improvement in the GCSE results in 1998 and 1999 and in the A-level results in 1999.

28.The school's ethos is strong. The thrust towards raising attainment is now widely shared by the staff. There is a very good emphasis on equality of opportunity. The importance of good relationships underpinning everything the school does and being a crucial pre-condition in helping pupils to raise their expectations of themselves is universally shared.

29.Senior managers are now making very good use of comparative data on pupil performance. In addition to national data provided by OFSTED and the DfEE [Department for Education and Employment], they make particularly good use of value-added information on the progress of individual pupils through Years 10 and 11. Together with the heads of the lower [Years 7-9] and upper schools [Years 10-11] and the head of the Sixth Form, they also make good use of the school's interim reporting system. Through this they identify from an early stage pupils who do not appear to be doing as well as they should be.

30.The school's aims are succinct and clear. They underpin all the school's work. A special feature is the influence of the pupils, through their councils in the wording of the first aim, 'To achieve one's personal best', an aim which is clearly inclusive of everyone in the school community. The school has an appropriate range of policies, both statutory and not. Most are well translated into the day-to-day working of the school. One area of relative weakness here is the school's marking and assessment policy which is not consistently implemented.

31.The monitoring of the teaching is sound. Although there is as yet no structured and sustained programme, there is nonetheless good analysis of the performance of individual teachers, related for example to pupils' performance in external assessments. There is some monitoring of colleagues by some heads of department, though as yet this is patchy. Money and time have appropriately been allocated for later this year to extend this activity. Curriculum developments are well monitored through the termly meetings between heads of department with the headteacher and the deputy head who has line management responsibility for the department.

32.There are a number of strengths in the school's development planning. The review of the success of the previous plan, including areas that did not improve as much as hoped, is thorough, honest and rigorous. The current plan itself focuses appropriately on a small number of key priorities, all clearly related to improving the pupil's attainment. There are good links between the overall school plan and the subject and other plans, all of which outline some contribution to the key priorities. The process of developing the plan, particularly discussion involving key staff and governors in the 'development circles', was good. The main weakness is the variation in the quality and usefulness of the subject plans. These are good in geography, science, mathematics, religious education and physical education. At best sound in the other subjects, they are however weak in English, design and technology and for special educational needs.

33.Within subjects the quality of leadership and management is very good in science and geography. It is no coincidence that these are two of the subjects in which the pupils' performance is best. Key features include a clear vision of improvement, healthy self-criticism, intervention where there are weaknesses in individual pupil performance or in the teaching and the creation of strong teamwork well

focused on continuing to improve the teaching. Some of these features are also present in the good leadership and management in mathematics, physical education, art, religious education, history and French. The management of English, music, design and technology and for the specific ICT courses are sound. There are, however, weaknesses in the school's arrangements for the overall management of ICT across the curriculum and for the provision of the GNVQ courses in the Sixth Form. These affect both the quality of the provision and the overall standards achieved. The one area where the absence of clear management is having a profound impact on the standards achieved is in German and Spanish. In respect of the support and guidance of the pupils, the quality of the leadership and management provided by the heads of the lower and upper schools and by the head of the Sixth form is very good.

34. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Most of these pupils make good progress in spite of, rather than because of, the quality of the management in this area. The department has currently no clear direction; planning is weak. The quality of the pupils' individual education plans leaves much to be desired. The pupils' targets and the strategies defined to achieve them are often too vague to provide clear guidance to teachers. The review and evaluation of the pupils' plans lack rigour. The learning support assistants are not given the level of support they need; they do their best in the circumstances, often providing good support to pupils. With better management their work would nevertheless be more effective. The school has recognised the weakness in the management of the provision for these pupils. A thorough review has been instigated and temporary arrangements for co-ordination are being implemented, pending a new appointment.

35. The school has a strong and effective governing body. The governors have a very good knowledge of the school, of its strengths and its few areas of weakness. A significant number of governors are able to spend time in the school on a regular basis despite work commitments. They attend subject meetings, participate in discussions in the 'development circles' and visit lessons in the subject to which they are "attached". They then report back to the full governing body. Areas in which the governors have effectively played the role of "critical friend" have included the establishment of the termly health and safety audit, strict guidelines for cost-effectiveness in the Sixth Form provision and the need for identified contingency in the budget. The latter was particularly significant several years ago when the school management was tempted to retrieve a temporary budget deficit [resulting from external mismanagement of a building contract] too quickly.

36. Most statutory requirements are met. The areas where this is not fully the case are: collective worship, provision for ICT and religious education at Key Stage 4; some reporting requirements in the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents; the provision of GNVQ in science at Key Stage 4.

37. The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in 1994, particularly in raising standards at GCSE and A-level. Governors, the headteacher, senior managers, the key pastoral staff and many of the subject heads have played an influential role in this. A positive response was made to the issues identified last time. Most have now been satisfactorily addressed. The criteria for the grouping of pupils are clear and the arrangements almost always effective. Time for geography, history and science has been improved and is now satisfactory. Time for music at Key Stage 3 is, however, still not sufficient and more time is needed at Key Stage 4 for religious education to ensure that the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus can be met. The school has given good attention to reviewing and extending teaching approaches and has improved the overall quality of the teaching. The 'development circle' discussion groups are providing a good vehicle for the sharing of good practice across subjects. Assessment has improved, though inconsistencies remain in marking, particularly the use of a wide range of different grading systems. Monitoring of standards is now a clear strength of the school. The health and safety requirements pointed out in design and technology are now met. The one area where the school has not been able to make progress is in meeting the statutory requirement for a

daily act of collective worship.

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

75. **Staffing**

38. The school has a sufficient number of teachers to meet the needs of its curriculum. Most are very well qualified with a good range of experience. This good match between qualifications and the demands of the curriculum is reflected in the good examination results. In mathematics and religious education where there is some non-specialist teaching, the teachers are well supported by the head of department; even so, standards in religious education are adversely affected to some extent by this non-specialist teaching at Key Stage 4. There is a predominance of experienced teachers, although in recent years a number of new staff, including newly qualified teachers, have joined the school and are a positive source of new ideas. There is good technical support in science and design technology but no technical support in art. A good number of learning support assistants make a sound contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The school has a full-time and a part-time librarian who make a valuable contribution to the curriculum. Administrative staff provide good support to the teachers and senior staff. A particular strength is the service provided by the administrative team who process data for analysis by senior managers and the teachers.

39. The provision for staff development is carefully planned and monitored. All teaching and non-teaching staff have access to training on courses provided by the county and external agencies. Access to courses and professional development is provided appropriately in response to the priorities identified by the school, department development plans and individual needs. Staff development is evenly spread and well co-ordinated and the school recognises the need to find more ways of sharing good practice within the school. The one area in which more is clearly needed is in ICT. Appraisal broadly follows the Devon county system but the school is currently awaiting the new regulations. The recently revised national arrangements for induction and support of newly qualified teachers have been implemented successfully.

77. **Accommodation**

40. The quality of the school's accommodation is good. It has improved significantly since the last inspection. This has been the outcome of a comprehensive and very well planned building programme.

41. Specific improvements which have had a positive impact on the quality of the pupils' learning include:

- the new science laboratories;
- the new facilities for design and technology, specifically for work in resistant materials and in food technology;
- the enhanced facilities for music.

1. A small number of areas remain where the accommodation is less than adequate:

- within design and technology, for graphics and textiles (both cramped and lacking in some basic facilities);
- within the much improved accommodation for music there remains a lack of spaces for work in small groups.

1. With these exceptions, the accommodation is good across the curriculum and has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress in almost all subjects. The school has undertaken considerable work to meet the needs of its physically disabled pupils. There is now satisfactory access to almost all areas. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that the difficulties of access to two areas of the school do not impact on the pupils' learning opportunities.

81. **Learning Resources**

2. Resources for learning are adequate in almost all subjects of the curriculum. This is having a positive impact on standards. The range and quality of resources are very good in English; they are good in religious education, physical education, geography and for the specific ICT courses. There are significant shortcomings in design and technology (particularly for electronics, textiles and graphics) and Spanish (particularly for pupils of average and below average ability). These shortcomings are not due to a lack of funds but rather to decisions on the allocation of funds in these departments. Resources to support special educational needs are unsatisfactory.

3. The deficiencies in the library provision, identified in the previous inspection report, have been rectified. The heavy investment in the library has addressed the shortcoming identified in the previous report. The stock of books in the library is good for the size and type of school both in terms of range and quantity. It is well stocked for all subjects. Spending on library provision is well above average. The computerised system for monitoring the use of the library and its stock is working effectively. The library is well managed, supports subjects well and caters well for the reading needs of pupils of all abilities. The school has an adequate number of computers to support the curriculum. There are four well-equipped computer rooms. In many subjects, for example in art and music, there remains an inadequate provision of ICT programs. This obviously limits the pupils' experience of ICT across the curriculum. There has been some, but overall insufficient, improvement since the last inspection in this respect. The school provides good opportunities for the use of external resources, such as educational visits and the local environment. These include theatre visits, fieldwork, such as a study of the local area in geography and site work in history, for example at Totnes Castle and Lanhydrock House. Very good use is made of outdoor activity centres in physical education for activities such as water sports, caving and skiing, and of local religious communities in religious education.

83. **The efficiency of the school**

4. The school has maintained the careful budget planning and management described at the time of the previous inspection. Since then the school has husbanded its resources with great care and has successfully addressed the deficit arising from building work four years ago without detriment to the curriculum and levels of resourcing.

5. The budget-setting process is aided by high quality and detailed information about future needs over a five year period. This enables the governors to be effective in discharging their responsibility for planning the use of resources. There is sensible planning for contingencies and guidelines for spending are well informed by comparative figures. Close consideration is given to the range of subjects on offer in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form and to decisions about class size and the allocation of time for

teachers to undertake management responsibilities. Staff are well informed about financial decisions and the impact of spending decisions is appropriately monitored. Spending on the Sixth Form is kept under review and, given the efficient use of resources in this area and the good standards achieved, the Sixth Form is cost-effective.

6. Money is targeted at developments which have an impact on pupils' learning. For example, spending on support staff has been increased to provide administrative support for teachers and to enable them to concentrate on their teaching. Development planning at departmental level is not sufficiently detailed to provide a close guide for spending but money is set aside to support developments in the curriculum for which heads of department can bid.

7. Effective use is made of staffing, accommodation and learning resources. The deployment of teaching staff is particularly efficient. The money earmarked for provision for pupils with special educational needs is used appropriately to provide a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. The school has supplemented this funding to ensure that pupils who are physically disabled have good access to school buildings. Good use is made of the grant for staff training.

8. Financial control is very secure. Detailed information is available to senior staff and to governors to enable them to monitor spending and to plan and finances are kept in very good order. Efficient administration enables the school to run smoothly.

9. The funding per pupil is higher than average. The school nevertheless uses its resources effectively and provides a good quality education. The pupils make good progress, reach high standards in their work and in their behaviour and personal development. Taking account of all these factors, the school is judged as giving good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

89. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

89. English

10. Standards of attainment in English are good. There has been an upward trend over the last three years in the results at the end of Key Stage 3, in GCSE and at A-level.

11. Key Stage 3 results in English in 1999 were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. These very good results were well ahead of 1998 results, particularly in the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 or above. In lessons, the pupils are reaching standards which are about average in Years 7 and 8 but above average by the time they are in Year 9. They perform well in the National Curriculum test because they are very well prepared for the test requirements. By Year 9, reading is established as an area of strength, with pupils choosing a range of authors from Roald Dahl to Charlotte Bronte. Skills in speaking and listening are also good and contribute to very good standards in drama. Many pupils are able to justify their point of view in discussion. For example, Year 9 pupils were fluent in arguing their case in a discussion on gender stereotyping. Standards in writing are about average. Girls reach higher standards than boys do but many pupils handle a range of writing competently, in spite of weaknesses in spelling and punctuation.

12. GCSE results were above average in 1999 and also showed an improvement, particularly in the percentage of boys achieving higher grades. Girls are still ahead of boys but the gap has been reduced to match the difference found nationally. English literature results, which were well above the national average, are largely explained by the school policy of entering a relatively small number of higher attaining pupils. In lessons the pupils reach good standards. They discuss fluently, for example when they are considering the impact of visual images in the media unit of their English work. Reading is a particular strength of both boys and girls. They choose a wide selection of literature for their personal reading and in lessons explore themes in 'Macbeth' and analyse the language in 'To Kill a Mockingbird' and in poetry. They are developing their skills in writing, using a wide vocabulary, but written work is sometimes marred by errors of punctuation and spelling. There is more high quality extended writing from the girls than from the boys.

13. A-level results in English were well above average in 1999, both in the average point score and in the percentage of pupils gaining A and B grades. These very good results represent a significant improvement on the previous year. The pupils are also attaining very good standards in lessons and in their written work, developing their skills from their GCSE courses and showing good levels of understanding of poetry, 'Hamlet' and the other texts they are studying.

14. In other subjects pupils show reasonable competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They develop a growing vocabulary and are increasingly able to use technical terms accurately. Higher attainers show rapid comprehension, for example in geography, and most pupils have the reading skills to cope with the material presented to them. Their speaking and listening skills make a good contribution to work in subjects such as religious education. Skills in writing are appropriate for the tasks set in most subjects.

15. Both boys and girls make good progress in English both over time and in lessons. They enter the school with average levels of attainment overall. After a slow start to Year 7, they make reasonable progress in their first two years and then make good progress as they move towards the end of Key Stage 3 and go through Key Stage 4 and their A-Level course. Some pupils make very good progress, particularly those of average ability. Progress is best in reading and speaking and listening because there is more of an emphasis on these areas in the teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make

sound progress in both Key Stages 3 and 4.

16. The pupils' attitudes are very good. They enjoy their English work and often participate with real enthusiasm at all ages. They are held spellbound by good reading aloud, for example from 'Buddy' or by good storytelling in drama. They are keen readers and bring their own choice of reading to lessons. One Year 7 class entered their classroom, sat down with their books and started reading without a word from their teacher. Members of a Year 11 class were just as involved with their reading. The pupils talk about their books and listen with interest to their classmates. They organise themselves well in group work and throw themselves into discussion, many contributing with real maturity. They tackle challenging poetry and often remain engrossed until the very end of the lesson. These discussions are very productive, particularly by the time pupils reach the Sixth Form. The behaviour of pupils of all ages is usually very good but just occasionally spoilt by silliness from a small minority of boys. The interest and commitment which pupils bring to their work contribute significantly to the good standards they achieve.

17. The teaching is good in each key stage and this too contributes to high standards. The teachers communicate a real love of literature and an enthusiasm for their subject and are extremely successful in developing these positive attitudes in their pupils. They establish a good-humoured atmosphere and plan lessons in which pupils move swiftly between activities of reading, writing and discussion. The pace and variety of lessons is very motivating for pupils, who achieved an impressive amount in fifty minutes in drama lessons, for example, or in studying Hardy. In the most successful lessons, there is a clear focus on learning, expectations are high and teachers structure the work so that all pupils can achieve a good standard. Teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory. Work for pupils with special educational needs is not always well enough matched to their needs for them to make good progress. In lessons which are otherwise sound, the teachers do not make enough use of assessment in lessons to help the pupils to improve their work.

18. The leadership of the department is sound. There are, however, several areas of relative weakness that require attention. Firstly, planning for further developments lacks rigour. Secondly, although the curriculum provides a very good grounding in literature, it does not take a sufficiently structured approach to the development of writing skills or build adequately on the work covered in Key Stage 2. Too little contribution is made to the development of the pupils' skills in ICT. On the other hand, the very good range and quality of resources has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress.

98. **Mathematics**

19. The pupils' results in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The results have continued to improve over the last few years with more boys achieving above the expectation in 1999. On the basis of the lessons observed and work scrutinised, the attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. They demonstrate a good knowledge of number and apply this well to fractions, decimals, percentages and negative numbers. They recognise patterns in sequences. However, their investigative work, though sound, is not so well developed. The most able can draw and interpret graphs of linear and quadratic equations.

20. The results in the 1999 GCSE mathematics examination were above average and showed an increase in the average point score and the number of A* to C grades. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. On the basis of the lessons observed and work seen, the attainment of the pupils currently in Year 11 is above the national average. All demonstrate an at least satisfactory grasp of number and algebra. The most able can develop linear into quadratic equations. Almost all can find the areas and volumes of a variety of shapes. Most have a good understanding of Pythagoras' Theorem and of trigonometry. In data handling, most are competent in statistical representation and in

probability.

21. The pupils' results in the 1999 A-level examinations were well above the national average for grades A-E and showed a further improvement in the highest grades [A-B]. On the basis of the lessons observed and the results of the examination modules already taken by the pupils, attainment in the Sixth Form remains well above the national average. The current Year 13 pupils are able to manipulate algebraic equations, identify functions, use trigonometry and integral calculus. Those taking the mechanics option are confident in using and applying Newton's laws of motion, whilst those studying statistics are competent in identifying probabilities and in handling binomial distribution.

102. The pupils' overall attainment is good. In Key Stage 3, their progress over time and in lessons is good, although progress is less satisfactory in Year 7 because too little account is given to curriculum continuity between the primary and secondary phases. There is also insufficient evidence of work covering using and applying mathematics and, up to the end of Year 8, the most able pupils make insufficient progress as their work lacks challenge especially where time is wasted in colouring in symmetrical patterns. Progress in Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form is good and the progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

22. The response of the pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is good and they show an interest and enthusiasm for their work. They want to do well, they concentrate on explanations and apply themselves willingly to their work. They respond well to challenges when presented and persevere when difficulties arise. The response of pupils in the Sixth Form is good and they enjoy positive and respectful relationships with their teachers. They work hard in class and develop good working habits which support their learning. They work co-operatively and support each other in overcoming any difficulties which they have with their work.

104. The teaching in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form is good. It is a key factor in the good progress made by most pupils. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and understanding of examination techniques and common errors. In a Year 11 top set, the pupils were challenged with demanding GCSE questions which tested their previous knowledge and extended their understanding of the sine rule. Questioning is used to good effect, especially in the Sixth Form where the pupils' understanding of concepts is rigorously but sensitively checked by the use of probing questions. In some lessons, however, the planning does not take account of the whole ability range and time is wasted on repetitive exercises consisting, for example, in far too many questions on adding and subtracting negative numbers.

23. A number of factors contribute positively to the pupils' attainment and progress. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is good and includes a useful programme of 'Active Revision' which supports pupils' understanding and prepares them well for external examinations. Pupils entered for the foundation tier are also offered extra tuition after school to improve their mathematics performance. The leadership of the department is good. In a short period of time, the head of department has provided a clear vision and strong ethos for the department, which is shared by all staff. A number of initiatives have recently been instigated, including opportunities for teachers to undertake team teaching in order to share good practice. The departmental development plan is good.

24. The department has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection report. Recent training has been appropriately targeted at improving teaching styles in mathematics and using ICT. There is, however, still some way to go in developing better provision for the application of ICT in mathematics.

25. The pupils' skills in numeracy across the curriculum are satisfactory. In Key Stage 3, there is an appropriate emphasis on graphs in history, geography, science and food technology. The pupils use

mental arithmetic to work out prices in modern foreign languages. In science lessons they calculate the area of a person's foot by counting squares as well as working out compound measures of speed. At Key Stage 4, the pupils demonstrate good application of key skills and measure distance, time, temperature, weight and electrical current in science lessons. They use statistics and graphs in physical education for physiology and make good use of simple modelling in ICT lessons. In the Sixth Form, the pupils undertake surveys in geography as well as making good use of spreadsheets in ICT.

107. Science

26. The pupils' attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 was above the national average and above the average for similar schools. In 1998 and 1997 it was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades in the GCSE double award science in 1999 was well above the national average; the performance of girls was better than that of boys. Given the pupils' attainment on entry, these results at the end of Key Stage 3 and for GCSE are very good. During the last three years there has been considerable improvement in the GCSE results. Between 1998 and 1999, there was also considerable improvement in boys' attainment. Overall achievement in A-level sciences in 1999 was above the national average; that for physics was well above. There was considerable improvement in A-level achievement between 1998 and 1999.

27. The above results are reflected in the work of the current pupils. The standard of work of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 3 is above the national average; it is well above at Key Stage 4; and it is above in the Sixth Form. At Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils have a good knowledge of science facts. The higher-attaining pupils are developing an understanding of scientific concepts such as the reactivity series of metals. At Key Stage 4, the pupils consolidate and greatly add to this knowledge and understanding. Higher attainers, for example, readily understand the concept of electrical resistance and how it is calculated and the principles governing water movement in plants. In the Sixth Form, the pupils apply complex concepts with confidence. Throughout Key Stage 3, the ability of the vast majority of the pupils to carry out and report scientific investigations is good. The higher-attaining pupils undertake investigative work proficiently by the end of Key Stage 4 and at Sixth Form level. They produce very good written reports. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities make good use of charts and graphs. The higher attainers at Key Stage 4 are learning to apply mathematical principles to science and in the Sixth Form many are doing this confidently and competently. The quality of written work throughout the school is generally good. The application of ICT to science, however, is unsatisfactory.

28. Throughout the school the progress of the pupils is good, both over time and in lessons. For the majority at Key Stage 4 it is very good. For the pupils with special educational needs, it is good at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Good teaching and positive pupil attitudes contribute to this good progress. It is also facilitated by systematic assessment, regular monitoring of progress, identification of underachievers followed by intervention. Intervention strategies include: agreeing targets for future work with their science teachers and the head of department; telephone calls to their parents and, at Key Stage 4, letters home to their parents if the pupils have not completed course work or are not working sufficiently diligently. For Year 11 pupils the teachers also offer much extra tuition after school and in holiday time.

29. The pupils' attitudes are good. The vast majority are well behaved and co-operate willingly with their teachers and one another. Many are confident to ask questions in order to clarify their thinking. They are attentive and concentrate on tasks to the end of lessons. They show interest in science and are particularly keen to carry out practical work. A small minority, however, mainly boys, behave inappropriately from time to time, for instance by not responding to teachers' requests and by talking unnecessarily amongst themselves. As a consequence, in a small number of lessons the teachers need to give this minority frequent reminders to conform.

30.The teaching is good in all years; this is the main reason for the standards achieved. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The teachers plan carefully. They are very confident in their knowledge of the subject matter, including at Sixth Form level. They give clear explanations and demonstrations. They question pupils skilfully, for example to help them to distinguish between energy sources and energy types. They make frequent reference to everyday science. They ensure safe working practices. Their marking is regular and most write helpful comments. In many lessons the teachers encourage a brisk pace of work and show much enthusiasm. In one very good lesson on electrical safety, taught to Year 10 pupils, the teacher was very well prepared and provided a good variety of interesting activities including practical work, demonstrations and questions requiring short answers. These strategies, together with skilful questioning, enabled the pupils to understand thoroughly the importance of fuses, earthing and double insulation.

31.A number of factors make a significant contribution to the good standards achieved. The curriculum is well planned and facilitates continuity and progression in the pupils' learning. They make a faster start in Year 7 than, for example, in English and mathematics. Assessment procedures are very good, with very good use being made of assessment data to improve standards. The leadership and management of the department are very good and have been a key factor in raising standards. Very good planning for future development, linked to very good arrangements for professional development have also made a positive impact. Since the last inspection there has been considerable improvement to the accommodation, including provision of two new Sixth Form laboratories; this has had a positive effect on learning. Resources for ICT, however, are inadequate.

113. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

113. Art

32.Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is good. The National Curriculum teacher assessments for 1998 and 1999 show that the majority of pupils reach or exceed national expectations. This is confirmed by the work seen in lessons and displayed during the inspection week. By the end of the key stage, pupils have mastered an appropriate range of skills and techniques to produce good quality art work. Year 7 pupils had displayed three-dimensional masks showing good techniques and imaginative interpretation. Most of the pupils can name some contemporary and past artists. They are developing a good understanding of art from other cultures. In a lesson on Islamic art, Year 9 pupils produced some effective geometric and arabesque patterns. Some of the pupils could describe the limitations of design if their patterns were to be printed. They are beginning to develop a technical language for art and can describe their work and the work of famous artists. Work resulting from a visit to an aquarium included recognition of Paul Klee's work.

33.Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is also good. The 1998 and 1999 GCSE results are above the national averages. Girls' results are better than boys'. By the end of Key Stage 4 most of the pupils can analyse why they prefer certain styles of art and are willing to experiment with a range of techniques. Model making, a variety of printing, some three-dimensional card sculpture and many forms of painting and drawing are used effectively to interpret GCSE project themes. The current GCSE pupils have not had the experience of ceramics. Portfolio work shows some imaginative and creative work where one theme is illustrated in a variety of ways. Increased use of descriptive language increases the pupils' literacy attainment. There is little evidence, however, of any commercial applications of art. At Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils on the GNVQ Intermediate Level art and design programme are currently working at the national average. Some produce work of distinction and merit standard. In one lesson the pupils worked with considerable enthusiasm and effect on printing techniques.

34. A-level results in art and design were below the national averages for 1998 and 1999 for the highest grades but above the national average for the pass grades A-E. The A-level photography results for 1998 and 1999 are broadly in line with national averages, both for the higher grades and the overall pass grades. The attainment of the pupils currently in Year 13 is broadly average, although good work was seen during the inspection for both these courses. Progress for most pupils through the Sixth Form is at least sound.

35. The pupils' art experience before Year 7 is not the same but most pupils make good progress during Key Stage 3, including those with special educational needs. Pupils' sketch books and portfolios show good development and provide a sound basis for Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4, portfolios and sketch books also show good progress. However, some work needs annotation to be of use at a later date and incomplete homework limits the progress for some pupils. During lessons most pupils make good progress at both key stages, including those with special educational needs. Progress in the Sixth Form is sound but does vary; some pupils have timetable clashes with other subjects so that the whole group is not taught together and time has to be made up by joining other classes.

36. The response to art is very positive throughout the school. Pupils work with evident enjoyment, take a pride in their work and respect that of fellow pupils.

37. The majority of the teaching is good throughout the school, promoting good standards of attainment and good progress in art. The teachers' careful planning and subject expertise encourages pupils to respond well. The skills of investigating and making are well integrated with methods to increase knowledge and understanding of art. All lessons include well-chosen, inspirational, illustrative materials for the pupils. Art makes a sound contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils. The guided discussions on artists' work increases the pupils' awareness of many social and moral issues. Assessment schemes are clear and understood by the pupils who take part in their own assessment. Good use is made of relevant homework.

38. Several factors have some negative impact on the overall quality of the pupils' experience in art. Pupils do not have good opportunities to use computers for research or to use the many art and graphics programs currently available. Textile work is limited by shortage of some materials. The department has no technician support which means that professional staff are spending time on preparation of materials and maintenance of equipment. Whilst accommodation is attractive and much of the equipment is fairly new, one of the rooms is very small for the size of classes.

39. Compared with the last inspection, there has been no improvement in the access to ICT which was reported to be inadequate. There is still an imbalance in favour of two-dimensional activities but the recent new appointment to the department has particular expertise in three-dimensional work. Lesson objectives are now explicit and closely linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Display of work is now used effectively in the studios but there could still be more displayed in the school.

121. **Design and Technology**

40. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Progress, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is sound both over time and in lessons. The pupils' knowledge and manufacturing skills are generally in line with national expectations and are sometimes higher, particularly in food and textiles. However, their design skills are relatively weak and barely satisfactory. The pupils' research and analytical skills are often good. For example, in a Year 8 lesson the pupils used computers particularly well to analyse and present a survey that they had devised. However, the pupils' graphical skills and their ability to generate and develop ideas are often below average. This is because the teachers do not emphasise these skills

sufficiently in their teaching.

41. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards overall are average, both in the GCSE examinations and in lessons. Given the pupils' general attainment on entry, these results are sound. The standards that the pupils achieved in 1999 were better than in the previous year, when they were below average. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress over the key stage and in their lessons. However, standards vary between courses. They are above average in food and textiles and are generally average in resistant materials. They are consistently below average in graphics. The boys achieve standards that are just below the national average for boys. However, over the past two years, the girls have improved from below the national average for girls to above average.

42. The pupils have good attitudes to learning and generally enjoy their work. They behave well and handle tools and equipment safely and with confidence. The pupils are keen to succeed and they sustain concentration well in lessons. They often show good levels of independence. However, insufficient access to research materials at Key Stage 3 reduces their opportunities for independent work.

43. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Some lessons at Key Stage 3 are very good. However, a small proportion of the teaching is unsatisfactory. The teachers have good expertise, other than in graphical design. They are enthusiastic about their work and generally create a good working environment for the pupils. Where the teaching is best, the teachers have high expectations. They use questioning well to monitor and extend the pupils' learning and they provide good opportunities for the pupils to apply what they have learned. For example, in one very good lesson the pupils were introduced to levers through experiments involving the whole class. The teachers' good questioning helped to "fix" the pupils' understanding which they then used to model solutions to mechanical problems. Where the teaching is less satisfactory, expectations are too low and tasks often fail to build on and extend previous learning. Often, insufficient use is made of resources and demonstrations to raise the standards of the pupils' design work.

44. The leadership and management of the department is sound overall. Teamwork is strong and some improvements in standards have been achieved since the last inspection. However, the following weaknesses are holding back the progress of the pupils:

- .. development planning;
- .. monitoring of standards and teaching;
- .. planning for progression in the pupils' learning at Key Stage 3;
- .. assessment at Key Stage 3 and insufficient guidance to the pupils on how to raise their standards at both key stages.

1. Facilities for resistant materials and food have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now very good. However, less than adequate accommodation for textiles and graphics is holding back the pupils' progress in these areas. This accommodation is both too cramped and lacking in key facilities, including those for ICT. There are a number of safety issues, for example the cluttered workspace around the machines in the resistant materials preparation room.

127. **Geography**

2. By the end of Year 9 the pupils' attainment is above average. The performance of girls is slightly better than that of boys. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is well above average. In the 1999 GCSE examination, over three-quarters of the candidates were awarded passes at grades A* to C, with the boys' results being slightly higher than girls'. These well above average results were significantly better than the previous year, especially for boys, and were amongst the highest in the school.

Attainment in the Sixth Form at A-level is good. All the candidates entered for the examination in the last two years have been successful, with half of them achieving passes at the higher grades of A-B. These good results are above the national average and are also good in comparison with other subjects taught in this school.

3.The attainment above is reflected in the pupils' work in lessons and in their written work. By the end of Key Stage 3, they understand the special nature of their local environment and have acquired direct knowledge of it through a variety of fieldwork activities. They can then apply their ideas in a wider context, for example by extracting information from maps and identifying the impact of tourism on national parks. By sharing and discussing ideas in small groups, they make decisions on suitable locations for leisure developments. In Key Stage 4, the more able pupils relate examples of local urban change to theoretical models and discuss the value of this. Pupils of lower ability use their fieldwork data to produce maps displaying variations in environmental quality although some have difficulty using statistics and drawing graphs. Pupils in the final year of their Sixth Form studies use a wide variety of resources to identify multiple hazards in Japan and the complexities of earthquake prediction.

4.The pupils' progress in Key Stage 3 is good, both in lessons and over time. In lessons, they learn to use a wide range of geographical skills, such as the conversion of statistics into graphs and diagrams. They practise a variety of written tasks so that their literacy skills improve. Throughout this key stage, the pupils' written work increases in complexity and detail. Year 8 pupils found the preparation of a written report on a local industrial estate very challenging but they persevered and extended their learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly with help from classroom assistants.

5.Firm foundations are therefore laid for success at the next key stage. As yet there is only limited use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons, although one unit of work on population in Year 8 is designed to incorporate a range of computer skills.

6.In Key Stage 4 the pupils make very good progress. In lessons, the more able pupils develop their powers of independent learning and enjoy decision-making exercises that entail robust discussions and the sharing of ideas with the teachers. Over time, they make very good progress with their written work, producing detailed records of case studies. Lower-ability pupils receive appropriate help to enable them to complete the units of work. The teachers provide a wide range of resources that extend the pupils' experience. A very good example of this was seen in the display of authentic Turkish newspapers, with graphic pictures of the recent earthquake and its impact on local communities.

7.Pupils in the Sixth Form make good progress. The teaching, which includes help on the acquisition of study skills such as effective note-taking, enables the pupils to extract relevant information efficiently. A good example of this was seen in a Year 12 lesson where the teacher provided a good variety of resources on aspects of the tropical rainforest. Personal studies on topics, such as the consequences of residential building development in rural locations, enable the pupils to use their initiative and display their findings using a wide variety of statistical techniques.

8.The pupils' behaviour is usually good and they respond well in lessons. They listen attentively to instructions, try hard to answer questions and settle down to written tasks sensibly. They are eager to contribute their own knowledge and experience, for example on local industrial and residential areas. When given the opportunity, for example on fieldwork excursions, they work well together in groups and pool their findings sensibly. Some pupils find it hard to sustain their concentration, especially when they are coping with difficult tasks or where the same activity is extended for a considerable proportion of the lesson and they lose interest.

9.The teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form. It is very good at Key Stage 4. In Key

Stage 3, over half the teaching observed was judged to be good; at Key Stage 4, two out of every three lessons were judged to be good or very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The overall strengths of the teaching is a key factor in the high standards attained.

10. The teachers' knowledge and experience of their subject is very good. Detailed schemes of work are used and continuously revised. All members of the department share ideas and expertise. The teachers assess the pupils' work in an appropriate variety of ways, employing standardised methods across the department. The results are then used effectively to adapt schemes of work and to monitor the progress of individual pupils. Achievements of pupils with special educational needs receive particular attention. Targets that are set are based on teachers' high expectations and knowledge of individual pupils rather than simply on the use of numerical scores. However, the teachers make only limited use of ICT.

11. The teachers' discipline and the use of time in lessons is generally good, although in one lesson, with a lower ability group, the lack of pace and variety resulted in chatter that was unrelated to the task in hand. In one very good lesson with Year 7, the skilful use of resources and examples helped the pupils to visualise variations in relief in the landscape and then produce the appropriate contour patterns from them.

12. Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly in the attainment of the pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. Skilful management, together with an emphasis on high expectations and thorough knowledge of all pupils, combine to produce a very successful department.

138. **History**

13. In the current Year 9 the majority of the pupils are on target to achieve the standards expected nationally by the end of the key stage. This is a clear improvement compared with the time of the last inspection. The pupils' attainment is best in their knowledge and understanding and in their historical enquiry skills. Their attainment in interpretations of the past is weaker. For example, Year 9 pupils show an ability to construct an account of an event, such as the suffragette incident at the 1913 Derby, from a range of sources.

14. In the GCSE examinations in 1999, attainment at A* to C was just above the national average. Given the pupils' overall attainment on entry, these results were good. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupil work indicates that standards for the growing number of pupils choosing history in the current Years 10 and 11 are above average. These standards are the result of teaching which is well focused on examination requirements.

15. At A-level, standards of attainment in the current Years 12 and 13 are above average. There were no candidates entered for examination in the last two years but in 1997 the results were above average.

16. At A-level, all pupils are making good progress. For example, Year 12 pupils are making good progress in their ability to understand the complexity of events such as the Swing Riots in 1830. At Key Stage 4, almost all the pupils are making good progress, including those with special educational needs. Year 11 pupils are making good progress in their understanding of how the Nazis consolidated their power in Germany in the 1930s through the use of propaganda. At Key Stage 3 almost all the pupils are making good progress, again including pupils with special educational needs. Progress is best in relation to their knowledge of the key features of events, developments and personalities, such as the tactics used by those campaigning for the vote for women. It is less developed in terms of the depth of that understanding. The pupils' skills in handling sources and in spoken and written communication are good at both key stages. Progress in lessons is always satisfactory and frequently good. There is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls or of pupils of differing levels of

ability.

17.The pupils' attitudes to learning are good at Key Stage 3 and in Years 10 and 11 and very good in Years 12 and 13. Their behaviour is very good; they work very well together and their concentration levels are high.

18.The teaching throughout the school is good. This has a positive impact on standards. Strong features of the good teaching are good subject knowledge, very good relationships with pupils and discipline. Good use is made of recap and questioning to extend the pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 10 lesson the teacher set up an excellent role-play activity around the Brown v Topeka Civil Rights case. The pupils were well prepared on the historical context. Together with skilful questioning by the teacher, this helped all the pupils to reach a sympathetic and sophisticated understanding of attitudes at the time. Very good use is made of homework to support and extend the learning in lessons.

19.Several factors have a positive impact on teaching, attainment and progress. The department is well led and has a clear direction. Other strengths include the use made of visits to historical sites (e.g. Exeter cathedral, World War 1 battlefields) and the consistency of assessment of the pupils' work.

145. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

20.Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below expected levels. The pupils are making sound, and at times better, progress in Years 7 and 8, reaching standards that are about average for their age. In these two years, ICT is taught as a subject in its own right. However, there are no formal ICT lessons in Year 9 and there are too few opportunities for the pupils to consolidate and improve their ICT skills within subjects in Year 9. As a result, their progress by the end of the key stage is unsatisfactory, especially in using computers for modelling, measurement and control.

21.GCSE results have steadily improved after a sharp drop in 1997 and are now in line with national averages for grades A* to C and above average for grades A to G. These results are sound, but no more than that. The attainment of the pupils currently studying for GCSE is also in line with the average.

22.National Curriculum requirements are not met for all pupils at Key Stage 4. Only one-third of the pupils take the GCSE course. Attainment is below expected levels for many pupils who do not take GCSE. In part this is because experience of ICT, especially data handling, modelling and control, for these pupils is too dependent on the subjects studied, personal interest and/or equipment at home. The introduction of a GCSE short course in ICT is currently under consideration by the school. This would provide an appropriate structured programme of ICT for all pupils at Key Stage 4.

23.A-level results for 1999 were above the national average for grades A-E. This year's A-level pupils are making sound progress. For example, a project to calculate ladies' golf handicaps for a local club demonstrates a range of advanced spreadsheet skills including linked sheets and macros. Additional Sixth Form courses provide good opportunities for all pupils to acquire basic ICT skills. The pupils are making sound progress and working at appropriate levels for their courses.

24.The pupils' attitudes are good. Pupils of all ages generally work well together when using computers. Lower-attaining pupils are often motivated to achieve higher standards when using ICT. Many pupils are independent users of word processing. This makes a valuable contribution to the development of their reading and writing skills. There are examples of work well above average standards where ICT has enhanced the pupils' learning. For example, in environmental science, some

pupils have produced professional, well-designed folders with a range of information and images through research on the Internet and CD-ROMs and from scanners. Other pupils take advantage of further opportunities to build on their ICT experiences before and after school and at a lunchtime computer club.

25. The quality of teaching of ICT is good in the specific ICT lessons in Years 7 and 8 and in the GCSE course. In the best lessons the pace was brisk, expectations high and the teachers shared their enthusiasm for the subject. Teachers know their subject well. With subjects across the curriculum there is some good teaching in food technology, history and environmental science. In the other subjects, the amount of provision is very patchy.

26. The head of ICT, with the effective support of the technician, has carefully planned a programme of upgrading the computer networks, providing a secure, reliable environment for all users. Provision of staff training last year is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' work with ICT across the curriculum. While training is provided upon request this year, there is no structured programme of in-service training or arrangements to monitor its impact.

27. Since the last inspection there has been considerable investment in ICT. The school now has a well-designed computer department containing 60 computers in four rooms. Further computers are distributed around the school. Careful timetabling enables individual access to a computer for each pupil during lessons. A good range of equipment includes scanners, digital cameras and laser and colour printers.

28. Coverage of the minimum National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 3 is just satisfactory. The planned introduction of separate ICT lessons in Year 9 next year should ensure better coverage of all aspects in Key Stage 3. However, the pupils' experience of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory at both key stages. Most subjects lack sufficient hardware, software or expertise. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the specific ICT course in years 7 and 8 and for the GCSE course. Her role in ensuring satisfactory provision across the curriculum is insufficiently clear.

154. **Modern Foreign Languages**

154.

29. All pupils study French in Year 7. In Years 8 and 9 all the pupils also study Spanish or German. At Key Stage 4, all pupils study either French, German or Spanish and a small number study two languages. The three languages are offered in the Sixth Form and currently there are classes in French and Spanish. Italian is offered to GCSE, also in the Sixth Form.

30. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils' attainment in French is in line with the national expectation. More able pupils by this age are beginning to speak and write with accuracy and confidence and to use the past tense. The majority of the pupils are confident in a range of topics, being able to participate in short role-plays with reasonable pronunciation, write short pieces, chiefly from a model, and understand short texts through reading or listening. In Spanish, the pupils just achieve national expectations, with competence in a range of topics but no development of tenses. In German, the attainment of the pupils is below the national expectation at the end of Year 9, with the majority of the pupils lacking confidence in their understanding and recall of vocabulary and phrases so that their use is limited to short responses.

31. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in French through Key Stage 3, both over time and in lessons. In Year 7 they learn good habits in pronunciation, spelling and listening. This helps the pupils learn with confidence and pace in Years 8 and 9. In Spanish, progress is satisfactory. Knowledge and understanding of a range of topics is complemented by an increasing understanding of how to pronounce and use the language. In German, the pupils do not

make sufficient progress either in their knowledge of the language or in its use.

32. By the end of Key Stage 4, the pupils' attainment is above average in French but well below in both Spanish and German. In 1999 the GCSE results in French were above the national average; a considerable improvement since 1998. The performance of girls is, however, considerably better than that of boys. This trend of improvement is reflected in the standards being achieved in class by the pupils now in the key stage. In Spanish, the GCSE results for 1999 are well below the national average and have been so for a number of years. In German 1999 GCSE results were also well below the national average. Spanish and German together represented about half the total entry for GCSE last year: in both languages, the pupils underachieved significantly compared to their results in other subjects. Compared with the time of the last inspection, attainment in French has improved; attainment in German and Spanish has not.

33. In French, good standards at GCSE are reflected in confident use by more able pupils of past, present and future tenses and the ability to express and justify opinions at length. Almost all the pupils make good progress through Years 10 and 11, including those with special educational needs. In Spanish, more able pupils in Year 11 achieve similarly good standards but, overall in the key stage, progress is unsatisfactory. In German, few pupils are reaching standards equivalent to the higher grades of GCSE and progress is not satisfactory.

34. At A-level, the number of candidates each year is small. However, results over the last two years have been good, particularly in 1998. Generally, the A-level pupils achieve at the national expectation or above. The pupils currently studying French or Spanish are making good progress.

35. The pupils' attitudes to learning languages are generally good. The pupils respond particularly well in French lessons throughout the school. Good response is exemplified by active participation in oral work, excellent behaviour and pupils working through a range of activities with sustained concentration. Some unsatisfactory behaviour by a small number of boys was seen in Key Stage 4 Spanish. A feature of most classes is the willingness of the pupils to work collaboratively in pairs or groups.

36. There are significant differences in the quality of the teaching between French on the one hand and German and Spanish on the other. These differences are the single most crucial factor in explaining the considerable difference in the pupils' attainment across the languages. Compared with the previous inspection, the teaching has improved in French; it is not so good in German and Spanish.

37. The teaching of French is good at Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form; it is very good at Key Stage 4. It is well focused on the needs and abilities of the pupils, motivating and challenging. There are high expectations of all pupils. The teachers use French consistently as the main means of communication, with some judicious use of English to reinforce understanding. Good standards of pronunciation, spelling and grammar are reinforced constantly. Key strengths are the use of a range of techniques and resources, pair-work and excellent classroom management.

38. Examples of good teaching were:

- in a Year 7 French class, the high expectations of the teacher meant that, as well as teaching the vocabulary for objects in the classroom, she also emphasised gender, spelling, pronunciation and question forms: the pupils understood a lot of French and achieved good standards;
- in a Year 9 French class, the teacher combined the use of realia and role-play to introduce vocabulary and to practise it in context: previously the pupils had written their own

sketches and recorded them on video;

- _. in a Year 11 French class, the teacher used a wide range of visuals expertly to progress from single words and phrases to more complex sentences, as preparation for GCSE coursework.

1.The teaching of Spanish is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4 with all but the more able. The teaching in Key Stage 3 is thorough and occasionally good but does not actively raise standards beyond the expected minimum attainment. In the mixed ability classes and for pupils of middle to low attainment at Key Stage 4, the teaching does not motivate or prepare pupils efficiently for GCSE. Teaching methods used are not inherently unsound but there are problems with classroom management, a lack of suitable course material and a weakness in departmental planning for the needs of all pupils. Spanish teaching to A-level is good.

2.In German, the teaching is barely satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4. It lacks challenge, with pupils being allowed to work comfortably at a low level, relying far too much on English and not going beyond learning a few phrases and basic vocabulary. The learning is not consolidated and the pace is slow. Too much English is used in the classroom and planning is sometimes poor. However, relationships and discipline are good and, together with the teachers' good command of German, give a basis for improvement.

3.A relative weakness in all the teaching seen is the failure to encourage pupils to use the foreign language for even the most basic classroom request. A strength is the explicit practice of question forms.

4.There are further issues which require attention in order to improve standards, particularly in German and Spanish. There is very little use of National Curriculum levels in assessment at Key Stage 3 and this makes it difficult to monitor and to improve standards. The management of French is good and the head of department and her deputy are excellent role models of teaching and learning. However, the management of German and Spanish is ineffective, particularly in addressing the weaknesses in Key Stage 4. The lack of monitoring of the teaching is a weakness in the light of the inconsistency in teaching across the department. Very good use is made of links with France and of visits and exchanges abroad.

168. **Music**

5.At Key Stage 3, standards of attainment vary across the key stage and across different areas of the curriculum. In Years 7 and 8, standards are broadly in line with the national expectation. However, at the end of the key stage, standards are lower than expected as limited curriculum time inhibits the development of practical musical skills. The pupils' performing skills are weak and most play keyboards with one hand only, many relying on letter names to indicate the notes on both the music and the keyboards. Most attempt to use their fingers correctly. Ensemble skills are satisfactory and most pupils are able to maintain individual simple repetitive parts in small groups. In composing, pupils in Year 8 make satisfactory use of texture, timbre and echo in their work and some can use different scales. In Year 9, the pupils arrange given motifs into simple structures but their ability to develop musical ideas and to use harmony is below the expected standard. Pupils have no opportunity to use music technology to explore and create sounds at this key stage. In listening and appraising, the pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the musical elements but they do not always apply this knowledge correctly when listening to musical extracts. In Year 9, most pupils could recognise instruments and describe tempo but they did not notice a change in time signatures. This is indicative of working towards, but not at, the expectation.

6. By the end of Key Stage 4, the standards are good. The pupils, in groups that are larger than the average national cohort, achieve above average results in GCSE. Performance skills, in both classical and modern styles, are very good and a particular strength. In composing, pupils in Year 10 show good understanding of melodic passing notes and primary harmony including the dominant seventh. A few pupils make effective use of multi-tracking in their compositions and understanding of structure is satisfactory. The pupils' books demonstrate a wide-ranging knowledge of musical styles but they do not always use musical terminology correctly when describing musical elements, referring to texture as calm and slow, for example.

7. In the Sixth Form, small groups of pupils study A and A/S level music. Standards are satisfactory overall but vary between individual pupils and across the different elements of the subject. Results in previous years have been broadly average.

8. The attainment of girls is significantly better than that of boys at the end of both Key Stage 3 and 4.

9. Progress is at least satisfactory across all key stages in lessons but there are variations over time. For example, progress in lessons at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. However, across the key stage it is unsatisfactory as pupils do not have enough curriculum time in which to develop the expected musical skills. In lessons, the pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their ensemble skills and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of texture, timbre and simple structures. Pupils of different abilities make similar progress. In one Year 8 lesson, the presence of a learning support assistant contributed to all pupils making good progress. Progress is slowed when pupils working in small groups in the same room cannot hear their work clearly. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress and in the Sixth Form progress is satisfactory overall, although the rate of progress varies between disciplines. For example, pupils make very good progress when developing aural dictation skills and satisfactory progress when learning to relate knowledge of musical periods to extracts of music.

10. The pupils' response is always satisfactory and often good. Most pupils behave well and show interest in their work. They co-operate in small groups as they discuss and develop their work and they maintain concentration in practical sessions, despite difficulty in hearing their work clearly. They listen to teacher explanations and peer performances but are sometimes reticent in response to questions. A few are occasionally over-excited and a little slow to settle. In the examination classes, the pupils are keen to succeed and hard working. A-level pupils demonstrate their love for the subject in their descriptions of favourite styles.

11. The teaching is sound at Key Stage 3; it is good at Key Stage 4; both satisfactory and very good teaching was seen at post-16. The teachers have good subject knowledge and use their personal musical skills well to demonstrate and explain. Explanations of Rondo form were enhanced by demonstrations on the piano and the meaning of instrumental tone was clarified by vocal and cello demonstrations. The teachers prepare appropriate worksheets, simplifying them to meet the needs of particular classes as necessary, and they support the pupils well as they work in small groups. Pace of lessons is usually satisfactory but occasionally slows with changes of task. Explanations are sometimes over-long and more questioning is needed in some lessons to check the pupils' understanding and their musical opinions. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils, although the pupils' performances deserve more praise. Where the teaching is very good, the teachers prepare varied tasks progressing in level of difficulty and, as in a clarinet lesson, have high expectations that constantly challenge pupils to develop understanding and make progress.

12. In instrumental lessons standards, progress and teaching are good and, at times, very good. Pupils work hard and enthusiastically in lessons, although attendance is irregular for some.

13. In the extracurricular ensembles a variety of musical styles is offered and the standard is strikingly good. For example, in the orchestra rehearsal observed, the pupils worked successively in technically difficult passages from 'Les Miserables' showing good technique and ensemble skills. In the choir rehearsal, the pupils exhibited a high standard of close harmony within a range that really stretched their voices. The previous report commented that the timetable provision for music was below average and restricted pupil achievement. While the school has increased this provision in Year 7, the overall time for music at Key Stage 3 is still limited and still affects the standards attained adversely. Withdrawal from music lessons of some Year 7 pupils for extra English exacerbates the situation. In Year 11, the music option group shares curriculum time with design and technology which reduces the time available for both subjects.

14. It was also stated in the last report that the opportunities for pupils to use music technology were underdeveloped. Although the music department now has one computer, there are still no opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 3 to create and explore sound using music technology. There has been no improvement in this respect. There is also a need to update some of the keyboards to permit more multi-tracking and to replace those with mini-keys that are not suitable for the hand sizes of pupils in Years 8 and 9.

15. The previous report considered the mobile classroom to be unsuitable for music teaching. The school has responded well by building another main teaching room. There is still a need, however, to develop more small spaces to enable pupils to hear their work clearly when they are working in small groups in lesson time. At present this difficulty slows progress.

179.

Physical Education

16. The attainment of the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectation. As at Key Stage 4, a minority of pupils is attaining above and a few below these expectations. Games and gymnastics are a strength with pupils showing increasingly refined techniques. A significant number of boys have above average rugby skills. They anticipate well and can control the game with good timing of moves and passes. A few are able to adapt their own performance in response to the limitations of others. In gymnastics, the pupils construct and perform sequences of movement with control and precision. The pupils are able to observe and accurately evaluate each other's work using technical language in lessons where these skills are taught. They understand the importance of exercise for a healthy lifestyle and generally have a good level of fitness. There is little difference in the attainment levels of boys and girls in their respective activities. Those pupils attaining below expectations have ball and co-ordination skills that are less refined.

17. Attainment by the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national expectation. A minority is attaining above and below these expectations. Outdoor adventurous activities are a strength. Many of the pupils are able to control and manoeuvre their canoes with confidence. The girls in the lower set hockey group have a satisfactory grasp of the basic skills but are slow to anticipate the response from others. The girls involved in umpiring the inter-house hockey matches had a sound knowledge of the rules and were able to adapt their decisions to match the ability of the pupils. The attainment of the majority of the pupils currently studying GCSE is average relative to examination requirements. A significant minority attain above and a few below these requirements. Written and oral presentations are a strength, with confident use of technical language. The pupils mostly have a satisfactory depth of knowledge and produce work that is well structured and carefully analysed. A few pupils produce work that shows poor spelling and limited subject knowledge. Practical work for the majority is average, with a significant minority above average.

18. A-Level results in the last three years have been broadly average for grades A-E. GCSE results in 1998 were well below the national average but improved considerably in 1999 when they were above

the average. The performance of the girls was particularly good in 1999; almost all gained grades in the A* to C range.

19. The attainment by the majority currently studying A-level is average, with a minority above average. The pupils have a satisfactory depth of knowledge in most modules. They use technical language with confidence when writing but are less confident when speaking. Higher-attaining pupils present written work that is thoroughly researched and carefully analysed, making astute cross-references to other aspects of the syllabus. They have a mature approach to this subject and show an independence to their studies, especially in practical work.

20. Progress is good for the majority of the pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4 and in the Sixth Form. A significant minority make very good progress in GCSE lessons. They are quick to consolidate and learn new skills because the tasks set mostly challenge all ranges of ability within the class. Very good progress is made in a minority of lessons where the pupils plan and judge their own performance under the structured guidance of the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs and those with physical disabilities generally make good progress in lessons. However, they occasionally make slower progress when the support staff are not sufficiently involved in the planning of the lesson. Unsatisfactory progress is made by a few pupils when they are not appropriately motivated to strive for better performance and when the pace of the lesson is slow.

21. Attitudes to learning are mainly very good and contribute strongly to the pupils' progress. The pupils are enthusiastic and comply willingly to the established code of conduct. They work well together and demonstrate good sporting behaviour. They answer and ask questions with increasing confidence and respect the opinions of others. They readily accept constructive criticism from each other and their teachers. GCSE pupils help to organise and referee inter-house competitions. The good response to the varied extra-curricular programme allows all pupils to further their interests and compete in school, county and national competitions. Individual pupils have had national success in rugby, athletics and cross country. The pupils show great determination and resourcefulness in outdoor adventurous activities. The take-up rate for the GCSE course is good among pupils at all levels of attainment. The Sixth Form recreational programme gives a valuable breadth to the Sixth Form curriculum.

22. The teaching is good in all years, although there is a small amount of less than satisfactory teaching at Key Stage 4. Overall, this is an improvement since the previous inspection and has contributed strongly to the improved GCSE results. In almost all lessons the teachers ask probing questions to consolidate knowledge and provoke thought. They use an appropriate range of teaching methods. In the best teaching, the teacher sets tasks which build up logically to performance of the final skill. A good example of this was seen in a rugby lesson where the pupils rehearsed the "line out" procedure, at first unopposed to secure the skills and then transferred successfully to a competitive situation. Ongoing assessment in lessons is constructive, ensuring individual and group progress. The pupils have good opportunities for evaluating each others work in most lessons but planning does not often include tasks to develop these skills for those pupils who are temporarily physically unable to take part in the lesson. The teachers mostly have high expectations of all pupils and encourage them to strive for better performance, appropriately related to their ability. Unsatisfactory elements in one lesson included too little activity and tasks that did not sufficiently challenge the pupils.

23. The department is effectively led and well organised. Response to the last inspection has been good. The quality and range of teaching styles have improved. A new assessment policy has been introduced which is used efficiently to monitor the pupils' progress and set relative targets. Good planning for development has led to considerable improvement in the range of activities provided including, extracurricular activities.

187. Religious Education

24. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is above the expectations of the local agreed syllabus and the majority of pupils make good progress, both over time and in their lessons. The pupils can identify key religious beliefs and practices in Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. They recognise the important links between people's beliefs and their actions and lifestyles. The Year 7 "Insights" unit is particularly successful at developing the pupils' listening skills. In a Year 7 lesson, the pupils, through creative teaching and positive relationships, showed very good listening skills. They also demonstrated a good understanding of the importance of listening in religion. The pupils are skilful at identifying their own beliefs, values and ideas and make good connections between their learning in religious education and modern day issues. For example, in Year 9 the pupils effectively use the life and teachings of Martin Luther King as a basis for discussing prejudice, discrimination and racism. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported through interesting and realistic learning tasks. The progress of the most able is satisfactory rather than good, as their teachers do not always set them sufficiently challenging tasks. Overall, the pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 has improved since the last inspection.

25. By the end of Key Stage 4, the pupils' attainment is below expectations. This is almost entirely due to insufficient time for religious education at Key Stage 4. This lack of time leads to gaps in the pupils' learning. In Year 11, the pupils were not able to highlight important beliefs or show how people from a religious tradition make moral decisions and choices. While the actual content for Key Stage 4 religious education is interesting and imaginative there are not enough opportunities for the pupils to study the range of beliefs, perspectives on modern issues and the development of evaluative skills that the Key Stage 4 religious education syllabus requires. The lack of time has a negative impact upon the pupils' attainment and progress. Within the limited time available, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. In the GCSE religious studies group the pupils are attaining above average standards and make good progress. Post-16, the pupils have the opportunity to follow an interesting and thought-provoking general religious education course.

26. At Key Stage 3, the response of the pupils is good; it is satisfactory at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3, the pupils show a real interest in religious education, sustain concentration well and are able to work effectively on their own, in pairs and in groups. At Key Stage 4, some pupils show an active interest in their learning, for example in the Year 11 religion and the media work, the pupils work well together on the computers in developing their own stories and articles. However, some pupils show less interest in the subject.

27. At Key Stage 3, the teaching is good and has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers who are not subject specialists show skill and enthusiasm in their teaching. All the teachers explain the activities clearly and set homework tasks that are often imaginative and interesting. At Key Stage 4, however, the teaching is satisfactory with some interesting and creative learning activities. The pace of lessons is sometimes slow and non-specialist teachers are not always secure in their subject knowledge. The teaching in the GCSE religious studies group is good. The teachers give particularly good feedback to individual pupils.

28. Several factors contribute positively to the pupils' attainment and progress, particularly at Key Stage 3. There are good procedures for assessing the pupils' learning in religious education at Key Stage 3 and feedback is detailed and helpful. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. For example, in Year 7 the "Insights" unit encourages pupils to think about themselves, their feelings and relationships. The Year 10 programme encourages pupils to reflect upon their values and moral choices. Provision for religious education in the Sixth Form meets statutory requirements.

192. **General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), post-sixteen**

29.The school is currently providing both Advanced and Intermediate courses in art and design, business, health and social care, information and communication technology and in leisure and tourism. In the first three of the five areas, the school is offering courses at both single and double award.

30.Over the past two years, the percentage of pupils attaining the full Advanced GNVQ qualification has been well below the national average. It has been above the national average at Intermediate level.

31.Standards at Advanced Level are, however, improving. The work of the majority of current pupils, on both double and single award advanced programmes, is in line to gain the full award at the end of the course. Some of the pupils are producing work of distinction and merit standard. Most of the pupils show initiative in seeking and handling information from a variety of sources. This was demonstrated in a survey by leisure and tourism pupils of customer care in different businesses in Torquay and in work by business pupils on marketing techniques. The most able pupils make good use of technical language and they can plan, select and present information appropriately. This was exemplified in the work of health and social care pupils who were assessing and planning different client needs and by the work on a multi-media presentation for a Sixth form information evening by pupils on the ICT course.

32.The current attainment level of the Intermediate Level pupils in the Sixth Form is below the national average. Most show commitment and enthusiasm for what they do and co-operate well with their teachers. However, many lack confidence in selecting relevant information or in evaluating the work they have done at the end of a course unit. Some pupils are held back by their poor writing skills.

33.The development of the pupils' key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is generally satisfactory. However, a majority of the pupils, outside the Business and Information Technology options, do not apply ICT beyond word processing, despite good access to computer equipment in school. This picture contrasts with the good understanding that both advanced and intermediate level pupils showed in a very effective ICT workshop on the use of spreadsheets.

34.On the Advanced GNVQ programmes, the pupils generally make sound progress over time. Many pupils made good progress in lessons observed in ICT, business and leisure and tourism. They responded with enthusiasm and initiative to the well-focused and high expectations of their teachers.

35.The progress of the pupils currently following the Intermediate course is unsatisfactory. They are being held back through having to learn in mixed classes with A-level pupils. A number of them find it difficult to request individual help for their particular needs.

36.The vast majority of the pupils like the practical work involved in their programmes and value the opportunity to work on topics they see as relevant. They co-operate well with their teachers and with one another. Many respond with considerable maturity to the responsibility and trust placed in them.

37. The teaching in all the lessons seen was at least satisfactory; it was good in half. In the best lessons, the teachers had planned well, showed a good knowledge of the progress and needs of individual pupils and provided materials which captured their interest and motivation. They gave good individual guidance to pupils on request. The accommodation gives good support to the types of learning demanded by GNVQ. However, the teachers are working within the constraints imposed by a time allocation that is less than that nationally recommended; and by classes that incorporate different GNVQ levels. This reduces the potential impact of what they can achieve with the pupils. They are sometimes led to place too much emphasis on individual pupil needs and too little on whole class teaching. When that happens, some less confident pupils fail to request the support they need and the pace of their learning accordingly suffers.

38. Despite a strong commitment to the programme and the development of good links with local businesses, the co-ordinator has found it difficult to achieve consistency in approach across all the areas offered. As a result, leadership and management of GNVQ is a weakness. This is having a negative impact on the overall direction for GNVQ in the school, the administration of the courses and on progress made by the Intermediate pupils. A further factor holding back progress is the lack of analysis of information provided by assessment of the pupils' work.

39. Although many pupils benefit from their experiences on the different GNVQ programmes, the range and diversity of the programme offered to post-16 pupils does not make for effective provision for all pupils within the resources currently available. Simply put, there are too many pupils studying for too many different levels in most of the classes.

203. NON - NATIONAL CURRICULUM SUBJECTS AT KEY STAGE 4

40. GCSE results in **drama** are well above average and these high standards are reflected in the work in lessons. The pupils build on their good grounding in Key Stage 3. By Year 11 they show a good understanding of drama techniques and the skills to apply them in their practical work. They are able to adopt and sustain a role, showing good control of voice and movement and a sensitivity to their audience. They make very good progress in lessons and over time, partly because they are very keen on the subject and because they are very well taught. They participate in lessons with great interest and enjoyment and have the confidence to show their work to others and discuss ways to improve. The teachers set high standards for pupils, devise interesting and demanding lessons which capture the pupils' imagination and maintain a good working atmosphere.

204.

41. In 1997 the pupils' GCSE results in **child development** were below average. They were significantly better in 1998 when they were close to the average. There were no candidates studying the subject in Year 11 last year. However, the pupils currently studying the subject in Year 11 are achieving standards that are above average and they are making good progress. For example, in a lesson when the pupils were planning investigations into children's food products, they demonstrated good investigative skills and drew effectively on their previous knowledge when deciding the issues to explore. In other investigations they show good evaluative skills, particularly in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of products. The teacher has good subject expertise and promotes good levels of interest and confidence in her pupils.

205.

42. Environmental studies is available as an optional course in Key Stage 4. It is studied by all pupils in Years 8 and 9 and is available at A-level. GCSE results in this subject are good and have improved over time. In 1999, over half the candidates were awarded passes at grades A* to C, with girls' results being slightly higher than the boys'. The teaching is sound and makes good use of the expertise of individuals who all have other departmental commitments. Very good examples of coursework were seen in Key Stage 4 using different applications of ICT in the evaluation of local environmental issues.

206.

43. Business studies is taught as an option at Key Stage 4. The percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades at GCSE in 1999 was well below the national average. The current standard of the older pupils is much more broadly in line with the national average, although there is a wide spectrum of pupil ability both in Years 10 and 11. A small minority of the pupils are on course to achieve GCSE grades A* to B. Most of the pupils know and understand topics such as location of industry and different forms of business organisation. The more able pupils can apply concepts relating to costs and profits correctly in context. The vast majority of the pupils show care in the presentation of their work. The progress of nearly all the pupils at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. The pupils respond well to teaching that displays sound subject knowledge, sets clear objectives and is challenging. There have been recent important links with business organisations, such as through Young Enterprise, that have further contributed to generating pupil interest in the subject.

207. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

44. The inspection team consisted of 16 inspectors. A total of 230 lessons was observed. Inspectors also visited assemblies, registration sessions and extracurricular activities. All of the teachers were seen at least once and almost all on several occasions. Planned discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, with governors and with members of the community. Inspectors scrutinised the written and other work of three pupils in each year. Planned discussions were held with these pupils and informal discussions with many more. Documentation provided by the school, including considerable statistical data on the pupils' performance, was analysed before and during the inspection. The registered inspector led a meeting attended by 33 parents before the inspection and considered responses from 413 parents to the questionnaire.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1,281	37	230	138

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	69.59
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked each week	415

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	78%
--	-----

Average teaching group size:	KS3	26
	KS4	23

Financial data

Financial year:

1999

	£
Total Income	3,226,813
Total Expenditure	3,129,853
Expenditure per pupil	2,557
Balance brought forward from previous year	-17,679
Balance carried forward to next year	114,639

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	1,281
Number of questionnaires returned:	413

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	12	65	16	6	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	38	57	3	2	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	24	51	20	5	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	13	67	12	7	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	28	61	7	5	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30	64	4	1	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	22	60	15	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	19	65	9	6	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	22	60	16	2	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	23	62	13	2	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	34	64	7	4	1

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents felt that the pupils made a relatively slow start in Year 7.