

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH HIGH SCHOOL**

Chapel-en-le-Frith

LEA area : Derbyshire

Unique Reference Number : 112932

Inspection Number: 185178

Headteacher : Mr S F Ash

Reporting inspector : Colin Goulding  
22584

Dates of inspection : 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708076

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Comprehensive
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	11 - 16
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
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Appropriate authority :	Derbyshire County Council
Name of chair of governors :	Ms D S Barlow
Date of previous inspection :	7 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> November 1994

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Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr C Goulding - Rgl	Physical education	Teaching Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Efficiency of the school
Ms. C Dalton - Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Equal opportunities Support, guidance and pupil's welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mr B A Chaplin	History	Attainment and progress Leadership and management
Mr G A Gill	Religious education	Curriculum and assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Personal and social education
Mr I S Knight	Mathematics Information and communications technology	
Mr D R Wood	English	
Dr D J Wood	Science	
Mrs S J Peckett	Science	
Ms M Fasciato	Art	
Mrs M Timmis	Special educational needs Design and technology	
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Mrs S Wareing	Modern foreign languages	
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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

it has maintained standards above and sometimes well above the national average in most subjects; the high attainment of the girls has contributed substantially to these results

- the teaching is of consistently good quality at both key stages
- the school analyses performance data extensively and uses it to set appropriately challenging targets in the subjects of the curriculum
- the school is well managed and deploys its resources efficiently and effectively despite below average levels of funding and difficulties with the fabric and condition of the buildings
- the school's partnership with parents and the community contributes substantially to pupils' attainment and progress
- the provision for pupils' welfare and guidance, and for support of those with special educational needs, lead to above average levels of attendance and continuity in pupils' learning.

### Where the school has weaknesses

provision for pupils' spiritual development is thin and a daily act of collective worship is not provided for all pupils

- I. the layout and condition of the accommodation places constraints on learning
- II. the performance of boys is significantly below that of the girls in most subjects
- III. pupils are insufficiently involved in self-evaluation and target-setting in most subjects
- IV. although the school's mission statement, aims and objectives have served it well for a number of years, they no longer provide an adequate framework for development planning.

No lessons were seen being taught in Year 11 because these pupils were on work experience at the time of the inspection. The written and other work of these pupils and the teachers' planning were scrutinised with especial care so that the inspection team was able to reach firm judgements on the standards achieved.

This is an improving school with a number of considerable strengths that outweigh its weaknesses. It is managed well and highly regarded in the community. The good quality of teaching prompts standards that are often above average. A particular strength is the careful co-ordination of pastoral and academic monitoring and support. Relationships are good and it has the capacity to improve further.

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

The school has made satisfactory progress in the improvement of standards at Key Stage 3 since the previous inspection. Overall, results in the GCSE core subjects have improved satisfactorily but good progress has been made in raising the standards in the GCSE foundation subjects since the previous inspection. The range of resources has been improved in most curriculum areas and ICT resources are being replaced with up-to-date hardware and software. The school has enhanced parts of the accommodation within its financial capability but much remains to be done. Policies have been further developed and their implementation is now more consistent. Health and safety issues identified in the previous report have been attended to effectively. Little progress has been made in implementing arrangements for collective worship, however.

## Standards in subjects

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

Performance in:	Compared with all schools 1999	Compared with similar schools 1999	Key
Key Stage 3 test	B	C	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
GCSE examinations	B	C	

Results in Key Stage 3 tests in each of English, mathematics and science are somewhat above the national average and close to the average of other schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Pupils' performance in English is in line with the average for similar schools, in mathematics it is above and in science it is below. The 1999 results maintained steady improvement in line with the national trend.

Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 4. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more and one or more subjects at Grades A\*-C in GCSE improved between 1998 and 1999 and widened the gap between the school's and national figures that had previously been closing. The improvement also brought the performance in line with that of similar schools. Girls attain higher standards than the boys in almost all subjects at this key stage. In 1999, the strongest subjects at GCSE were design and technology, drama, geography, history, music and physical education.

### KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

#### The headteacher, staff and governors should:

- V. Take urgent steps to improve the attainment of boys in order to raise the level of their performance closer to that of the girls (paragraph nos. 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 98, 197)
- VI. Improve the attitude to learning of some younger boys in some subjects (paragraph nos. 24, 37, 101, 160, 194)
- VII. Improve the planning and provision for pupils' spiritual development and ensure that the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils is met (paragraph nos. 53, 54)
- VIII. Seek, as a matter of urgency, to improve the quality of the accommodation which, in terms of layout and condition, places severe constraints on the attainment of pupils (paragraph nos. 83, 86, 104, 118, 125, 132, 144, 165, 167, 195).

#### Other issues for development

- IX. In conjunction with the staff, pupils and parents, revise the school's aims and objectives to provide a more effective framework within which planning and the overall life and work of the school can be developed further (paragraph no. 76)
- X. Involve pupils more extensively in the evaluation of their own work and in the targets they are set in each subject of the curriculum (paragraph no. 52).



## Quality of teaching

	<b>Overall quality</b>	<b>Most effective in:</b>	<b>Least effective in:</b>
Years 7-9	Good	English, science, design & technology, drama, geography, art, music, religious education, physical education	-
Years 10-11	Good	English, science, design & technology, drama, geography, history, music, religious education, physical education	-
English	Good	-	-
Mathematics	Satisfactory	-	-

Almost all of the 164 lessons seen were satisfactory or better and a third of these were very good or excellent.

Shortcomings were evident in only a very small proportion of the lessons observed and were not confined to any one subject. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen in each subject of the curriculum.

*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	Generally good, although a small number of pupils, primarily in Years 7 and 8, and particularly boys, behave immaturely in some classes.
Attendance	Very good: regular attendance, particularly in Years 10 and 11, leads to good performances in examinations.
Ethos*	Positive attitudes and good relationships create a positive climate for learning, despite poor buildings.
Leadership and management	The school is well led and managed; it deploys its often meagre resources effectively; it has created a sense of common purpose and endeavour.
Curriculum	Broad and well balanced, it is particularly skilfully timetabled to provide equality of opportunity for all to do well.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good organisation and management combined with effective support promote progress above expectations.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good provision for moral and social aspects; satisfactory for cultural development, but weak in terms of spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Within the tight financial context, staff and resources are well managed and deployed. The accommodation is poor and deteriorating.
Value for money	Low unit costs and generally above average attainment leads to good value for money.

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

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
XI. Well managed transition from primary schools and the settling-in process. XII. The school ethos XIII. Leadership of the headteacher and senior management team. XIV. Reports on pupils' progress XV. Approachability of staff and the way issues raised by parents are promptly and effectively dealt with. XVI. Academic standards. XVII. Special needs support. XVIII. Pupils are happy at school.	XIX. Inconsistent setting of homework XX. Offensive language used by some XXI. Dilapidated appearance of the XXII. The shortage of up-to-date ICT XXIII. Occasional bullying of younger XXIV. Girls' achievements being celebrated

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. Homework is set appropriately for the most part, although some overload does occur on rare occasions during the GCSE years. No instances of the use of offensive language were observed either in school or in the playground. The current stock of ICT equipment is ageing but its replacement is imminent and the school has embarked on significant investment in this resource area. Similarly, the school is making significant efforts to up date and increase its text book stocks, and is engaged in a number of entrepreneurial fund raising initiatives for this purpose. No instances of bullying were seen and younger pupils report that on the rare occasions when it does occur staff follow it up rapidly and effectively. During the week of the inspection, no difference was observed in the celebration of achievements of boys and girls.

## INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

1. Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is smaller than most 11-16 secondary schools nationally and has 733 pupils (369 boys; 364 girls) on roll. The number on roll has fluctuated, falling from 1000 seventeen years ago to an all time low of 500 eight years ago. Since that time the roll has risen steadily and, in September 1999, admission requests exceeded the standard admission number. Numbers are projected to grow to 850 by September 2002. The school is situated in the High Peak district of Derbyshire and is somewhat isolated geographically from the main centres of population in the county. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (6.4%) is below the national average. Only two pupils speak English as an additional language, a proportion that is low when compared with secondary schools nationally. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (18%) is above the national average as is the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need (3.2%). Only one pupil has been permanently excluded which is in line with the national average for schools of this type and size. Fifty-seven pupils (49 boys and 8 girls) were excluded for a fixed period during 1998-99, a figure that is well above average for schools of this size and type nationally. The area served by the school is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Unemployment is relatively low. Property in the area is relatively cheap and this leads to a high rate of owner occupancy. Census data reveals a high percentage of graduates in some wards. Many of these have migrated into this rural area from more urban centres however, and their children are beyond secondary school age. Census figures hide some pockets of social deprivation although there are few pupils from overcrowded households. Attainment on entry covers a normal range, although a percentage of higher attaining pupils from feeder primary schools move to secondary schools with sixth forms or into the private sector at age 11. However, this trend appears to be reducing as the school's GCSE results have improved.
2. As its strategic objectives, the school aims to:
  - maximise the academic potential of each individual in order to achieve the highest standards
  - promote values which encourage pride, contribution and identity within the community
  - maximise resources in order to promote a healthy, attractive environment
  - enrich the school experience by providing an ethos which is stimulating and creative
  - create a caring and secure environment which is conducive to learning for life

## Key Indicators

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	76	75	151

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	51	55	48
	Girls	62	54	44
	Total	113	109	92
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	75 (82)	72 (69)	61 (63)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	36 (42)	48 (40)	24 (26)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	49	55	50
	Girls	64	61	44
	Total	113	116	94
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	75 (74)	77 (78)	62 (58)
	National	64 (61)	64 (64)	60 (61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	35 (38)	50 (50)	26 (23)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	30 (30)

<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	67	63	130

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	29	63	64
	Girls	42	63	63
	Total	71	126	127
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	54.6 (48.4)	96.9 (88.4)	97.7 (95.0)
	National	47.8 (41.3)	88.5 (85.4)	93.9 (92.3)

## Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.3
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.6
	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	56
Permanent	1

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	28
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

<sup>2</sup>

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

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

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

#### **Attainment and progress**

1. On the basis of the Key Stage 2 results and nationally recognised tests of pupils' capabilities administered when they enter the school in Year 7, it is clear that the great majority of pupils are clustered tightly around the average. Very few pupils are high attainers on entry and overall the school has rather more pupils who have learning difficulties and special educational needs than the average nationally.
2. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, the proportion gaining the expected Level 5 and higher was well above the national average in English and mathematics, and above it in science. The proportion reaching the higher Level 6 was well above the national average in mathematics, above it in English and marginally above it in science. When considering the test results at the end of Key Stage 3 over the previous three years, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 5 and above exceeds the national average in each of the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The proportion gaining the higher Level 6 is above and sometimes well above the average in English and mathematics, and close to it in science. These achievements represent good progress in relation to the starting points in Year 7 and steady improvement since the previous inspection.
3. Comparisons are less favourable with national benchmark information for schools with apparently similar intakes. However, these benchmarks are based solely on the relatively low percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals at this school and do not take into account, for example, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In 1999 in relation to these benchmarks, the pupils achieved in line with the national averages for similar schools in English at Level 5 and higher, and in line with them at Level 6. In mathematics, they achieved above them at Level 5 and at Level 6. In science, pupils were well below similar schools in relation both to the Level 5 and Level 6 benchmarks.
4. In terms of National Curriculum average levels covering the performance of all the pupils in the age group, in 1999 the school achieved in line with similar schools in English, generally above them in mathematics but well below them in science. The performance of boys in English was again significantly below that of girls, and that of girls somewhat below the boys' average level in mathematics and science. The benchmark information in relation to similar schools is being used to set targets for improvement.
5. The school has consistently exceeded the averages for Derbyshire LEA in the Key Stage 3 tests in English, mathematics and science over the last three years. The school's results are well above the LEA averages in English and above them in mathematics and science, though by a larger margin in mathematics than in science. These results represent good progress in relation to a strongly rising trend in the Authority.

6. In the 1999 Key Stage 3 assessments undertaken by the teachers in the foundation subjects of the curriculum, pupils reach levels above the national average in design and technology, modern foreign languages and geography. They are working beyond the expectations for the end of the key stage in art and music, and well beyond them for a number of pupils. They achieve in line with expectations in history and physical education but below in information technology. Significantly, the girls exceed the performance of the boys, sometimes substantially, in each subject except physical education and information technology where boys do better than girls, and in modern foreign languages where the attainments are similar. The school has already identified the under-performance of boys as the single most important challenge facing the school and is already developing strategies to overcome the difficulties. For example, pupils are set by prior attainment in the subject in mathematics and modern foreign languages and the school now organises classes so that boys and girls sit alternately. It is too early to judge whether this last approach is successful, although it is creating a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning in the classroom.
7. In the classes observed at Key Stage 3, attainment was at least in line with expectations in nearly nine out of ten lessons. Indeed, in a third of all lessons attainment was above and, very occasionally, well above average. The majority of those lessons in which it fell below average were with groups containing pupils with special educational needs. Because pupils with special needs and other low attaining pupils make good gains in learning, progress was at least satisfactory in well over nine out of ten lessons and good or very good in over half. Progress was rarely exceptionally high in any lesson. Overall at this key stage, pupils' attainment and progress represent steady improvement since the previous inspection, despite the continuing under-performance of boys.
8. At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more subjects at grades A\* to C in GCSE over the last four years has been above the national average. Although the gap narrowed until 1998, it opened up again in 1999. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more subjects at grades A\* to G has also remained consistently above the national figures for the last four years. Over the last four years the average point score, which provides a full account of the performance of all pupils, not just those who reach particular grade thresholds, has been above the national average. The gap between the school's and the national figures was narrowing until 1998 but it widened somewhat in 1999. Although the boys' average point score over the last four years is marginally above the national average for boys, it is substantially below that of the girls. Were the boys to match their performance to that of the girls, the school would consistently perform well above the national figures.
9. At Key Stage 4, comparisons with similar schools are also based solely on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more subjects at grades A\* to C is slightly below the average for similar schools. The percentage gaining five or more subjects at grades A\* to G is above and the proportion gaining one or more subjects at grades A\* to G is in line with the average for similar schools. The average point score falls a little below that for schools with similar free school meal entitlements.
10. In the last three years, the school has exceeded the Derbyshire averages in GCSE



examinations for pupils gaining five or more subjects at grades A\* to C and at grades A\* to G. In two of the years it exceeded the LEA average for one or more subjects at grades A\* to G. The average points score, taking account of the performance of all the pupils whatever their grades, either matches or just exceeds the average for the LEA as a whole. Overall, these achievements represent satisfactory progress over the three years and since the previous inspection.

11. The percentage of pupils in 1999 gaining grades A\* to C in GCSE English is well above the national average. The high level of these results is very dependent on the girls' performance, which outstrips that of the boys by more than a third. The results are in line with those of similar schools. The percentages of pupils gaining grades A\* to C in science and mathematics are a little below the national average, and are below and well below in relation to similar schools. In both subjects, the girls' results are slightly better than are those of the boys.
12. In GCSE examinations in 1999, the school achieved above the national average in the percentages of pupils gaining grades A\* to C in most foundation and other subjects of the curriculum. Indeed, they were well above the national figures in design and technology, drama, geography, history, music and physical education. Results were above the national averages for these grades in French and in line with them in German. Only in English literature and art did the higher grade results dip below the national averages and in both cases not seriously so. Significantly, girls' performances exceeded those of the boys in each of the foundation subjects.
13. Overall, the results in the foundation subjects represent good progress since the previous inspection and value has been added in most of them in relation to the performance of the same pupils in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1997. The performance in the core subjects is mixed. Although results in some of the past four years, for example 1996, have been above the national averages, the school has not managed consistently to lift performance out of a fairly narrow band just above the national figures.
14. In the work observed at Key Stage 4, attainment was at least at the levels expected in nearly nine out of ten lessons and in a little over half of all lessons it was above them. Attainment well above the average was observed in very few lessons. In those lessons where standards fell below expectations, the groups involved almost always contained low attaining pupils or those with special needs. Because these pupils made consistently good progress in relation to their capabilities, overall progress was never less than satisfactory in all the lessons seen. In a third of lessons it was good and in a further third very good. The extent of attainment and progress and the relative performance of boys and girls were borne out in the samples of pupils' work scrutinised and in the books and other work of a larger number of pupils evaluated as part of the inspection of the subjects.
15. In the work seen in English, most pupils are on track at least to meet the expected national average in terms of grade A\* to C results in GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4 and for a high proportion to exceed them. A majority of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 are likely to achieve higher grade results in mathematics and science and the attainments of boys and girls are more even in these subjects. In all other subjects at Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils are well placed to achieve the national average or exceed it.

16. Most pupils read competently if not extensively. They have a good understanding of the range of books and materials they meet in lessons. Pupils of above average attainment master effectively higher order reading skills, such as skimming and scanning, in order to gather information. Pupils read aloud with confidence and with satisfactory accuracy and expression. In some subjects, for example design and technology, English, geography and history, pupils are encouraged to find out information or explore ideas for themselves. Overall though, scope exists to use homework more extensively to develop skills of independent learning. Some good examples were seen of the use of the Internet for this purpose and the school rightly insists that the outcomes of such research must be expressed in the pupils' own words.
17. Most pupils write with satisfactory accuracy and clarity. In some subjects, for example geography and history, they make their own notes and they write up their science experiments in their own words. They have extensive opportunities to write in a wide variety of styles and for a wide range of readers in English, and in history pupils in Year 9 have written poetry in the style of the War Poets of 1914 – 1918. Although the standard of writing is generally satisfactory, opportunities to write at length are limited in some subjects. Sometimes lessons move too quickly from discussion to a writing task. Some boys in particular find it difficult to write clearly and fully until they have thoroughly absorbed facts and ideas before setting pen to paper.
18. Most pupils speak confidently and join in class discussions enthusiastically. They respond well to teachers' questions and generally listen attentively. The restrictive nature of much of the accommodation means that lessons are generally taught to the class as a whole. It is more difficult in many rooms to work in small groups, although some effective working in pairs leads to good learning gains, especially as boys now sit next to girls.
19. Numeracy skills are consolidated satisfactorily across the curriculum as well as in mathematics itself. Pupils calculate quantities and materials costs in the various disciplines within design and technology; in science they measure accurately volume and mass; and they cope well with statistical analysis in geography and to a more limited extent in history. They explore the effect of variables when handling spreadsheets in ICT.
20. Overall, skills in ICT are less well developed than expected, mainly because the school's equipment has become dated and financial constraints have, until now, prevented its replacement. Now that up-to-date computers are arriving, work is already beginning in raising basic ICT skill levels and in the use of more challenging programs. The use of ICT is still fairly low across the curriculum. However some subjects, for example mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and history, are already exploring ways of applying it to enhance pupils' learning. The library, too, is well equipped for personal study using ICT and is extensively accessed by pupils, particularly at Key Stage 3.
21. The school has analysed test and examination data in considerable detail to reveal where strengths and weaknesses lie. Analysis of itself does not supply solutions to the problems identified. However, it is providing a clear focus for the school's efforts. Targets are now set for each subject at each key stage based on a

realistic evaluation of each age group's potential with an added element for challenge. The school is poised to set targets for individual pupils and to provide the necessary individual support that such a development requires. It has already launched an initiative to raise the performance of underachievers in each age group across the curriculum. Successful work is also being done in some subjects to raise the standards of those pupils at Key Stage 4 who lie on the border between grades D and C in GCSE. The school recognises that the challenge now is to find ways of teaching and learning which will provide new routes into learning for those pupils, especially boys, whose attainment lies doggedly just below the average.

23.

23. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

1. Pupils' attitudes to learning throughout the school are generally good. Most pupils in most subjects and year groups show interest in their work and want to do well. They listen carefully and are able to sustain concentration. A small minority of younger pupils have not yet developed good learning habits and across both key stages a small, but significant number of boys sometimes lack concentration. At times they display an unsatisfactory attitude to learning. Many pupils in the majority of lessons are keen to answer questions, are industrious and often absorbed in their work, as observed in Year 9 religious education and in history and geography at both key stages. In other subjects, for example in mathematics, ICT and science, some pupils, although interested, are reluctant to answer questions in class, but will contribute questions in small groups. Almost without exception, pupils with special educational needs respond well, are interested in their lessons and make good progress. At both key stages, particularly in geography, history and English, pupils develop their research skills, showing initiative and taking responsibility for their own learning, both at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Similar examples are found in religious education in Years 9 and 10. However in other subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4, in ICT, mathematics and science, opportunities are fewer for pupils to demonstrate initiative and to take responsibility for their own learning.
2. The behaviour of the majority of pupils in lessons and throughout the school is good. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. Parents and pupils both comment that most pupils settle quickly into school and are happy. A very small minority of parents and pupils reported some dissatisfaction in respect of offensive language and bullying. Neither were, however, witnessed. Pupils feel confident in reporting incidents of bullying, which are responded to promptly and sensitively. Pupils respond well to the school rules and to the system of rewards and sanctions in place. Younger pupils particularly, work hard to achieve merits for a wide range of achievements, including effort and behaviour. Pupils and staff are currently being consulted within their year councils about the adoption of a more appropriate reward system for Years 10 and 11. The school's analysis of the relatively high incidence of fixed-term exclusions indicate that for most pupils they are predominantly single episodes with a low rate of recurrence. Although boys and girls are excluded, most are boys.
3. Outside the classroom most pupils are friendly, confident, respectful and trustworthy, and negotiate the dispersed buildings in an orderly manner. Within the classroom and outside, they treat property and resources with respect. In most

subjects, pupils look after the equipment and resources, even though they are sometimes in poor condition. Relationships at both key stages between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves are good. Pupils are encouraged and enabled to express their views and opinions through tutor group discussions and in most subjects. Within lessons, pupils listen to each other and work constructively together when required. Even in those subjects where opportunities for collaborative work are few relationships are positive. Year 11 pupils seen on work experience placements were mature, confident, responsive and appropriately behaved.

4. Within lessons, most pupils value others' opinions, listen attentively and express an interest in ideas and opinions different from their own. Religious education provides pupils with the opportunity to explore other faiths, cultures and belief systems. In other subjects, for example, art and English, they experience artefacts, poetry, literature and music from other cultures. However, pupils have little real exposure to life in a multicultural society, and a small minority of pupils have very fixed attitudes. In PSE pupils have extensive opportunity to debate and discuss a whole of moral and ethical issues. They are encouraged to reflect on their feelings and behaviour.
5. Throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, pupils respond well to opportunities to show initiative and accept responsibility. In most lessons pupils respond positively to increasing challenge, although the size and shape of some classrooms impede creativity and flexibility in teaching methods. Many pupils contribute orally or volunteer to read aloud, and many develop research skills particularly in the foundation subjects. In physical education at Key Stage 4 pupils develop leadership qualities through opportunities to referee. They have a strong sense of fair play. Many pupils volunteer for activities such as helping in the library, with registers, book fairs, on school councils, or by joining the choir and band. Many Year 7 and 8 pupils are involved with the induction of new pupils, through visits to local primary schools and helping on parents' evenings. Older pupils are also involved in the supported reading scheme. Plans are in hand to develop and extend the role of the prefects. The school has a long history of taking part in charitable events, as each year group supports charities of their choice. Pupils' involvement with community activities and school events is high.

## 28. **Attendance**

1. Attendance is very good and is well above the national average for secondary schools. The attendance rate has remained above the national average since the previous inspection. Very little variation is apparent in pupil attendance between year groups. The overall rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. Statutory requirements are met in the marking of registers. Lateness is minimal and does not adversely affect teaching, attainment and progress. Lessons start and finish on time. Good attendance and punctuality contribute directly to the standards achieved and to continuity in pupils' learning.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

## Teaching

2. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The strengths in the teaching substantially outweigh the weaknesses. Pupils' progress in lessons and the quality of work in their books indicate that the teaching is thorough and conscientious and that it covers well the National Curriculum programmes of study and the GCSE syllabuses. In all but four of the 164 lessons seen, the teaching was at least satisfactory. In about two-thirds of lessons at Key Stage 3 and in about three-quarters of those at Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is at least good and sometimes very good or excellent. Overall, in the lessons seen at both key stages, one third was in these two higher categories. A significant proportion of high quality teaching is evident in music, drama, physical education, geography, modern foreign languages, design technology and English at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, in addition to the above subjects, very good and better teaching is evident also in history and religious education. All subject areas include some lessons with teaching of good quality to act as examples of effective practice.
3. Teachers work hard and show commitment to their work. Their knowledge and understanding of their subjects at both key stages, and of the GCSE examination requirements, are good. Secure command of the subject matter leads to interesting and stimulating lessons. In a Year 8 geography lesson, for example, expert knowledge of the effects of pollution caused by industry on the environment and the effective use a wide range of resources including information technology captured pupils' interest and stimulated independent learning. A strong feature of this lesson, and a number of others, was the liaison and planning which had taken place prior to the lesson between library staff and the teacher. This significantly enhanced the learning and enabled pupils to make very effective use of a wide range of resources in their research.
4. The planning of lessons is good at both key stages. The work is sustained well in the hour-long lessons. For example, in a Year 7 German lesson with a mixed ability group, work was carefully differentiated at the planning stage, the pace was varied appropriately and a very good range of methods was used. These included the use of mime and body language, pictures, the overhead projector, oral work in pairs and individual presentations to the whole class.
5. Schemes of work are well constructed for the most part. The best specify the learning objectives for each section of the work, suggest approaches and resources that can be used and indicate methods of assessment. However, the addition of performance targets to these schemes in some subjects would give the teaching a sharper focus. Although these targets are present in some schemes, they are often loosely expressed and the means of attaining them are not always identified.
6. A good variety of teaching methods is used in most subjects to provide different routes into learning and to engage pupils' interest. For example, a Year 10 geography class tested the hypothesis that the extent of open space increases the greater the distance from a city centre. The teacher used the overhead projector well to demonstrate and explain the concept. Pupils were then challenged to predict what their work would reveal. They tested the hypothesis using maps and

scattergraph techniques. The lesson concluded with a lively debate in which all pupils took part. Homework was then set to extend their understanding of settlements. In this and other subject areas, and in many individual lessons, teachers make good use of audio-visual aids and independent research methods to stimulate learning.

7. The organisation of pupils within classes generally matches the objectives of the work well. Pupils are used to working as individuals, in pairs and in small groups as well as in the class as a whole as the work requires. For example, in a Year 8 dance lesson for boys and girls designed to improve their sense of rhythm, pupils listened to a piece of music and then discussed, as a class, what images it stimulated within them. Using the idea of a circus, they designed and practised their own individual routines. They then worked in pairs sharing ideas and combining the best of these to develop a dance with a partner. Pairs were then combined into larger groups and the process repeated. The teacher was very effective and skilful in drawing on the pupils' ideas to produce an impressive whole class performance by the end of the lesson.
8. The setting of pupils into classes and groups according to prior attainment in some subjects provides the opportunity for teachers to match the work to the needs and capabilities of each group. In mixed ability groups, however, the planning of differentiated work is more variable. In some lessons, teachers provide work that matches well the capabilities of pupils. For example, in a Year 10 physical education GCSE theory lesson, pupils with special educational needs were provided with materials and set tasks that were appropriate to their capabilities and allowed them to achieve outcomes similar to those of higher attaining pupils. In other lessons with groups of mixed ability, differentiation is only achieved by the teacher giving more attention to slower learning pupils.
9. Relationships in the classroom are almost invariably positive and productive. However, occasionally a very small number of boys, particularly in Years 7 and 8, take time to settle at the beginning of a lesson or lose concentration when tasks become challenging. When this occurs, relationships are strained and the work of other pupils is affected. For the most part however, teachers manage pupils well in class and high standards of discipline are established. Positive relationships contribute much to the success of the personal and social education course, particularly when sensitive issues like drugs awareness and aspects of sex education are discussed, and in careers lessons when personal aspirations have to be realistically assessed in terms of pupils' potential.
10. Teachers' expectations of pupils are satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. In some lessons, particularly with younger pupils, the teaching provides more direction and support than is really necessary because the class is not expected to be able to cope with work in hand or to be able to work independently towards a solution to the problems posed. Occasionally, the teacher has an uncertain view of what younger pupils are able to achieve and, in these cases, teaching to the average becomes the norm. In many subjects, too, boys have low expectations of themselves. As pupils move into Key Stage 4, teachers' expectations of pupils are higher. Increasingly, the teaching stimulates challenge and communicates a sense of vigour and urgency in the learning as pupils commence their GCSE studies. Teachers expect pupils to engage in independent study both in classwork and homework at Key Stage 4. The foundation for this

type of work is gradually developed through Key Stage 3 and by the time pupils reach Key Stage 4, teachers' expectations of this approach to learning are fully justified for the most part.

11. Generally, assessment is being used constructively to raise attainment. The quality of marking is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. The marking now offers grades so that pupils know the level at which they are working. This recent change in the marking system has caused some confusion amongst a minority of pupils. Comments on the work are generally encouraging and supportive, and at both key stages indicate what needs to be done to improve. Informal, day-to-day assessment means that teachers know their pupils well and is effective in helping the planning of subsequent stages of the work. The school now has an effective assessment policy and assessment practice has improved since the previous inspection.
12. The school sets a reasonable amount of homework for each age group. Homework diaries help to keep parents informed and are a useful channel of communication between home and school. They are checked regularly during the morning registration period. Homework is usually set at an appropriate level and aims at consolidating or extending learning, in many cases through longer-term research projects rather than simply completing classwork. Higher attaining pupils gain extensively from these because no predetermined outcomes are expected and they are able to work to the limits of their capabilities. Occasionally, teachers set extra homework during Years 10 and 11 which causes pressure on some pupils following certain GCSE courses. The setting and use of homework to raise attainment have improved since the previous inspection.
13. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well throughout the school. Most of these pupils are full integrated into mainstream classes and receive support from classroom assistants from time to time. At other times, some are taught in small groups and, on other occasions, as individuals. The full range of these approaches was observed and in all cases the quality of the teaching was good. Different work is set to match individual needs and appropriate resources are used. Pupils value the support they receive.

41.

#### **The curriculum and assessment**

14. The previous inspection found that the school provided a broad and balanced curriculum, with full coverage of the National Curriculum and religious education. This continues to be the case. The present curriculum is the product of a recent review by a group of staff. It is well planned and the timetabling of the 25 weekly periods is flexible, responsive and skilful. In practice, the curriculum is much better than the school's slight and generalised curriculum policy statement would suggest. This document compares unfavourably with the subject policy statements that are written to a helpful standard format and are reviewed regularly. Pupils in all years receive very useful Programmes of Study Guides that give details of the courses studied, the resources used, guidance on homework and how parents can help. In the questionnaire, more than 80 per cent of parents agreed that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught.
15. The time given to the curriculum is in line with national recommendations. Overall,

appropriate allocations of time are made to individual subjects although some fare slightly better than others at Key Stage 4. Progression and continuity within the curriculum and between the primary and secondary phases are good. The links with post-16 institutions are effective at school level but progression and continuity at subject level are less well developed.

16. The school's curriculum gives all pupils equality of access and opportunity. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum that has not been disapplied for any pupil. To enable efficient use of support staff, some classes have a high proportion of pupils with special needs. In some lessons, all pupils make good progress but on other occasions the demands of some pupils are so great that the learning needs of all pupils in the class are not fully met. Withdrawal of pupils for additional support in reading, spelling and comprehension is very effectively raising their attainment. At times, however, it hampers their learning in the subjects from which they are withdrawn. The school has rightly tried to rotate the lessons missed but it remains an area needing constant monitoring.
17. All pupils take a common range of subjects throughout Key Stage 3 with the exception that some study French and others German. Pupils are taught in mixed ability groups for all subjects except mathematics and modern foreign languages for which they are grouped according to prior attainment from Year 8.
18. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 includes a core of subjects that all pupils take in addition to a range of options. Sets in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages are formed according to pupils' prior attainment. Careers education, ICT, personal and social education, core physical education and engineering are the only courses that do not lead to GCSE. This list used to include core religious education but the school now intends that this should be a short GCSE course, although the demands will be great as the time allocated is less than that recommended. All pupils, apart from a handful whose completed coursework is insufficient, are entered for GCSE. With the exception of Certificate of Achievement work in English, engineering and some unit accreditation work, the curriculum provides little for those for whom GCSE is not the most appropriate outcome. In some subjects, courses offer accreditation for units of work completed but the school does not offer courses leading to the General National Vocational Qualification as a preparation for the next stage of education, training or employment. However, sufficient resources have now been obtained for staff training and the provision of a GNVQ option is rightly being considered. A small number of pupils with special educational needs take one GCSE course fewer than the others in order to receive additional help with literacy and numeracy.
19. Effective careers education and guidance are included partly within the personal and social education programme at Key Stage 3. This programme is taught to all pupils on a different period every week so that the effect on time allocations to subjects is minimal. The course is carefully planned and thorough in its coverage of social, moral and health education, and of life skills. It is also planned in conjunction with religious education and science in its coverage of sex education. Its contribution to careers education is complemented by a separate course at Key Stage 4. The quality of personal and social education lessons observed was variable, but satisfactory overall.



20. The school's provision of extra-curricular activities is particularly strong in music and sport. Other valuable activities include art, drama, technology, ICT, a club for pupils with special educational needs, and the Christian Union. In the questionnaire, 90 per cent of parents agreed that the school encourages pupils to get involved in more than lessons.
21. The school has a thorough policy on assessment that will need to be revised because of the recent work by a staff group that has introduced improvements to the system. Assessment and marking practices have varied from subject to subject, as the previous inspection found. Geography and history have particularly effective procedures. The standard has been generally satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4, where GCSE gives a helpful framework. The revised system will provide greater consistency through an annual progress report, parents' evening and written report for pupils in each year. Effort grades with common criteria and attainment grades linked to National Curriculum levels will provide a clearer picture for pupils and parents. Currently, an opportunity is missed because information about assessment is omitted from the Programmes of Study Guides that all parents receive.
22. The teachers' use of the outcomes of assessment to plan future work is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. For example, in geography and history, end-of-year reviews lead to work being varied in response to assessment, and in design and technology the outcomes of assessment influence the pace of teaching and learning, and the matching of work to the abilities of pupils.
23. For pupils with special educational needs, assessment is thorough and comprehensive. It leads to detailed, focused individual learning programmes for pupils on relevant stages of the school's special needs register. Continuous assessment is used effectively to plan the next stage of learning for each pupil.
24. The school has much to do in order to involve pupils effectively in assessment and target-setting, and this has been identified appropriately as the next priority for the staff working group. Currently, pupils are interviewed individually by their tutors about their progress report and general improvement targets are agreed. However, subject departments are insufficiently involved in pupils' self-evaluation and rarely stimulate the progress of individuals by setting subject-specific targets.

**52. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

25. The previous inspection report stated that the school was successful in developing moral and social values and a sense of right and wrong. Although cultural opportunities in the curriculum were good, the range of extra-curricular opportunities was narrow. Opportunities for spiritual development were confined to religious education and English. Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils were not met. The school's provision has changed little since the previous inspection. The mission statement attaches due importance to moral and social aspects but makes no reference to spiritual or cultural development. The school has no policy on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and subject policy statements, other than those for religious education and personal and social education, do not refer to it. Religious

education makes a strong contribution to all four aspects. For example, it helps pupils to explore ultimate questions, reflect on their own beliefs and values, and appreciate the beliefs and values of others. They are given opportunities to examine moral issues and different approaches to them, consider social issues and the effect of belief on behaviour, understand the richness of cultural diversity, and challenge racism.

26. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is poor. The school makes little attempt to meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, even though this was a key issue for action in the previous inspection report. No act of collective worship was included in the morning tutor time of any form or in the three year-group assemblies observed. In lessons other than religious education, planned contributions to pupils' spiritual development are rare. Some exceptions exist. History makes a valuable contribution by studying the power of the medieval Church in Year 7, and examining the spiritual beliefs of the Plains Indians in Year 9. Pupils read First World War letters and poetry at Key Stage 4 in order to explore the human spirit's response to the horrors of war. Relevant topics in drama cover children in war in Year 7 and, in Year 8, the Eyam plague. Apart from a small contribution from geography on the origins of the universe, no other subjects play a significant part in pupils' spiritual development.
27. By contrast, the provision for pupils' moral development is good. The staff set good examples and the pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Regular attention is drawn to the school's code of conduct which is displayed in most classrooms. Several subjects make effective contributions to moral development. Personal and social education plays an important role, for example through topics such as: needs, rights and responsibilities; bullying; conflict; teenage pregnancy; and crime and the law. Drama includes topics on relationships and on bullying at Key Stage 3, and on the American high school massacres at Key Stage 4. English lessons promote moral development through pupil reflection on issues arising from literature. In geography, pupils cover a variety of work on the theme of rich world/poor world and on protecting the environment and those who live in it. In physical education lessons, a strong emphasis is placed on playing to the rules.
28. The provision for pupils' social development is also good, although in some subjects, such as English, geography and history, the lack of space in the classrooms restricts group work and therefore social development. Drama topics include social responsibility and dealing with personal tension. In design and technology lessons, pupils consider environmental issues related to re-cycling, and bake biscuits to raise money for charities. In physical education, pupils are trained in the skills necessary for the responsibilities of captaincy and refereeing. Personal and social education includes topics such as the environment, safety, assertiveness, drugs, equal opportunities and traffic education. Outside lessons, the school is actively involved in the community. The music department presents a Christmas festival in the local parish church and concerts for various audiences in the local area. Pupils have a range of appropriate opportunities to exercise responsibility, for example as librarians and as prefects, although the prefects' role is limited at present and the school rightly intends to expand it. Every tutor group is represented on its year council and every year council adopts a charity to support.

29. The absence of a school policy, and therefore a clear lead, causes the provision for pupils' cultural development, although satisfactory, to be less advanced than that for moral and social development. Multi-cultural awareness is strong in the practice of some departments which, though largely unplanned, is ahead of the school's general approach. The art department mounts displays of aboriginal art. The drama department recently presented a school play about the Amazon rain forests, with themes of conservation and anti-racism. In design and technology, pupils consider cultural attitudes to food and fashion. At Key Stage 4, the English department presents pupils with multi-cultural poetry and challenges racist attitudes. In geography, Year 9 pupils are helped to develop a fair and accurate image of developing countries. As a contribution to multi-cultural education, the history department is about to introduce a study of the black peoples of America. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own culture, particularly in drama, English and music.

57. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

30. Procedures for monitoring pupil progress and personal development at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are very good. The school provides a warm, supportive environment for pupils. Class tutors, support staff, heads of years and senior management, know pupils well, and show a sensitive understanding of their personal and social needs. Relationships between staff and pupils are relaxed, democratic and fair. Close, responsive relationships between pupils and class tutors are evident during tutor group time each morning. The provision for year tutors to move through the school with their tutor group facilitates the development of close, trusting relationships. Pupils also have direct access to heads of year and senior staff. Staff respond sensitively to individual need and difficulties, particularly to those pupils with specific behavioural, learning or emotional needs, and most pupils are happy and confident in the school environment.

31. Pastoral support is very strong. It has a positive impact on pupils' personal and academic progress, and enables most pupils to cope well with life in school. Personal progress is monitored closely. Medical and personal information is updated regularly, and appropriate staff have access to pupils' files which are held by the heads of years. Opportunities are available for personal discussion, for example with the school nurse on a twice-weekly basis. Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Many of them use the informal provision available to them before school and during the lunch periods. Year 7 pupils are inducted into school very thoroughly, and well prepared for the transition, personally, socially and academically.

32. Provision for careers education and guidance within school is good. Year 11 pupils are well prepared for their transition to the work environment or further education. The partnership agreement with Lifetime Careers, the links with a number of colleges, and with local industry and commerce, ensure that pupils can make informed choices about their future careers. Pupils' intended destinations are monitored through the careers service, but monitoring of actual pupil destinations is less systematic. More pupils are entering modern apprenticeship schemes which results in an apparent decline in pupils entering further education.

33. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress throughout the school is good.

Records include comparative data for the tutor group or set. Monitoring identifies groups of underachievers, who then receive additional one-to-one support programmes. Monitoring of pupils with special educational needs is also good. Pupils have detailed, well-focused individual learning programmes, and assessment informs planning and target setting.

34. Procedures for checking attendance are very good through a rigorous system implemented by heads of years, class tutors and administration staff. Consistent weekly monitoring, good liaison and rapid follow up with home maintains the high level of attendance. Registers are taken at each lesson. Punctuality is also rigorously monitored by heads of year. Sanctions for late arrivals are strictly applied. Weekly meetings with the education social work service ensure that the needs of individual pupils are well known and appropriately managed.
35. The school follows the local Area Child Protection procedures and guidelines. The designated child protection co-ordinator, the head of pastoral care, is very experienced in this area, has received training and has very close links with the appropriate agencies. Other heads of year also attend case conferences as appropriate. All new staff receive induction training on child protection issues and these are also covered in tutor group meetings.
36. The school's provision for the health and safety of pupils is good. Pupil safety is paramount within and outside lessons, as well as on field trips and educational visits. Risk assessments and insurance checks are undertaken for pupils on work experience placements through the careers service. Individual pupils' health and safety needs are closely monitored. Administrative staff, trained in first aid, are readily available. Mid-day supervisors and some teaching staff are also appropriately qualified. Staff are clear about procedures and resources are replenished termly. Procedures for health and safety monitoring and audits of the building and equipment are currently being updated since the school undertook responsibility for some audits. Safety procedures for cleaning staff and caretakers are being reviewed. The poor design and condition of some of the buildings gives them a down-at-heel appearance, despite the best efforts of cleaning and maintenance staff, and teaching staff to provide a pleasant environment in which to work.

### **Partnership with Parents and the Community**

1. The quality of the school's partnership with parents and the community is very good. It reflects the focal position that the school has achieved within the community. The school's involvement with and contribution to the local community, including local industry and employers, is an outstanding example of such provision. As a result, the school is valued by local business and commerce, the parish council and many voluntary and denominational groups. Some links with local businesses and commerce are well established. Others have developed in recent years through a series of approaches by the headteacher and senior staff. Pupils at both key stages benefit from links with local industries, for example geography field trips in conjunction with a local quarry and opportunities for work experience. Pupils also benefit from a fruitful association with the largest engineering employer in the area, and the Neighbourhood Engineers scheme. Both are directly involved in contributing to the work in the classroom. They

support the annual 'challenges', assist in the debriefing sessions following pupil work experience placements, and also provide placements for teaching staff.

2. The school's links with a number of local primary schools are very close and constructive. The school invariably offers support for joint initiatives such as drugs awareness and provides sports facilities and other school resources. Letters from a number of primary heads have emphasised the support and contribution that the school provides for them. Such support has a useful impact on the local community, and establishes a positive image for the school. These close working and personal relationships serve to make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and intellectual development.
3. The quality of information that the school provides for parents is of a very high standard. From the earliest point of contact with new parents and throughout a pupil's time at the school, the information shared with parents is informative and detailed. Weekly newsletters and pupil bulletins outline clearly activities and events in the life of the school. Parents have been productively consulted or involved in home school agreements, underachievers groups, language choices, and careers and work experience placements. Attendance at parents' meetings is high.
4. Parents have opportunities for daily contact with the tutor through home-school diaries. Statutory requirements for reporting are met through the annual parents' meeting in the spring term, and the written pupils' report in July. These annual reports have been improved to include clearer evaluations of pupils' attainment and progress. In future, parents will retain a copy of the progress reports to be issued in the autumn term. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed. A high proportion of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire commented that school kept them well informed of their children's progress. A similar number felt that they had a clear understanding of what is taught. A significant number of parents and families help in school or actively support school in other ways. At the beginning of each year, parents are invited to volunteer their services and many respond. They help regularly in some departments and use their own expertise, for example skills in art, casting brass in design and technology and entering data for the library. Other parents provide support for pupils with special educational needs **or** assist on school visits at home and abroad, or with the band. Parents are currently being recruited to assist in the new information technology suite.
5. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is very active in organising a successful range of fund-raising and social events throughout the year. It has recently associated with the funding of the furnishing of the new information technology suite soon to be equipped through Tools For Schools scheme. The PTA has a high profile within school, and enjoys a close working relationship with the senior management team, pupils and families.
6. The school has a long tradition of supporting local and national charities. The school is also renowned for its many musical and social events. Pupils' strong identification with their local community makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development and to their attainment and progress.

## THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### 70. Leadership and management

1. The school is well led and managed efficiently. The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the work of the school. He is supported effectively by two deputy headteachers. The senior management team also includes staff responsible for the pastoral system and the senior administrative officer who provides financial and budgetary advice. Their responsibilities have been carefully structured to reflect the terms of reference of the committees of the governing body and to respond to day-to-day operational demands. Each has coherent specific as well as corporate responsibilities. From time to time, other senior staff are attached to the senior management team for specific purposes or projects. In these ways, representatives of each of the major areas of the school's operation have a stake in deciding and implementing school policies and priorities for development.
2. The senior management team has good two-way lines of communication with middle management, the quality of which is good. Members of the senior team chair the meetings of the heads of subject department and the heads of year, and other members attend including the headteacher. These groups meet regularly and advise the senior management team on the development and implementation of policies. Subject departments and year groups are well led and managed, and they currently achieve useful coherence and consistency in the implementation of school policies. Productive overlap between the subject and the year group teams occurs through the pastoral team's teaching of the personal and social education programme within the curriculum. The teachers involved in the pastoral team are also members of subject departments so that mutual concerns are shared regularly at department meetings. Notes of the various meetings are made accessible to all staff. Good communications are also maintained through daily briefings, weekly bulletins and staff meetings. As a result, staff are aware of current issues and developments, and they work well together at all levels.
3. A number of factors have, until recently, frustrated major curricular and organisational change. The fall in the number of pupils over a long period, the consequent financial constraints and the need to reduce staffing, together with mounting difficulties over the building's fabric and facilities, left only limited room for manoeuvre. Now, numbers are rising, bids for additional finance have proved successful and prospects for the building are brighter. The comprehensive and detailed school development plan is now drawn up as a three-year rolling programme, and is based on wide consultation and a rigorous annual review. It defines and orders appropriate priorities for the school's development. It identifies those responsible for leading the initiatives, sets realistic budgets and deadlines, and establishes the means of evaluating the outcomes. The planning of subject departments and other areas is also based on an annual review of performance. They too are moving to three-year subject development plans in order to integrate with that of the school. The priorities are discussed by staff, and developed and refined by the senior management team in the light of precise costings. They are further refined by the relevant governors' committees before being accepted by the full governing body and incorporated into the budget for the coming year. The system, though relatively new in this fully developed form, is proving effective in creating a real sense of common purpose and is leading to measurable

improvements in the classroom.

4. The school has developed a distinct and positive ethos. It ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and takes positive action to provide equality of opportunity for pupils to succeed, for example it offers individual support for those on the grade C/D borderline in GCSE and is attempting to raise the performance of boys. The same principles underpin the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Effective diagnostic and support mechanisms are in place and staff are effectively deployed to provide maximum help to pupils within the mainstream classes.
5. The school has effective policies and systems that reflect its current mission statement and aims, and which cover most aspects of its life and work. It has been successful in gaining accreditation and reassessment as an Investor in People and is providing effective professional development and support under the leadership of a deputy head. The school is strongly committed to raising achievement. Under the leadership of the head of English, the senior management team and the heads of subjects are undertaking close analysis of performance data to identify strengths and weaknesses, and take necessary action. The analyses are also used to set departmental targets and ultimately targets for individual pupils. It has begun to identify where value is being added or lost, and the reasons why. The school has adopted the OFSTED model of school self-evaluation. Although it is too early to assess its impact, it complements the extensive work of the senior management team and the staff as a whole in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the standards of work. The efforts mark considerable progress since the previous inspection.
6. Some limitations still exist. The school's mission statement and its aims, values and objectives were drawn up when the school faced a period of contraction. They have served the school well but are now in need of revision. For example, they do not give sufficient emphasis to raising attainment or mention spiritual values. They do not establish the principles on which, for instance, effective policies for the curriculum or for worship can be based, both of which are significantly missing from the school's policy portfolio. The school therefore currently lacks a coherent framework to which staff at all levels can relate their day-to-day work and through which the school's core intentions and values are reflected. The time is opportune for the senior management team to involve governors, staff, parents and pupils in the review and reconstruction of the school's overall aims and objectives.
7. The leadership and management are successful in promoting the school's image and achievements locally. In this, they are well supported by the governing body which itself has close ties with the community and a commitment to the school playing a full part in its life. Governors are knowledgeable and are led with vigour and perception. They discharge their duties well. Since the previous inspection, they have demonstrated their strong commitment by close involvement with the school in planning and in making strategic policy decisions. They are developing further their procedures for reviewing the school's progress and for setting targets. They meet their statutory duties effectively and ensure compliance with statutory requirements with the exception of that for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

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

8. Overall, the qualifications, experience and expertise of teaching and support staff make a positive contribution to the pupils' attainment and progress. The school has sufficient teaching staff for its present curriculum. Of the 41 teaching staff, seven are employed on a part-time basis. The average number of pupils to each teacher is much less favourable than the national figure, particularly at Key Stage 3, and staff teach a higher proportion of the week than in most other comprehensive schools. Teaching groups are above average in size. Staff are well qualified and the match is good between their qualifications and the subjects they teach. Almost three-quarters are graduates.
9. It is an experienced staff for the most part. The average length of service in teaching is just over 17 years and almost one quarter of the staff have spent the whole of their teaching careers at the school. They provide considerable stability and continuity. Although some continue to use well-tried and tested methods, many retain variety and freshness in their approach to classroom work. A third of the staff has joined the school in the last two years. Overall, the balance between youth and experience produces a profitable mixture of established practice and new ideas. New staff settle quickly. They are provided with an induction programme, a mentor and appropriate support and guidance from senior staff. The staff has the capacity to undertake change and sustain improvement.
10. The arrangements for staff development provide well for the teachers' individual needs through the professional review process. In-service training provision is also tied in closely to the school development plan and departmental reviews, as well as priorities identified by the senior management team, internal working groups and the governing body. Spending on staff development was average last year and the school is managing the funds allocated for this efficiently and effectively. Where possible, the school puts on its own staff development programmes or shares with other schools the cost of external providers. All staff development needs are prioritised and carefully costed. Self-evaluation training has been undertaken recently and target-setting for pupils is now seen as a high priority for development.
11. Staffing provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally good. In addition to the special needs co-ordinator, four other teachers provide support for low attaining pupils and five education care officers provide classroom support, mainly for pupils who have statements of special educational need. Support focuses mainly on raising standards of literacy and numeracy. The support system works well and helps pupils attain in line with their capabilities and make progress. Overall, staffing arrangements for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties are appropriate and effective.
12. The proportion of the budget spent on administrative and education and support staff is near the national average. They serve the school well in a wide range of clerical, financial and reprographic duties. Technical assistants are sufficient in number, used to good effect and support the teaching well. The site manager and his staff have a difficult job maintaining and running the buildings but do it well.
13. The accommodation is poor and there has been little improvement to its condition since the previous inspection. The school has done what it can from its meagre



resources to maintain the fabric of the building and prevent further deterioration such as the re-felting of some of the flat roofs. Despite this, large pools of standing water remain on roofs, and water damage occurs inside the buildings. During the week of the inspection, which was particularly wet, rainwater could be seen coming in to the school through ceilings and window frames at a number of points, including the headteacher's office. The exterior of the building is unappealing. There has been little investment in external maintenance for a number of years other than some running repairs and the replacement of some rotting windows. Window frames in other parts of the building continue to rot, and are rapidly reaching a dangerous condition. Other features of the school's environment are also in need of attention. Parts of the playing fields are unusable for much of the year due to bad drainage. Where covered walkways exist between the buildings, they are ineffective and provide little protection against driving rain and snow.

14. The school has made great efforts to improve the quality of the building internally and has invested a considerable amount of money in redecorating parts of the school and improving its provision. For example, an attractive reception office has been created which makes the school more welcoming to visitors. Colourful and interesting displays of pupils' work feature in some of the public areas. For example, outside the library some high-quality examples of pupils' design and technology work are tastefully displayed. A new computer room is being created out of an old lecture theatre. However, social spaces for pupils are inadequate in number and size. This lack causes problems during wet break times and requires a large number of staff and prefects to be deployed within the school to ensure effective supervision and the safety of pupils.
15. The accommodation is just sufficient to implement the curriculum. However, with large numbers in some classes, rooms become crowded and negatively affect the learning process. With rising numbers of pupils entering the school, this situation is likely to become worse in the future. Deficiencies in the English and humanities areas mean that some rooms can only be accessed by pupils passing through other rooms, with consequent delays and disruption to the start of lessons. Design and technology rooms are dispersed in a number of buildings and science accommodation is below standard, a situation unchanged since the previous inspection.
16. The condition and siting of the buildings makes them expensive to run. Spending on the accommodation is above, and cleaning and caretaking costs well above the national average. Overall, the poor quality of the accommodation makes it difficult for staff to raise standards at a significant rate despite their considerable efforts to do so.
17. The range and quality of resources are generally satisfactory in each subject area although the current stock of ICT equipment is ageing. Its replacement is, however, imminent and by the start of the spring term the school should have adequate stocks of up-to-date computers to match the needs of the curriculum. Spending on resources overall was well below the national average in 1998-99 and it is anticipated that this will remain at a low level during the current financial year. However, most departments have updated their text book stocks to meet the needs of the National Curriculum although a number of departments have insufficient to permit pupils to take books home for homework. The current ratio of

books to pupils in the library and in classrooms is good. Library resources are used well and support the curriculum very effectively.

18. The school has been very resourceful in fund raising to ensure that it has adequate stocks of books and equipment, for example through the use of profits from the tuck shop to purchase technology books. The PTA has also worked hard to this end and made very generous donations of equipment to the school over the years. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are adequate in all subject departments. Overall, the provision of resources enables pupils to attain the standards they currently achieve and offers them good opportunities to raise attainment.

#### 88. **The efficiency of the school**

19. The resources available to the school are managed very efficiently and effectively. The governors and staff have worked hard and successfully to avoid a deficit. The budget of £1.4 million in 1998-99 is forecast to rise to slightly over £1.5 million in 1999-2000. Staffing accounted for 81 per cent of the expenditure in 1998-99 of which the expenditure on teachers was at the national average. The exceptional circumstances associated with the high level of expenditure on supply and relief teachers included long-term serious illnesses amongst staff members. Expenditure in this respect during the current year is expected to fall to near the national average. The remainder of the expenditure is divided between learning resources, staff development, and other premises and facilities costs. Expenditure in these categories is at, or slightly below, the national average with the exception of buildings and cleaning costs. Generally, the funds are deployed prudently and the budget profile is very close to that found nationally.
20. Overall, the financial resources available are not generous, although they are in line with the LEA's formula. The funds available per pupil are below the national average for schools without sixth forms and are less than those available to over three-quarters of such schools nationally. The consequence is that expenditure has to be tightly controlled and the amount spent per pupil is below the national average. To achieve even these levels the school has to operate with very small reserves in order to meet its obligations and to maintain the quality of its provision. The situation offers no flexibility to meet unexpected contingencies. Under these circumstances, financial management is very good.
21. The cycle of annual school development planning is well established and works efficiently. The introduction of targets is beginning to allow subject departments to evaluate their performance and define their needs with greater precision. Funds are allocated equitably to subjects according to the curricular demands made on them, and only a minimal reserve is held centrally. Development plans from departments, largely covering the immediate and medium-term future, are incorporated after careful screening into a draft school development plan, discussed in detail within the governors' finance committee before being submitted to the governing body itself for final amendment and ratification. Short-term educational developments are therefore supported through very careful financial planning.
22. Expenditure in relation to agreed priorities is monitored carefully on a day-to-day

basis by the school's senior administrative officer and by regular reports to the senior management team and the chair of the finance committee. The accounts are audited by the LEA's finance department every year. The most recent audit made a few minor procedural recommendations, all of which have been implemented.

23. Effective use is made of the resources available. The well-qualified staff are deployed to make best use of their experience and expertise. The creation of posts of responsibility matches the school's needs. All staff have job descriptions and are clear about their roles and duties. Non-teaching and administrative staff are deployed efficiently. They make an important contribution in classrooms and facilitate the smooth running of the school from day to day.
24. The curriculum is generally well resourced. Any shortfalls are caused by constraints in overall funding rather than poor management. Accommodation is used to the full and a bright and cheerful working environment has been created indoors for the most part. Some departments have their rooms dispersed through adjacent buildings, however, which detracts from the efficient use of resources and the exchange of techniques and ideas. Some subject departments also have difficult accommodation to manage, but they do the best they can with what they have available. The exterior fabric of the building is in poor condition but, with the funds available over the years, the governors and the school have been able to do little to improve the situation.
25. The financial resources allocated to special educational needs are managed efficiently and effectively. The school has sufficient teaching resources in each subject department to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. These are used appropriately to raise the attainment of special needs pupils and support staff are well deployed. Strategic planning within the special needs department is of high quality. It is sufficiently flexible to allow response to needs throughout the school.
26. Given the funding available, the nature of the intake, the quality of the education provided and the above average standards achieved by of pupils, the school provides good value for money. Improvements in hand in the targeting of work and prospective improvements in performance have the potential to raise value for money further.

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

### **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

#### **English**

1. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with national expectations. Almost all pupils are entered for GCSE examinations in English and in English Literature. All pupils received a GCSE grade A\* to G in the 1999 examinations and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A\* to C was above the national average in English, and marginally below in English Literature. These results are consistent with the results reported the previous inspection. The attainment of girls is significantly better than that of boys in both subjects and the difference is greater than in most schools nationally. It is the lower attainment of boys which keeps results closer to the national average than they might otherwise be.
2. Attainment by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is generally above the national average. In 1999, results were slightly lower than in 1998 with a smaller number of successes at the higher levels. Despite this, results have risen since 1996 in line with national expectations. At age 14 as well as at age 16, the attainment of girls is significantly higher than that of boys.
3. At Key Stage 3 the progress of all pupils is at least satisfactory. Pupils read confidently building a good knowledge of Shakespeare and other major authors. They write in many different forms including poetry, play scripts, newspaper articles and letters. In their writing, pupils pay attention to grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils also work well together, discussing ideas and improving the content of their writing. The progress of the highest attaining pupils and those pupils with special education needs is consistently good. The progress of boys of average or slightly below average attainment is less than that of many other pupils in this key stage.
4. At Key Stage 4, the progress of all pupils is at least satisfactory, but girls take better advantage of opportunities to develop the accuracy and content of GCSE coursework than do the boys. The progress of boys of average or slightly below average attainment remains less than that of many other pupils in this key stage. The lowest attaining pupils benefit from learning support assistants who help them to improve the accuracy and content of their writing. The highest attaining pupils, both boys and girls, understand the moral issues in the literature studied such as racial prejudice in novels, and social class divisions in the plays studied. They write in detail about characters, finding examples and quotations to support their ideas and opinions. Many pupils produce extended pieces of writing, show imagination in creating stories and sensitivity in talking and writing about their own lives and experiences.
5. The great majority of pupils take an interest in their work, behave well and are polite and considerate to others. Working relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Most pupils keep their concentration and show that they can work independently, but in some lessons a small number of pupils, particularly boys, do not push their learning forward as much as they could.

6. Teaching is good or very good in most lessons and is satisfactory in all lessons at both key stages. In the best lessons, teachers set high expectations of the pupils and make the aims of the lessons clear to them. Discipline is firm, and a variety of activities is planned. Teachers move through the activities at a good pace and through careful marking and helpful advice individual pupils are brought to understand what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers and learning support assistants work together well to help those with special educational needs. In some lessons, teachers take a long time to explain work and to give instructions to the whole class. This slows the pace of the lesson and does not allow enough opportunity for pupils to work independently or to share their own ideas with other pupils in group work.
7. The English curriculum is well planned and procedures for assessment meet the statutory requirements at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Pupils are taught in mixed ability classes and as a result all pupils have good access to the whole curriculum, including those with special educational needs. At Key Stage 4, assessment is guided by the examination syllabus and is very thorough and consistent. At Key Stage 3, some marking is not as detailed and as a result some pupils of average and slightly below average ability are not challenged enough to improve their work at a fast rate. At both key stages, assessment information is not always used in the classroom to plan effectively for the learning of different groups or individuals.
8. The English rooms do not help teachers and pupils to achieve high standards of teaching and learning. Most classrooms are small for the number of pupils in the class. Several rooms are too hot or too cold. One room provides access to other rooms and this makes concentration difficult for pupils. Much of the furniture and equipment is adequate but ageing. Despite this, teachers and pupils work hard to make the learning environment attractive and effective. The wall displays are bright and colourful. Books and class materials are kept in good condition. The library has a good range of books, video recordings, computers, computer software and access to the Internet. The librarian is experienced in guiding pupils in the use of these resources and the library is an important facility for research and independent learning in English lessons.
9. The English department is efficiently run. English teachers work together and support each other to the benefit of the pupils. The department meets on a regular basis and priorities for future development have been identified. Some steps have been taken to improve the attainment and progress of boys, but these have not yet proved fully effective. As a result, standards have been maintained since the last inspection but have not significantly improved. The challenge now facing the department is to secure that improvement in overall attainment.

## 105. Literacy

10. Although the school has not yet appointed a literacy co-ordinator, the literacy working group has staff members from many different departments across the school curriculum. This group has organised literacy training for school staff and has produced a draft policy on literacy. Many subjects other than English make a very good contribution to pupils' competence in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Form time is used very well to work on spellings at Key Stage 3 and to

promote independent reading in all year groups. In food technology pupils gain in verbal confidence by presenting findings from investigations to the whole class. In religious education, good collaborative group work builds discussion skills. Geography lessons encourage use of a range of reading material for research, and make very good use of writing frames to help develop writing skills in the subject. History lessons involve pupils in studying the skills of analytical writing. The special educational needs department produces excellent literacy development work with individuals and small groups. The library makes a strong contribution to pupil literacy by supporting research in a wide number of subject areas. Standards of reading, writing and speaking and listening are good across the school to the benefit of the learning for all pupils.

## 106. **Drama**

11. Results in the most recent GCSE examinations were well above the national average, and this has been the consistent trend in recent years. Standards of attainment are high at Key Stage 3, and in Year 10. No lessons were observed in Year 11. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have gained a wide range of drama skills through which they express their own ideas and feelings. Pupils of all ability demonstrate confident improvised performances, successfully portraying accurate characterisation and a fluent use of accent and mime. Many reveal considerable imagination in their approaches to the interpretation of given stimuli. In Year 10, pupils are developing a fine sense of the dramatic, and can confidently sustain often complicated in-role situations for long periods of time.
12. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3 and very good progress Key Stage 4. It is significant at both key stages that pupils make progress both within lessons and across modules of work, whatever their academic ability. This is because of the way in which practical work is structured and because of the different approaches to develop pupils' different strengths that are worked into lessons. Pupils are always well focused in group work, rapidly experimenting and selecting, and discussing ways ahead. End of lesson performances always demonstrate progress made within those lessons.
13. Pupils have very good attitudes to drama at both key stages, and the subject is much enjoyed. In practical work, commitment is total. Pupils move alertly into group concentration both in class and group work. Pupils listen to each other sympathetically when performances take place, and they make mature and balanced comments about each other's work. Invariably, a sense of disappointment is evident when lessons come to an end.
14. The quality of teaching is mostly very good across the department. Teachers have a productive formal and informal working relationship with the pupils, and they know exactly how to make drama appeal to pupils of all abilities. To develop this relationship, they slip easily in and out of role at regular intervals. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and a thorough awareness of theatre craft. Lessons are well planned, with challenging stimuli well presented. They maintain a fast pace of development and keep pupils constantly on target.
15. The drama curriculum has been thoroughly thought through and is constantly being reviewed. It is now continuous between the years at both key stages, a

matter raised at the previous inspection. Assessment procedures are effective, another matter previously raised, although the current systems are being re-appraised. The department contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, and programmes of study enable pupils to raise their self-esteem and confidence in a wide variety of ways.

## 111. Mathematics

1. Attainment in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 1999 was well above average in terms of the proportions gaining Level 5 or Level 6. When the school is compared with others with a similar intake, these represent above average results. This was a significant improvement over the position in 1998 when, although higher numbers than average gained at least Level 5, the proportion gaining Level 6 was no better than average. Prior to this, there had been a declining trend in standards. The school identified that the approach in use, that of supported individual learning, was no longer appropriate for its intake and took steps to move away from it. This has led to a change in the textbook scheme and some variation in teaching methods but the revisions to the scheme of work that encompasses the new approach are far from complete. Furthermore, the school is not able to purchase sufficient texts to support the new approach so that a variety of texts remain in use throughout Key Stage 3, especially in Year 9. These factors together mean that the observed levels of attainment in lessons and in the scrutiny of completed work are broadly average at the moment. No significant differences exist between the attainment targets. Similarly, unlike other areas of the school, no significant differences exist between the performance of boys and girls, although boys do slightly better at Key Stage 3. The highest attaining pupils in Year 9 were able to solve linear equations efficiently and with understanding. However, when one group was asked to solve simultaneous equations, although most could complete the method, their understanding was incomplete. Most pupils in a middle set were able to give the bounds within which a measurement stated as, for example, 64 cm must lie. However, lower attaining pupils had little concept of formal algebra, although they could solve simple 'think of a number' problems. Some pupils have understanding that is better than expected, but little evidence was found of very high attainment. Many pupils carry out tasks without the underlying understanding necessary for them to apply that knowledge in subsequent stages of the work.
2. Results in GCSE examinations over some years show that standards are about average compared with all schools but somewhat below average when compared with similar schools. No obvious trend is apparent in these results recently and there is no significant difference in performance between boys and girls. It was not possible to observe classes in Year 11, but a scrutiny of their completed work indicates standards broadly as expected at this time of year. Pupils were successful in solving quite complex equations, but standards of numeracy were sometimes weak.
3. Numeracy is effectively promoted in other subject areas. For example, in geography, numeracy skills are used in many lessons and promote the correct use of graphs, co-ordinates and measurement. However, in a history lesson for Year 7, pupils were unable to estimate that, if Harold Hardrada's army of 10000 set sail in 300 ships then each ship needed to hold approximately 30 to 35 soldiers. Similarly, the implication that if 24 ships returned then only about 800 soldiers

survived was not made. Although the design and technology department has no formal strategy for numeracy, it is promoted through the requirement for accurate measurement when marking out and also through the use of tally charts and other statistical methods to analyse, for example, questionnaire responses.

4. Pupils make sound progress in the subject at both key stages. It is mirrored in the progress seen in individual lessons. When progress is good, it follows from lessons that have a good, brisk pace in which pupils are set short-term targets in their work. This happened in a Year 10 lesson on the expansion of brackets. Pupils were shown how to deal with the simplest case and then were expected to develop the other, more awkward, cases themselves. The regular changes in activity and focus from individual work to class discussion and back again meant that all pupils made good progress in their understanding of the concept over and above the mechanical knowledge they already had. However, in many lessons, pupils make only sound progress, although the tasks set have the potential for better progress. This is because pupils are left to their own devices when working individually on examples and the pace of lessons became slack. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and make similar progress to their peers, within the limits of their capabilities.
5. Pupils at Key Stage 3 respond well to the teaching they receive. At Key Stage 4, their response is satisfactory. Most pupils want to do well in lessons but are reluctant to volunteer answers in lessons even when it is clear they are confident in their understanding. They become well motivated when more imaginative methods are used, as happened in Year 8 lessons in which pupils were introduced to the idea of transformations of the plane effectively through the analogy of docking spaceships. However, in most lessons, pupils lose momentum during the lengthy practice of examples. This happens because the teacher's attention is usually focused only on those who ask for help rather than checking on the rate of work of all pupils. Pupils behave well at Key Stage 3 and satisfactorily at Key Stage 4. In one Year 10 lesson, a small number of pupils were openly inattentive and chatted during the lesson. However, even they were well motivated and concentrated intensely in the mental exercise at the end of lesson based on the numbers game in the television series Countdown. The previous inspection report observed that pupils had limited opportunities to work together, share information or pose their own questions. This is still largely the case. Very little group work is undertaken, although in some instances pupils discuss their ideas with their partner briefly. The large size of some classes and relatively small classrooms make the logistics of group work difficult.
6. At both key stages, teaching is sound overall, although some examples were seen of very good teaching. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson. Overall, almost half of the lessons observed had good teaching or better, and in exactly half it was satisfactory. The teaching always demonstrates sufficient knowledge about the content to be taught and the needs of the group in order to plan lessons effectively. However, some inconsistency exists in what is to be expected from pupils because the full scheme of work is not currently in place to guide teachers. As a result, rote learning of method replaces understanding. Most lessons follow the format of a brief introduction followed by the practice of examples from a textbook or worksheet. In this approach, some pupils are not challenged enough and can easily hide from the teacher's scrutiny. In most lessons, all pupils are expected to complete exactly the same work. Consequently, those who are



confident in the work or who choose not to ask for help are not necessarily working at their full capacity. Those who finish early are typically rewarded by more of the same rather than work that extends or deepens understanding. When the teaching is good, this problem is overcome by the regular changes of activity and tight time limits for work. Lessons do not often use assessment to modify tasks and approaches. In consequence, all of the class, regardless of their existing depth of understanding, are offered the same work. Homework is generally used well to support class learning.

7. Because schemes of work currently are skeletal, individual teachers have to interpret them for their classes. As a result, radically different topics are being studied by different classes. For example, one Year 9 top set had entirely appropriate work set on the solution of linear equations; the other had work which was much too difficult about simultaneous equations. The previous inspection noted that curricular provision was not consistent throughout the department. While still true, steps are being taken to correct this situation. Pupils with special needs enjoy the same level of access as their peers through the good quality support they receive. The department is now led temporarily by a deputy headteacher, pending the appointment of a new head of department. The change in working practices and the development of a new scheme of work are in hand. The level of monitoring was criticised in the previous report. This now takes place with a view to supporting colleagues and sharing good practice. The acting head of department has devised a good quality action plan for which different members take responsibility. The subject is mainly taught in a suite of four rooms. These include effective displays of pupils' work. However, the rooms are quite small for some of the classes. They restrict teaching styles and the area in which the suite is located remains drab and uninspiring. Currently the number of textbooks is insufficient for all classes so that some cannot take a text home for study or homework purposes. Nevertheless, the logistical task of sharing class sets of books is well organised.

## 118. Science

8. The progress achieved by pupils in science is for the most part satisfactory in relation to their capabilities. The standards of attainment are similar at both key stages. At Key Stage 3, pupils' standard of attainment in National Curriculum science tests was in line with the national average in 1999. The average level of attainment of pupils in science over the last three years in both National Curriculum tests and on the basis of teacher assessment have fluctuated around the national averages with no overall trend evident. However, attainments are well below those achieved in schools with similar intakes. At Key Stage 3, pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts is mainly in line with their abilities and they use both effectively in carrying out scientific investigations.
9. The standard of attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is also in line with the national average. The percentages of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in science at GCSE have for the last three years fluctuated around the national average but have fallen below those of similar schools. At Key Stage 4, pupils' knowledge and understanding is mainly commensurate with their abilities and by the end of the key stage, some pupils become very competent in carrying out scientific investigations.

10. For most pupils, throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, the progress made is broadly in line with their capabilities. Lessons are well structured, clear targets and deadlines are set, and most pupils acquire and consolidate scientific knowledge and understanding at an appropriate pace. However, large class sizes coupled with the wide ability range of some of the Key Stage 3 groups results in lower ability pupils not being adequately supported and higher ability pupils not being extended sufficiently to reach their potential.
11. The behaviour of pupils and their attitude to the learning of science is good. They are given clear expectations about how they are expected to behave, and they are challenged quickly and effectively if acceptable limits are transgressed. Pupils are secure about what is expected of them and in the majority of lessons they display a positive and enthusiastic attitude towards the subject. They willingly involve themselves in the lessons, are interested and sustain concentration whether listening, responding, or working on the tasks set. The relationships between pupils in science lessons are good. They work co-operatively and collaboratively when required. During practical work, they take appropriate care of the laboratories and apparatus. However, relatively few opportunities exist for pupils to develop their own ideas or to take responsibility or initiative for their own learning. When these are given, pupils respond maturely.
12. The overall quality of the teaching across both key stages in the science department is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and material presented at a level which is appropriate for the age of the pupils. Pupils' own ideas are explored and valued and their misconceptions about science are challenged. Teachers set expectations that, for the class as a whole, are high enough to be challenging but not so high as to be unattainable. Teaching of children at the high and low ends of the ability range is less effective at Key Stage 3. The approaches taken do not always effectively support the less able pupils or extend the learning of the more able ones. Teachers make the science knowledge and understanding interesting and relevant. Lessons are well planned with methods and organisational strategies chosen to suit the ages and average ability of the pupils concerned. Expectations of behaviour are high. The teaching time is used well and efficient use is made of the available resources. Homework is set regularly to extend and reinforce learning. It is well linked to the teaching which occurs in lessons. The standard of marking of pupils' classwork and homework is of a very high quality. Books are marked regularly in line with department policy. This includes monitoring the completion of classwork and homework, recording effort grades and providing helpful advice and targets for future progress.
13. The science curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 meets the statutory requirements. It is broad and balanced and is effectively planned through schemes of work supported by worksheets and textbooks. The organisation of teaching groups is more appropriate to pupils' needs and abilities at Key Stage 4 than it is at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 3, the wide ability range of the teaching groups makes providing for the needs of all pupils increasingly difficult as their abilities and interests diverge with age. The standard of more formal assessments such as tests and coursework is satisfactory. Pupils' progress against the National Curriculum expectations is carefully monitored, although the data are not currently analysed to identify underachievement or to set targets for individual pupil improvement.

14. Science teaching staff are appropriately qualified across the three science disciplines and they are effectively deployed to make the best use of their strengths. All are experienced but further staff development is limited. The accommodation is satisfactory in quantity but of unsatisfactory quality. The poor condition of the laboratories adversely affects the quality of the learning environment. The quantity of learning resources is just about sufficient as a result of careful organisation of the curriculum. Many of these resources are now of poor quality. Management of the department is satisfactory. The clear ethos promotes effective teaching and learning, but these are not fully linked to a planned, long-term vision of improving the standards of achievement. Short-term management, including development plans, targets and expenditure is satisfactory.
15. The availability of textbooks has improved since the previous inspection. All GCSE pupils will soon have their own copies. The quality of the laboratory accommodation has not improved. It still adversely affects the quality of teaching and learning. Chemicals are still stored in the main preparation area, which is a potential safety hazard.

## 126. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### 126. Art

16. At the end of Key Stage 4, although a lower proportion of pupils than nationally gained grades A\* to C at GCSE in 1999, the majority of pupils are working at or beyond national expectations. In 1999, their average points score exceeded the national average.
17. During Key Stage 3, pupils become increasingly proficient in their use of colour, texture and composition. They are confident about their work and the link is clear between the experimental and investigative work that they have carried out and their completed artwork. This was apparent in a project on Archimboldo where pupils consciously chose complementary colours to heighten effects. Special needs pupils are achieving in line with other pupils. At Key Stage 4, pupils display maturity and confidence in their manipulation of a range of media and knowledge of the work of contemporary artists. Work in ceramics based on under sea creatures shows individuality and experimentation, although designs in textiles are less well developed from the initial stimulus materials. Across both key stages, progress during lessons is at least satisfactory and sometimes very good. Clear progress has been made from work achieved during Key Stage 3. The use of sketchbooks for investigation and experimental work at Key Stage 3 does not continue at Key Stage 4.
18. At Key Stage 3, pupils show enjoyment in their work. They are stimulated by the projects devised by the teachers and work with interest and commitment. The majority of pupils concentrate during lessons. Their behaviour is usually at least satisfactory and they show interest in each other's work. The rate of pupils choosing art at Key Stage 4 continues on an upward trend. Pupils show commitment to art. They work hard during lessons without any behaviour problems. They show enthusiasm and initiative in their attitude towards their work and are keen to share their work with others.

19. Standards of teaching at both key stages are at least satisfactory and sometimes very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Expectations are high, targets are clearly expressed and pupils are given encouragement.
20. The curriculum is planned effectively and provides continuity and progression, and meets National Curriculum requirements. Projects are designed to give pupils confidence in the use of the visual language of art and to explore the work of other artists. At both key stages, pupils have the opportunity to explore media for themselves. Class management at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory or better. At Key Stage 4, there is good rapport between the pupils and the teacher.
21. Resources are adequate and the teachers make very good use of what is available. The studios are clean, tidy and well organised and one has a variety of stimulating displays. The ceramics studio is in urgent need of refurbishment. Excellent use is made of links with the community. No ICT facilities are currently available for class use, although the head of department has attended ICT training. Pupils make use of ICT in homework and holiday projects.
22. Assessment is carried out both informally and formally. Verbal feedback during lessons is of a high standard. At Key Stage 3, homework is marked with an effort rather than an attainment grade. The practice is not helpful in target setting. A new, formal assessment system has recently been introduced that includes both effort and attainment grades although pupils find the attainment grades confusing at present. Homework is regularly set as preparation and study for projects at Key Stage 4 and when appropriate at Key Stage 3. Pupils' self-evaluations are used to inform future planning.
23. The leadership of the subject is dynamic and is determined to continue to improve standards of accommodation and achievement within the department. The department has effectively dealt with the issues from the previous OFSTED report.

### **Design and technology**

1. At the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils are at least on course to meet, and many to exceed, the level expected nationally at the age of 14. Overall, at the end of Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* to C in the GCSE examinations in 1999 was well above the national average and above in the percentage attaining grades A\* to G. Within the different technology courses, results were just above the national average in food technology, and well above in graphics, textiles, resistant materials and child development. Overall, boys attain less well than girls. The work seen during the inspection of pupils currently studying GCSE courses generally reflects these examination results.
2. Pupils at both key stages are developing appropriately their skills in designing. They enthusiastically develop good skills and understanding in making a creative and exciting range of products using wood, metal, plastic, textiles and food. In graphics, the majority of pupils by the end of both key stages attain creditable portfolios of work.
3. Pupils make good progress at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well integrated within the

classes and are sensitively supported. Higher attaining pupils are equally well supported and challenged. Teachers have high expectations and work hard to ensure pupils investigate ideas, solve problems and design, make and evaluate their products. Good progress was made by pupils in Year 7 when designing and making a simple electronic circuit to control a notice to place on their bedroom doors, while the designing and making of clown collages was well executed. Very good progress was made in a briskly-paced lesson in Year 8 in which pupils skilfully and successfully made cereal-based apple desserts. During a Year 9 lesson, pupils developed skills in handling wood to create exciting and innovative moving toys and the pupils' progress was good.

4. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress within the range of examination courses. Within graphics, food and resistant materials pupils are keen and well motivated to achieve their best and this impacts well on their good progress. In a Year 10 lesson on child development, in which pupils were embarking on investigating a range of toys, they made astute and sensible observations on the toys' suitability for young children. ICT use is limited by the computers available. However, many pupils use it well at both key stages to complement their work effectively, particularly in the word processing of their portfolios.
5. The majority of pupils have good, positive attitudes to their work. They comply with what is required of them because of their respect for the teachers and the intrinsic interest in what is offered in lessons. Most pupils are well motivated, work carefully, both as individuals and in groups, are keen to learn and sustain good levels of concentration. Many are particularly eager to undertake practical making tasks and do so with great enthusiasm.
6. Overall, the teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have good, positive relationships with their classes. At times, the teaching is very good. It is lively and proceeds at a good pace. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils using a range of methods successfully made batches of scones prior to rating and ranking the outcomes in a very fast moving, stimulating lesson. Teachers often challenge, support and encourage pupils well. Praise is used well to acknowledge real progress or achievement.
7. The range of teaching styles is broad and well balanced across the department. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work independently and in groups, developing their knowledge and skills. For example, many Year 10 pupils' attention was captivated when working together tasting, rating and ranking a selection of yoghurts. Some lessons have a good mix of activities within them and lead to good rates of progress and high attainment. For example in a Year 10 graphics lesson, short teacher inputs stressed high expectations and re-focused the energies of the pupils. Expectations in most lessons are appropriately high for the differing levels of attainment within the class and the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is good. This was particularly so in a Year 7 textile lesson where pupils developed well their skills in attaching their clowns to their collages. For higher attaining pupils, extension work is encouraged and adds depth to their learning. However, very occasionally the work is not sufficiently challenging, teachers do not capture and maintain the pupils' interest, and some misbehaviour occurs. The use of technical language throughout the technology lessons is very good.

8. Appropriate schemes of work are in place. At Key Stage 3, the lesson planning is detailed in well-planned modules of work that are referenced closely to National Curriculum requirements. At Key Stage 4, lessons are well planned to match the requirements of the examination courses. Teachers are committed and work hard. They maintain access for pupils who choose to use the workshops at lunchtimes and after school, so enabling some pupils to accelerate their progress. Homework is generally appropriately set and valued by the teachers. Marking of pupils' work is done conscientiously with some good examples that advise pupils how they might improve, particularly at Key Stage 4. A good system for the assessment of pupils' achievements is in place at Key Stage 3, clearly linked to the National Curriculum and at Key Stage 4 linked to the examination course requirements.
9. The leadership of the department is very good, confident and enthusiastic. The established core of experienced, well-qualified, specialist staff support effectively newly appointed staff. The head of department, together with staff, is effectively monitoring the pupils' performance in GCSE courses and the quality of the teaching in order to identify areas for improvement and so raise standards. Most staff attend appropriate training courses to enhance further their skills. A clear, appropriate and realistic development plan is guiding the department forward.
10. The accommodation is poor but it is generally well cared for by the staff. However, as raised in the previous inspection report, the accommodation restricts opportunities for furthering the pupils' progress and attainment in design and technology. It is dispersed across three adjacent buildings and some is inadequate in both size and design to enable pupils to work comfortably on their practical tasks. The time available for technician support is barely adequate. Resources are generally adequate, although much of the equipment has not been updated. The provision of computers and computer-controlled equipment is inadequate. However, design and technology has a high profile in the school. The pupils' achievements are celebrated within excellent displays in each of the technology rooms as well as in the school corridors and reception areas.

## **Geography**

11. The attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national average. Some pupils attain standards which are well above average and these are reflected in the school's assessments. At the higher levels, the attainment of girls is above that of boys and this difference is more pronounced than the national trend. Pupils have a good sense of place which extends from a local to an international scale. They use atlases, texts and ICT for reference and research. They pose geographical questions and investigate these in fieldwork on weather, rivers and industry.
12. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is well above the national average and this is clearly shown in the GCSE examination results. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C is considerably higher than the national average and this has been maintained since the previous inspection. Over half the pupils take geography and all are entered for the examination. Virtually all gain a graded result. The attainment of girls is higher than that of boys in line with the national trend. Even so, the attainment of boys, both within the school and in comparison with national averages, is exceptionally good. The grades achieved by pupils in geography are, on average, higher than those they obtained in their other

subjects. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of people, places and the interaction of people with the environment. They use geographical terminology accurately to describe and explain complex physical and human patterns and processes.

13. Progress at both key stages is good. Attainment in geography on entry to the school is average and by the end of Key Stage 4 it is well above average. This illustrates the good progress made by pupils of all abilities throughout the school. It is ensured by good teaching which carefully matches resources to pupils' abilities and involves them in a variety of learning activities. At Key Stage 3, pupils build on their previous learning and apply their knowledge and understanding to progressively more complex situations. For example, in Year 7 all pupils prepared illustrated newspaper articles that described the causes and effects of a volcanic eruption. By the end of Key Stage 3, lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs describe accurately the monsoon climate and explain its influence on rice farming in India. Other pupils drew annotated diagrams of tropical cyclones and described their effects on Bangladesh. Higher attaining pupils consider the complex relationships of relief, deforestation and weather on flooding in that country. They also extend their knowledge and explain the impact of technology on intensive subsistence agriculture in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of the green revolution.
14. At Key Stage 4, pupils of all abilities continue to develop their practical skills. They consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the structure of population through the study of population pyramids. Most pupils apply these to the model of demographic transition and higher attaining pupils relate them to the stages of economic development. Many pupils quickly learn to interpret relationships illustrated on scattergraphs and are ready to progress to using statistical techniques in their analysis of data that they apply in their GCSE coursework on Castleton. In this study pupils collect, collate, illustrate and analyse data on the impact of tourism. Higher attaining pupils write more detailed conclusions and are aware of the limitations of their findings and how they could extend their investigation.
15. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour at both key stages are consistently good, frequently very good and sometimes excellent. These very good attitudes have a beneficial effect on their progress and attainment. Geography is a popular subject with pupils and a large proportion choose to study it for GCSE. Pupils like learning about people and places. In each year, they show enthusiasm and interest in their work. This is especially the case when they are working independently on projects, for example, on the impact of industry on the environment. The department has a number of similar exercises and these are a powerful strategy for developing motivation and a mature approach to self-study. Pupils show respect for their teachers, textbooks and materials, and this respect is extended to learning about other cultures in Nigeria, Japan and India. They are aware of the social, economic and moral issues of the contrast between rich and poor in third world countries. They understand the problems of industrial development and its conflicting impact on the environment and employment opportunities. In Year 7, pupils consider the origin of the earth and thereafter continually reflect on its future in terms of pollution created by use and misuse of natural resources.
16. The quality of teaching at both key stages is never less than satisfactory and the

majority is good. Teaching is sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. The teaching demonstrates a clear understanding of the subject matter. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and clear objectives are communicated to the pupils. Occasionally, the balance between what is taught and what pupils are to learn is slightly biased to the former and in these lessons exposition by the teacher tends to dominate. Teachers manage pupils very well with good organisation and control and education care officers are very effective in helping pupils with special educational needs. In the best lessons, for example on acid rain, flooding in Bangladesh and the use and interpretation of scattergraphs, teachers had high expectations and challenged pupils throughout. In general, expectations could be even higher and more consistently applied. Homework is set regularly to reinforce and extend learning. Marking is thorough and informs pupils how to improve. The department makes a good contribution to numeracy through the use of co-ordinates, scales and graphs. The use of fieldwork and ICT has been extended since the previous inspection but scope exists for further development in these areas.

17. The curriculum provision is very good and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Detailed schemes of work at both key stages are well planned and provide a coherent and progressive course of study. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is constantly under review and scope exists to slim it down and extend the depth of some topics. Procedures for assessment are good. The department is continuing to improve these by describing exactly what pupils need to do in order to achieve the different levels in their assessment tasks.
18. The geography department is effectively led and managed, and consists of a strong team of well-qualified subject specialists who work well together. The rooms are of adequate size and the display of pupils' work helps to set standards and creates a pleasant working environment. Learning resources are good, managed well and used with skill to enhance learning.
19. The staff are committed to sustaining the high attainment which has been maintained since the previous inspection. They have the capacity to improve further, however, planning needs to be more detailed and include targets. Monitoring teaching with a clear focus on high expectations and challenge is likely to result in further gains in pupils' progress and attainment.

### 153. **History**

20. By the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of the great majority of pupils is on course to exceed the level expected nationally. In the work seen and scrutinised, it is clear that most pupils know well the periods they are studying. Their responses in class draw on secure command of the work that has gone before. Their written work, largely in their own words, indicates good understanding. Most pupils are confident in analysing a wide variety of historical evidence, such as written sources, maps and archive film. For example, pupils in Year 8 weighed the conflicting evidence and drew sensible conclusions in deciding whether Elizabeth I should or should not marry Philip II of Spain. The evaluation of evidence is a strong and effective component in pupils' study of history at this key stage.
21. Pupils of above average attainment disentangle quite complex links between cause and effect. For example, pupils in Year 9 discerned the connection



between the technological superiority of the means of defence and the deficiencies in strategy and tactics when accounting for the failure of the Somme campaign in 1916. The work of most pupils of average attainment is descriptive rather than analytical at this key stage. For example, they described the events surrounding Henry VIII's divorce rather than explaining why he broke with Rome. Pupils of below average attainment achieve well in relation to their capabilities. For example, in Year 7 they talked accurately about the strengths and weaknesses of the two armies at Hastings but found it difficult, especially on paper, to say why William won. Overall, girls reach higher levels of attainment than the boys.

22. As the capabilities of the pupils entering the school in Year 7 are very close to the average, the standards achieved by the end of the key stage represent good progress. The pupils extend their knowledge systematically and use their analytical skills to determine bias or partiality in sources, for example how the settlers and politicians viewed the native American Indians in nineteenth century USA. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in the subject. Education care officers are involved in the planning of the work. As a result, these pupils make good progress in relation to their previous attainment.
23. By the end of Key Stage 4, those studying history, generally about a third of each age group, achieve well above the national average in GCSE examinations. Although the majority of those studying history also do well in other subjects, the proportions gaining grades A\* to C are consistently above and often well above the proportion gaining these grades nationally. Little difference is evident between the attainments of boys and girls. The results have remained buoyant over a number of years and indicate sustained progress since the previous inspection. The great majority of pupils analyses complex issues confidently and perceptively, for example the impact of New Deal on post-Depression America. Comparisons of work done at the beginning of Year 10, for example on the causes of World War I, with that completed in Year 11, for example on the rise of Nazism, indicate good progress in the work of the majority. The notebooks and essays of many in Year 11 show deepening understanding and the ability to set conflicting evidence in context in order to construct valid arguments and reach balanced judgements. Very few pupils make less than satisfactory progress at this stage.
24. Most pupils have positive attitudes to the work. They show enthusiasm and interest. They are keen to answer questions and to contribute their views to discussion in class. They also discuss work sensibly in pairs and they listen to and respect the views of others. On some occasions at Key Stage 3, a few pupils lose concentration but rapid adjustments to the task set or the approach used generally maintain their focus on the work in hand. Good foundations are laid at Key Stage 3. The extensive investment in the use and evaluation of evidence pays substantial dividends at Key Stage 4 where such skills are built on and developed, and account in large part for the success in GCSE.
25. The quality of teaching at both key stages is generally good, never less than satisfactory, and occasionally very good. Each teacher has secure knowledge and understanding of the subject as well as an enthusiasm that is communicated to the pupils. Lessons have clear objectives, although the planning tends to focus on what the teaching must cover rather than on what the pupils should learn. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and the methods used produce a well-balanced variety of activities. For example, educational videos provide compelling archive film

evidence for topics in the twentieth century or, through drama, they bring to life more distant events, such as the contrasting fortunes of the English and the Spanish in the Armada. A particularly memorable lesson using a projected CD.ROM allowed the pupils in Year 7 to follow through the crucial stages of the Battle of Hastings and re-run the sequence to pinpoint the turning points. The teaching stresses the appropriate use of historical terminology and the practice of note making. Opportunities for extended writing build up throughout Key Stage 3 and stand pupils in good stead at Key Stage 4. Questioning is used effectively at both key stages and is at its best when it prompts pupils to offer extended answers, and probes their understanding.

26. The department is effectively led and managed. It works together successfully as a team despite two of its three members working for only part of their teaching time in the subject. Regular departmental meetings help to identify and spread good practice. In-service training, particularly that provided by the Historical Association, has a beneficial influence on the work in the classroom. The head of department monitors standards and the quality of teaching through test and examination results and scrutiny of pupils' work, and through class observation as opportunities allow. The collective evaluation of samples of pupils' work offers considerable potential in establishing consistent teacher expectations. The scheme of work is backed by detailed guidance on effective teaching strategies for each unit of work. Scope exists to identify more precisely the learning objectives for each unit in order to sharpen the lesson planning for the various levels of capability within each class. The assessment of pupils' attainment is now firmly linked to National Curriculum levels so that current achievement and expectations of future performance are clear to pupils and their parents. The new system is designed to allow predictions and targets to be set for each pupil on the basis of realistic assessments of potential.
27. The work covered meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum, although references to the history of the locality are relatively limited. The module of work at Key Stage 3 on the Native Americans provides useful insights into the spiritual and cultural life of a non-European civilisation. The department is to replace that study this year with one on the Black Peoples of America, having piloted it last year. It is intended to meet the same objectives but contribute more directly to pupils' understanding of the ethnically diverse nature of contemporary society. Well-planned and conducted educational visits, for example to Eden Camp and the Imperial War Museum, as well as extended visits to the Western Front and the D-Day sites, make a powerful impact on the work in class. The good quality textbooks are adequate in number for class work but insufficient for homework; pupils at Key Stage 4 generally buy their own for independent work at home. Video resources are extensive and they and the small collection of artefacts bring topics to life. The overhead projector is used extensively, although the hand written slides do not set the same standards of presentation expected of the pupils. Well-displayed pupils' work acknowledges pupils' achievements and helps to set standards. The two adjacent history rooms are of awkward size and shape, and storage is poor. The department makes the best possible use of them. Overall, the subject makes a strong and positive contribution to the standards achieved in the school.

## 161. Information technology

28. The proportions of pupils gaining Level 5 or 6 in teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were below average. This was at least partly due to the fact that in that year the subject was taught only to Years 7, 8, 10 and 11 so the pupils assessed had not had any information technology experience beyond Year 8. This year, Year 9 are being taught information technology. However, the computers in use are old and unreliable as well as being insufficient in number. This means that the observed levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are below that which might be expected. It was not possible to observe Year 11 lessons, but a scrutiny of their work in folders and on display together with observations of Year 10 indicate that their levels are just in the average range. In the Year 9 lessons observed, pupils were able to open the software they used and mix text and pictures on the page. Some pupils showed some awareness of the likely audience for their work but this was not common. At Key Stage 4, pupils were observed creating questionnaires. The best examples were well designed with a clear attempt to match them to their audience. Some pupils also analysed the results of a questionnaire effectively, producing meaningful charts. There appears to be a decline since the last inspection when attainment was described as good. However, expectations have risen considerably in the intervening period but the school has found it difficult to develop skills further, due to the age of its computers.
29. Information technology is effectively used to promote learning elsewhere in the curriculum. Due to the age of the machines in the main suites, much research work takes place in the library where pupils have access to multimedia and an Internet connection. This means that only small groups can use it at a time. Nevertheless, good examples were observed in history in Year 7 in which interactive video was used to re-enact and analyse the Battle of Hastings. Similarly, a Year 9 religious education lesson was enhanced by the pupils' use of the CD-ROM to research Martin Luther King and his part in the American Civil Rights movement. A Year 10 science group showed competence in using a complex desk-top publishing package to illustrate their findings about global warming. Pupils studying design and technology make effective use of word processing and graphics to enhance their project reports.
30. In most lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress. This is slowed down by the unreliability of some of the machinery so that, for example, printing completed work can be a time-consuming exercise. In most lessons, pupils consolidate their knowledge of software packages and practise the skills in their use. However, in one lesson, an attempt to give pupils more direct experience by splitting the class into two groups made slow progress because the task given to those not using the computers was set at far too low a level. . In this lesson, half of the class was to design a Christmas card by hand, a task more suited to a junior school classroom. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.
31. Pupils respond soundly to the subject, taking the problems thrown up by the age and unreliability of the hardware stoically. They do not always, however, concentrate consistently throughout a lesson. The design of one of the rooms means that it is difficult to oversee the whole room at once which can allow inattention and silly behaviour to pass unnoticed. Nevertheless, the computers are treated sensibly and with respect. In most lessons, pupils have to share a

computer and they generally take turns well. Occasionally, one of a pair will dominate and the teaching has few strategies to prevent this.

32. The teaching of information technology at both key stages is sound. Almost all lessons were taught satisfactorily except for one in which it was not. Most of the staff who teach the subject have a good knowledge of the hardware and software in use. However, some teach very little information technology and may not be timetabled for it every year. Nevertheless, their knowledge is sound. As a result, pupils' problems are quickly and efficiently dealt with. Expectations are affected by the limitations of the machinery in use. Progress in information technology was adequate; in most of the lessons observed, pupils were working on projects individually with support from the staff. This was generally effective. The management of pupils is usually sound with good relationships evident. The shortcomings of the machines mean that the pace of lessons is typically steady rather than brisk. Little use of informal assessment was seen other than in dealing with particular problems in response to a request for help.
33. The scheme of work in use covers the required strands, although at Key Stage 3 it relies on the software in use rather than the National Curriculum programmes of study. Plans are in hand for a major overhaul of the scheme as newer, more up-to-date machines become available in the near future. As the current Year 9 is following a similar scheme to Year 10 who did not have access to the subject last year, plans are in hand to extend the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Assessment concentrates on competence in using a piece of software rather than the National Curriculum statements of attainment. Pupils undertake some self-assessment in the form of 'I can do...' sheets but these, too, are linked to software packages. The department is being carried into its next phase by a head of department and an ICT manager. Together they have produced a good quality three-year plan which has secured external funding. Plans are well advanced for two suites of new machines to be networked throughout the school and supplemented by the existing machines and refurbished corporate machines from the 'Tools for Schools' programme. These initiatives will tackle the current unsatisfactory state of the department's resources. Nevertheless, the use of the current resources is efficient.

167. **Modern foreign languages**

34. At Key Stage 3 the attainment of most pupils reaches the national expectation, and many pupils exceed it. Some less able boys struggle to spell and copy accurately in French. Many abler pupils ask questions about the language studied, sometimes in the foreign language itself.
35. In the 1998 GCSE examination in French, the proportion of grades A\* to C was below the national average and the grades A\* to G success rate was slightly above it. The proportion of grades A\* to C rate in German was well below the national expectation and for grades A\* to G just below it. The proportion of grades A\* to C in both languages in 1999 shows marked improvement: they exceeded the national average in French and were in line with it in German. Current Key Stage 4 pupils attain broadly in line with the national expectation. Many pupils show understanding of grammatical explanations, sometimes in the foreign language, although some lower attaining boys in French and German continue to struggle with spelling.

36. Progress at Key Stage 3 is generally good. By the end of the key stage pupils take part in structured dialogues and identify familiar items of vocabulary from a tape recording. Above average pupils manipulate more sophisticated language and engage in more creative work. The lack of differentiated materials within sets sometimes slows the progress of abler pupils who do not move on to more communicative activities.
37. Progress at Key Stage 4 is also good. Most pupils read and write more confidently and accurately and at greater length and complexity. Pupils with below average attainment consolidate their knowledge through carefully structured and supported activities. Some pupils at both key stages refer to grammar notes and vocabularies and scope exists for wider use of dictionaries.
38. Teaching is generally good at both key stages. Lessons are carefully prepared, well organised and varied, using attractive resources, although some over-reliance is placed on course materials. Opportunities also exist for wider use of television and video. The development of ICT is an urgent departmental priority, but pupils are encouraged to produce homework using ICT. Pace is good and teachers show great enthusiasm and very good subject competence. The extensive and effective use of the foreign language is a strength. Classes are managed firmly but with good humour and relationships are positive. Praise and encouragement are generous and error correction is sensitive.
39. Modern languages benefit from a recently increased time allocation that will permit some Key Stage 3 pupils to study a second foreign language. All pupils at Key Stage 4 study one foreign language and have the opportunity to begin a second but no pupils are currently doing so. The distribution of time at Key Stage 4 is not ideal for modern language study. Closer links need to be established with the teacher of French in the special educational needs department to share good practice.
40. Schemes of work are detailed but are undergoing revision. Application of the school's assessment policy is inconsistent, especially at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, much more detailed reference is made in lessons to GCSE assessment criteria. Homework is generally set and marked regularly, but the amount of detailed written feedback given varies from teacher to teacher. Procedures have yet to be established for the use of assessment data in target-setting and planning.
41. Staff are experienced and generally well qualified in the languages they teach. The majority of lessons are taught in specialist rooms with attractive wall displays and reasonable equipment, although some tape-recorders need replacement and screens and improved blackout are needed in some rooms. Many pupils share textbooks in lessons and do not all have access to them for independent home study. A more accessible storage system for teacher-produced resources needs to be developed to facilitate the sharing of differentiated materials for pupils of different capabilities in languages.
42. Library provision is poor and under-used. More attractive and stimulating reading material is needed to encourage extensive reading for pleasure. Pupils participate in visits to Germany and also visits to France, planned jointly with the history

department.

43. The department is emerging from a period of great instability due to long-term staff illness. A new head of department was appointed in September 1999 and is well supported collectively by the subject staff who show the will and expertise to succeed. The department now has a very clear sense of the direction in which it should develop. A period of consolidation is now required in which the efforts of the team can be co-ordinated and effective systems for monitoring and evaluating their work can be established. The wider dissemination of the undoubtedly good practice within the department is a clear priority for the future.
44. The previous inspection drew attention to a number of shortcomings. The lack of real communicative opportunities was noted. Now, pair and group work and learning through games are widely used. The abler pupils were felt to be insufficiently challenged, especially in writing. Although scope exists for more work to be geared to able linguists, they do now more frequently engage in creative writing. The report identified the lack of an assessment scheme to measure progress in terms of National Curriculum levels. An appropriate scheme has been set up, although it is applied with some inconsistency in daily planning. It is currently under review following the introduction of a new course book. The report indicated that not all pupils at Key Stage 4 studied a foreign language. All pupils now do so.

**178. Music**

45. This is a very successful department. Standards of attainment and progress are above average by the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Recent GCSE results were well above national expectations.
46. At Key Stage 3, pupils follow a broad curriculum. The majority has a working knowledge of the elements of music, although some have problems with treble clef notation, relying on letter names of notes. Singing is regularly practised and pupils make good progress throughout the key stage in practical music making. At Key Stage 4, pupils taking the GCSE course have individual standards ranging to grade six of Associated Board examinations. They speak with confidence about their work and make good progress. A high standard of composition was observed, enhanced by the use of computers both in composing and presentation. The department's two computers, with the score-writing software, are used well but additional ones are required to cater for the number of pupils in both years. Pupils are required to make arrangements of music works for other members of the group to perform, and one of these, arranged for voice and instrumentalists, was observed being rehearsed, performed and recorded. It proved to be particularly successful.
47. Pupils in all years are well behaved and show an obvious enjoyment of the subject. They demonstrate self-discipline and sustain concentration whether in class or small group situations.
48. The visiting instrumental and choral teachers provide an invaluable service. Twelve percent of the pupils take advantage of this tuition and others have private lessons. The dividend is clearly evident, in class work and in the high standard of musical extra-curricular activities. Full advantage is taken to extend experience

and musicianship by membership of local bands, choirs and orchestras.

49. The list of extra-curricular activities and events, involving feeder primary schools, industry and the community in general, is impressive. The school's Christmas celebration, held in the Chapel-en-le-Frith Parish Church, proved to be a memorable occasion with a well balanced band of forty players, brass and wind, playing two selections and accompanying congregational carols in a pleasing, confident manner. The school choir and a chorale performed, both with excellent diction, the latter singing in three and, at times, four parts with the boys contributing fully. Later in the week, the chorale was again heard in rehearsal, an after-school event which was well attended, even to the extent of some Year 11 pupils returning from their work experience. All groups are well trained, and a delight to hear and watch.
50. A pleasant teaching environment has been provided in quite good accommodation. It lacks a second adjoining practice room, although 'The Gallery' is a useful area for occasional use. The resources are adequate, partly due to purchases from concert receipts, although the teaching would benefit from additional pitched percussion instruments.
51. This is a one-teacher department. The standard of teaching at both key stages is always good and often very good. Much of the curriculum is taught by means of a classroom orchestra method that results in interest being maintained throughout all years. The relationship between teacher and pupils is excellent. To have maintained the high standards reported at the previous inspection is an achievement in itself, but to have improved upon them is a reflection of the teacher's hard work and dedication. Musical expertise is constantly on display and a great deal of additional time is given to out-of-school activities.

## 185. **Physical education**

52. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above and, at the end of Key Stage 4, well above national expectations. Since the previous inspection in 1994 the department has maintained, and on occasions improved upon its very good record of A\* to C grades in GCSE examinations. In the current year, the proportion of pupils achieving these grades was well above the national average. For the past four years, GCSE results at grades A\* to G have been consistently high and better than national averages when compared to all secondary schools. Course work observed during the inspection, in both theory and practice, indicates that pupils are on track to exceed national expectations in next year's examinations.
53. Almost all pupils at Key Stage 3 are on course at least to meet, and many to exceed, the levels expected nationally in each area of the subject at the end of the key stage. Pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of indoor and outdoor games such as volleyball, basketball, football, rugby and hockey. They understand rules and play within them fairly in both competitive and co-operative situations, and develop their basic skills and tactics well. As a result they participate fully with enjoyment in each game. In gymnastics and dance, by the end of the key stage, pupils acquire a sound understanding of the language of movement and use it appropriately. Skills in floor work and on apparatus have developed well and pupils perform sequences of gymnastic movements and dance

routines, individually and in groups, with grace and confidence.

54. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have built successfully on the solid foundations laid earlier and the great majority exceeds the national expectations in each of the target areas of the National Curriculum in this subject. The high level of attainment reached by pupils at the end of the key stage is demonstrated by the school's successful record in local and area competitions in a wide range of physical activities including girls' football. In GCSE courses, pupils complete successfully high quality project work, the results of which are presented attractively, occasionally using ICT. For the most part, pupils with special educational needs, at both key stages attain at levels that are at least in line with national expectations.
55. Progress is good within and at the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils make progress at a rate greater than national expectation in four-fifths of lessons and at a rate in line with the national expectation in the remainder. At Key Stage 4, progress is well above national expectations in three-quarters of lessons and above national expectations in the remaining quarter. Using the levels of attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 as a baseline, pupils make good progress consistently in this subject between Years 7 and 11. For example, very few pupils have played basketball before entry to the school but by the time they are in Year 11, they play the game to a good club standard and have acquired high levels of tactical skills. The marked progress of pupils in skill development over time, in a wide range of physical education associated activities, for example in invasion games, gymnastics and court games, is a major strength of the department. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in line with their capabilities within both key stages and, for the most part, their progress is in line with that of their peers.
56. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' GCSE work, plus observation of lessons at each key stage, confirm that teaching is consistently good, frequently very good and, on occasions, outstanding. Teaching is based securely on expert knowledge, high levels of personal skill and a genuine enthusiasm for the subject that is communicated to pupils' throughout the school. Long and short term planning is effective. The department is developing good assessment and recording strategies and communication with parents about attainment and progress, particularly in the GCSE years, is very good. This area has improved since the last inspection. For the most part, teaching strategies are highly appropriate to the activity being taught and teachers concentrate effectively on improving pupils' performance throughout lessons. Pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate their own performance, and that of others, within both key stages, but they could be given more responsibility for designing their own work and assuming leadership roles within Key Stage 3. Within Key Stage 4 however, this improves. For example, in Year 10, boys and girls were observed effectively refereeing their peers in a basketball lesson. Class management is good and relationships with pupils are very good in most instances. Teachers make effective use of time and lessons are well paced. Resources are used well.
57. The curriculum taught at both key stages fully complies with the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricula activities which includes team games, lunchtime and after school sports clubs and annual visits to the Continent to engage in outdoor and adventurous pursuits such



as skiing. The department has a good range of options available to pupils within the Key Stage 4 programme.

58. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good within both stages in almost all lessons. In the one lesson where pupils' response was less than satisfactory, a very small number of boys in a Year 8 class lacked self-discipline, failed to listen carefully and thereby prevented the rest of the group from gaining maximum benefit from the teaching. Discussions with pupils at both key stages revealed a genuine enthusiasm for the subject and an appreciation of the wide range of experiences offered to them. This is reflected in their commitment and the hard work they put into every lesson.
59. Staff are appropriately qualified and very experienced. They have improved their qualifications, knowledge, understanding and skill through appropriate in-service training in the areas that they identified as in need of updating. The amount and quality of resources are satisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is variable however. The gymnasias are satisfactory in size and condition but the changing rooms are small and in poor condition. The school does not have a sports hall. Drainage continues to be a problem on parts of the games fields, which are otherwise spacious and generally well maintained.
60. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The ethos is excellent within the department. Schemes of work are of good quality. The department's development plan is good and fits well into the whole-school development plan. There are no issues related to equal opportunities in the department and all lessons are taught to mixed gender groups at both key stages. Boys and girls work well together. A number of pupils continue to be selected for area and county representative teams. The school has been awarded a Sportsmark by the Sports Council for its work in physical education. Since the previous inspection, the department has maintained its high quality performance and provision in all the areas indicated in the 1994 report and improved the quality of assessment and record keeping. The department now monitors pupils' attainment very closely. Overall, this is a very successful department which enables pupils to achieve high standards.

194. **Religious education**

61. When compared with the end-of-key stage descriptions in the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus for religious education, the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 3 is average overall and above average in Year 9. The attainment of girls is usually higher than that of boys. No Year 11 lessons were seen but the attainment of pupils in Year 10 is above average when measured against the assessment objectives and grade descriptions in the GCSE syllabuses.
62. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils recall previous learning well and make valid connections with their current work. They have a sound, basic knowledge of the beliefs and practices of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. They recognise religious and secular interpretations of religious stories and are aware of the implications of religious ideas and beliefs for ways of living. Pupils have a sound grasp of symbolism, such as that of light, and a developing understanding of concepts like celebration. They are well aware of moral issues like civil rights, of

religious approaches to them, and of their relevance to personal circumstances. They identify and express simply their own values and beliefs.

63. At Key Stage 4, most pupils identify arguments for and against moral issues, such as abortion, and recognise and discuss moral dilemmas. Theoretical issues are related skilfully to real-life circumstances. Pupils consider religious and moral issues carefully, form opinions and express them clearly. They continue to make effective links with knowledge previously gained and to build on it. They also recognise and draw on connections with their learning in other subjects, such as history. Pupils identify and grapple with ultimate questions, such as the apparent conflict between the existence of a loving God and the presence of evil and suffering in the world. They relate effectively what they learn about religion to life in modern society and today's world. They have a basic knowledge and understanding of key religious words and terms, and are developing their ability to use them appropriately.
64. Pupils' progress is good in Year 9 and satisfactory overall in Years 7 and 8. In Year 7 lessons observed, most pupils made sound gains in their knowledge and understanding of the concept of celebration but their progress was hindered by a small number of pupils, mainly boys, who were less committed to the work. Similarly, progress in one Year 8 lesson on Christmas was good because the whole class was industrious and well behaved, while in another it was no better than satisfactory because of the lack of commitment by a few. In Year 9 lessons seen, pupils made very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of Martin Luther King and the American Civil Rights Movement through diligent research using a range of sources. Year 10 pupils, who had chosen the GCSE course, make good or very good progress by carefully thinking things through. Those in a Year 10 core lesson seen were fully engaged in grappling with the problem of good and evil and, consequently, made excellent progress.
65. The teaching at both key stages is never less than satisfactory and in two-thirds of lessons it is good or better; occasionally it is excellent. Good introductions to lessons capture pupils' interest, often using artefacts or drawing on the teacher's personal experience. Some story-telling is very skilled. The teachers have secure subject knowledge that is often complemented by infectious enthusiasm. Lessons are well planned and structured, their purpose is made clear to pupils and, on most occasions, clear instructions are given. The teaching uses an effective range of teaching strategies and a variety of well-prepared and differentiated resources. Classroom management and discipline are very good and pupils are treated with respect. The teaching achieves a generally good balance between knowledge and understanding. However, the distribution of time within lessons could be improved and the pace is not always adequate. Very occasionally, the emphasis on support leads to insufficient challenge. Instructions could sometimes be clearer and seating arrangements are not always planned to best effect.
66. In Key Stage 3 lessons, pupils' response is satisfactory in Years 7 and 8 and very good in Year 9. Some pupils, mainly boys, in Years 7 and 8 have not yet gained or developed good learning habits in spite of the teachers' best efforts. However, most pupils participate well and have good relationships with their teachers and other pupils. In one Year 8 class, which responded well, the pupils were industrious and well behaved. They were interested, concentrated well, answered questions eagerly and read aloud confidently. In Year 9 lessons seen, pupils were

absorbed in their work, co-operated well in class and in groups, and demonstrated good oral, listening and research skills. The response of pupils in Year 10 lessons is very good. They see their work as interesting and relevant and relate very well to one another and the teacher. They collaborate well in small groups, respect the views of others and make effective contributions to class discussions.

67. The religious education department makes a crucial contribution to the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is well led and managed and makes efficient and effective use of limited accommodation and resources. Appropriate initiatives are being taken to improve development planning and assessment. The department has made good progress since the previous inspection.

## 201. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

1. The school was inspected by 15 inspectors. In addition to the 164 lessons visited, assemblies, form tutor and registration sessions in all years and some extra-curricular activities were observed. All the teachers were seen teaching at least once and many several times. In addition to work seen when visiting lessons, the written and other work of a representative sample of pupils from each year group were scrutinised. Over 50 planned discussions were held with members of staff. Governors were met before, during and after the inspection week. Visits were made to partner primary schools and to work placement sites. A number of representatives of agencies from outside the school were met, including the school's education welfare officer and their roles in connection with the school were discussed. A large number of other representatives of the community, including industry and commerce, submitted written evidence of their successful partnership arrangements with the school. The school's policies, schemes of work and other documents were analysed before and during the inspection. The inspection team bore in mind points raised by parents in a pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting. The music inspector attended a public performance of a Christmas Festival produced by the school in the parish church the week before the inspection.

## 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- Y11	733	22	151	66

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7- Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	38.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

#### Education support staff (Y7- Y11)

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked each week	228

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	80.9
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	25
	KS4	22

### Financial data

Financial year:	1999
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	£
Total Income	1,406,822
Total Expenditure	1,412,763
Expenditure per pupil	2,062
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,904
Balance carried forward to next year	23,963

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

733

Number of questionnaires returned:

353

### 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	22	66	9	3	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	29	62	6	3	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	12	58	19	6	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	20	63	9	5	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	31	56	7	3	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	25	65	3	3	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27	63	8	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	21	64	5	8	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	23	59	11	5	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	20	57	15	5	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	30	52	10	4	3