

INSPECTION REPORT

Mary Hare Grammar School for the Deaf
Newbury

LEA area: Newbury

Unique Reference Number: 110180

Headteacher: Dr Ivan Tucker

Reporting inspector: Mrs Kathy Hooper
2971

Dates of inspection: 1-5 March 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 704425

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils:	5-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Arlington Manor Snelsmore Common Newbury Berkshire RG14 3BQ
Telephone number:	01635 244200
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Appropriate authority:	Board of Governors
Name of chair of governors:	Hugh Ogus
Date of previous inspection:	May 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Kathy Hooper, Registered Inspector Jane Chesterfield, Lay Inspector		Attainment and progress; Teaching; Leadership and management. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Partnership with parents; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources; Efficiency of the school. Curriculum and assessment Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Ted Culnane John Manning	Science English; Performing arts	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Special Educational Needs (deafness). Special Educational Needs.
Andreas Markides	Information technology; Business studies	Equal Opportunities.
Michael Holohan Marguerite Presman Susan Murray Jenny Smith Stephanie Parkin Charlotte Goodhill James Walsh Alan Wood	Design and technology; Music Mathematics History Geography Art Modern foreign languages Religious education Physical education	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- It helps pupils make very good progress in learning and particularly in language development.
- Teaching was very good or excellent in over 40% of lessons and satisfactory in all lessons.
- Relationships and attitudes to learning are very high throughout the school.
- Pupils receive high standards of support and guidance through good quality teaching and residential care.
- Pupils have access to a very broad and balanced curriculum.
- It makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the performing arts make a major contribution to this aspect of the curriculum.
- It involves parents well in their children's education.

Where the school has weaknesses

There are no major weaknesses, but further consideration should be given to:

- I. long-term planning for the primary division; and
- II. development planning, particularly at middle management level.

Mary Hare Grammar School, including its primary division, Mill Hall, is a very good school with many strengths and only a few minor weaknesses. The Governors' action plan will set out how the few weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be addressed. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils in the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made considerable progress since the last inspection. Academic standards have continued to rise and pupils make very good progress as a result of significant improvements in the quality of teaching. The pass rate at examination level in the General Certificate of Education has increased from just below the national average in 1993 to 20% above in 1998. Information technology is now firmly established within the curriculum and pupils are attaining at above average levels. Departments make a better contribution to the school development plan, although there is still room for further improvement. The school development plan is now costed. Significant refurbishment has taken place of the residential accommodation, particularly for Year 7 and the sixth form. Care provision has been improved and all care staff are trained or in the process of being trained. Effective systems are in place for risk assessments.

Since the last inspection, the school has taken responsibility for a primary school for deaf pupils. Relocating and re-launching the school as a division of Mary Hare has been a massive undertaking, but the transition has improved the provision for junior-aged pupils.

Whether pupils are making enough progress

Progress in:	By 11	By 16	By 19		
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A		Key
	B	A	B		y
English	B	A	B	<i>very good</i>	A
Mathematics	B	A	A	<i>good</i>	B
Science	B	A	A	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
Information technology	B	A	C	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
Religious education	C	B	B	<i>poor</i>	E
Art	B	B	B		
Design and technology		A	B		
French	B	C	B		
Geography		A	A		
History	B	B	B		
Music	B	A	A		
Physical education					

**IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs*

Pupils' attainment when they are at the end of compulsory schooling is well above the national average in mathematics, art and religious education. It is above national average in English, science, design and technology, information technology, history, music, physical education and French. It is average in geography. Sixty eight per cent of pupils gained five or more passes at A*-C compared with the national average of 46.3%. All pupils achieve five or more passes at A*-G. By the end of the sixth form, pupils' attainment is above the national average in science, design and technology, information technology, history, art, music and physical education. It is average in English, mathematics, geography, religious education and French.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
5-11 years	Good	In all subjects, and at all levels, the teaching is good.	There are no significant weaknesses.
11-16 years	Good		
Post-16	Very good		
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		
Science	Good		
Information technology	Good		
Religious education	Good		
Art	Good		
Design and technology	Good		
French	Good		
Geography	Good		
History	Good		
Music	Good		
Physical education	Good		

Teaching is good. It was very good in over 40% of lessons and never less than satisfactory. There is little difference between different parts of the school, but there is more good quality teaching in the sixth form. Teachers are skilful in teaching deaf pupils and make very good use of appropriate resources to aid communication.

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	Very good. The pupils are responsive in lessons, act sensibly and are well mannered, lively and confident.
Attendance	Very good.
Ethos*	Excellent. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They enjoy lessons in the primary division and in the secondary school they respond well to challenge. There are very good relationships and the school works as a harmonious community. There is a purposeful working atmosphere within the school.
Leadership and management	Very strong leadership is provided by the Principal and Vice-Principal and governors. There are good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Links between departmental and whole school planning require some strengthening as to how pupils' attainment is to be improved and to reflect the priorities in the whole school development plan.
Curriculum	A broad and balanced curriculum is provided. The breadth of the curriculum expands in Key Stage 4 and post-16 to ensure all pupils' needs are met. There is a strong emphasis on language development across the curriculum.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural values through their experience of creative and artistic work and discussions about their own beliefs and values - their own and those of others. Whole school assemblies make a very good contribution, as do English, art, music and the performing arts.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There is a good range of well trained staff who understand the pupils' needs. There is a very good level of resourcing, including excellent audiology aids. Accommodation is attractive and effectively supports pupils' progress, except in physical education where there are some shortcomings. The classrooms have been acoustically treated to improve communications.
Value for money	Very good.

**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
III. Very good progress made by their pupils when they come to the school IV. The improvement in self esteem and confidence of their children V. The very good communication between the school and parents VI. The level of help and guidance offered by the care staff and the teachers VII. The amount of homework that pupils do VIII. The way the school responds to parents' comments and suggestions IX. Their children enjoy being at the school	X. Some parents would like signing to be used XI. Some parents would like better follow-up from

Parents are very positive about the school and have great and well justified confidence in it.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The Principal, staff and governors are already strongly committed to promoting high standards. As part of this they should work to:

XII. develop long term planning for the primary division (see paragraphs 67, 71, 77);

XIII. strengthen the development planning:

- at whole school level, by establishing measurable success criteria;
- at middle management level, by enabling closer links between department and whole school planning and by strengthening the quality of development planning.

(See paragraphs 68, 71, 77, 92, 139, 155, 163, 169.)

The governors may also wish to include the following issues in their action plan:

- ensuring that enough time is devoted to religious education as part of the personal and social education programme at Key Stage 4 to enable the Agreed Syllabus to be taught in more appropriate depth (see paragraphs 33, 129, 130);
- establishing a system of short term target setting for all pupils to improve their attainment (see paragraphs 31, 43, 54, 155, 156);
- developing closer links between personal and social education in the school and care provision (see paragraphs 40, 52).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Mary Hare Grammar School is a non-maintained, mixed special school which provides oral education for pupils with severe and profound hearing loss. Since the last inspection, the school has taken over responsibility for Mill Hall School which is a primary school for hearing impaired pupils. Mary Hare Grammar School now has responsibility for a secondary grammar school and a primary division, Mill Hall, and together they provide education for pupils aged 5 to 19. The secondary school selects its pupils from the top 30% of the ability range whilst Mill Hall takes pupils of all abilities. Pupils do not move automatically from the primary division to the secondary school and only those pupils selected continue their education at Mary Hare. Although they are managed as two separate schools, they share the same management structure. Both schools draw their pupils from the whole of the United Kingdom. All but eight pupils board at the schools.
2. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. In line with other special schools, Mill Hall has twice as many boys as girls but, in the school overall, there are 116 boys and 114 girls. Approximately 10% of pupils are of ethnic minority origin although no one group predominates. 18.3% of the pupils are from homes where English is not the first language. Of these most are from families who use British Sign Language. The remainder are from families where parents speak languages of China or the Indian sub-continent or Welsh. 225 of the 230 pupils at the school have statements of special needs. Pupils' attainment on entry to the grammar school is lower than average. Despite their higher than average intellectual ability, they are below their potential on account of their disability. Almost all pupils stay on in full time education after they complete Year 11 and nearly all join the school's sixth form. 94% of sixth form students go on to further or higher education.
3. The school's aims are:
 - to provide severely and profoundly deaf pupils with the best possible auditory/oral education offering a broad and balanced curriculum;
 - to enable pupils to achieve their full educational potential by accessing national examinations at the end of Year 11 and post-16 in order to enter higher education;
 - to provide stimulating additional and extra-curricular experiences and opportunities and enhance their overall education in the broadest sense;
 - to develop the whole child to enable pupils to become worthy, contributing members of society.
1. The school has an over-arching commitment to improving the quality of education for deaf pupils nationally. Future developments include setting up a Family Centre for parents of pre-school deaf children and a Regional Assessment Centre for the families of deaf children of all ages.

5. Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	19	15	34

5. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	9	14	15
	Girls	14	11	10
	Total	23	25	25
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	68 (75)	74 (91)	74 (69)
	National	65 (58)	60 (60)	56 (60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	27 (25)	35 (34)	29 (34)
	National	35 (25)	36 (37)	27 (29)

5. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	10	16	15
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	22	29	28
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	65 (81)	85 (94)	82 (66)
	National	60 (60)	64 (64)	61 (61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	30 (41)	48 (31)	44 (44)
	National	28 (28)	37 (37)	29 (29)

Attainment at Key Stage 4¹

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	10	21	31

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	8	10	10
	Girls	13	21	21
	Total	21	31	31
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	67.7 (62.5)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	46.1 (45.1)	87.3 (86.4)	93.4 (92.3)

1

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

Attainment in the Sixth Form ²

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

Year	M	F	Total
1998	16	9	25

Average A/AS points score per	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
School	10.6	13.5	11.7 *	5.5	N/A	5.5*
National	N/A	N/A	17.5	N/A	N/A	3.0

* Small numbers entered make comparisons difficult

Number in the final year of approved vocational qualifications, and percentage of *such students* who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	% Success Rate
School	10 (9)	100 (100)
National		N/A

5. Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
Authorised	School		Y1-6: 4.9
	National comparative data		Y7-11: 2.0
Unauthorised Absence	School		Y1-6: 6.1
	National comparative data		Y7-11: 10.0

5. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
Fixed period		8
	Permanent	0

5. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:	%
Very good or better	43
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

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

5. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

5. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

5. Attainment and progress

1. Mary Hare Grammar School provides education for deaf pupils aged 11-18. Pupils are selected from the top 30 percent by ability. It takes responsibility for a non-selective primary school for deaf pupils which is managed as a separate division of the school. Only the most able pupils are selected to join Mary Hare. Many pupils who enter the school at different Key Stages are attaining at levels which are below their potential because of their disability.
2. *As a consequence of their special educational needs, the attainment of pupils in the primary division are below their age related norms. Comparisons will not normally be made with national expectations or averages for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, although this report will refer to what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about their progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews and individual education plans. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form have been selected by ability and, therefore, comparisons are made in the report with national norms.*
7. *Progress of junior-aged pupils*
 1. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school. Secondary pupils' and post-16 students' attainment is good. Many of the pupils over 5 years old who enter the primary division (Mill Hall) have little spoken language as a consequence of their special educational needs. Older pupils have more language. Pupils are tested on entry and at regular, half termly intervals. Results from these and other data collected during the inspection from lesson observations and work scrutiny indicate that pupils in the school make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment and in relation to the targets set for them. The older pupils at Key Stage 2 develop sufficient language to be able to mix confidently with mainstream pupils on a weekly basis. Pupils make very good progress because of skilful teaching coupled with very effective use of audiology aids.
 2. In English, pupils make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, and higher attaining pupils' progress is particularly rapid. By the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils discuss complex ideas from difficult texts. Higher attaining pupils in Year 3 use effective vocabulary in English when describing Macbeth or the Bible and can make reference to the text when explaining their views. Younger pupils have greater difficulty in reading but their use of picture clues is far in advance of their ability to use sounds to build words. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good progress in mathematics and science. Having started from a very low base, Key Stage 2 pupils are becoming sufficiently confident with mental arithmetic. Higher attaining pupils can recognise different kinds of angles and how to calculate them. Lower attaining pupils make slower progress and are still learning to count accurately up to 100. In science, Key Stage 2 pupils describe changes caused by heating or cooling and describe what they draw.
 3. In music, pupils make very good progress and have an understanding of pitch, volume and tempo. Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in design and technology, information technology, physical education and religious education. Most Key Stage 2 pupils word process their writing, save it and print it. In design and technology, they record data using descriptive language and in religious education they have a good understanding of the four major religions, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. In art, history and geography, their progress is satisfactory.

10. *Attainment and progress of secondary and post-16 pupils*

4. Pupils entering Mary Hare at Year 7 join from different schools and baseline tests indicate below average levels of attainment. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils attain at least in line with other pupils nationally in all subjects and their attainment is above what might be expected nationally in mathematics, science, design and technology, information technology, art, music, physical education and religious education because they have developed appropriate language skills as a result of the high quality of the teaching. This inspection found improved levels of attainment compared to the previous inspection report.
5. In English, Key Stage 3 pupils have learned a range of communication skills and are helped in this by drama lessons. They read a good range of fiction and their personal writing is good although some have difficulties with tense construction and spellings.
6. In mathematics, pupils use fractions, decimals and percentages confidently. In science, they carry out experiments effectively, for instance when sorting out acids and alkalis, and use approximations well when calculating the speed of sound.
7. Pupils make at least good progress in all subject areas and in mathematics, science, art, music, information technology and religious education, Key Stage 3 pupils make very good progress. Pupils make often rapid gains because the teaching is well focused and skilful.
8. This positive picture remains throughout Key Stage 4 and pupils continue to attain well. In mathematics, art, and religious education, pupils' attainment is very good. Pupils' attainment in geography is satisfactory. The pass rate at examination level (General Certificate in Secondary Education) has increased steadily from below the national average in 1993 to almost 20 percent above in 1998. The last inspection showed a pass rate in five or more subjects at higher grades (A*-C) as 48 percent. In 1998, the pass rate for five or more passes in the higher grades was 68 percent. In all but two subjects, computing and textiles technology, pupils surpassed the national average. In art and craft, design and technology, pupils' attainment compares favourably with the average for selective schools. Every pupil gains eight or more passes at grades A to G.
9. Between Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make very good progress. Their progress is maintained in most subjects and, in some subjects, it is improved. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' progress accelerates in English, history, physical education and French and pupils make very good progress in these subjects as well as mathematics, science, information technology, art, music and religious education. Pupils continue to make good progress in design and technology and geography.
10. By the end of the sixth form, students attain at levels which are in line with other pupils nationally. Attainment is high in science, design and technology, information technology, history, art, music, physical education. Detailed comparisons of results in external examinations are more difficult at this stage due to the fluctuating numbers taking different subjects and the small size of some of the entries. All pupils taking a vocational examination course achieve a pass at advanced or intermediate level and all gain either a merit or a distinction. Students continue to make very good progress. All pupils achieve an award from their work on the Youth Award Scheme. All pupils achieve an externally verified key skills certificate.

17. *Overall attainment and progress*

11. In public examinations, although the attainment of boys and girl is similar, girls' results are slightly higher. The school does not analyse results by ethnicity, but the inspection data revealed no discrepancies. Pupils with additional special needs make very good progress as a result of good support from teachers.
12. Literacy across the curriculum is reinforced throughout all lessons in the primary, secondary and post-16 phases. The school's emphasis on language development and specialist facilities and equipment

contributes significantly to pupils' progress. The school's technological aids are a further significant factor in enabling pupils' progress. From the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident enough to ask questions for clarification and, when they are unable to make their meaning clear, they often resort to spelling words out. By the end of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form higher attaining pupils are able to hold high levels of debate and analysis. Pupils' numeracy and graphicacy is above average and is well reinforced throughout many subjects, but particularly in science, design and technology, history and physical education. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment in information technology has improved significantly and is above average. Computers are used in almost all lessons and pupils make good progress. The majority of pupils use word processing confidently and they use data-logging and control, for instance in science. Pupils are able access reference materials for their work in several subjects.

13. There is no national data to compare the attainment of hearing-impaired pupils, across mainstream and special schools. However, in comparison with other special schools for deaf pupils, the pupils' attainment at Mary Hare is very well above average. The school has set appropriate targets for continuing improvement and these are clearly based on thorough analyses of previous performance and trends.

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

1. The school has maintained its high standards in this area since the time of the last inspection. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning at all Key Stages. Pupils settle quickly in lessons and use their audiological aids well to enable themselves to communicate effectively and participate wholeheartedly in class discussions. They are motivated and concentrate well on their tasks, persevering with them and taking a pride in what they have accomplished. They show commitment to their study and are happy to explain in detail what they are doing. Pupils enjoy the challenge of finding things out for themselves and taking responsibility for their own learning. When they are given the chance to use their initiative and work independently, particularly in practical subjects, they do so with relish and enthusiasm. They have a lively and enquiring approach to learning and some older secondary pupils even set their own targets to increase their progress.
2. Pupils who have recently joined the school, at both junior and secondary level, are effectively mastering the skills of self-discipline and application necessary to enable them to do well.
3. The pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school. Most have successfully developed the ability to control any frustrations they may feel with their difficulties in communicating. They display good manners and social skills in the dining rooms, and mealtimes are pleasant and sociable occasions. Pupils maintain these high standards of behaviour in their recreational time and in their residential areas, so that the school is a harmonious community. The number of exclusions is broadly similar to that of other schools and reflects the school's firm and consistent attitudes to discipline at all times.
4. Relationships within the school are excellent. This is one of the school's many strengths. Pupils get on very well with one another and with teaching and support staff. Pupils are very supportive of one another in class and in social situations, helping others to understand and to make themselves understood. They co-operate very well with one another in lessons and collaborate effectively on their work when required. Pupils in the school come from all over the country and from a variety of different backgrounds, but are content to accept their differences and mix very well together. Girls and boys and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are interested in the views and beliefs of others, and have the confidence to express their own ideas in front of one another. They are happy to celebrate others' achievements.
5. Many parents feel very strongly that their children's confidence and self-assurance has increased markedly since they came to the school. This is reflected in the enthusiasm and determination which pupils show as they represent the school in tournaments, participate in clubs alongside hearing children and carry out duties in school and in their houses. They take their responsibilities seriously and carry them out willingly.

25. **Attendance**

1. The level of attendance for the secondary-aged pupils is excellent. The attendance of the junior-aged pupils is good compared with other primary schools nationally. There is no absence for unacceptable reasons at any of the Key Stages.
2. Punctuality at all Key Stages, including the sixth form, is good. These high standards of attendance and punctuality have a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress.

27. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

27. **Teaching**

3. The quality of teaching is good across all Key Stages. It is never less than satisfactory. In 84 per cent of lessons it is good or better, while in 43 percent it is very good or excellent. This represents a significant improvement on the quality of teaching reported in the previous inspection. There is little difference between the amount of good and very good teaching across Key Stages 1 to 4, but at post-16 the teaching is almost always good and, in more than 50 percent of lessons, it is very good or excellent. There are several key features of all lessons. Teachers make quite sure that all pupils are giving them their full attention. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding through questioning. Opportunities are well taken to develop pupils' language. The teachers use excellent learning aids and resources which increase the level of communication for deaf pupils.
4. At Key Stage 1 and 2 the best teaching is characterised by teachers' enthusiasm and their wide knowledge of language development. Provision of different activities ensures that pupils are able to access learning in a variety of ways. For instance, role play is well used in English, activities are well matched to pupils' different levels of ability in mathematics and in science pupils investigate the size of real leaves in order to compile their tables. Teachers are skilful in capturing pupils' full attention before beginning to communicate, despite pupils' less well developed ability to concentrate. Their questions are well focused to check, challenge and extend pupils' understanding. Planning is well tailored to pupils' individual targets in literacy and numeracy.
5. The most successful teaching at Key Stages 3, 4 and post-16 was characterised by very well focused tasks and reinforcement of the main learning points at the end of the lesson. In science, this enabled an astonishing rate of learning. Good teachers provided frequent opportunities for pupils to evaluate and improve their work. The pupils' presentation of their own coursework in art to the rest of the group was very successful. It enabled pupils to develop their critical skills and their understanding of how artists develop their ideas as well as improving their work. Activities enabled pupils to take substantial responsibility for their own work when carrying out experiments in science and when developing their own work in design and technology. Teachers' high levels of specialist knowledge enabled them to set challenging work which pupils found stimulating and exciting, for instance, in music and art. A good balance between teachers' talk and activities for pupils ensured better progress than in lessons where there was too much teachers' talk, as happened in a few English lessons. Pupils respond particularly well to challenging activities and the most successful teachers were very skilful in their use of questions to extend pupils' thinking. Homework tasks were well related to classwork work and the time in lessons was sufficient to evaluate and discuss pupils' efforts and reinforce learning.
6. The progress of pupils in lessons at all levels is encouraged by good humour and very good relationships both between teachers and pupils and between pupils. Teachers use assessments of pupils' work well to help them to help them plan their lessons. They know the pupils very well, particularly in primary classes. In the most successful lessons in the secondary school, they match the work effectively to pupils' individual learning needs. However, few teachers negotiate individual targets with pupils for improvement and, in some lessons, for instance geography, this limits the focus of lessons. Additional teacher support is effective in promoting the progress of pupils with low levels of attainment in English and French at Key Stage 3 and 4 and that of some pupils with additional special needs.

31. **The curriculum and assessment**

7. The school provides a very good curriculum which is broad and balanced at all Key Stages. Indeed the breadth increases significantly and appropriately from one Key Stage to the next. There is a very wide offer of subjects in the sixth form. The curriculum promotes the learning of junior aged pupils very well and prepares them well for secondary school. Sufficient time is devoted to subjects. There is an emphasis

on language development which forms the basis of their intellectual development. In the secondary school, the curriculum enables pupils to develop well.

8. The requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are met and no pupils are disapplied from the curriculum or from examination requirements. The requirements for health and sex education are well met through a personal and social education programme. Information technology is taught through subjects across the curriculum. However, in order to focus on language development, the school has chosen to reduce the amount of time for non-examination religious education at Key Stage 4 and this prevents the subject from being studied in depth. The literacy hour is timetabled and well used. There are detailed schemes of work for each Key Stage which reflect the National Curriculum programmes of study and meet the particular language needs of hearing impaired pupils. Information technology has been well planned to support English, mathematics and science.
9. Junior-aged pupils are grouped according to their language attainment levels, which encourages good access for all pupils to the curriculum. Lessons for junior pupils are planned according to their progress on a half-termly basis with appropriate individual targets. This enables them to make good progress. Within the classroom there are good daily planning sheets to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Material is modified according to pupils' language development. With the exception of mathematics and design and technology, all subjects at Key Stage 3 are taught in tutor groups. They are taught in sets according to their attainment in mathematics at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in science from Year 9.
10. All Key Stage 4 pupils study at least nine subjects to examination level in the General Certificate of Secondary Education. The school has introduced an element of flexibility at Key Stage 4 by offering a good range of half courses. Provision at post 16 enables students to study a very wide range of courses covering General Certificate in Education at A and A/S level, vocational courses at advanced and intermediate levels. There are shared courses with the local Further Education College in life drawing. Students on non-vocational courses study Cambridge Information Technology. Key skills are developed well through the Youth Award Scheme.
11. Extensive support is provided out of lesson time for pupils to succeed both in taught courses and in examinations. Pupils have supervised periods after school during which they complete their homework. Whole Saturdays are devoted to course work in all subjects and this has resulted in high levels of attainment. In music, pupils with help from their teachers draw up a theme contract at the beginning of each term. Intensive extra lessons are given in French for pupils arriving at the school having previously studied other languages.
12. The curriculum provision at both primary and secondary levels takes into account that many pupils arrive at the school attaining at lower levels than those of which they are capable. It provides excellent opportunities for language development. There are excellent specialist facilities for pupils with profound hearing impairment to access the curriculum. The use of amplification of sound enables group discussion. The use of ear moulds and learning aids allows pupils to work independently and make best use of their residual hearing. Withdrawal of pupils from lessons is kept at a minimum and negotiated with teachers to prevent disruption to learning.
13. The curriculum enables pupils with additional special educational needs to make very good progress. Individual education plans are detailed and targets are well framed and appropriate. Care staff contribute to annual reviews. For primary pupils there are care plans. Contributions to secondary pupils' reviews are general and do not relate to planned experiences designed to extend pupils' personal and social development; their value, therefore, is limited.
14. There is a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme which effectively teaches pupils about sex, drugs and other health issues. However, opportunities are missed to extend and reinforce this aspect of the curriculum through residential experiences.

15. The curriculum includes very good careers education and advice. The majority of students continue their sixth form studies at the school after which the majority go on to further and higher education courses. Good links are made with further and higher education and students are well supported to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible.
16. The curriculum is enriched by a good programme of extra-curricular activities that includes competitive sports and cultural, recreational and social activities. These take place within the school day, in the evenings and at the weekends. Junior aged pupils make class visits to places of worship and, in geography, pupils visit the local area. The activities programme is well organised by a member of the care team. After school activities include a wide range of sports for both boys and girls. There is a wide range of inter-school matches, county and district meets. Good links exist with local organisations and societies (scouts, Red Cross, athletic clubs, army cadets, guides, model railway). The school magazine *Chatterbox* is on the Internet. Social facilities for pupils include a coffee bar and fitness room. There are school productions, theatre and cinema visits. Cultural activities include a collaborative arts project at the Newbury Spring Festival, visits to museums and art galleries. Participation is good and activities include weekend excursions. There are many trips abroad to Madrid, Barcelona and Florence. As part of the French course all Year 10 pupils visit Paris.

41. *Assessment*

17. Assessment procedures are very good across all Key Stages. In the junior division, detailed baseline assessments on entry evaluate pupils' levels of attainment and motor skills and these are supported by assessments made by educational psychologists and audiologists. A strength of the school is the use of video records to judge junior-aged pupils' progress in language development. There are detailed on-going assessments of progress in pupils' communication, motor and attainment levels. Key Stage tests are taken when appropriate to a pupil's level of linguistic development. Individual education plans are reviewed on a half termly basis and there is a detailed annual review for all children. Curriculum plans are reviewed accordingly.
18. In the secondary school, detailed baseline measures are in place to enable the school to judge pupils' current and potential attainment and there are very effective systems within departments for assessing pupils' attainment. The school has carried out an excellent analysis of results to demonstrate that pupils make very good progress particularly throughout the secondary school. School reports and profiles are very well documented and very informative. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and annual reviews provide an excellent feedback for curriculum managers and are used effectively to monitor pupils' progress between the Key Stages. Although some pupils set themselves targets, they are normally only agreed with staff where there is a cause for concern. Annual reviews provide an effective forum for the exchange of information between teaching and care staff. Pupils are present at their annual reviews and parents value the meetings. Where parents cannot visit the school, members of the senior management team visit the parents, which sometimes involves them travelling to Ireland and Scotland.
19. The school policy on assessment is well supported across all subject areas and pupils understand the marking system well. Test grades are given at the end of topics and pupils have grade sheets every half term to take home. Parents value these. Half term grades are monitored across subjects by the senior curriculum managers and action is taken where necessary. The review of assessment information has led to modifications in curriculum planning at Key Stages 1 and 2 and in subjects such as science, design and technology and media studies.

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

20. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is evident in the wide range of activities seen both in the planned curriculum and in residential and other aspects of the pupils' lives at school.

21. Pupils' spiritual development benefits from opportunities to reflect on issues of human rights and responsibilities in a variety of lessons and in assemblies. They take inspiration from famous paintings and music for their own work. In religious education pupils reflect on the creation and, in science, a lesson on sound and speed generated a sense of excitement as they carried out experiments. Assemblies are excellent occasions for communal celebrations of achievement. The school ensures that all pupils can participate in the proceedings by providing good audio and visual facilities. Pupils are always involved in the presentation of the assemblies by reading their own poems, playing music and singing songs or reading prepared text. Pupils leave all assemblies with a positive feeling about themselves, their friends and the staff in school. A regular thought for the week supports the assemblies at both primary and secondary levels.
22. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils see good role models in the staff and in lessons they study the cause and effects of racism and discuss human rights and responsibilities. A very good discussion on the issues surrounding disabilities, including deafness, was held in a personal and social education lesson after watching a video exploring the plight of minority groups in Europe and South East Asia. In history they look at how stereotyping can lead to discrimination and in geography they consider issues such as pollution, damage to the environment and consider what society might do about these problems. A very moving assembly was held where pupils described their experiences as a result of a visit to the war fields in Belgium. Religious education lessons consolidated the discussion on the evils of war and the desirability of striving for peace. These topics are explored also in English literature and history. Pupils do a lot of good work for others through their charity collections.
23. Provision for social development is very good. In classes, in the playground and in the residential areas, boys and girls work and play together harmoniously. The teachers are skilful in ensuring high levels of communication within lessons. Relationships at all levels are excellent and make a significant impact on the good standards achieved. Paired work and group work is effective but opportunities are missed to extended collaborative work in some secondary classes. Pupils have ample opportunities to develop their social skills by reading in assembly, playing in teams and in bands. The School Council helps pupils to gain an understanding of the democratic process and participate in the improvement of conditions in the school.
24. There is very good provision for pupils' cultural experiences. Assemblies introduce different religions and religious education develops pupils understanding of how different people worship and there are visits to such places as a Hindu temple. There are many visits to museums and galleries both in this country and abroad. Geography field trips and other activities in sport lead to written reflections by pupils on their experiences. There are regular trips to France to help pupils gain an insight into the language and culture of other people. Pupils have good opportunities to study the lives, religions and cultures of many different groups of people around the world both in class and by trips outside school.
25. The last inspection reported very positively on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents have a high degree of satisfaction in the values and attitudes promoted by the school and this inspection supports their views. The standards have been well sustained and it remains a very strong aspect of the school.
- 50. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
26. The school makes very good provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils. The quality of care contributes well to pupils' ability to make progress throughout the school.
27. Pupils' personal development and welfare are very well monitored by care staff and form tutors under the supervision of the Vice-Principal and in close liaison with the Local Education Authority. Attendance and punctuality and are closely monitored by the teachers under the supervision of one of the Assistant Principals. Appropriate records are kept. There is a well organised and effectively delivered programme

of personal, social and health education, but it is not systematically extended in residential settings. Issues such as bullying, growing up, abuse of drugs, nutrition, dating, self-awareness, relationships, discrimination and sex education are sensitively presented and thoroughly discussed. This programme in particular has a positive impact on the maturity, moral development and confidence of the pupils.

28. The school successfully promotes high standards of behaviour and discipline. It has high expectations of behaviour based on self-discipline and respect for others. Its code of conduct is well thought out and is constantly reinforced by all members of staff. Rewards and sanctions are fair, appropriate and pupils are confident that any incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and speedily.
29. Procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic progress are very good. Each pupil's progress is constantly monitored by the teachers and heads of departments and individual targets are set for those who need to improve. Parents are regularly kept informed of their children's performance both in effort and in grades achieved. Existing in-class and after-school individual support is very good. All teaching staff are approachable, showing interest in and commitment to the academic development of their pupils. Pupils receive very good careers education which is well linked to very good guidance from the careers service.
30. The special needs of the pupils are very well met. Audiological provision within the school is excellent. Pupils' audiological needs, including amplification requirements, are comprehensively assessed and most effectively met. The earmould laboratory provides a service to all pupils which is second to none. Non-functioning hearing aids and broken earmoulds are replaced within the day. The new innovations in the group hearing aid system developed by the school and used in classes ensure that all pupils can use their residual hearing to the maximum. This is one of the most important factors contributing to the outstanding oral communication abilities of the pupils.
31. Provision for speech and language therapy in the school is of high quality. Individual needs are assessed regularly. Individual targets are set and pupils receive extra tuition, both in language development and in speech intelligibility, before and after school periods. There is close and effective liaison between speech therapists and teachers.
32. Child protection arrangements are very good and reflect local authority guidelines. All staff have received awareness-raising training in child protection issues. Issues and procedures are regularly discussed in meetings of the pastoral care group. All staff, pupils and parents are fully aware of them. Policies on drugs education, sex education, administration of medicines, emergency procedures are in place and are consistently applied. The school has been inspected recently by the local Social Services Department and provision for residential care has been found to be of good quality.
33. The medical needs of the pupils are very well met. There is close contact with the local doctor who visits the school regularly and with the Royal Berkshire Hospital, especially the Ear Nose and Throat and Audiology Departments. Accidents are dealt with appropriately. Sufficient staff are trained in First Aid and the two State Registered Nurses employed by the school are in charge of administering medicine to pupils and keeping the relevant records. The sick bays available are clean, well supervised, homely and provide very good accommodation for temporarily sick pupils. Parents are kept well informed.
34. Care within the residential facilities of the school is very good. Since the last inspection training of all care staff has been undertaken. At present a substantial number of staff have gained National Vocational Qualifications in Childcare at level 3. Others are studying at this and higher levels. This is a substantial improvement. Care staff are aware of the effects of deafness on educational and personal development, appreciating the difficulties faced by the pupils. Residential facilities are very good overall, particularly for Year 7 and sixth form students. After-school activities are well organised. Pupils follow their interests in a wide variety of activities, such as swimming, athletics, personal fitness, music, studying, relaxing. Pupils are very well fed. The food is of high quality, well cooked and aesthetically served in clean and civilised surroundings. This has a positive impact on the social and personal development of the pupils.

35. The school keeps parents well informed of their children's personal and academic progress and parents keep in touch with the school. The overwhelming majority of them are very satisfied with the educational, social and emotional development of their children.
60. **Partnership with parents and the community**
36. The school works hard to establish good relationships with parents, and is very successful in creating an effective partnership which is of great benefit to pupils. Parents are provided with a good quantity of high quality and detailed information about the school's curriculum, organisation and residential arrangements through its prospectuses and a variety of handbooks and packs of information. The junior division's handbook, for example, is particularly reassuring for parents sending their young children away from home for the first time. The secondary school parents' pack sets out clearly the school's high standards and expectations for its pupils. The school's philosophy on, and approaches to, teaching the deaf are very fully and carefully explained through its literature. There is an excellent website facility which many parents are able to access for regularly updated news of the school. The school's many achievements are detailed in its well-produced annual report and regular newsletters.
37. There are very good channels of daily communication available to parents. Staff are readily accessible by phone and the well run key worker system means that parents know who is their immediate point of contact. They feel that the school is very approachable if they have any concerns. The excellent home-school and home-care diaries used for the junior school pupils mean that staff and parents can maintain a close dialogue about the needs of the younger children.
38. Parents are given good, frequent information about their children's progress through half-termly grade sheets, mid-year progress reports and annual profiles. The introduction of the grade sheets, at the request of parents, is a good example of the school responding to parents' needs, and parents are very pleased with the level of information they are given. Pupils' annual profiles are good overall, though there is some variation in quality from subject to subject. The best set out clearly what pupils know, understand and can do, and what skills they have acquired in that subject. Sometimes, however, comments over-emphasise pupils' attitudes to their work and the effort they have made at the expense of their progress in learning, particularly at Key Stage 3. Sections written by care staff help to provide parents with a good overview of their child's all-round development. The reports for the junior aged pupils are very good. They relate closely to each child's individual needs and indicate the progress the child has made in overcoming their disability in relation to each area of the curriculum. Parents are very well involved in the annual review of their children's statement of special educational needs. The school makes every effort to ensure that they are able to participate, and senior staff travel to the more distant regions of the country to enable this to happen.
39. Parents are full of praise for the school and its ethos, and are very fully involved in the work it is doing for their children. They are interested in their children's progress and attainment, and keen to act in partnership with the school to do what is best for their children. They maintain regular contact with the school, attend school events, and are involved with the active parent-teacher associations which provide a network of support for the school and for other parents. The school values this support, which makes a significant contribution to the pupils' progress.
40. The school has established a wide range of very good links with the local community which help to enhance pupils' personal and social development, and enrich the curriculum available to them. Pupils are able to make use of local amenities to develop their skills in sport, for example, and have the opportunity to mix with hearing children at clubs and in competitions. Here they are also given the responsibility of representing the school. Some junior aged pupils are given good opportunities to sample integration into mainstream schooling through visits to a local primary school. Curriculum work is extended and enlivened through input from outside organisations. In science, for example, useful work has been done with a major company, while music has benefited from the involvement of an international orchestra. These links all have a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The school is also anxious to be of use to the local community, and has made its expertise and facilities in audiology and its teacher

training programme widely available to others.

65. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

65. Leadership and management

41. The governors and the Principal and Vice-Principal provide very clear educational direction for the school. They are well supported in this by other senior and middle managers in the school. The re-location of the primary division has been a major undertaking, but has been very well managed without affecting developments in the secondary school. The number of junior-aged pupils has increased and they make good progress. They make particularly good progress in their development of language.
42. The governing body has a well-informed strategic view which includes a wide focus as a centre for the development of oral education for deaf and hearing impaired children nationally. For instance, there is a nationally acclaimed audiology department which not only serves the needs of pupils within the school, but also provides a service to local health authorities. The governors have a clearly defined management structure of appropriate sub-committees which enable it to carry out its statutory responsibilities very effectively. There is an effective sub-committee to oversee the new primary division, but long-term plans are not yet fully developed.
43. The Principal, Vice-Principal and senior management use staff appraisal and a system of structured meetings to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. As a result, the school identifies areas of weakness promptly and subsequent developments are very effectively supported to ensure that improvements in provision take place. The school has addressed all issues identified in the previous inspection report and there have been significant improvements as a result, particularly in terms of provision for information technology, the costing of whole school priorities, the refurbishment of residential accommodation, the organisation and monitoring of care provision and risk assessments. However, monitoring and evaluation by heads of department is only informal and does not clearly relate to development planning. Some work has recently been started on looking at ways of introducing systems to enable the continuous improvement of subject departments in the secondary school, but it is not well developed.
44. The aims of the school are very clearly reflected throughout the school. Pupils make very good progress in lessons because of the emphasis on the use of language throughout all subjects and within all lessons. In addition to the taught curriculum, staff skilfully provide opportunities to enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills, for instance, at meal-times and during extra-curricular activities. Through the emphasis given to language, pupils achieve their educational potential and succeed very well in public examinations at the end of Year 11 and post-16, and 94% go on to a very good range of further and higher education courses. External test and examination results at the end of each Key Stage indicate steady improvement over the years. The school's own analysis, informed by surveys such as the national pilot project on value added, indicates that the school is making consistent and very good progress in enabling high standards. Pupils have access to a very wide range of extra-curricular experiences which enhance their understanding of literature, art and music as well as sporting and recreational activities. Pupils develop very good attitudes towards learning and good levels of personal and social skills enable them to take responsibility within the school community. Parents recognise the significant improvements in their children's self-confidence and self-esteem. Staff share a common purpose in enabling pupils to succeed through their support, guidance and concern for their welfare.
45. The school works closely with parents and recognises the necessity of their involvement in their children's education. Parents value the work of the school and point to many individual instances where their child has made significant improvements in personal, social and academic progress as a result of being at the school.

46. Stimulated by the previous inspection, the school carried out a strategic planning exercise which resulted in a broad development plan for the school. Each aspect of the plan is amplified by details of responsibilities, outcomes and costs. It is intended that the process of development informs and is informed by departments and, as a result, each department has a development plan. Priorities identified in the school development plan are appropriate, comprehensive and ambitious. However, the long term planning for the primary division still needs to be developed further. Departmental development plans are variable in clarity and focus and do not always relate well to the whole school priorities for continued improvements in academic success. Planning at all levels does not contain clearly measurable success criteria, for instance, in terms of outcomes for pupils or for the school. However, although the school development plan is well used and regularly evaluated by senior managers including governors, it is not used as a necessary management tool by departments. Overall, the link between departmental and whole school planning is insufficiently strong.

47. The ethos in the school is very good. Staff at all levels are very effective role models for pupils. Their shared commitment to high achievement based on an emphasis on language development and learning, coupled with supportive relationships, ensures pupils make very good progress. Pupils are hard-working, helpful, supportive of each other and they enjoy the school. Pupils' individual learning needs are well known to staff and no pupil is excluded or marginalised because of their culture or special needs. Statutory requirements are met.

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

48. The school is well staffed with well qualified and suitably experienced teachers and carers to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. The school has a carefully considered policy of recruiting subject specialists and training them as teachers of the deaf, in order to offer pupils the best possible provision, and this works well. The same principle is applied to recruiting and training professional care staff, with equal success. The school deliberately keeps a high ratio of teachers to pupils in class so that individuals get maximum attention. The numbers of care staff are appropriate to the ages and level of support required by pupils.

49. Arrangements for the induction, appraisal and professional development of staff are very good. The school has worked hard to improve its provision for care staff since the last inspection. It has been successful in creating a climate where the professionalism of care and support staff is rightly recognised and opportunities for development and career progression mirror those available to teachers. There is a very good induction programme for all staff, laying appropriate emphasis on audiology issues and covering child protection procedures. Child protection training has also been carried out with existing staff, in line with the requirements of the previous inspection report. Appraisal is up to date and available to all staff in the school, and this acts as a means of identifying individual training needs. In response to the last inspection, the school has developed training for care staff, which motivates staff and contributes to quality of care. The school has achieved the Investors In People award for its commitment to staff development. The high standards of training have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and care experienced by pupils.

50. The school's accommodation is good. It allows most subjects to be taught appropriately, but the gym and swimming pool facilities are not adequate. Provision for science, information technology, design technology, media studies and art is particularly good, and in all areas of the curriculum accommodation has been adapted to make it suitable for hearing impaired pupils through effective sound proofing. Since the last inspection the school has greatly improved its older residential houses to bring them closer in standard to the excellent Year 7 and sixth form buildings. Much work has been done to create comfortable common rooms and bedrooms, although a number of bathrooms are rather spartan and some corridors are in need of refurbishing. The residential accommodation for the junior aged pupils is very good and a great deal of effort has been put in to surround them with a comfortable and homely environment. All accommodation is cleaned and maintained to a high standard. The displays throughout the school are of a high standard and reflect the school's standards well.

51. The school has good resources which support the curriculum well and are appropriate for the special needs of the pupils. Audiology equipment is excellent, and the arrangements for providing pupils with replacement earmoulds are outstanding. They make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and progress. Resources for subjects are very good across the curriculum. The library is well stocked and supplies of fiction have been increased since the last inspection so that these are now good. However, there are a number of old and out-of-date factual books on the library shelves which are misleading to pupils. Very good use is made of resources off-site to enrich the curriculum, and pupils make frequent visits to museums, exhibitions and theatres to support their learning.

76. **The efficiency of the school**

52. The school has a clear vision for its long-term future and makes very good use of its finances in order to reach its goals. However, long term planning for the primary division is not yet clearly charted. Systems for budget planning and monitoring are very good. Senior staff and governors follow a well-ordered cycle for this, and governors are presented with excellent quality financial information to enable them to maintain a strategic overview of the school's development. Governors are concerned with the cost-effectiveness of their decision making, and are rigorous in holding the school to account for its spending. The school development plans' priorities are linked to the budget, and the plans are partly costed. Departmental development plans, however, are still not costed, and although the school has made some progress since the last inspection in relating whole school and departmental priorities, this aspect of development planning has not yet been fully achieved.

53. The school deploys its staff very effectively to promote the academic and personal development of its pupils. Teaching and care staff are well organised to meet the pupils' particular needs. In some lessons, for example, pairs of staff teach together in order to give more attention to individuals, while numbers of care staff on duty vary depending on pupils' ages and levels of independence, with fewer supervising sixth formers than Year 7s and junior-aged pupils. Accommodation is very well used across the school. The school has been very successful in making imaginative use of available space, and has been careful to ensure that the creation of good acoustics throughout has been of paramount importance. This has a positive impact on standards of attainment. Resources are very well used across the curriculum. In all subjects, teachers make sure that visual aids and audiological equipment, such as the group hearing aids, are effectively employed to provide the best possible means of communication.

54. Financial control and administration in the school are very good. There are straightforward procedures for ordering, receiving and paying for goods, and proper lines of authority for approving orders and payments. Audited accounts and annual reports are produced in accordance with legal requirements. School administration too is very good. The school office provides capable and unobtrusive support to the smooth everyday running of the school, dealing efficiently with the particular needs of producing large numbers of pupils' annual reviews, and of liaising constantly with parents and visitors.

55. Pupils come to the school from a variety of backgrounds, and their attainment on entry is below average. At the school, they make very good progress, and their attainment is good. Standards of behaviour and personal development are very good. Unit costs per pupil are comparable with schools of a similar type, and the quality of education the pupils receive is good. Taking these factors into consideration, the school provides very good value for money.

80. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

80. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

80. **English**

56. Junior aged pupils make good progress. Higher attaining pupils make rapid progress in all elements of the English curriculum. In lesson observations and in work scrutinised, some junior pupils can discuss fairly complex ideas from difficult texts. The higher attaining pupils who will attend Mary Hare in the next academic year understand the meaning of tragedy and give examples from Macbeth and the Bible. They also use effective vocabulary to describe characters in plays and stories and make reference to texts when explaining their views. They talk about the setting of a play and why it is effective. Younger pupils struggle with reading because their understanding of language is under-developed. Some are starting to recognise familiar words in context. Their use of picture clues is far in advance of the ability to use sounds to build up words. Their preparation for the English Speaking Board examinations helps them to make good progress in speaking and listening in both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. There are no noticeable differences between the progress of junior aged girls and boys or those from different cultures.
57. By the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is nearly always in line with that expected nationally and for some pupils it is above average. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have made up much of the deficit in knowledge and understanding caused by their severe hearing impairment. Results in the National Curriculum tests at age 13 are in line with the national average. This represents a considerable achievement as most pupils arrive in school with below average expectations in Year 7. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have made good progress. In Year 9 their progress is very good. Progress in speaking and listening is good and pupils are helped to learn a range of communication skills through good drama lessons. In Year 9, for example, pupils were able to demonstrate an understanding of the issues surrounding vegetarianism and produced short improvisations reflecting very accurately how a family would react to such issues at a lunch table. Progress in reading is good and is supported by a very good supply of fiction in classrooms and in the library. Teachers regularly give pupils the chance to practise reading in class. Personal writing is better than factual descriptions. Some of the autobiographies in Year 7 are honest, amusing and engaging to the reader though occasionally are let down by inaccuracies in spelling and in tense construction. Pupils are more accurate in Year 9.
58. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is above national expectations. Pupils communicate their ideas well in speech and in actions in both drama and English lessons. Reading and writing are also often above the standards expected at this stage. Progress is very good and particularly so in writing. Pupils' sentence structure is more secure and they build up ideas logically and in sequence. Some of their factual writing has improved and their accounts of work experience are both accurate and written with a deep understanding of human emotions. This sensitivity is shown also in their literature essays on *Of Mice and Men* and was discussed with vigour and intelligence in class in Year 11. In the external examinations in English in 1998 the proportion gaining A* to C was well above the average of all secondary schools and represented a very large improvement on the national curriculum test results of these same pupils in 1996. The small numbers of pupils who took external examinations in English literature in 1998 all attained grades A* to C as did those taking theatre arts.
59. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have made very good progress. Trends over the last three years show an overall improvement in standards with the performance of pupils in 1997 being well above the national level. The inspection confirmed that these pupils, now in Year 11, are on course to perform well in their external examinations. Girls make quicker progress than boys in Key Stage 3 but by the end of Key Stage 4 boys have generally caught up. In the sixth form, fewer boys study English but they make satisfactory progress. There is no noticeable difference in the progress of those who have English as an additional language.

60. At the end of the sixth form, attainment is average in comparison with national standards and it is in line with course requirements. Pupils make good progress and are able to debate issues in a lively manner with the teacher's help. They are less assured when writing essays but, by Year 13, many are starting to use relevant evidence to back up their opinions of the texts. Results in the advanced level English examination have been less good than at General Certificate of Secondary Education, although the small number of pupils taking the subject makes comparisons with national averages insecure.
61. Pupils' very good progress in the school is due to a consistent approach to reading, writing, speaking and listening by all staff across the school coupled with extremely effective audiological aids. In the primary division, some of the oral lessons, such as talks about pupils' news, are slow because of pupils' hearing difficulties, but they make good progress in speaking over time. Literacy lessons make a significant contribution to this improvement through constant reinforcement and practice in phonics, word recognition and sentence building. The good supply of books gives pupils an interest in reading and many boys use the library to read newspapers regularly. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are talking and reading with more fluency and they can extract information from science text books with confidence and accuracy. The arrangement of pupils in lessons ensures that all pupils are able to hear and respond, key specialist words are displayed, overhead projectors are used to reinforce teaching points, and pupils are questioned to check their understanding. Pupils in Key Stage 3 can write accurately in food studies about making cakes and bread. In Key Stage 4 in music, Mussorgsky's *A Night on a Bare Mountain* had inspired good imaginative responses from pupils. In art, pupils explain their research and invite a critical response from their peers. Written accounts by sixth form students in physical education show that they have a good grasp of appropriate vocabulary and they are sensitive to audience needs, writing in a lively fashion about football matches and watersports.
62. Pupils' response in the primary school is positive. Most of them are lively and interested in their lessons. The older ones show care in the presentation of work which they display for others to read. Younger pupils are more restless but teachers are skilful in keeping them on task. They learn to persevere with their work for longer periods as they move up through the school. By the end of the Key Stage they can work unaided. Response in the other Key Stages is almost always good. Most pupils are well motivated and develop positive attitudes to learning. They show maturity and thoughtfulness in their drama lessons and lively involvement is a feature of many English groups. Relationships are very good. Pupils support each other excellently and make sure others can all follow what is happening in lessons.
63. The teaching of junior aged pupils is good and in some lessons it is very good. Teachers are clear in their aims for the lessons and have good strategies for motivating pupils such as varying activities and utilising the skills of support staff with individuals who need extra help. Expectations of the pupils are high in Years 5 and 6. The structure of lessons is carefully planned so that pupils gain the information to be able to hold intelligent discussions on difficult plays such as *Macbeth*. The literacy hour is well prepared with very good materials for individual and group work with pupils.
64. Teaching in the other Key Stages is good overall and it is never less than satisfactory. Teaching in the sixth form is always good. The main strength lies in all teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and their wide knowledge of language development. They are able to inspire in pupils a willingness to learn and to explore new ideas in literature and in drama. They get involved in role play and pupils respond very well. Their understanding of the needs of pupils with severe hearing impairment is evident in the way that they always ensure that every pupil is fully involved in almost every lesson. Marking is rigorous and consistent. It gives pupils good advice and praise, though this has to be hard earned. Assessment is thorough and contributes to effective planning where good audio-visual resources such as videos, most of them subtitled, and overhead projectors are often used to good effect.
65. In a minority of lessons, the pace does not allow sufficient opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning. Occasional lessons rely on pupils listening to the teacher for too long. Where there are two teachers in classes which contain pupils with additional language difficulties, it is usually effective. However, there has been no formal evaluation yet as to its overall efficiency to ensure that the expertise of

both teachers in the room is always fully utilised.

66. The management of the English curriculum is strong in both schools. There is a good team approach to planning and though much of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is informal it is generally effective. Resources are very good and contribute very positively to the high standards. Teachers' knowledge of literature and its high profile in many lessons make a distinctive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at all Key Stages.
67. Since the last inspection English at Mary Hare has improved in several respects. Pupils' proof-reading skills are much better now. This has been supported by more consistent use of information technology, particularly word processing. Strategies to help pupils to read are more consistent in all classes. Marking has definitely improved but there is still insufficient variety in the pace and structure of some lessons. Whereas in the last report English was a growing strength of the school, it is now established. Drama is a successful department and it contributes to good standards across the curriculum. However, there are no formal systems for monitoring, and departmental planning contains no costs or success criteria.

92. **Mathematics**

68. Junior aged pupils make good progress. They come into the school, during Key Stages 1 or 2, with very little understanding of number. Pupils learn to count and to write numbers. In Key Stage 2 pupils learn to add and subtract numbers and some find the area of irregular shapes by counting the squares. By the end of Key Stage 2 some pupils are able to recognise numbers up to one thousand. Some pupils know the names and can recognise acute and obtuse angles and right angles. Pupils are improving their mental mathematics skills in Key Stage 2. Most work appropriately focuses on number, where pupils have a large deficit. In lessons, pupils learn to manipulate numbers in their heads, and are becoming confident with number. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 a few pupils are working at or above national averages.
69. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is consistently above national average. Pupils gaining level 5 and above are well above the national average. Pupils attaining the higher levels 6 and above are broadly similar to the national average. In 1998, for the first time, some pupils achieved the even higher levels 7 and 8.
70. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils make very good progress. Most pupils enter the school with average or below average attainment in mathematics. In their first year they understand about different types of numbers, such as odd and even numbers, and they learn to multiply and divide two-digit numbers by a single digit number. During Key Stage 3 pupils learn to use simple formulae and understand about squared and cubed numbers. Pupils learn their multiplication tables and use them well. Pupils learn to use fractions, decimals and percentages, and by the end of Key Stage 3 some pupils are able to use trigonometrical functions. During Key Stage 3 pupils learn to investigate, particularly with number. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards in number work are good and most pupils' mental arithmetic skills are good.
71. Pupils make very good progress by the end of Key Stage 4. They can use algebraic expressions to solve problems involving speed, distance and time. Pupils can manipulate algebraic equations well. However no pupils have yet attained grade A*. Pupils' achievements in external examinations in 1998 were well above the national average. There has been an upward improvement in examination results since 1993 although they have fluctuated over the past five years. In 1993 pupils attaining grades A*-C was 54% whereas, in 1998, it was 75%.
72. Pupils' progress from the end of Key Stage 4 to the end of their advanced level course is good. All groups of pupils progress as well as others of similar prior attainment. In 1998, students' achievements in the advanced level course were broadly similar to the national average.

73. Pupils use numeracy and graphs well across the curriculum. In science pupils use mental mathematics and quick approximations when calculating velocity and volumes. Pupils make good use of graphs, which increase in difficulty throughout the Key Stages. In Year 10 pupils use scattergrams to show their results. Pupils make good use of their calculators in science lessons. In media studies, pupils used graphs to illustrate the results of a survey of favourite films. In history pupils use time lines, which they draw well to scale. They make family trees, which they use as a database for numbers of descendants of different types. Pupils show numeracy skills in their chronology work. In physical education pupils calculate heart rate, and also use angles of direction confidently in orienteering and angles of projection in gymnastics.
74. Pupils consistently show interest in their work, they work hard in lessons and sustain a high level of concentration. Pupils develop their capacity for personal study and complete a great deal of work in lessons and for homework. They always behave well, and are courteous and trustworthy. They show respect for property; both their own and each other's. They form constructive relationships; and are developing their capacity to work together, when given the opportunity. Pupils show respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs and are particularly polite. Pupils are keen to please and to do well. They enjoy the challenges in mathematics and willingly ask and answer questions.
75. The quality of teaching is good. It is very good in just over half of lessons seen. In the junior school the majority of the lessons are good. Teachers of junior aged pupils ensure a good range of activities that combine fun with consolidation and practice. Different activities are given to match the needs of different pupils and short-term targets are set for individual pupils. In the secondary school at Key Stage 3, in almost half the lessons, teaching is very good, in Key Stage 4 most of the lessons are very good and, in post-16, classes half the lessons are very good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the topics they are teaching. They have very high expectations of their pupils, both for the quality of work and also for their behaviour. Teachers' planning, methods and organisational strategies are good, and often very good. They manage their pupils very well and maintain a very high standard of discipline in lessons and keep pupils on task. Teachers use time very well and make good use of homework to support pupils' understanding and to aid revision. In Key Stage 4, teachers set extra homework for pupils to practise examination techniques, which has worked very well in raising achievement. Teachers use their assessment of pupils' work well to inform their teaching. Teachers often have very good relationships with their pupils and in some instances they are excellent. They motivate them well, particularly in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The teachers across all Key Stages treat their pupils with a great deal of respect which enhances pupils' self worth and contributes to their social and moral education. Teachers know their pupils well and are aware of their needs and reactions. Good reinforcement of literacy skills is included in mathematics lessons. Teachers make good use of the group hearing aid, and have established good routines.
76. Favourable adult-pupil ratios support pupils' learning very well. The curriculum is planned effectively to provide smooth transition from one Key Stage to the next. There are effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. Good records are kept of pupils' attainments in tests from the time they enter the school to the end of their schooling. Assessment is used well to inform curriculum planning. The subject is well led and managed. In the secondary school, the head of department has helped to create a strong department that is committed to high achievement. The accommodation in the department is good and there are good learning resources, including books, materials and equipment. The high quality group hearing aids support pupils' learning very well. The secondary department has carried out well most of the recommendations in the previous inspection report that has resulted in improved standards. However, insufficient use was seen of apparatus being used to support the understanding of number.

101. **Science**

77. Junior aged pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils carry out simple experiments with help. They can describe and draw what they observe. They recall details about burning using appropriate words and identify an range of materials. They describe changes caused by heating or cooling and record measurements of different leaves in simple tables. They use the appropriate vocabulary to name and describe the process of planting and growing and that food is required

for growth. They make simple investigations, such as finding out about paper. The grouping of pupils according to their language development and excellent use of audiology aids enable all pupils to progress equally well and better than expected.

78. Standards achieved in science by the end of Key Stage 3 are above the standards achieved nationally. Girls and boys do equally well. Pupils arrive at the school having achieved results well below the national average. National Curriculum Key Stage 3 tests in 1998 are above the national average and have improved by about 20 percent since the last inspection. Pupils are able to move from good classroom discussion using the audiology equipment, to carrying out experiments independently. They use scientific vocabulary well in their descriptions and explanations of light refraction. Pupils of all abilities carry out experiments confidently and well, for instance when sorting out different liquids into acids and alkalis. They recall terms like pitch and vibration in sound and understand loudness. They measure angles with precision and calculate and tabulate their results very well. They use approximations well in calculating the speed of sound. In work on rusting they seek evidence to support their reasons and are able to hypothesise on the likely outcomes. Although there is often an imbalance of boys and girls in lessons this does not affect attainment. The use of open-ended investigations is improving standards. Progress is supported by the pupils' confident use of numbers when calculating.
79. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils attain standards in class that are above the national average. Pupils use their knowledge to give explanations of moving and rotating objects and distinguish between different forms of energy. They understand reversible reactions in chemistry. They link their chemistry knowledge with physics well. They speculate on the effect of altering pressure and temperature in the production of ammonia. They use computers confidently and expertly for modelling and data logging. They identify the key factors in the functioning of the heart and how this affects other parts of the body. All abilities achieve equally well and there is no difference in attainment between boys and girls. Examination results in 1998 are above the national average, but there are no A* grades. There has been a steady improvement in the number of high grades of about 10 percent since the last inspection.
80. By the end of the sixth form standards are above the national average. Standards are improving. Students follow complicated and detailed instructions in practical work. They use computers well. Students think and explain to a high level. They use their knowledge, for example of electromagnetic induction to explain events such as eddy currents, well and can carry out calculations successfully.
81. Pupils make very good progress throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and post-16 because teachers plan lessons well to provide increasing complexity and there is a logical progression in the development of practical skills. Progress is enabled by the skilful use of amplification aids. Models and worksheets help pupils to understand. Appropriate time for pupils to think for themselves and to take ownership of their work improves progress.
82. In all Key Stages pupils respond very well to their lessons. Pupils work hard and value the range of equipment used. Junior aged pupils are keen to answer questions correctly when grouping food types. Their attitude to learning is good and they are interested in learning as when learning about seeds. They show pride in their work and are keen to talk about it. When the tasks last too long, pupils become inattentive. They listen to each other well. When classroom discussion is too prolonged pupils become less attentive. Pupils are proud of their work and it is neatly presented. When pupils are unsure they seek clarification. When tasks are too simple they become bored. Older pupils are confident. They seek reasons and are willing to discuss their findings and this helps their understanding. They are delighted when they get the right answers. Given the responsibility of carrying out an experiment with the minimum of instructions, they quickly become engaged and enjoy the challenge. Post-16 students are too dependent on teachers when carrying out practical work. They do not readily take risks and this restricts their learning of difficult concepts. When they are given more responsibility for their work students answer questions confidently, offer explanations and consider possible outcomes from practical work.
83. The teaching of science is good in the primary division. Teachers' knowledge of science is good. Enthusiastic presentation, expressive body language and appropriate vocabulary by the teacher, encourage

pupils to make good progress. Teachers make good use of previous knowledge and provide clear explanations. They ensure that pupils look, listen and speak. Good relationships with pupils encourage discussion and this helps all pupils to make a contribution. Teachers assess pupils very well and use this knowledge to improve pupils' observation skills.

84. The quality of teaching in the senior school is good. This is because teachers are very well qualified, have high levels of expertise in teaching hearing impaired pupils. Good teachers give excellent broad directions that allow pupils to take ownership of their learning. The quality of questioning is demanding and helps pupils understand complex concepts such as loudness in terms of energy transfers. Teachers ensure that pupils listen carefully in classroom discussions and, as a consequence, pupils are clear about the purpose of work. Pupils are made to think. Teachers know the pupils' levels of attainment well and this helps them to plan effectively to meet individual needs. Although pupils' work is regularly marked, the teachers' comments do not help pupils to improve their work. Teachers reinforce language well, for instance, by the use of key words. They engage pupils by asking question, giving every-day examples and setting achievable but challenging targets. The good technician support ensures that experiments are successful. Teachers are competent and confident using computers and use them widely in lessons for simulation exercises and data logging. The pace of lessons is brisk and pupils are not allowed to coast. Appropriate homework is set and regularly marked. Some teachers are over protective this reduces pupils' confidence in carrying out practical work.
85. The science curriculum promotes good learning and high standards across all Key Stages and statutory requirements are met. In Key Stage 3 the introduction of a course of activities which provide increasing complexity helps pupils to think more clearly. Since the last inspection, the amount of practical work has been increased. The curriculum at all stages is further enhanced by educational visits and good links with local employers. Pupils' work is effectively assessed and, in the secondary school, the information is used to develop new schemes of work at Key Stage 4 and to introduce more demanding work in Key Stage 3. The leadership and the high quality resources are having a significant impact on the good standards.

110. **Information and communications technology**

86. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress in relation to their previous attainment. Pupils can switch the computer on and off, load disks, use the mouse to move pictures and use simple programmes for number activities. Most of the pupils are able to carry out simple word processing and can save and print their work. Higher attaining pupils can work independently at the computer to extract information from an encyclopaedia using CD-ROM. Information technology is used across the curriculum but the pupils have not yet been introduced to control technology.
87. Attainment at Key Stage 3, is above average when compared to national expectations. Pupils enter and amend information on spreadsheets, they word process documents and most of them can import pictures and graphics into an open file. They edit and print their work with confidence. Higher attaining pupils understand databases and spreadsheets. They know that computers are used for a variety of purposes. A minority of pupils can scan and do simple digital photograph manipulation. Some pupils in Year 9 use computers to control electrical devices. Pupils make very good progress.
88. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils know about digital sensors and digital outputs. They programme the computer to control a simple electrical appliance. They experiment to improve their knowledge and learn from their mistakes. They touch-type with confidence, rectify errors and have good mastery and recall of necessary processes. Their key skills are very good. The pupils make very good progress. Year 11 pupils have a good understanding of Universal symbols. They are competent in desktop publishing and construct and interpret spreadsheets and databases with confidence. Last year's external examination results were below the national average. This year's results are predicted to be much better.
89. By the end of the sixth form, students' attainment is above average in lessons observed. The students

combine information from various sources and discuss scientific aspects of computing using the appropriate terminology. Their progress is very good. Students consolidate their understanding of databases and spreadsheets and prepare, process and present information systematically using automated routines. The results of pupils taking advanced level are satisfactory and in line with national expectations.

90. Students throughout the school enjoy their lessons in information technology. They show very good understanding of safety factors, cooperate well when working together and show pride in their work. They seek information from various sources and willingly talk about their work. They work diligently and remain focused for the duration of the lessons.
91. The quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently very good. The best teaching is characterised by detailed planning to meet individual needs, clear instructions, high expectations, enthusiasm, perseverance and the ability to communicate with hearing-impaired pupils effectively.
92. There is a well thought out policy document for this subject. The curriculum for information technology is broadly based and balanced. Information technology is used across the curriculum but in some subjects, such as art and food technology, its use is limited. Long-term, medium and short-term planning are in place. Information technology is well co-ordinated and planning provides clear and sequenced direction for teachers. Resources, both hard and software, are very good and well used, well maintained and accessible in and out of school hours. Assessments are regularly carried out, the results obtained being used to amend teachers' planning.
93. The school's response to the previous inspection has been positive and constructive. Staff have undergone extensive in-service training in information technology. The subject is used across the curriculum. Resources have improved considerably. Access to the Internet has been established. The quality of provision has been recently been favourably evaluated by a nationally established accreditation organisation.

118. **Religious education**

94. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good progress. They know a good range of stories from the Bible, they begin to understand the richness and diversity of religion through the study of four different religions and they are developing an awareness of their own identity and relationships with others. For example, pupils study the story of Martha and Mary from the New Testament. Through this story they look at the role of women in the bible and discuss why Mary chose to listen to the words of Jesus rather than help her sister in a more domestic role. They further develop this theme by looking at the importance of Esther, a heroine in Jewish history, through the festival of Purim. Pupils achieve the expectations in relation to the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Their progress is consistent in their knowledge and understanding of some religious beliefs, practices and festivals.
95. The attainment of secondary-aged pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 exceeds the standards expected through the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils show a very good understanding of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and some elements of Judaism. From the scrutiny of pupils' work, there is very good coverage of the syllabus. Pupils have studied in great detail the life of Jesus, worship in the Christian family and the great schism in the Christian church. Through looking at Islam closely, pupils have effectively researched information on the sacred writings from the Qur'an and the importance of pilgrimages including the Hajj. In Buddhism, the noble eightfold path has been identified and explained accurately in written text. Pupils in lessons have had the opportunity to discuss growing up experiences and the religious views of war through Christianity and Islam. By the end of the Key Stage, secondary-aged pupils are learning about and from religions. They are also developing very good attitudes towards each other and adults around them and enhancing their spiritual and moral development.

96. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is well above national expectations. Although the examination group is small, performance is better than the national average. The department gained its first candidate at A* in 1998. By the end of Key Stage 4, secondary-aged pupils have made very good progress. They have deepened their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Islam. The scrutiny or work indicates that pupils have effectively covered moral and ethical issues, different places of worship, rites of passage and the early history of the Christian church. In lessons, pupils have confidently discussed festivals and debated peace and conflict as part of their examination coursework. Examination results in 1998 show a marked improvement on pupils' results in 1996.
97. Secondary-aged pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4, make very good progress and this is a direct result of the high standard of teaching and pupils' positive attitude to learning. At Key Stage 3, pupils are acquiring very good factual knowledge of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, with some aspects of Judaism. For example, pupils in Key Stage 3 study Islam and are able to confidently recall and describe in both Arabic and English the "five pillars" or actions which a Muslim must dutifully perform. At Key Stage 4, secondary-aged pupils apply religious teachings to current issues. For example, pupils compare views on marriage, divorce and family life in Christian and Islamic cultures.
98. Sixth form students do not take any external examinations in the subject. Students make sound progress through their personal, social educational module, competently study the practices and beliefs of other people and reflect on their own personal philosophy. They clearly focus on analysing a variety of views on religious and moral issues. Post-16 students make satisfactory progress in their study and understanding of the beliefs of other people looking closely at their own multi-faith school.
99. Junior-aged pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They show interest and enthusiasm, cooperate well with each other and are willing to answer questions thoughtfully. They work well, are attentive and remain focused on the task. Relationships between the teacher and the pupils are very good. Behaviour in lessons is very good and written work is well presented.
100. Secondary-aged pupils are very interested in religious education. They work with sustained concentration and they are very well behaved. Pupils are attentive and are keen to contribute to the lessons especially when they have many opportunities to debate and develop their oral skills. Pupils show respect for their teacher and for each other. All pupils show respect towards other cultures and beliefs and this makes a positive contribution to their own personal development. Pupils' work is very neat and tidy and they feel proud of their achievement in the presentation of their work. Post-16 students are keen to learn and show positive attitudes to all aspects of their work. Overall, secondary-aged pupils' attitude to learning is very good.
101. The quality of teaching in the junior division is satisfactory. Teachers have a sound subject knowledge, good story-telling technique and use questioning effectively to extend pupils' understanding. Curriculum planning shows learning outcomes related to the school scheme of work. Teachers make good use of audio-visual resources which positively contributes towards pupils' progress. Lessons are well paced and pupils have the opportunity to discuss the Bible stories with the teacher.
102. The teaching of religious education in the secondary school is very good. All lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. The specialist teacher approaches the subject with great enthusiasm which highly motivates the pupils and has a major impact on standards and progress in Key Stage 3 and 4. Lessons proceed at a good pace and the pupils are well focused as the teacher stands directly at the front of the pupils and they can all see both the teacher and each other. In all lessons, pupils are given opportunities to read aloud, discuss with the teacher and each other, use the audio-visual aids effectively, respond to questions and complete a variety of written tasks. Very good use is made of all the resources available for pupils with severe and profound hearing loss. Oral skills are expertly taught to enhance pupils' understanding and to support their progress. The teacher makes good use of the overhead projector in all lessons, which helps to reinforce pupils' learning outcomes. Pupils are expected to cover a very good range and quantity of work during all lessons. Tasks and activities during the lessons are appropriate to the ability level of all the pupils. Homework is regularly set and it challenges and meets the needs of all

the pupils. Pupils' progress in lessons particularly at Key Stage 4 is well supported by the introduction of relevant study skills and examination techniques for public examinations.

103. The teaching of post-16 students is very good and is based on a personal, social and educational programme which includes elements of religious education.
104. The curriculum for religious education is very good and offers good breadth, balance and relevance both in the junior and secondary schools. However, there is limited religious education time for those pupils who are not taking the examination course. Religious education for Post-16 students covers selected elements of the agreed syllabus. Assessment in religious education better developed in the secondary school. Teachers' marking helps pupils to improve their work. The reporting of religious education is included in pupils' annual reports but not for those pupils in Key Stage 4 who are not taking an examination course. Management of the subject in the secondary school is very good. The co-ordinator in the junior division is newly appointed, but has a clear understanding of her role.
105. Since the last inspection, progress has improved from good to very good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and pupils exceed the expectations in relation to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The subject is still very popular and examination results are now better than national averages in the number of pupils gaining high grades. Planning and time allocation for Key Stage 4 pupils who are not taking an examination course still require further development.

130. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

130. **Art**

106. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress. The majority of pupils understand how styles of decoration in objects reflects the time in which they were made such as the motifs and images on Greek pottery. They are beginning to recognise that there are different kinds of art and are recording from direct observation using a widening range of media. They also use colour expressively in paintings.
107. By the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of pupils is above average in relation to national standards. Pupils successfully integrate knowledge of artists' work with their own work and have strong observational skills. Pupils make very good progress from a below average level of attainment on entry in Year 7. All pupils are developing good skills of research and investigation and are increasingly using the Internet, Encarta and word processing to widen their information base and methods of presentation. They select and prioritise from a range of first hand information to support and develop their ideas for making clay models influenced by the work of Henry Moore.
108. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is well above the national average. In lessons, pupils critically evaluate their work and refine their ideas to produce individual and highly imaginative work. They acquire a very good grounding in a range of skills. The results in public examinations over the last three years reflect the high standards throughout both Key Stages. In 1998 girls achieved a higher proportion of a grades than boys. Pupils document their ideas well. They discuss and present their ideas to other pupils with increasing confidence and competence. Pupils develop a good understanding how scale changes the way an image is perceived such as in the large scale charcoal drawings of seed pods and the large paintings after Georgia O'Keefe.
109. By the end of the sixth form, A level attainment is above the national average. Work demonstrates high quality personal development, character and depth of research. Students in the sixth form make exceptionally good progress. They analyse, manipulate and document ideas clearly and explicitly, such as the research into the international power and influence of a recruitment poster for world war one by a British artist. They explore a wide range of political and social issues through their personal studies.

110. All pupils in the secondary school produce good quality work that effectively combines a wide range of materials and media in two and three dimensions.
111. Junior-aged pupils listen attentively to teaching instructions. They are keen to work and ask good questions about unfamiliar terms. Pupils respond good humouredly to teachers' suggestions. The majority of pupils concentrate well without receiving individual attention. In the secondary school art contributes significantly to pupils' personal development and self esteem. Pupils' attitudes to art are very good and for some they are excellent. They are well motivated and show increasing commitment, responsibility and maturity towards their work. They give and take support from each other and evaluate suggestions about how to improve their work. Relationships are very good throughout. At Key Stage 4 pupils develop very good skills of independence and enjoy opportunities to explore and experiment with different media and materials to improve and extend their knowledge and skills. Advanced level students are mature and responsive to high levels of challenge.
112. Teaching is good. In approximately 20 percent of lessons in the secondary school, it is excellent. There are many strengths and very few weaknesses. Secondary teachers have extensive subject knowledge particularly of historical and contemporary influences in art. Their expectations of pupils are exceptionally high. Planning is clear, explicit and builds systematically on pupils' previous achievements. The good use of time, links between theory and practice and the very good range of individual teaching strategies promote high standards of motivation and behaviour. Homework is well integrated into all courses. The management of pupils is very good and pupils' concentration is very well maintained. A significant feature of the excellent teaching is the highly skilful questioning coupled with their help for pupils to understand how artists work. This allows pupils to present their ideas very successfully, as when a Year 12 student presented his research on Calder to the rest of the group. The teachers' management of resources and the environment promote pupils' learning, for example, when investigating seed pods as containers with Year 7. Marking and assessment helps pupils to improve on their work. Primary teachers' lack of subject knowledge results in a lack of clarity in planning and this restricts the pupils' progress to some extent.
113. In the junior division, the curriculum is broad and balanced. The scheme of work is appropriately planned but not always delivered as intended. Pupils' observational and drawing skills and experience of a range of media are not developed progressively and, therefore, pupils do not build on knowledge and skills systematically. Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment in art is in the very early stages. Pupils make appropriate visits such as to the local reconstructed rain forest as stimulation for their own work. In the secondary school the curriculum is broad and balanced and more than fully meets statutory requirements. Art makes a significant contribution to pupils' social, spiritual and cultural development by providing many opportunities to visit local, national and international galleries and museums. In recent years there have been effective trips to Florence, Barcelona and Madrid.
114. The management of art for junior-aged pupils is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides support for teachers and gives guidance on teaching materials and resources. The management of art in the secondary school is very good. The department is very effectively led. There are regular, planned opportunities to review and revise the curriculum, but the development planning requires more clarity and detail. The quality of display inside and outside of classrooms is excellent.. The excellent new accommodation which houses a range of specialist teaching rooms and the sixth form study base significantly contributes to the overall high standards.
139. **Design and technology**
115. Junior-aged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 make good progress. Their skills in making enable them to use simple hand tools and equipment effectively to produce objects such as joined, moveable figures. Similarly, skills of shaping and cutting show good progress in the making of model shelters and houses. The pupils are capable of designing and making simple objects such as paper aeroplanes. Effective links

with the teaching of science have been established which enable pupils to test a range of materials for waterproofing, flexibility and rigidity. This work enables pupils to make good progress in the development of recording data and in the use of descriptive language. By the end of Key Stage 2, junior aged pupils have made good progress in food technology where they have developed an awareness of healthy foods, the preparation of sandwiches and the baking of bread.

116. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 achieve a level of attainment which is above average in relation to the national standards. This level of attainment is achieved through the good progress that all pupils make. Working with resistant materials, pupils develop their making skills through effective use of hand tools to make, for instance, a cross section of a cantilever bridge and a wooden stool. Effective use of equipment, combined with the ability to mark out and cut materials accurately, enables pupils to use metal to produce a coat hook. The links with graphic design are well established and provide pupils with the ability to follow a design specification and to evaluate the results. The pupils apply these skills in the design and production of fire exit signs and the designing of logos for a target audience. Their awareness of the importance of colour, graphics and shape, combined with the ability to incorporate them in their projects, is a noteworthy feature of their design work. In food technology, Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress and display this in their ability to use the equipment effectively to produce pizzas, a variety of breads and cakes. The pupils' written and oral skills are further developed through the detailed evaluations that pupils make of their practical work. The pupils work well in textiles and make good progress. Their theoretical knowledge of areas such as the structure of cloth is supported by a range of practical activities. The pupils mix dyes and prepare stencils for its application and undertake knotting, taping and tying in weaving which enables them to produce a wide range of sample work.
117. Examination results in Key Stage 4 demonstrate above average attainment and good progress. The pupils' skills in making and design show an increasing maturity and confidence. In work with resistant materials, food and textiles, results significantly exceed national averages. Similarly, attainment in the short electronics course is good with all pupils achieving higher grades in public examinations. In work with resistant materials pupils have the making and design skills to produce large scale projects of a high standard. They are capable of making effective use of a wide range of materials and can work in wood, metal and acrylic. The pupils' ability to produce joints in wood and use a range of fastening devices is well developed and enables them to design their work so that it can be disassembled for easy transportation. The pupils' ability to work independently and use a range of electric cutting and smoothing machines is noteworthy. Similarly in food technology pupils work independently to produce a meal from a given recipe. The pupils' projects illustrate their ability to test and evaluate recipes effectively and use statistics to analyse the results in graphical and diagrammatic form. In work with textiles, pupils produce projects on a range of topics and their practical work is of a high standard. In graphic design, the pupils combine good quality graphic skills with a good understanding of the marketing skills necessary to follow a design brief and make a range of packaging for a consumer group. The work in the short electronics course is of good quality. The pupils have a theoretical knowledge of electronic calculations and can use relays, capacitors and time constants in circuit construction.
118. The standard of attainment in textiles work is good and overall results in the advanced level examination exceed the national average. The work seen in Craft, Design and Technology is of good quality and contains designing and making skills of a high order.
119. The pupils' response to the subject is good. Their willingness to work hard results in high levels of concentration and a willingness to take increasing responsibility for their work. The mutual respect that exists between staff and pupils makes a strong contribution to the pupils' attainment and progress. Similarly, the friendly relations that exist between the pupils make them supportive of each other's efforts. Pupils use equipment well and with care. Their enthusiasm for the subject is demonstrated by their willingness to continue working in their own time. This positive attitude results in pupils developing high levels of maturity and confidence as they progress through the school.
120. Overall, the teaching is good, and in some lessons it was very good. The teachers' subject knowledge combined with their understanding of the issues of teaching hearing impaired pupils makes a positive

contribution to the pupils' progress. When teaching is most effective, the lessons are well planned with clear aims and objectives. Teachers explain the work carefully and provide effective individual support for pupils and use questioning well to enable pupils to solve problems for themselves. The good relationships between teachers and the pupils, aided by clear expectations of both work and behaviour, creates a positive ethos in lessons. The brisk pace of lessons adds to the purposeful atmosphere. Homework is used well to support the work done in lessons. The practical work areas are used well and resources are carefully maintained. In a few lessons it was noted that on occasions there was a lack of pace. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, planning lacked clarity, which resulted in the focus of the lessons being unclear.

121. Design and technology is well managed. Junior aged pupils have access to a curriculum which covers all aspects of the programmes of study. The setting of pupils in Key Stage 3 has a positive impact upon standards and enables the teaching to be more closely allied to their individual needs. The recent reorganisation of the course for Year 9 pupils, which enables them to have the full range of experiences before selecting their options, is an effective and efficient use of time. Appropriate emphasis is given to the identification and support of pupils with additional special needs. The emphasis upon the provision of short courses in Key Stage 4 is a good use of staff time and has resulted both in high levels of attainment and the ability of pupils to transfer to the full course if necessary. The previous report judged that the split between textiles and food technology hampered pupils' development in these areas and the double time block did not allow sufficient time for the cooking and preparation of food. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of the pupils' work indicates that this judgement is no longer valid. Assessment procedures are good and enable staff to monitor pupils progress and attainment effectively.

122. The department has identified that boys are inclined to choose resistant materials and girls to choose food technology or textiles at Key Stage 4. There is an effective policy in place to address the problem.

123. The subject is very well resourced and the recently opened design block in the secondary school is of very good quality. The provision of well qualified subject specialist who have all received training in the teaching of deaf pupils make a significant contribution to the pupils. The technician makes a valuable contribution to pupils' progress by releasing teachers from routine tasks and by helping pupils in lessons.

124. The range of books and the provision of computer technology is generally very good. Resources are used effectively. However, the previous inspection identified a shortage of reference books in textiles and inadequate use of information technology in food technology. Neither of these issues has yet been addressed by the school.

149. **Geography**

125. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good progress. They can recognise features such as a school and a hospital on a map. Pupils show an increasing spatial awareness and are gaining a wider geographical vocabulary. The highest attaining pupils understand more complex geographical issues such as seasonal changes and the different months of the year when seasons occur in the northern and southern hemispheres. Higher attaining pupils are gaining confidence and developing much wider communication and social skills in the excellent integration opportunities offered at the local primary school. During their visits they undertake some geography and physical education. Pupils' written and pictorial work reflects good knowledge about the distinctiveness of different localities.

126. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is in line with national averages for pupils of this age. Some higher attaining pupils are achieving levels beyond this. Pupils use the computer to name continents and groups of islands in year 7. In year 9 pupils bring a great deal of prior knowledge about coastlines, including places they have visited, to the work on coastal features being studied. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is average in relation to national standards. Examination results at the highest grades (A*-C), were above the national average in 1998 and have improved over the last three years. At Key Stage 4, pupils consolidate their learning, draw on a widening range of knowledge about places and geographical concepts and apply these to new situations. For example, pupils used their

knowledge of fieldwork undertaken to construct hypotheses. Pupils have a good grasp of fieldwork techniques and understand a range of physical processes at work in a river channel. At present there is only one pupil undertaking A level; the standards attained are at expected levels for the work being undertaken.

127. Pupils' progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 good. Pupils gain in confidence and oral participation in question and answer sessions is, in almost all cases, good. Where pupils are given the opportunity to work in small groups or pairs pupils are able to challenge their own and each other's understanding of quite complex geographical processes. There are a few instances where individual progress was hampered where pupils had not completed their work.
128. Junior aged pupils respond well to their topics in geography, showing interest and a willingness to answer questions. Secondary aged pupils' behaviour is good, they are motivated and keen to learn. Relationships in the classroom between pupils and between pupils and their teachers were very good. Pupils particularly responded well when given opportunities to discover things for themselves and where tasks were more open ended.
129. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2 is good. Teachers have good classroom strategies for meeting the needs of all pupils, resources are well prepared and lessons are well planned. The quality of teaching in the secondary school is good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and expect high standards from the pupils. Support teaching was very effective. They plan well and produce a range of resources suitable for the courses. The quality of teacher input to lessons is good and teachers ensure that the subject matter has rigour and that pupils use correct geographical terminology. However, in some lessons there is a limited range of teaching styles and pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to think or discover for themselves or to work in small groups or pairs. In some year groups there is an over reliance on work sheets which, although well produced, limit the extent to which pupils undertake extended writing tasks. Pupils have suitable opportunities to use information technology in geography. The department works very effectively as a team and has a good range of books and other resources, many of which have been devised by the team of teachers working collaboratively. The library has many old geography texts, many of which are for A level work; there is a shortage of books to support particularly Key Stage 3 geography.
130. The curriculum complies with the National Curriculum statutory requirements for geography and the subject contributes well to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural dimension of learning. For example, whilst studying coastlines pupils are also asked to reflect on what feelings are evoked by views of the coastline. Moral dilemmas are explored in work on the environment and population studies. Pupils' work is marked regularly and the recently introduced "pupil passports" help pupils to keep track of their own progress. This, together with the pupil profiles, should enable more effective pupil target setting to take place in future. At present, many of the targets set with pupils are insufficiently focused on the specific aspects of geography which need improving. The department has recognised within its own development plan that greater emphasis need to be placed on constructive comments on pupils' work and a need to create more opportunities for extended writing. However, monitoring is informal and development planning is not well linked to whole school plans.
131. The department has made considerable progress since the last inspection in the development of effective schemes of work; in the provision of information technology opportunities and by increasing the range and number of fieldwork experiences for pupils. However, the marking still needs to include more constructive comments which will guide pupils in understanding what they specifically need to do in order to improve the quality of their work. This links directly to setting more specific geography-related targets in pupils' profiles.
156. **History**
132. History for junior-aged pupils is taught as part of a Humanities curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2,

pupils have made sound progress in their understanding of sequences of events in the past. Although there was insufficient evidence during the inspection to make secure judgements about progress and teaching, pupils are beginning to follow through lines of investigation and are able to seek help appropriately.

133. By the end of Key Stages 3 attainment is average in relation to national expectations. Pupils learn the language and develop the concepts they need to study history. By the end of the Key Stage they can analyse and interpret primary sources of historical information and consider their reliability and value. They are becoming well informed about the periods they study. Oral work is generally better than written work but pupils use information and communications technology to produce interesting displays and word process their writing. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is good. Pupils build on earlier work and, by the end of Year 11, they can discuss historical issues and draw valid conclusions about the actions and political positions of key players in important historical events such as the Treaty of Versailles and the Russian Revolution. Written work shows a range of competence, with some pupils producing assignments of a high quality. Public examination results have improved dramatically since the last inspection. For the last 3 years they have been well above the national average. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. They can recall language, ideas and information from earlier lessons and can consolidate and build on their knowledge. Pupils' written work is more independent, accurate and fluent.
134. At the end of the sixth form, students' attainment is average. Post-16 students have a wide historical knowledge and can organise facts in different ways to address varied tasks. They understand historical issues and can analyse and discuss sources using sophisticated language. Post-16 students' progress is very good. They show greater confidence in their approaches to planning work and are becoming increasingly independent in their thinking.
135. Junior aged pupils are interested in their work and persevere within a limited time span. They are enthusiastic about practical activities. When responding to questions, boys are more assertive than girls, but when the teacher identifies an individual, they all listen well. They listen carefully to the teacher. Secondary aged pupils are responsive to the tasks offered. Boys and girls work together co-operatively. A high percentage of pupils choose to study history at General Certificate in Secondary Education and they enjoy the subject and take an active part in oral work. Post-16 students concentrate for long periods. They use their initiative and work independently. Pupils from all backgrounds respond well to work on bias and stereotyping.
136. Humanities teaching is good at junior level. The teacher has a secure knowledge of her subject. Expectations are high and teaching challenges the most able. Pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and relate it to the previous one. Planning is good and resources are readily available.
137. Teaching of secondary pupils and post 16 students is good. In nearly half the lessons, it was judged to be very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and high expectations of the pupils. Lessons are well planned and the aims are made clear to the pupils. A major strength is the way that language and concepts are developed through history lessons. Pupils are taught to analyse, interpret and evaluate historical sources and to set them in the correct social or political context. Homework is reviewed and work is marked following the school's scheme. Classroom management is good and teachers make sure that all pupils take part in discussions and activities. Pupils' efforts are noticed and praised.
138. The department is well managed, although the systems are often informal. Issues raised in the previous inspection have been addressed. Schemes of work have been written for Key Stages and linked to assessment tasks. Departmental planning and resourcing is linked with the school development plan. There have been considerable advances in the department's use of information technology for investigating and manipulating data, for producing displays and for word processing assignments and this is now an area of strength. The head of department plans to develop this further.

Modern foreign languages

139. French is taught throughout the school. German is also taught as a module of a vocational course in the sixth form.
140. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards of attainment in reading and writing are in line with the national average. Pupils' understanding of spoken French is systematically developed through a combination of the group hearing aids and lip-reading and they are able to respond to questions from the teacher. By the end of Key Stage 3 they can write short letters and accounts, demonstrating a good understanding of verb endings in the present tense and adjectival agreements. The progress of those pupils who have transferred from the junior division is supported by their introduction to French in Year 6. At Key Stage 4 standards are above the national average. Pupils successfully tackle extended writing and display an excellent grasp of pattern and structure. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 3 and exceptionally rapid progress at Key Stage 4. The teaching of much basic grammar, such as the formation and use of verb tenses other than the present, is deliberately delayed until Year 10 due to the linguistic deficiency of most pupils when they arrive in Year 7. As a result, when the tools of language are made available to them, these very able pupils demonstrate an impressive improvement in the quality of their output.
141. External examination results in French have risen substantially in the past five years and are now well above the national average for all maintained schools. Boys consistently out-performed girls until 1998 when performance was equal. Attainment at the end of the sixth form is below average. Their progress in lessons in the advanced level in French and the German module of the vocational course is good. The results of the few candidates who take the advanced level course have been below the national average since the first group was entered in 1997.
142. Pupils are alert and attentive and there is frequently a sense of intellectual excitement in lessons. They watch the teacher intently to extract meaning and their concentration is excellent. Many are confident speakers, eager to respond and they enjoy performing in front of the class. They consult dictionaries intelligently and make productive use of any opportunity they are given to work in pairs. Great care is taken by most in the presentation of their exercise books and work for display is frequently word-processed.
143. Teaching is always good and in one-third of lessons it is very good. All teachers have a good command of French but they do not all encourage pupils to use the language sufficiently in the classroom for routine interaction. Lessons are well planned and delivered briskly. Material is challenging and expectations high. All teaching is patient and thorough with good coverage of the National Curriculum. The best lessons display flair and originality and resources are used imaginatively to stimulate interest. Teaching on the advanced level course is rigorous and the teaching of German in the sixth form is well attuned to the vocational and non-specialist needs of the students, many of whom abandoned the study of a foreign language at the end of Key Stage 3. In all years teachers enjoy an excellent relationship with their pupils.
144. There are no disapplications from French and, at Key Stage 4, all pupils study for a full or short course General Certificate in Secondary Education in mixed-ability classes. Currently, there are equal numbers on each course in both Years 10 and 11. The time allocation for French at Key Stage 3 is insufficient and below recommendations because of the school's decision to increase the amount of English. Marking is thorough but assessment procedures need consolidating at Key Stage 3. The department is well led and efficiently administered with an ingenious system of shared resources, colour-coded according to their National Curriculum level. Documentation is sound, but the department development plan is insufficiently well detailed in terms of costs and success criteria. The specialist rooms are well appointed with good displays of pupils' work on the walls. An extensive programme of residential visits to France provides valuable enhancement of the pupils' foreign language learning.
169. **Music**
145. Junior-aged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 make very good progress. They have the ability to make music on a range of instruments such as keyboards, percussion and recorders to a standard which

demonstrates their knowledge of pitch, volume and tempo. The pupils' knowledge of basic musical notation enables them to devise and experiment with musical compositions which can illustrate narrative as diverse as Macbeth and Jack and the Beanstalk. The opportunity for pupils to receive individual instrumental tuition has a significant effect on their confident use of musical instruments.

146. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3, attain levels of performance which are good and are above the national average for secondary schools. This level of attainment is achieved as a consequence of the very good progress that is made in the subject. Key Stage 3 pupils' knowledge of musical forms is extensive and covers areas such as the six and twelve bar blues, rock and roll and the use of music in silent film. The previous report judged that pupils' knowledge of musical history was limited. This judgement is no longer valid as pupils have undertaken a range of historical studies such as a study of the popular music of the First World War. The pupils' capacity to read music enables them to produce music in lessons, such as themes from Grease, and to work together effectively as a musical group.
147. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is good and exceeds national expectations. The number of Key Stage 4 pupils entered for external examinations in music has risen steadily over the last five years. The number of pupils achieving high grades has remained constant at 100 percent. Key Stage 4 pupils make very good progress and display an increasing sophistication in both their knowledge and performance of music. Pupils' interpretation of music is well developed and they can produce written work of a high standard from listening to music such as *A Night on the Bare Mountain* when they display the ability to empathise with the composer's emotional meaning. The development of pupils' composition skills is also very good. They are aware of the musical conventions of song writing and compose songs on a range of themes and in a variety of styles.
148. Post-16 students attain above average standards. They achieve high levels of technical skill, such as the ability to perform a Saraband, and through lengthy projects, such as one on 20th century music. The ability of students to go on to study music in higher education is a reflection of their very good progress.
149. The attitude of pupils at all Key Stages and of post 16 students to music is very good. Junior aged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have the confidence to offer ideas and suggestions to develop their musical work. Their high level of commitment and the excitement generated by their work in music is reflected in their ability to work together well to produce music. Pupils in Key Stage 3 respond to the challenges of the work with great enthusiasm and work hard. The good humoured atmosphere that prevails in lessons leads pupils to become appreciative of the efforts of others. Pupils display a commendable level of self-discipline which enables them to both perform and appreciate music. This enthusiasm and confidence is also present at Key Stage 4 where pupils concentrate well and share ideas confidently. Post-16 students have a musical maturity which enables them to perform with a high degree of technical and interpretative skill.
150. Teaching is good throughout the school. All teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to provide challenges which the pupils find stimulating and exciting. Opportunities to assist with the development of pupils' language are used effectively and the enthusiasm with which music is taught enables the pupils to make progress not only in music but in overall language development. The teaching of junior aged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is extremely effective in helping pupils to evaluate, develop and improve their performing skills. The very good relationships and organisation of the lessons make a positive contribution to the pupils' knowledge of music. Teaching in Key Stage 4 demands increasingly sophisticated responses from the pupils in their interpretation and use of music. The active encouragement of pupils to consistently evaluate and improve both their practical and theoretical work is a noteworthy feature of the teaching. The teaching of post-16 students focuses upon the development of high standards of performance and provides a good humoured and supportive ethos which enables students to achieve high levels of performance. Whilst it was not possible to observe any of the peripatetic staff teaching, the progress made by the pupils and students indicates that the judgement in the previous inspection concerning their effective contribution to standards and quality is still valid. Good use is made of information technology as a reference source to obtain information on composers.
151. The subject is efficiently managed and all pupils have full access to the National Curriculum. The

involvement of pupils in the assessment of their work is very effective. Pupils' work is closely monitored and this, combined with detailed schemes of work and an effective policy, contributes to the very good progress made by all pupils.

152. The wide range of opportunities that are provided for pupils and students to appreciate and perform music both in school and in other venues is a strength of the provision. Older pupils and students have the opportunity to play together in a string group, a middle band and a senior band as well as the opportunity to perform to a wider audience such as their performances for the primary division, a local primary school.

The pupils' experiences are extended through opportunities to record their music in a professional studio and by attendance at venues such as the Royal Academy and the theatre.

153. Music is very well resourced and there is a wide range of instruments and equipment available. The teaching staff are well qualified and experienced as musicians and are also qualified teachers of the deaf.

The previous report stated that the accommodation is used well but is insufficient to meet the needs of the growing department. Despite the improvements that have been made since then, the accommodation suffers from being distributed around the school and also from problems caused by noise. It reflects well upon teachers, pupils and students alike that they are rarely distracted by these problems.

178. **Physical education**

154. Junior-aged pupils make good progress and, by the end of Key Stage 2, have progressed from initial over-caution to full and active participation in the full range of physical activities. They successfully play minor competitive games using a variety of balls and simple equipment. In games they are aware of space and can move around with appropriate awareness of others. In gymnastics they use apparatus with appropriate confidence and skill, utilising speed, direction and shape. In athletics events they participate successfully in an appropriate range of running, jumping and throwing events and in swimming most are commencing on a range of individual targets to improve their personal performance. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is average in relation to national expectations.

155. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils' attainments are average in relation to the national standards.

Pupils have refined their existing skills and, increasingly, are able to apply them to new situations. They compete successfully in a number of disciplines and, in many instances, their individual performances are greatly improved; for example, the year-on-year breaking of individual school athletics records. Pupils make good progress. They have a good understanding of rules and the importance of coaching team tactics, for example, when moving from an offensive to a defensive stance when possession of the ball is lost. Players understand the importance of shielding the ball when tackled, and know how to sustain their balance when an opponent turns them. Throughout all disciplines and games pupils' knowledge of technical terms is at least sound with many able to sustain detailed conversations on the relative merits of team and individual performances. Representative players are able to analyse their previous performances and suggest ideas for future improvement.

156. By the end of compulsory education many Year 11 pupils are attaining well above the national expectation. Many pupils are able to successfully participate in a wide range of games and events. They have sufficient skill, knowledge and understanding to respond to advanced coaching in order to win competitive games, and many can successfully work as coaches for younger teams. In many instances technical knowledge and understanding is high, such that many are able to respond to professional coaching in order to achieve individual excellence. Pupils make very good progress. The importance of sport in sustaining personal health and well being is widely understood as a result of everyone participating in a health and hygiene course, with many extending these principles and practice into their leisure time at school.

157. By the end of the sixth form, pupils' attainment is average in relation to national standards. Many students take their competence and interest into the wider community and play as full members of local teams and clubs, often making significant contributions to their teams' successes. Occasionally this

success is confined to an individual, but no lesser important, level, for example achieving a personal swimming target of 15 miles. Overall, students make very good progress.

158. Pupils' and students' response to their lessons is never less than good and, in nearly half the lessons observed, it is very good. They are well motivated and, throughout both schools, they are often eager to participate in activities. Sometimes however, the excitement of the very young, at the start of lessons, causes them to lose concentration and purpose. All pupils can accept and work well with the level of competition inherent in many games and events, and even those for whom additional arrangements for non-competitive activities are made, respond with effort, enthusiasm and enjoyment. Concentration is high throughout and the vast majority participate with a high level of energy and effort. Pupils' and students' behaviour is exemplary. They respond to teachers' guidance and direction quickly and accept refereeing decisions instantly. In individual and group coaching sessions they answer questions sensibly and proffer their own valid suggestions. They willingly accept advice and exhortation to try harder, sometimes with pride and enthusiasm. Their acceptance of both praise and criticism is sensible and appropriately mature. Relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils, are excellent, and at the heart of all lessons. Pupils and students constantly and intuitively help each other to communicate and understand and, as a consequence, everyone's full participation is sustained. Pupils' personal development is good, as exemplified by the high numbers participating in the wide range of competitive sports available in their leisure time. A few others participate in a wide range of sports and clubs outside the school.

159. The quality of teaching is consistently good. In lessons for post-16 students the teaching is very good. Throughout the school this successful teaching is characterised by the effective communications between pupils and teachers. This ensures that pupils' and students' attention is sustained and teachers' very good knowledge, understanding and personal skill can be effectively presented. The organisation of lessons is such that sufficient and appropriate time is provided for a realistic balance between instruction and practice, the latter being usefully extended in individual, small games and full team situations for maximum impact and effect. All teachers use questions well to probe pupils' and students' understanding of what to do, and, with older groups, their understanding of the impact and effect of strategy and team tactics. Through the high quality of relationships evident in all lessons, staff are able to successfully sustain high standards of discipline for most of the time. Teachers use their good professional judgement and skill to provide successful strategies to prevent unsatisfactory behaviour from occurring; for example, the provision of appropriate courses for students who prefer non-competitive activities. Assessment is continuous and thorough, from lesson-by-lesson analysis of individual performance, to group discussion of team performance, through to individual coaching sessions. Subsequent lessons focus on identified priorities drawn from such analyses, and pupil and student motivation is sustained as a direct consequence. Records are comprehensive and detailed and provide the essential information for subsequent good lesson planning. Effective and appropriate homework expectation is provided in many forms, from participation in teams playing after school and at weekends, to maintaining computerised records and analyses of personal fitness programmes during homework time, to following personal training programmes.

160. Although physical education lessons are taught by teachers who work across the school in other subject disciplines, staff teamwork is good, and this contributes effectively to a well run, confident and successful department. All staff are committed to the same whole-school values which are evident in the manner and methods employed by the team. The quality and quantity of resources are high and contribute well to the success of many lessons. For example, there are sufficient bibs for all players to participate in teams, and bats, balls and sticks abound to prevent them having to waste time waiting their turn. However the gymnasium is too small for the full range of gymnastics activities for class groups and the swimming pool prevents the full implementation of current health and hygiene standards. Similarly, the gymnasium for the primary aged pupils is also unsuitable in both design and layout.

161. The school has a rich and extensive tradition of success in many areas and levels of competition with a significant number successfully participating in representational swimming, games and athletics events, at county, regional and national level. Many others successfully represent their school in local pennant sports and all participate in inter-house games, swimming galas and athletics meets. The school has an ethos and culture of participation that is rewarded by both individual and corporate success at many levels.

162. Following the previous good report, the department has made significant progress. Individual standards have continued to improve and school records have continued to be broken. The number of pupils and students participating in competitive sports, both personally and on behalf of the school, continues to be significant. The number of pupils and post-16 students who now participate in some form of physical activity is increasing. The quality of teaching has improved. Pupils and post-16 students continue to perform successfully in competitions against those from much larger institutions whose members have no disability.

187. **Media studies**

163. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is well above the national average. Examination results were very good in 1998 with all three pupils gaining the highest grades possible. The attainment of post 16 students is average. At advanced level, all students gained a pass grade. These results are similar to previous years.

164. In Key Stage 4 pupils use a range of technical equipment effectively to produce good media products. By the end of the Key Stage they can recognise media techniques in film and television. Progress is good as they can relate new knowledge to previously learned facts. For example, they used ideas gained in earlier projects to extend discussions on science fiction and other kinds of writing.

165. In the Sixth Form many make use of cross reference to their own personal project work, so helping to develop their understanding of technical aspects of the subject such as the relationship between media and audience. Some of the poster work and video productions by Year 13 students are of a very high quality and show the very good progress that has been made in the use of technology. They can script, direct and edit short films and use music and setting to excellent effect. Knowledge of technical terms is still a little insecure but it does not detract from the quality of their work. Progress is very good.

166. Students' response to media studies is very good indeed. They give up much of their own time to perfect their production work and they talk about it with evident pride and enthusiasm. They show initiative and involve many of their friends and even outside agencies, such as the police, in their productions.

167. The teaching is always at least good and is often very good. The course has been well organised with effective use of the very good equipment to enable students to complete high quality work. The direction of all lessons is firm and controlled but students are given a lot of opportunities to think for themselves. They are frequently put in charge of their own learning and they are regularly tested to ensure that knowledge is secure. The needs of hearing impaired students are well understood and students are all involved in lessons and are helped to follow clearly what the tasks and intentions are. Media studies are well managed and the course makes a valuable contribution particularly to students' personal development and gives them increased powers of communication.

192. **Performing arts**

168. Performing arts is part of the music faculty and is only studied at A-level.

169. Attainment is average when compared with the national picture. Results in 1998 were good, with all four students attaining pass grades in the range C to E. Similar results were achieved in 1997. Of the current students, all are at least in line with course requirements. Most can evaluate their own performance with clarity and are beginning to use relevant technical terms in their essay writing. By Year 13 their essays are well structured and provide clear and well argued answers based on a study of texts and dramatic productions. Their own performances are polished and closely analysed both orally and in writing.

170. Progress is good as students sharpen their analytical skills and they gain a growing awareness of a range of dramatic conventions and performance techniques. Older students are particularly adept at critical thinking; not content with superficial questions, they probe their audience's reactions quite deeply in order to improve their performance. Considering their difficulties with hearing, their powers of communication improve remarkably over time.
171. The students' response is good. Students are well motivated if a little uncoordinated and inhibited in Year 12. They develop confidence and poise by the time they reach Year 13 and attempt quite ambitious projects. Teaching is always good. The rapport between teacher and students inspires confidence and this is important because it enables students to have the self-belief to go on to more complex tasks. Marking challenges students to think for themselves and to use critical texts carefully. Lessons have pace and energy and are characterised by a high level of debate especially with older students.
172. The course is well managed and links well with drama, music and art. Resources and accommodation are well used and performing arts makes a major contribution to the life of the school. It has a major impact on the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
197. **Business studies**
173. The school offers students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form a wide range of academic and vocational courses in business studies. The courses are well subscribed and the attainment of the students last year was excellent. The school achieved 100% pass rate in the vocational course at both advanced and intermediate levels. Every student who achieved a merit or distinction has gone on to higher education. Students' attainment in all courses is consistently good. Students' progress in all courses followed is very good. Students taking the General Certificate in Secondary Education course and the vocational intermediate course have a secure knowledge of the purpose and organisation of business, marketing, financial transactions, the strengths and weaknesses of various forms of advertising and the promotion of products.
174. Students taking the advanced level courses have very good grasp of business systems, business planning, marketing, human resources and can discuss factors influencing supply and demand with knowledge and understanding. They improve their communication abilities and research, collate and present information on a product using a variety of information technology processes. They take part in discussions with confidence and evaluate and present data. Their written reports are comprehensive and effectively presented.
175. Students in all courses are interested in their subject and show pleasure and commitment in their studies. They co-operate well with one another and are able to extract information from a variety of sources. They are proud of their work and they are very willing to learn.
176. Teaching in all courses is consistently very good and often excellent. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, they encourage the students to take control of their learning, they are innovating and have high expectations.
177. There is a very good policy document and both long term and short term planning is detailed and provides clear guidance for progression and continuity. Students are regularly assessed and the results obtained are extensively used to inform teaching and learning. The subject co-ordinator is well organised and provides very good leadership and support to both students and staff. Resources are very good, well organised and accessible to students and staff. Links with local industry are very good. The subject has significant impact on the students' development of oral communication abilities, on their skills and use of information technology and on their preparation for work and further education.

202. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

202. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

178. The team consisted of thirteen inspectors, including a lay inspector, who spent a total of 39 days in the school. The inspection team:

- observed 181 lessons over a period of 118 hours:
 - 33 lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2,
 - 59 in Key Stage 3,
 - 50 in Key Stage 4 and
 - 39 in the sixth form;
- observed before and after school activities, break and lunchtimes;
- observed life in the residential houses in the evenings and mornings;
- attended assemblies;
- had meals with the pupils;
- had discussions with the Principal and Vice-Principal and the senior management team, the chairman of governors and other governors, middle managers, care staff, support staff, site staff and administrative staff;
- reviewed all the available work, including videos of junior-aged pupils, of a representative sample of pupils from each class;
- analysed a large quantity of documentation provided by the school both before and during the inspection including school prospectus, school policies, Governors' Annual Report to Parents, minutes of governors' meetings, financial statements, school development plans, subject policies and planning, pupils' records and reports;
- held a meeting attended by 31 parents and considered 135 responses from parents to a questionnaire asking about their views of the school. 21 written responses were also reviewed.

204. DATA AND INDICATORS

204. 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
YR-Y13	230	225	230	N/A

204. Teachers and classes

204. Qualified teachers (YR-Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	43
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	4.41

204. Education support staff (YR-Y13)

Total number of education support staff:	12
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	427

Average class size: 7.7

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes: 76.3

Average teaching group size:	KS2	8.5
	KS3	8.56
	KS4	8.6

204. Financial data

Financial year:	1997/1998
	£
Total income	4,221,000
Total expenditure	4,187,000
Expenditure per pupil	17,893.16
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,000
Balance carried forward to next year	34,000

204. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	230
Number of questionnaires returned:	135

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	41	50	4	2	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	56	34	7	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	27	42	19	3	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	32	57	5	5	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	51	44	2	1	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	59	37	1	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	56	34	7	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	41	52	4	0	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	44	44	9	1	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	45	47	5	1	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	50	44	2	2	1

204. Other issues raised by parents

Parents were mainly very positive about the school. About 20 also wrote comments which were mainly positive. There were some minor concerns about the lack of signing and the lack of response over queries, but these may be inevitable since some pupils come from families which sign as their normal means of communication and pupils come to the school from all over the country.