

INSPECTION REPORT

The Coleshill School
Birmingham

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique Reference Number: 125746

Inspection Number: 185531

Headteacher: Mrs. C. M. Kearney

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. Palmer
31198

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708491

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. Colin Hayfield
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

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		Leadership and management
Mr. N. Shelley, Lay Inspector	Equality of opportunity	Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Mr. G. Allison	Information technology	
Mr. E. Bowyer	Geography	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Assessment
Mr. M. Butterworth	Physical education	
Mr. T. Dodd	Design and technology	
Mrs. C. Jackson	Special educational needs	
	Key Stage 4	
	6 th Form provision	
Mr. K. Jeavons	Art	
Mrs. J. Johnson	Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr. B. Medhurst	Mathematics	The efficiency of the school
		Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr. P. Murray	Science	
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Standards achieved in A level are above the national average. Results in vocational courses are good. The staying on rate into the sixth form has increased. Good mentoring helps improve standards of attainment.
- Overall, results at GCSE are close to national averages, those of boys are slightly above average.
- Teaching is good in most lessons. Relationships between pupils and staff are mostly good.
- Planning is good and leadership is good. By setting challenging and realistic targets, the school shows its commitment and capacity to continue improvement.
- The large majority of pupils behaves well and has good attitudes to learning.
- Resources for information technology have improved considerably.
- The programme of extra curricular activities is good.
- Financial planning and control are very good
- The school is an orderly and supportive place where pupils are happy.
- School reports provide comprehensive information about pupils' attainment and progress.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Proportion of pupils with A*-C grades in GCSE is below average and indicates unsatisfactory progress in recent years. Results at both key stages are well below average for similar schools.
- II. Pupils of high attainment sometimes receive insufficiently challenging work in a few subjects.
- III. Quality and quantity of homework are inconsistent within and across subjects.
- IV. Co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is inadequate.
- V. A small amount of teaching is unsatisfactory.
- VI. The school does not meet statutory requirements for the provision of daily collective worship.

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

How the school has improved since the last inspection

- VII. The school has made mainly good progress in tackling five of the seven key issues identified in the previous inspection report of 1995. Much of this improvement has occurred in the last two years or so. In the other two key issues little progress is evident. Firstly, the whole-school approach to the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is poorly managed and lacks consistency and coherence. Secondly, the school has increased the number of assemblies per week since the last inspection, but still does not comply fully with statutory requirements for collective worship on days when pupils do not attend assembly.
- VIII. The overall performance at GCSE for the period 1996 to 1998 is similar to that in the last report, but with boys showing a slight improvement and girls a slight decline. Performances at A level since 1995 remain above average and sometimes well above.

Standards in subjects

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

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

Results in the Key Stage 3 tests were close to the national average in mathematics and science and below in English. In comparison with similar schools, the standards achieved in mathematics and science were well below the average and those for English were very low. In 1999 the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above in the Key Stage 3 tests rose significantly in English, remained the same in mathematics and dropped slightly in science. At GCSE in 1998 boys' results were close to the national average, those of girls were below. The proportion gaining five or more passes at grades A*-C was below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. Provisional results for 1999 indicate a similar picture. Long-term absences of a few teachers and a recent larger than usual turnover of teaching staff, have contributed to this underachievement. In A level examinations, standards were close to the national average overall. Provisional results for 1999 indicate a further and considerable overall improvement in the average points score per candidate at A level. Students make good progress in the sixth form and many results at A level are higher than earlier performances at GCSE predicted.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	Art, drama, music, science, geography information technology	History
Years 10-11	Good	English, art, drama, music, geography, information technology, German, Spanish	French
Sixth form	Good	English, science, art, geography	
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		

The overall quality of teaching is good. It was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons observed and good or very good in two out of every three lessons. In the sixth form four out of every five lessons were judged good and none was unsatisfactory. Teachers generally set challenging work, have high expectations, use assessment procedures to good effect, manage their classes well and create a positive environment for learning. The unsatisfactory teaching is confined to a small number of teachers spread across six subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4. In these lessons expectations were low, the pace of the lesson was slow, methods used were inappropriate and sometimes class control was weak.

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	Behaviour is good overall.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are at least satisfactory, but a significant minority of parents takes pupils on holiday during term time, which has an adverse impact on pupils' progress.
Ethos*	There is a good environment for purposeful work. Daily life of the school reflects its clear aims and values, which seek to develop respect, tolerance, and good standards of behaviour and attainment.
Leadership and management	Governors, headteacher and senior managers provide good leadership, and have introduced appropriate programmes for improving standards.
Curriculum	Curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but individual education plans often lack subject specific targets.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for moral and social development is good; that for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Generally, teachers are suitably qualified to teach their classes. The accommodation is satisfactory but a few large classes occur in crowded conditions. The range, quality and amount of resources for learning are satisfactory.
Value for money	The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
IX. Pupils are happy at school.	XVI. Inconsistent quality of homework.
X. Most teachers are good and caring.	XVII. Disruptive behaviour of a small
XI. Bright pupils are well catered for.	XVIII. Poor standards of a few teachers.
XII. Good relationships between teachers and pupils.	XIX. A few pupils are insufficiently
XIII. The school is welcoming and approachable.	XX. Recent results at A*-C grades in
XIV. Well informed about their children's progress.	XXI. Lack of lockers.
XV. They feel that educational standards are good.	

Inspection evidence supports most of parents' positive views of the school. In respect of the matters about which some parents are unhappy, there is some justification for parents' views. There is insufficient monitoring of the quality, consistency and amount of homeworks. There is a small amount of poor behaviour in class but the large majority of teachers manages these pupils well. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. In a few subjects, pupils of higher attainment receive insufficiently challenging work. The school shares parents' concerns that the proportion of grades A*-C is not high enough. It has introduced measures such as mentoring and improved systems of assessment, which are raising the expectations of both teachers and pupils. Pupils often have several, bulky items to carry around with them, because they do not have access to lockers.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve further the standards achieved and the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆. take further action to raise standards of attainment at Key Stage 4 and, in particular, increase the proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A*-C in GCSE examinations, by:
 - (Paragraphs: 9, 11, 12, 15, 40, 41, 134, 147, 169, 171, 186, 195, 203, 209, 217)
 - . extending the use of individual targets and mentoring for all pupils; (Paragraphs: 13, 39, 64, 75, 208)
 - . providing work of a suitably challenging nature for all pupils; (Paragraphs: 17, 136, 143, 153, 184, 199, 207, 222, 223)
 - . providing a consistent and suitable quality of homework for all pupils; (Paragraphs: 45, 83, 100, 192, 227)
 - . improving pupils' key skills in literacy and numeracy and their use in all subjects; (Paragraphs: 13, 19, 20, 44, 138, 150, 181, 188, 191, 203, 203, 205, 207, 224)
 - . increasing the amount of time allocated to the teaching of science at Key Stage 4. (Paragraphs: 54, 56, 151)
- ◆. improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs, by:
 - (Paragraphs: 48, 58, 105, 106, 112, 115, 128, 190)
 - . making better progress towards establishing a more consistent and coherent whole-school approach as indicated in the previous inspection report; (Paragraph: 29)
 - . reviewing the allocation of managerial responsibilities within the special needs department; (Paragraph: 81)
 - . ensuring that individual education plans contain subject specific targets and are suitably implemented and monitored in all subjects. (Paragraphs: 18, 49, 65)

- ◆ . meet the statutory requirements for collective worship. (Paragraphs: 69, 70, 97)

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

- continue efforts to improve the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching; (Paragraphs: 34, 35, 41, 50, 144)
- plan spiritual elements in the teaching of subjects of the curriculum; (Paragraph: 67)
- persevere with behaviour management strategies to ensure that the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils does not disrupt learning. (Paragraphs: 26, 27, 78, 142, 171, 221)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1.The Coleshill School is a long established school. It now operates as an average sized comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18 years. There were 995 pupils on roll in September 1999 compared to 886 at the time of the previous inspection in 1995. The proportion of pupils choosing to stay on in the sixth form has risen recently to over 40 per cent.

2.The school is based on a single site at the western boundary of Warwickshire and draws upon a large area for its pupils. The intake reflects the diverse nature of the localities of rural North Warwickshire, the town of Coleshill, urban North Solihull and the fringes of the city of Birmingham.

3.The pupils of compulsory school age cover the full ability range and their overall levels of attainment on entry to the school are in line with the national average. They have a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. About half of all pupils and students travel by bus to school from within and without Warwickshire.

4.A significant minority of pupils and students comes from neighbouring education authorities. This causes the school some difficulties both in managing the continuity of pupils' educational experiences and in accessing support systems. These difficulties occur not only at the point of transfer but subsequently during the pupil's school life.

5.The pupil population comes from varied socio-economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average at 8 per cent. There are 175 pupils on the register of special educational needs and the proportion of these pupils is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion with statements of educational needs is below average. There are few pupils from ethnic minority families.

6.The clearly stated aims of the school are to enable all pupils to achieve personal excellence and to support individuals to achieve their potential. The school seeks to develop respect and tolerance whilst instilling personal pride and self-esteem. The school has set a challenging target of raising the proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades at A*-C in GCSE to over 50 per cent in 2000. It has made good progress in working towards its targets of improved liaison with local junior schools and an increase in extra-curricular provision.

7.Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	92	80	172

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	34	57	52
	Girls	57	55	50
	Total	91	112	102
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	55 (70)	67 (66)	61 (66)
	National	65 (57)	60 (56)	56 (60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	20 (41)	34 (38)	32 (30)
	National	35 (23)	36 (33)	27 (29)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	45	54	54
	Girls	50	59	60
	Total	95	113	114
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	55 (50)	68 (65)	68 (51)
	National	62 (60)	64 (64)	62 (61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	23 (24)	37 (37)	39 (21)
	National	31 (28)	37 (37)	31 (29)

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	67	80	147

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	25	66	66
	Girls	31	72	75
	Total	56	138	141
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	38 (38)	94 (97)	96
	National	44.6 (43.3)	89.8 (88.5)	95.2

Attainment in the Sixth Form³

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

Year	Male	Female	Total
1998	20	16	36

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	18.2	16.2	17.3	N/A	N/A	N/A
National	N/A	N/A	17.6	N/A	N/A	2.8

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

	Number	% Success Rate
School	12	100
National		N/A

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

³ Figures in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	8.2
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.4
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	21
Permanent	2

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	19
Satisfactory or better	94
Less than satisfactory	6

7. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

7. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

7. Attainment and progress

8.The overall profile of pupils' levels of attainment on entry to the school, as indicated by prior performance in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, is average. Standards of attainment throughout the school are broadly in line with the national averages.

9.Pupils, of all levels of attainment, make satisfactory progress overall, in all subjects, so that by the end of Key Stage 3, standards of attainment remain broadly in line with national expectations. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are just below average overall, and reflect the inconsistent progress made in different subjects, which ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 13 are at least in line with national averages and indicate good progress for students of all attainment levels. The overall performance at GCSE for the period 1996 to 1998 is similar to that in the last report, but with boys showing a slight improvement and girls a slight decline. Performances at A level since 1995 remain above average and occasionally well above.

10.In 1998, the school's results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 were broadly in line with the national average for all schools in mathematics and science, and below average in English. In comparison to schools with similar intakes, the school's results are well below average. In recent years the proportion of pupils achieving National Curriculum Level 5 is above the national average in mathematics and science, but fluctuates between above and below average in English. In 1999, results in English rose considerably, results in mathematics remained the same, but in science they fell. Staffing difficulties in the science department during the last year contributed to this decline. Currently, attainment in the key stage is judged to be in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. In the period 1996 to 1998 boys' overall results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are close to their national average, those of girls are slightly below their national average.

11.In 1998, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C was below the national average, but the proportion achieving grades A*-G was above average. Performances at A*-C grade were below national averages in most subjects but there were good results in English Literature, art, business studies and food technology. Over the period 1996 to 1998, boys' results overall at GCSE are above their national average while those of girls are close to their average.

12.Comparing performances at GCSE in 1998 with their attainments in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1996, pupils made at least satisfactory progress overall in English, but unsatisfactory progress in mathematics and science. The main contributory factors for this unsatisfactory progress in the latter two subjects were:- insufficient teaching time for science, previously inadequate use of assessment to help pupils improve, a lack of continuity of teaching resulting from long-term absences and a large turnover of teachers in both departments Recent changes in staffing, time-tabling and organisation have led to some good improvements. Currently the progress of pupils is satisfactory in mathematics. In science progress although improving and satisfactory, is still adversely affected, because pupils receive the equivalent of 16 per cent of curriculum time for double award science instead of the more usual 20 per cent.

13.In 1998, A level results were close to the national average and GNVQ results at Intermediate level were in line with predictions based on students' previous levels of attainment. Results at A level in 1999 show a significant overall improvement. For the

period 1996 to 1998 the average aggregate points score achieved by students at A level was well above the national average. Comparing their individual performances at A level in 1998 and 1999 with their earlier achievements at GCSE in 1996 and 1997 respectively, most students made good and a few, very good progress. Students attain well because they receive good teaching. Under the careful surveillance of the head of sixth form very good mentoring and assessment procedures are followed to ensure students have appropriate targets for improvement. The programme for developing key skills is effective in enhancing students' learning and confidence across all subjects in the sixth form. Pupils' progress and attainment in the rest of the school are hindered because there is insufficient attention given to developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. The system for adding value to students' previous attainments is effective in the sixth form and is now being extended to other year groups.

14. Standards of attainment in class at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average in music; they are broadly average in all other subjects apart from history and information technology, where they are below average.

15. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment levels in class and work samples are well above average in art, above average in music, average in English, science, geography, and religious education, below average in mathematics, history, design technology, information technology, physical education and modern languages.

16. By the end of the A-Level course, standards of attainment are at least average and often above average. Good standards are attained in the subjects that students have began studying for the first time in the sixth form, including law and psychology. Standards in GNVQ are above national standards. There is a significant growth in higher level accreditation in business studies. All systems in place for assessment and internal verification of vocational courses are secure and consistent with the demands of the awarding body. Students in the sixth form benefit from the communication skills' programme which is of a very high quality.

17. The progress of pupils is satisfactory overall as they move through the school. Progress is mainly good in the sixth form. Progress in Key Stage 3 is sometimes good, but in a few subjects some pupils of high attainment are not always given sufficiently challenging work. However, in some mathematics work seen in Year 9 the work set for high attainers was suitably demanding and showed high expectations from the teacher and pupils. Progress in Key Stage 4, has improved and is now satisfactory and occasionally good, although there are a few instances of lack of challenge, for example, in mathematics.

18. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Their progress is unsatisfactory in English in Key Stage 3 and for history in both key stages. The lack of subject specific targets in many of the individual education plans hinders the progress of pupils with special educational needs. In a few classes there is insufficient support for some pupils with learning difficulties and this slows their learning.

19. Pupils' skills in literacy are mainly satisfactory. Pupils read sufficiently well to make progress in all subjects. They usually present their written work neatly and carefully. Their spelling, grammar and punctuation are generally accurate within English lessons. In some subjects, such as history and modern languages, pupils' skills in oral work, use of grammar, spelling and extended writing are weak. In the sixth form, students enhance their skills in speaking, listening reading and writing through a well-structured and very effective programme to develop their key skills.

20. Pupils' skills in numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils do not always use their mathematical skills and knowledge to good effect in other subjects. In science in Key Stages 3 and 4, for example, pupils do not readily use their mathematical skills in practical applications in science.

The lack of a school policy to ensure consistency of approach in teaching and using skills of numeracy across the curriculum, results in occasional confusion and misunderstanding by pupils.

21. Pupils' skills in information technology are improving, as a result of the school's drive to improve the provision of equipment and the teaching. However, these skills are unsatisfactory in most pupils.

22. The school is determined to improve the levels of academic performance in all subjects and at all levels. It has developed suitable value-added systems to analyse performance data and relate these to appropriately challenging targets, for students and departments. These have proved successful in raising further the already good levels of attainment in the sixth form. The school is introducing similar arrangements and mentoring to other year groups, in an attempt to raise standards.

22. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

23. The school is an orderly and friendly community. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils throughout the school are good, as they were at the time of the previous inspection and help create a positive atmosphere for learning.

24. Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils respond positively. They show interest, involvement and on many occasions, enjoyment and excitement. The vast majority of pupils, across the range of attainments, concentrates well and is attentive to instructions and guidance. Where individuals find the work difficult, they usually show the capacity to persevere and to complete the task. Most take a pride in their finished work.

25. A course in study skills, within the personal and social education course, has enabled pupils to work productively as individuals and as pairs or in small groups. Positive relationships, both with the teacher and within the peer group, are a strong feature of the school.

26. In a small number of classes judged to have weaknesses, individual pupils are inattentive or easily distracted. A few chatter and exhibit a rather casual attitude to their work. Parents value the school's expectations regarding behaviour although some expressed concern at the poor behaviour of a few pupils in class. A home/school agreement is distributed providing information about the code of conduct, rewards and sanctions. Pupils are well aware of the code; a copy is displayed in all classrooms and is printed in the individual's personal planner.

27. Pupils socialise well outside the classroom. Movement in and around the buildings is orderly. At change of lessons, they show good self-discipline in the narrow stairwells and corridors. Pupils report there is little bullying but that when it arises, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. The school is committed to a high expectation of behaviour. Exclusions are sanctioned only when the school is satisfied that all other sanctions have been exhausted. In the event, correct procedures are followed and there is careful monitoring on all occasions. During the school year prior to the inspection, there were two permanent exclusions and 21 occasions on which a pupil was excluded for a fixed period of time. These numbers have decreased in the last few years.

28. Systems for pastoral care and pupils' personal development operate effectively. The generally effective programme of personal and social education is given a high profile and is now taught on the same timetabled period to all tutor groups. All senior staff are involved. The syllabus appropriately covers major issues as they occur at critical periods during a pupil's five or seven years at the school; for example, induction in Year 7, options in Year 9 and career choices in Key Stage 4. Central to the policy is the importance of preparing pupils for life after

school by developing their skills and confidence. Pupils are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities promoted through departments and year groups. Ten per cent of the pupil population takes part in musical groups. The Charity Committee actively supports cancer and meningitis research whilst the sixth-form and whole-school committees provide a forum in which significant issues are discussed. Sixth formers volunteer to work directly with younger pupils as mentors. Well-planned work-placements give pupils a realistic insight into different professions and jobs. Fieldtrips, visits and exchanges extend pupils' experiences and, as part of World Challenge, a group of pupils took part in an expedition to Equador. Foreign residential experiences, such as those organised by the history department, broaden pupils' outlooks.

29. Pupils progress well within the school and develop into mature young adults. They readily accept the opportunities to discuss and to reflect on their feelings and experiences. They willingly promote their own points of view but also respect those of other pupils and adults.

29. **Attendance**

30. The standard of pupils' attendance and punctuality is at least satisfactory and this is a similar finding to the previous inspection. Attendance rates are around the average for secondary schools and unauthorised absence is well below the average. Most pupils arrive in time for the start of the school day except when buses arrive late. A small minority of pupils acquires a record of recurring lateness and they miss part or all of morning form time or assembly. Whilst pupils move around the school between lessons without delay some lessons do not start on time because of the distance between classrooms. A significant minority of parents withdraws pupils during term time for the purpose of private holidays. This has an adverse effect on the continuity of learning because teachers have to adjust their programmes to help pupils to cover ground which they have missed.

31. Attendance registers are fully and accurately completed and details are published in pupils' and other school reports.

31. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

31. **Teaching**

32. The overall quality of teaching is currently good throughout the school. This is reflected in the improvement in progress made by pupils in the large majority of classes observed by inspectors.

33. A total of 188 lessons was observed during the inspection. In 94 per cent of these lessons, teaching was at least satisfactory. Teaching was judged to be good or better in 65 per cent of lessons, and in 19 per cent it was very good and occasionally excellent.

34. The proportion of very good teaching seen was approximately 20 per cent in Key Stages 3 and 4 and about 8 per cent in the sixth form. Over 80 per cent of teaching in the sixth form was judged good or better and none was unsatisfactory. In Key Stages 3 and 4, around 60 per cent of teaching was judged good or better, and the unsatisfactory teaching amounted to 7 per cent and 9 per cent respectively.

35. In Key Stage 3, teaching is at least satisfactory overall in all subjects. It is currently good in science, art, geography, design and technology, information technology and physical education. Teaching is very good in music. In mathematics, teaching is satisfactory overall but ranges from very good to unsatisfactory.

36. In Key Stage 4, teaching is at least satisfactory overall in all subjects. It is good in English, science, geography and information technology, and very good in art and music.

37. In the sixth form teaching is good in all subjects apart from modern languages and religious education where it is satisfactory.

38. There is good teaching in all subjects with a significant amount of very good teaching in art, geography, information technology and music.

39. In the many lessons where teaching is good, teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and communicate high expectations; they plan and present their lessons carefully to ensure suitable progression, set appropriately challenging work for all pupils and conduct their lessons at a brisk pace. Skilful and challenging questions, asked of pupils in class and group discussion, consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding. Especially in the sixth form, teachers make effective use of the data obtained from the assessment of students' work both to adjust their teaching to the needs of their classes, and to review individual and departmental targets for improvement. This good practice is slowly spreading to other year groups.

40. The lessons judged satisfactory contain several good features. The shortcomings in these lessons include insufficient challenge for the pupils of above average attainment, an over reliance on work sheets and unimaginative use of resources.

41. The unsatisfactory teaching is confined to a few individual teachers, but is an important feature in slowing progress in several classes in both Key Stages 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics, French and history. This unsatisfactory teaching is due to a variety of reasons such as, poor class control and management, low expectations, the setting of undemanding work, slow pace and use of unsuitable teaching techniques.

42. The good mentoring by teachers of students in the sixth form has recently been used to equally good effect in Key Stage 4 to help raise standards of attainment. Many parents commented favourably about the positive impact of this mentoring on pupils' attitudes to learning.

43. In all subjects, well-planned schemes of work effectively cover the National Curriculum and external examination requirements. However, in science at Key Stage 4 there is insufficient time allocated for fully effective coverage of the schemes of work, with the result that pupils' progress is hindered.

44. There is insufficient teaching of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology across the curriculum. There are currently no whole-school policies to promote the development of these skills. In a few subjects, for example, modern languages and religious education, pupils' skills in writing, spelling and reading are inadequate. In science, pupils do not always apply their skills in numeracy to good effect.

45. Homework is often well used to support pupils' learning, but there are some inconsistencies in both the quality and amount of homework set within and across subjects. Form teachers regularly check the pupils' planners to ensure that homework is recorded, but the school's procedures for monitoring the quality of homework are inadequate.

46. Relationships between teachers and pupils are mainly good and help provide a pleasant working environment in most classes.

47. Teachers generally make effective use of the available time and resources. They assess pupils carefully. For the most part work is marked to help pupils understand how they can

improve.

48. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is just satisfactory overall in Key Stages 3 and 4. In mathematics, science and physical education teachers plan effectively, use suitably differentiated resources and approaches to meet the individual needs of these pupils, who then progress well. In most other subjects, these features are lacking.

49. Individual Education Plans are in place for all pupils at Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 on the register of special educational needs. However, in several subjects including history, religious education, design and technology and modern foreign languages these plans lack subject-specific targets. There is inconsistency in their use by subjects. A few teachers are unsure how to follow the recommendations made on assessment, the monitoring of progress, and the subsequent leading of the pupil towards review at a specified stage. Pupils are insufficiently involved in their own Individual Education Plan and in self-assessment.

50. Some parents expressed concerns about the inconsistent standards of teaching during the last few years but recognised that the large majority of teachers has high standards. Inspectors found that parents' views were justified. The quality of teaching is adversely affected by a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Prolonged absences of a few teachers, a larger than usual turnover of teaching staff and difficulties in recruitment of teachers to replace those who left were major contributory causes of the unsatisfactory levels of pupils' progress in some subjects at Key Stage 4 in the last few years.

51. In the last two years, approximately one third of the teaching staff has left and been replaced. Recent appointments of teachers have had a positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, science and geography.

52. There has been generally good progress in maintaining the good features, and in dealing with the areas for improvements in teaching, which were identified in the previous inspection. Several improvements have occurred during the last two years. The professional development of teachers is more closely linked to school and departmental priorities. The appraisal system for teachers has been reviewed and re-introduced. The use of mentoring is successful in raising the expectations and standards of pupils and teachers. Assessment procedures are very well used in the sixth form and are becoming increasingly effective in other year groups. Realistic targets for improvements in pupils' attainment are produced. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced.

52. The curriculum and assessment

53. The aim of the school is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in which all parts are equally accessible to all pupils and students. For the most part it achieves this aim and the curriculum provided is relevant to the needs of pupils and prepares them for life beyond school, whether they leave at the end of Year 11 or from the sixth form. The governors, through their standing committee, work closely with senior staff and they are kept well informed of curricular developments. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. Schemes of work provide a clear framework for curricular delivery and development. Planning for continuity and progression is good overall although in modern languages this is not sufficiently linked to the attainment targets of the National Curriculum.

54. The school has met the curricular issue related to information technology raised in the last inspection. It has now the staff, equipment and curricular structures in place to provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their capability in this area. However, the time allocated to double science in Key Stage 4 is still below the recommended levels and this continues to have a detrimental impact on the quality of learning and the standards achieved. Work for the full ability range is not always provided in mixed ability groups.

55.The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is broad and balanced and provision is good. Over the key stage, the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught for an appropriate amount of time. Information technology is taught in Year 7 and is integrated across the curriculum thereafter. In Year 9, pupils are enabled to study a second foreign language. Pupils also study social and religious education.

56.The curriculum is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. There is an extensive core curriculum and non-examination courses in personal and social education, social and religious education and physical education. There is a good range of options, which includes art, business studies, music, social science, and examination courses in physical education and religious education. The time allocated for teaching science is low. Most pupils follow examination courses to GCSE.

57.In the sixth form, breadth and balance are provided through a wide range of A Level courses. There are two GNVQ courses at intermediate level and in business at advanced level. Sixth form students also study physical education, social and religious education, key skills and communication technology. All students in the lower sixth have an allocated key skills session with a qualified assessor to enable them to achieve level 3 accreditation in the NCVQ key skills programme. Recreational activities are timetabled weekly. Overall this is good provision for sixth form students.

58.The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs meets the specific needs identified in the learning objectives in their individual education plans and for Stage 5 pupils in their statement of special needs and in their annual reviews. Curricular provision at both key stages is satisfactory overall. However, in most subjects there is insufficient forward planning and use of suitably differentiated resources to meet pupils' special needs.

59.Provision for personal and social education is good. It is taught for one period per week with contributions from form tutors supplemented by specialist input where appropriate. The content is varied and develops individual and social skills as well as understanding of the needs of others. The provision for sex and drug education is good.

60.The quality of careers education and guidance is good. It begins in Year 9 when pupils choose their options for Key Stage 4. Work experience takes place in Year 10 for two weeks in the year. The Careers Service gives very good support to the school. In Key Stage 4, all pupils have personal careers interviews and opportunities to participate in careers conventions. Provision continues to be good in the sixth form and there is good support for students as they prepare applications for colleges and universities.

61.There is a programme of extra-curricular activities with particularly good provision in music, sport, information technology and drama. Some foreign visits are also arranged. Provision for extra-curricular sport is good. The school competes in team games with other schools in a variety of sports including football, basketball, netball, swimming and cross country. Opportunities are more limited in other areas of the curriculum. One of the school's current targets is to increase the level of pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities, including sport.

62.Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good at all key stages. They have improved since the previous inspection. The school now has clear policies and a revised structure, which denotes appropriate responsibilities including those of the senior management team. A close link has been established between the pastoral and academic systems. This has resulted in more consistent monitoring of pupils' progress and enables a more valid evaluation for forward planning.

63. Good use is made of assessment information received from some, but not all, of the contributory primary schools to plan individual pupils' experiences. The school sensitively checks on pupils' potential attainment during the first half-term in Year 7.

64. Assessment arrangements in response to National Curriculum requirements are in place. The majority of departments assess pupils effectively but, on occasions, marking is too widely variable. It is undertaken well both within and across departments but is sometimes not informative enough about outcomes, in identifying strengths and weaknesses and how to improve. Regular testing provides good summary data. A whole-school database containing pupils' results and targets is in place. Records kept by individual teachers and departments are good and comprehensive. The use of this information to inform curriculum planning is good in the sixth form and is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 where there is scope for further development in its application in subjects where teaching is not matched to the learning needs of pupils.

65. The detailed analysis of data is a positive influence in setting suitably challenging targets for pupils. Individual learning programmes for individuals with special needs have not been developed sufficiently. The absence of subject specific targets for these pupils is an unsatisfactory feature of many individual plans and inhibits accurate assessment of their learning and progress.

66. Reports based on a revised format are due to be issued for the first time later this term. They will respond, in part, to the concern expressed by a minority of parents about a lack of information on the curriculum followed by pupils. Subject pages are designed to be more consistent to facilitate understanding and will report pupils' achievements within the National Curriculum. The revised timetable for sending reports home aims to ensure that parents get information about progress and attainment at the right time and that there is a home-school contact at least once a term.

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

67. Overall, the school makes good provision to promote pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. There are a few good examples of strategies to promote cultural development, and spiritual development is promoted in some subjects, but there is no coherent approach for the promotion of these two aspects across the whole school.

68. The policy statement on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which has been developed by the religious education department is an example of good practice which could usefully be extended as a whole school approach, or within individual departments. The personal and social education programme has been developed since the last inspection and extra-curricular opportunities have been widened, especially in drama and music.

69. The school has made only limited progress in celebrating the riches of the diverse cultures within the local area. Although the school does not fulfil the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of worship, it has since the last inspection increased the number of assemblies to three each week. During the week of inspection the assemblies provided few opportunities for worship, such as through use of music or time for reflection. Although the school has a planned set of themes for assemblies, there is insufficient use of these themes to ensure a broadly Christian character within some assemblies.

70. Spiritual development is fostered in some areas of the curriculum. These include English, where topics such as abortion, capital punishment and hunting are discussed in relation to the study of literature. In music pupils are occasionally moved by the musical performance of their peers. Examples in religious education include reflection on the contribution of religious

leaders, and a homework on the work of a vicar; there are good opportunities to consider the scientific view of the origin of the universe and to reflect on the religious understanding of the place of God in creation. Environmental issues are treated well in science and in design technology, whilst the geography curriculum gives openings to consider the wonders of the natural environment exemplified by volcanoes, earthquakes and beautiful scenery. Inspectors did not consider that assemblies enhanced spiritual development. The school motto 'Through God, not chance' has a prominent place in the school prospectus; pupils do not know the translation of the Latin version of it on their blazer badges, and it is not currently explained in a lesson or assembly.

71.Both the school code and the prospectus stress the importance of moral and social issues. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Moral issues are promoted as part of the personal and social education curriculum and across some subjects, for example sport and mathematics. The practice of the music department, in which there are sanctions for poor work, and awards of colours for high achievers is effective. In science and design technology pupils respect the equipment and facilities, and accept the need for codes of conduct and health and safety regulations, to protect themselves and others. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form there are useful debates in religious education which include consideration of issues of life and death, and various theories of ethics including feminist approaches to ethics.

72.Relationships around the school are a particular strength. The prospectus has a clear statement on discipline, and teachers provide good role models. When given the opportunity, pupils collaborate well and demonstrate good levels of self-discipline; examples include PE and science. Within teaching of modern foreign languages there are many references to thought for others and to responsibility as a group. Sixth formers help younger pupils with reading. There is limited emphasis on social responsibility to the local community, but there has been an increase in charitable work since the last inspection, and there is an interesting display of current projects. There has been a significant increase in extracurricular music since the last inspection, and about a tenth of the school is involved in one or more activities. These range from choirs through a wind band to both string and rock groups, the latter organised by pupils.

73.Cultural development is also strongly promoted in music. Concerts include blues, jazz and pop music. The school's musicians perform at various locations locally and at county events. There are regular joint lessons with a local primary school. Visits arranged by the art department to galleries, both locally and in London, enhance pupils' understanding of the subject. Recent cultural projects have included a study of African masks and making and researching icons. Visits to theatres and dramatic performances also enhance cultural development. The study of French and German includes consideration of the countries where the languages are spoken, and some overseas visits, such as that of Year 13 to Paris. The English department has identified the need to broaden the cultural base of the texts studied. Visits to some places of worship demonstrate cultural diversity but pupils' awareness of the riches of their own culture is underdeveloped.

73.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

74.The quality of the support, guidance and welfare provided for pupils is good and effectively contributes to their academic progress and personal development. There are several instances of improvement since the previous inspection. Careers education and guidance is good with effective input from the careers' service. This is confirmed by the views of parents and pupils. There is adequate careers related literature and a good range of videos and software in the improved library but space and opportunity for study is still limited. Health and safety is well managed throughout the school and no significant matters of concern were observed during the inspection. The recommendations included in recent safety audits are predominantly of a lower risk nature and have been attended to.

75.Suitable systems for monitoring the attainment and progress of pupils are in place and their application is developing well. Pupils develop a clear focus of their strengths and weaknesses and targets for improvement. A mentoring system was successfully piloted last year in Year 11 and will be extended through the school.

76.The routine daily guidance given to individual pupils about their work is good. This is supplemented by the tutor group system. However, some registration periods do not always include positive learning experiences for pupils but provide only a social opportunity. The sessions are used to carry out checks of pupils' planners.

77.The personal and social education programme is suitable in content and is mainly taught by form tutors. Pupils and students receive appropriate and helpful information about subject choices and opportunities for further and higher education.

78.The quality of pastoral care is very good and relationships between tutors and pupils are constructive, respectful and trusting. The ethos created is conducive to learning and a sense of security. Behaviour is closely monitored and very effectively managed in almost all instances by a mix of recognition, reporting, the application of sanctions and consultation with parents. A most useful arrangement for peer counselling is also available to pupils for both academic and personal support.

79.Attendance is effectively recorded, well monitored and positively promoted.

80.Child protection procedures are understood and followed. There is appropriate provision for health and medical care and first aid.

81.The co-ordination of support, both in and out of class, for pupils with special educational needs is not efficiently managed. Targets expressed in individual educational plans are insufficiently specific.

82.The school receives generally good support from external agencies. However, the school's catchment area extends beyond the local Authority's boundaries and in some cases this inhibits effective support owing to communication difficulties. This lack of support has an adverse effect on for example, the efficient follow-up of the absence of some pupils.

82. Partnership with parents and the community

83.The school's links with parents and community are good and contribute positively to standards of attainment, the quality of learning and pupils' personal development. Contrary to the previous inspection report, support from the careers' service is very good. This has since been confirmed by both parents and pupils. Involvement in and use of the wider community is extensive. The positive views of parents expressed mainly via the questionnaires and the meeting with the Registered Inspector far outweigh the negative views. The very large majority says their children are happy at school. Parents are mostly satisfied with attainment and progress, the values promoted by the school and the approachability of the school. A minority has concerns about homework and others would like more information about the curriculum. Inspectors agree with most parents' views.

84.Parents are well informed in most respects. They receive a prospectus and governor's annual report both of which comply with the requirements of DfEE circulars.

85.The induction process, home/school agreement, newsletters and very good annual school reports keep parents up to date with main issues, pupils' progress and school activities. Meetings for parents to consult with teachers provide suitable opportunities for parents to

discuss progress, learn about subject options and careers issues. They do not formally receive detailed information about what is taught in school although policies, syllabi and schemes of work are available upon request. The school is considering how it might more closely meet the needs of parents in this respect. Information for parents regarding pupil's progress and personal development is good by way of annual and interim reports and at other times regarding significant over- and under-achievement. Parents are also appropriately advised and consulted about any serious concerns regarding conduct and attendance.

86. Parental support is encouraged through the home/school agreement, with pupils' work at home and the checking of pupils' planners. Parents are encouraged to participate in the parents and friends' association which organises social events and raises substantial funds to help improve the school's resources. Parents are occasionally consulted about key issues, for example, school uniform.

87. The school's involvement with industry and employers is good in terms of providing relevant work experiences for pupils and career preparation for example with mock interviews and industry days. The use of industry and commerce to provide learning experiences in subjects is underdeveloped. There is little professional development of teachers via work placements in industry for the purpose of expertise and curriculum enhancement. The school receives very little by way of sponsorships and donations from employers.

88. The school's involvement in the local and wider community provides good opportunities for learning and personal development. Students represent the school on civic occasions. They are involved in charitable support and voluntary service. A wide range of extra curricular activities mainly in sport and music are supplemented by visits abroad including an exchange with German students and recently an expedition to Ecuador. A former governor, who is also a member of a local church frequently conducts an assembly and contributes to religious education. The school liaises closely with the primary schools within the Warwickshire family of schools and this includes effective transfer arrangements, curricular development and meaningful mutual support.

88. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

88. Leadership and management

89. The governors, headteacher and senior management team, provide good leadership and management overall. They are well aware of the school's strengths and those areas for development that will further enhance pupils' standards of attainment. The process of target-setting is developing well and the school's targets are suitably ambitious.

90. Suitable programmes for school improvement are in place. These include the restructuring of management responsibilities; the further development of systems to improve the assessment of both pupils' and teachers' work, in order to set appropriately challenging targets for pupils, teachers and departments; better resources for information and communications technology; improvements to some of the buildings.

91. The governing body contains a suitably wide range of expertise, is effective in its work and is very positive in its support to the school. Governors show a keen interest in all aspects of school life and take an active part in curricular as well as in budgetary and planning matters. Appropriate sub-committees are well established, meet regularly, keep proper minutes and give good consideration to the reports, reviews and presentations made by the professional staff.

92. The current headteacher has been in post for just over two years and the deputy head for one year. Working closely with the two senior teachers they form an effective senior

management team with a clear vision of the educational direction for the school and suitably high expectations of pupils and staff. They have provided sensitive leadership during a time made difficult by the long-term absences of a few teachers, a larger than usual turnover of teachers recently and some difficulties in recruitment of staff.

93.The school has made satisfactory progress in tackling the seven key issues identified in the previous inspection report of 1995. It is mostly during the last two years that significant and good developments have occurred.

94.There is now a good provision of resources and equipment to provide an appropriate curriculum in information technology. The teaching of this subject is currently effective and pupils' progress and attainment are improving.

95.In September 1998 the system of staff appraisal was improved and more closely linked to professional development in order to have a positive impact on teaching and learning activities. Around the same time, several whole-school working groups were set up in an attempt to involve all staff in monitoring attainment, standards and processes. This initiative has been partially successful and the good practice evident in the sixth form is gradually spreading to other year groups. Some of the recently appointed middle managers are helping to instil a wider understanding and use of value-added information to help both in determining teaching programmes and in target-setting.

96.Last year, a formal review of the school's management structure, involving extensive consultation with staff, resulted in the decision to operate a faculty structure. This plan is gradually being implemented and is a positive response to the previous report's recognition of the need to extend the whole-school responsibilities of middle managers. The roles of middle managers have been strengthened, Most heads of subject departments and heads of year make a valuable contribution to raising standards of attainment and behaviour

97.The school has increased the number of assemblies per week since the last inspection, but still does not comply fully with statutory requirements for collective worship on days when pupils do not attend assembly.

98.The school quickly dealt with the aspects of health and safety mentioned in the last report. Current policies and procedures for health and safety are appropriate and effective.

99.The lack of clear co-ordination and leadership within the special needs department, evident at the time of the last report remains. There is unsatisfactory leadership in this area that does not provide clear educational direction for pupils with special educational needs. The whole-school approach to the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is poorly managed and lacks consistency and coherence.

100.The school's strategic development plan (1999-2002) and its current annual development plan are good instruments for helping the school to make further advances. These plans seek to involve all staff and have a suitable focus on self-evaluation and the further improvement in standards of teaching and learning. They list appropriate priorities, key staff, time-scales, resources and in-service training needs, measurable outcomes and monitoring strategies. They also contain suitable annual reviews and evaluations. However, they lack specific and numeric targets for improvements in all pupils' attainments. Also the monitoring of policies is inconsistently applied, as for example, in assessing the quality of homework. There is a suitable focus on the development of teaching, learning and the process of self-evaluation.

101.The departmental development plans are closely linked to the school's overall plan. In several subjects the processes of self-evaluation and target-setting are well advanced and make an important contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

102.The quality of leadership and management in subject areas is mainly good and the heads of year operate effectively.

103.There is a positive, friendly ethos and a mostly good environment for purposeful work. The school's policies promote equality of opportunity and high standards of attainment for all its pupils. The daily life of the school reflects its clear aims and values. Pupils show respect and tolerance and strive towards good standards of behaviour and attainment.

104.The commitment of senior management, governors and the large majority of teachers puts the school in a good position to achieve further improvements. There is a suitably ambitious whole school, and closely allied departmental, programme for school improvement.

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

105.On the whole, appropriately qualified teachers of varying experience and service satisfactorily staff the school. In modern languages and religious education, however, a significant number of non-specialist teachers is employed to fulfil the curriculum's requirements. Standards of education provided are not, however, adversely affected by such arrangements. Most teachers are committed to working as a team to help pupils realise their potential for success. All members of staff have well written job descriptions that clearly define their roles and responsibilities within the school's structure. There are two full-time teachers for pupils with special educational needs. There is an uneven workload because the co-ordinator does not carry out all the normal duties of the post.

106.Members of the support staff working in lessons to help pupils with special educational needs, generally offer valuable assistance, but they are not always used most effectively, nor are their programmes of work planned in sufficient detail. When teachers provide them with clear instructions, the help provided to individuals does much to aid progress and attainment, but in other cases where help is apportioned without specific reference to the demands of individual subjects, the effect is less significant.

107.Members of the academic and administrative support staff perform essential and valuable work to contribute to the smooth running of the school. The site manager, caretakers and associated personnel perform important roles in maintaining the quality and cleanliness of the environment.

108.The provision for staff development is satisfactory overall. An effective staff appraisal scheme, which involves all staff and satisfies national requirements, is in operation in the school. Appropriate records are maintained and the outcomes accordingly inform the school's professional development programme. It is unfortunate that the provision of funding for such a programme is sufficient only to meet a fraction of the training requirements. The school, however, makes every effort to ameliorate the situation by making effective use of school closure days. Arrangements for induction of new staff are satisfactory

109.The school has good provision of extensive, well-managed grounds and external sports facilities. The buildings are in good repair and well maintained, both internally and externally. Security is good. Graffiti is negligible and any litter is quickly removed. Most departments benefit from having suites of rooms in close proximity to each other, and thence having easy access to resources. Nearly all classrooms provide good stimulating learning environments, suitably enhanced by appropriate displays of pupils' work. Accommodation is, for the most part, sufficiently spacious to cater for class sizes, but there are instances, as in information technology, where crowded conditions do not always contribute favourably to the learning environment. In music there are insufficient rooms available for practice for group-work. In design and technology, whilst adequate accommodation is available, the quality of some of its

provision is unsatisfactory and has an adverse impact on teaching and pupils' learning. The facilities provided by the library, whilst offering good opportunities for individual research and access to computer systems, are insufficiently available to pupils regularly enough to enhance learning to maximum effect. The resource centre does not provide an appropriate enrichment of the curriculum for most pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Too few pupils are allowed in at lunch time, a maximum of twenty and almost all from Year 7 and Year 8.

110. Following a major monetary investment, the ratio of pupils to computers is now closer to the national average. Pupils make good use of facilities for information technology. Effective timetabling of computer rooms, along with the increasing expertise and confidence to use equipment of a large number of staff, contribute positively to pupils' improving standards in this area.

111. Overall, the range, quality and quantity of learning resources are satisfactory, but there are some shortcomings. In a range of subjects, including English and modern languages, there are insufficient textbooks for pupils to have one each or to take home for homework. In a few subjects, there is too heavy a reliance upon photocopied worksheets, some of which do little to motivate pupils. The use made of audio visual and similar resources, across the curriculum, is variable, but where used, it is done so effectively for the most part.

112. The accommodation for pupils with special needs is attractive and welcoming, The reading area is pleasant and well laid out, but there is a lack of appropriate, up-to-date, readers to encourage the reluctant reader at both Key Stages 3 and 4. At the time of the last report it was found that there was inadequate staffing. Currently, the post of support assistant is being advertised, in order to increase the amount of in class help for pupils to a satisfactory level.

113. Most of the issues of concern highlighted in the last report have been fully addressed, but a few still remain to be resolved fully. There are: difficulties in recruiting staff in a few subjects such as modern languages; facilities for music practice have not improved and there is an insufficiency of good textbooks in some subjects.

113. The efficiency of the school

114. The school manages annual funds of around two and a quarter million pounds with efficiency and care. The budget is set to enable the chosen curriculum model to be delivered most effectively. The senior administrative officer, the school's senior management team and the governing body together exercise very good financial and resource management and control. They are largely successful in ensuring a good quality education for pupils.

115. The school's staffing enables it to meet the requirements of its curriculum and, for the most part, teachers are well deployed and effectively used, but there is some use of non-specialist teachers, for example, in modern languages. Administration, site management and catering staff are employed in cost effective ways and deployed to best effect. The overall deployment of support staff is appropriate but there is currently an under-provision of support staff for pupils with special educational needs.

116. Regular auditors' reports are submitted and the school responds appropriately to any suggestions made as soon as practicable.

117. Funding for learning resources is allocated to departments in response to requests for capitation to support each department's development plan. Prudently, a small reserve is maintained to cater for unexpected demands. The school's accommodation is kept in good order both externally and internally at very economic cost, ensuring an environment that is safe, secure and conducive to good learning. Departments are rightly expected to account for

their expenditure. Consequently, spending is closely monitored to ensure value for money, through departmental reviews undertaken at regular intervals by the headteacher.

118.Recent capital expenditure has enabled the school to enhance its buildings considerably. Extra funding from such sources as the parents and friends' association assists in improving the facilities in the library, for example.

119.Funds for staff and curriculum development, funding for special educational needs and additional appropriations, as they become available, are all well managed and the internal allocation of them closely monitored.

120.Overall the school manages its funds professionally and prudently. During their time in school most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Accordingly the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

120. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

120. **English**

121. Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are below national average, as measured by 1998 National Curriculum standard test results, and well below the levels achieved in similar schools. The numbers of pupils achieving the highest levels are also well below national figures. 1999 National Curriculum test results are well above the 1998 national average figures, except for numbers of pupils gaining the highest levels. At the end of Key Stage 4 levels of attainment are below national average, as measured by 1998 GCSE results for English and English literature. 1999 GCSE results are still below average for English but in line with national averages for English literature. At the end of the sixth form levels of attainment are above national average, as measured by the 1998 GCE A level results in English literature, and well above national average for the number of pupils gaining grades A and B. 1999 A level results are well below 1998 national figures.

122. Levels of attainment in lessons and pupils' work are in line with the average picture for all three key stages. Key Stage 3 pupils have good basic knowledge of grammar and punctuate sentences effectively. They use planning and drafting to produce well-constructed stories and vivid descriptions. They use information technology skills, such as word processing and desktop publishing to enhance written work. They read texts closely for meaning and can use the school library to gather information. They work together well in pairs and small groups. Key Stage 4 pupils are able to analyse complex literary texts exploring character and motive as, for example when Year 11 discussed language and style in Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice'. They can write in argumentative and discursive modes and they talk clearly and persuasively in class discussion. Sixth form students' writing is focused and analytical. They appreciate how writers achieve effects and make critical judgements about their study texts. Oral presentations, such as those of Year 12 students on Prospero's relationships with surrounding characters in 'The Tempest' are well researched and persuasively delivered. Folder notes are thorough and well organised. Oral work in all years has improved significantly since the last inspection.

123. Rates of progress for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are satisfactory, although relative to girls, boys in Key Stage 4 are still not making progress in line with national patterns. Pupils with special educational needs in general make satisfactory progress. However, lower-attaining pupils in large Key Stage 3 groups do not receive enough additional support to maximise their progress. Sixth form students make good progress. Pupils in Key Stage 3 learn to structure their writing effectively using paragraphs. They widen their range of reading to include media texts and pre-twentieth century literature. They gain confidence in their speaking and written work shows a clearer sense of purpose. Pupils in Key Stage 4 become aware of audience and choose appropriate styles in their writing. They respond particularly well to Shakespeare and to challenging poetry as, for example, when Year 11 pupils analysed language and meaning in John Clare's poem, 'First Love'. They develop more demanding speaking skills for presentations and performances. Sixth form students quickly respond to the demands of GCE A level texts. They acquire good critical vocabularies and begin to evaluate literary techniques. Essays become more confident and reflective.

124. Pupils in all years are highly motivated and behave well in lessons. There are good examples in all three key stages of pupils working with real enthusiasm. Most written work is well presented. Pupils relate well to staff and support each other in class. They respond readily when given opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of their learning.

125. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form it is good. Almost all teaching is satisfactory. Three quarters of all teaching is good or better and about a quarter is very good or excellent. There is some outstanding teaching within the department. Teachers are well qualified and confident in their subject. Standards of classroom management are high. Good schemes of work support lesson planning. In the best lessons aims are clear to pupils. They are engaged and challenged by thoughtfully presented learning materials. The pace is brisk and activities are varied and progressive. Teachers convey their own enthusiasm for English to pupils and there is mutual respect. In a significant minority of lessons progress of higher-attaining pupils is held back by lack of pace and insufficiently challenging work.

126. The department is well organised and managed. Documentation is comprehensive and policies are clear. Responsibilities within the department are sensibly delegated. There are regular meetings with an agenda and minutes but until this year these have been too infrequent to make the work of the department most effective. There is insufficient time available for staff to observe colleagues teach to encourage the sharing of best practice. Large group sizes and low levels of in class support are making teaching less effective. There is a shortage of books, which often prevents pupils from taking them home. Some books, especially in Key Stage 4, are rather unappealing. National Curriculum requirements are fully met and Key Stage 3 schemes of work are based on the prescribed programmes of study.

127. All pupils get an appropriate number of English lessons and Key Stage 4 pupils enjoy full access to both GCSE English courses. Separate drama lessons for all Key Stage 3 pupils help lift the overall standard of their achievement in English. Arrangements for assessing and reporting on pupils' progress are good. Pupil self-evaluation and target setting form a valuable part of this process. There are developing links with local primary schools.

128. The limited progress of lower attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 3, calls for the department to review its strategies for teaching those with special educational needs. The resource centre is well organised but it does not yet provide appropriate curriculum enrichment for most Key Stage 4 and sixth form students.

129. There is no whole school literacy policy to raise standards of learning across the curriculum. The departmental review of how best to prepare pupils for the diverse faiths and cultures of our society is a valuable initiative.

130. Across the curriculum levels of literacy reflect national patterns but there is no whole school policy to raise standards. Pupils in most subjects are able to read sufficiently well to make progress. In geography they read effectively for information and are confident when reading in music. In information technology some reading by pupils is careless. There is only limited reading in design technology and science. Some extended writing occurs in information technology, religious education, design technology and in Key Stage 4 work in mathematics and science. Pupils' written work is well presented in music, modern foreign languages and religious education. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are generally accurate in information technology music, modern foreign languages and in Key Stage 4 geography. There are lower levels of accuracy in pupils' writing for religious education, Key Stage 3 geography and science. Some focus on key subject words takes place in music and geography but there is little evidence of literacy strategies in other subjects. Issues identified in the previous inspection report have been satisfactorily addressed.

130. **Drama**

131. Levels of attainment in drama at Key Stage 3 are in line with the national picture. By the end of Key Stage 4, as measured by 1998 GCSE results, they are a little above the national average on a small entry. By the end of the sixth form levels of attainment, as measured by 1998 theatre studies GCE A level results, are in line with national averages. At Key Stage 3 pupils acquire knowledge of basic terms and techniques in drama. They give dramatic form to narrative and character through mime and improvisation. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils can work with scripted drama and they have knowledge of aspects of stage design. They are able to evaluate theatrical performances and write critically about them.

132. Teaching is always good or very good. There are clearly structured schemes of work. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their ideas in lessons and these are respected. They collaborate well in small groups and support each other when performing. Evaluation of their own work and that of other pupils is built into the learning process. Assessment is structured and thoughtful.

133. Drama is well managed. A new teacher in charge of the subject, has already revised Key Stage 3 schemes of work and, assisted by a second drama specialist, is intent on raising drama standards throughout the school. All Key Stage 3 pupils have a separate drama lesson and the numbers of Key Stage 4 pupils taking up drama has increased significantly. Over two hundred pupils turned up to audition for parts in the latest school dramatic production. Extra-curricular activities such as productions, drama clubs and theatre visits greatly enrich the overall school curriculum.

133. **Mathematics**

134. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national average with around 67 per cent of pupils attaining at level 5 or above over the last three years. These results are, however, well below those attained in schools of a similar background, as indicated in the national benchmark figures. There is no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls, and the 1998 results are slightly better than those obtained by other core subjects in the school. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in GCSE examinations are below national expectations for grades A* - C, and well below those obtained in similar schools but they are improving, and most members of the department have the capacity and the will to continue this improvement. The results, however, for grades A*-G are better with an almost 100 per cent success rate being achieved. Currently, standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 as seen and judged during the inspection are average. The A level results indicate variable success, albeit below national averages for grades A/B and grades A - E, but current small entry figures preclude significant comparisons for trends over time. Currently standards of attainment in the sixth form as viewed during the inspection are average.

135. By the end of Key Stage 3, with the exception of a minority of average and below average pupils and a small group of disruptive pupils, all are confident when working with numbers, for example, the four rules, and basic work with fractions and percentages. Mental mathematical skills are further developed to cover wider aspects of the programme of study, such as algebra and geometry, through well-planned regular practice. Pupils generally use correct terminology when describing aspects of mathematics and they occasionally give extended reasoned answers to questions, indicating a good depth of understanding, such as the properties of circles in one Year 9 class. Basic algebra and trigonometry are well developed in the above average sets, a group of pupils in Year 9, in particular, handling quite complex equations and graphs with confidence. Additionally, most cope well with work on data-handling and probability. Calculators are used, for the most part, effectively and proficiently. There is little inappropriate use for calculations that should be performed mentally. In work with information technology applications such as LOGO, pupils demonstrate a willingness to investigate and

predict.

136. By the end of Key Stage 4 many pupils across the attainment range have developed good investigative techniques for their GCSE coursework – adopting suitable approaches to solving problems and writing their findings in a logical manner. Most noticeable was the standard achieved by a set of pupils, studying for foundation level GCSE, who were committed to good systematic working and clear recording. Many higher attainers are confident with all aspects of mental mathematics, including rearrangement of simple formulae. A good range of previous work, covering all attainment targets, is often clearly understood and applied in new situations. This was seen in work on standard deviation in statistics and complex equations in algebra. There is not, however, clear evidence that all pupils are fully realising the potential indicated at the end of Key Stage 3. A significant minority is neither motivated nor challenged sufficiently to do more than complete the immediate tasks presented to them. There is little sense of inquiry.

137. In the sixth form students tend, after much encouragement, to take more responsibility for their own learning. Following the essential introductory algebra course in Year 12 most are able to recall and apply a range of mathematical techniques in new situations such as differentiation and integration or application of Newton's Laws in a range of mechanics situations. Most, but not all, are able to explain clearly what they are doing. The highest attainers readily recognise the relationships that exist between different aspects of the course, and they often challenge teachers to justify and explain concepts more fully to confirm their understanding. Work is not always well organised and complete.

138. Aspects of mathematics are used to good effect in some areas of the curriculum, for example in geography where it is explicit in the schemes of work, so that simple graphs, statistical tools and information and communications technology application are employed. In design and technology and science, such aspects as calculations involving amps, volts and watts are well handled by pupils and students. However, in science at Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils do not readily use their mathematical skills in practical applications. There is no school policy in force to ensure consistency of approach in teaching or using these various items outside the mathematics department.

139. The evidence from test data for Year 9 and their classwork and homework, compared with prior attainment information, such as Key Stage 2 data, indicates that for the majority of pupils, satisfactory progress is being made in Key Stage 3. With the exception of a class in Year 9, which contains a few disruptive pupils, most pupils are working well to maintain progress, both in lessons and over time. In most lessons measurable gains are made in knowledge, skills or understanding - such as the consolidation of mental mathematical skills in every class through regular practice or the understanding of symmetry of plane figures (both rotational and reflective) in a lesson in Year 7. Likewise, useful progress occurred in a set in Year 9, where pupils 'discovered' and used "pi" effectively in calculations. Only a small minority of pupils, however, seeks further understanding through asking probing questions and challenging teachers' suggestions.

140. There has been unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 4 recently, as indicated by the low 'value added' between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 results, culminating in the below average A*-C results at GCSE. However, in lessons observed and from examinations of pupils' work, the current progress for many pupils across a range of prior attainment levels is satisfactory, over most aspects of the programmes of study. This is mainly attributable to the recent beneficial changes in staffing, and a better focus upon effective teaching. Many pupils are making good gains in skills and knowledge over time, and in most lessons previous learning is satisfactorily consolidated. Pupils further enhance their learning by using mathematical 'tools' in new and more complex situations such as GCSE coursework investigations in Year 11, or solving problems involving rearranging formulae in Year 10. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall in both Key Stages 3 and 4.

141. Progress made in the sixth form A level classes is generally good. Confidence to research, debate and defend opinions is gradually developed. There is usually a fast acquisition of knowledge and skills in Year 12, particularly with respect to algebraic techniques through a carefully planned programme, and these are well applied to the wider aspects of the A level course in Year 13. A few, however, find the transition from GCSE to A-Level too demanding.

142. In the majority of lessons pupils' attitudes are good. In a small minority of lessons, Most pupils are, attentive to teachers' exposition and eager to respond to questions. They are usually enthusiastic and conscientious, working well alone or collaboratively as required. On a significant minority of occasions, where teaching is unsatisfactory, learning is disrupted by poor behaviour and by an unwillingness of some pupils to co-operate.

143. As a result of recent beneficial staffing changes and efforts to address the issue of underachievement, teaching was good in the majority of classes observed. Evidence from a range of pupils' work supports this judgement. Good planning ensures that National Curriculum requirements are satisfied. In most lessons at Key Stage 3 suitably high expectations of attainment ensure that many pupils, but not all, are presented with challenges that generally encourage a good rate of progress. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and offer a suitable variety of activities to pupils to maintain interest and to motivate pupils well. In Key Stage 4, where the emphasis is upon developing pupils' skills and knowledge for their GCSE examinations, pupils receive an insufficient amount of challenging work. It is usually in their course-work that pupils are encouraged to think and debate in order to increase their levels of understanding.

144. In a significant minority of lessons observed, particularly in Key Stage 3, teaching was unsatisfactory. In these lessons, control of pupils was weak, the work was undemanding and methods were taught without the accompanying understanding being expected. This results in some pupils receiving poor preparation for eventual performance in external examinations in mathematics.

145. Issues highlighted in the last report have been successfully addressed.

145. **Science**

146. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 is comparable to the national average. In National Curriculum tests in 1998, the proportion of pupils at Key Stage 3 attaining level 5 was close to the national average. The proportion attaining level 6 was above the national figure, but below the average for schools with pupils from a similar background. In 1999 pupils' results declined slightly with a smaller proportion of pupils attaining level 5 and level 6. The performances of boys and girls are similar.

147. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment in GCSE is below the national average. In 1998, the results for pupils attaining grades A* to C in the GCSE double award science were well below the national average, although one hundred per cent of those who took the examination were awarded a grade in the A* to G range. The 1999 results for this examination declined further. These results are not commensurate with the pupils' prior attainments on entering the school. Since the last inspection of 1995, GCSE results have not altered significantly. In this last year, a small number of the lower attaining pupils were entered for a modular GCSE combined science course examination. Pupils' overall underachievement in GCSE examinations in science, in recent times, is mainly due to prolonged absences of some teachers and the uncertainties caused by a large turnover of teachers within the department. These staffing difficulties have been overcome. Currently attainment in Key Stage 4 as seen and judged during the inspection is broadly average.

148. Advanced level science results have been consistently good for a number of years, and were so at the time of the last inspection. The 1998 results were comparable with those for 1995 and in line with national averages. The results in 1999 are good. The department achieved 100 per cent passes in all three sciences of biology, chemistry and physics, with nearly half the entry achieving A and B grades.

149. In A level biology, students understand the structure of fatty acids and are able to classify lipids. In studying genetics, they understand the effect of point mutation and of chromosome mutation. In A level physics, they are able to perform calculations involving objects subjected to uniform acceleration. In chemistry, they are aware of the periodic classification of the elements and they are able to perform volumetric exercises to a high degree of accuracy.

150. At Key Stages 3 and 4, higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of basic theoretical scientific principles. They are able to apply them in practical and in problem-solving contexts. Their ability to understand and to apply quantitative data is confined to the highest attainers. Many find difficulty in transferring skills taught in mathematics to their practical application in science. Levels of literacy vary considerably, but overall they are generally satisfactory. Presentation of work is of a good standard, especially amongst higher attaining pupils. Pupils use information technology in all years. The quality of its application is good and imaginative, and the majority of pupils, in both key stages, understand it. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are acquiring a satisfactory understanding of the strengths of magnetic fields, and how an electric current in a coil produces a magnetic field pattern. At the beginning of Year 9, they are aware of variations between and within species and of their causes. From this they are able to create a database. The recording and presentation of data are good and, by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils can represent data graphically and interpret it to make scientific predictions. Pupils have an understanding of velocity and are able to determine the units for measuring it. They have a good appreciation of the difference between force and pressure and they understand the pressure changes that occur inside a balloon as it is inflated. They have an awareness of the basic crystalline structures of different types of rocks, such as limestone, chalk and sedimentary rocks.

151. The great majority of pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 is making at least satisfactory progress, and for many, progress is good. There is no significant difference between the progress of boys and that of girls. In both key stages, pupils consolidate their scientific knowledge and understanding, and they acquire satisfactory practical skills and techniques. At Key Stage 4, pupils are allocated only 16 per cent of their timetable for science. This falls well below the 20 per cent recommended, and places pupils at a distinct disadvantage in their GCSE examinations to most other candidates. Progress is also impaired by large class sizes in certain parts of the school, notably in Year 9. Pupils with special educational need are well integrated into classes and their progress is at least satisfactory.

152. Pupils are invariably polite, pleasant and compliant. Throughout the school they are attentive and they have a good attitude to their work. Work is presented on time and they take pride in its appearance. The great majority of them show a genuine interest in their lessons and they display considerable application. In a Year 7 lesson on time and motion, pupils were able to work effectively and efficiently in small groups to carry out their practical work before returning to their class format and then writing up their findings. The manner in which they work together and record their findings displays not only an enthusiasm for the subject but also good skills of co-operation. Behaviour throughout all lessons is good, pupils invariably being courteous to their teachers and pleasantly disposed to each other.

153. One of the current strengths of the department is its teaching staff. This has undergone a considerable transformation in personnel during the last six months. Teaching is always satisfactory or better and in many lessons it is good. This applies at both key stages and at A level. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Lessons typically begin with an

introduction and an explanation of the context before the pupils embark on a practical exercise in small groups. The teaching scheme is carefully planned and thoughtfully structured. This helps teachers to prepare their lessons well and to deliver them with enthusiasm. Lessons are suitably paced and targeted appropriately to pupils' needs and to their respective levels of attainment. Discipline is good and classroom management is of a high order. The rapport between teachers and pupils is friendly and caring. Teachers' expectations of pupils are generally high, although at Key Stage 4, the learning capacity of the higher attainers is not sufficiently stretched. Homework is set regularly and exercise books are marked routinely, the marking being accompanied by constructive and encouraging comments.

154. The department is well managed and there is a good corporate spirit amongst the staff. The technicians provide competent support for the subject. The quality of the textbooks available to the pupils is good, but they are inadequate in number. There are insufficient good quality reference books. Laboratories are suitably available and spacious, and contain adequate equipment. Electronic top-pan balances are available to pupils at both key stages and ones of analytical accuracy are available to A level students. There is good access to computer rooms and very good use is made of this facility.

154. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

154. **Art**

155. The proportion of pupils achieving A* - C grades in the GCSE examination has fluctuated since the last inspection. An upturn in the last two years has brought results well above the national average. A level results in 1998 were slightly below the national average but they improved in 1999.

156. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the level expected at the age of 14. Pupils receive a broad art experience covering a wide range of media and materials to give them a firm foundation. The still-life project by Year 9 pupils is sharp, well observed work in pencil, pastel, thread and paint.

157. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above the national expectations for pupils of this age. Pupils continue to build on their previous experiences. Sketch books are used very well for research and as a resource. Artists and their work are continually referred to, as stimuli and reference, by the pupils in their work. The project in Year 10 based on natural forms has produced some very strong images influenced by artists, in particular, Andy Goldsworthy.

158. Attainment in the sixth form is now at a level expected of students of this age. The painting and mixed media work is quite bold in size and execution. Visits to galleries and working with artists have been an advantage for these developments.

159. The department has regained the levels of attainment seen at the previous inspection particularly at Key Stage 4.

160. Progress at Key Stage 3 is good. Examples in sketch books and folders of work provide good evidence. Emphasis is on basic skills and processes. Skills, techniques and technical vocabulary are interwoven into the study of artists and other cultures. The Ikon project, which ranges across continents and religions, including visits to Coventry Cathedral, provides a rich collection of work. The sketch book project is another example of imaginative approaches being used, but presentation of work is rarely good.

161. Progress at Key Stage 4 is very good. Work in sketch books on natural forms has extended research and development, resulting in very carefully executed work. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress and produce creditable results. The variety of work and solutions can be seen in the work from the residency at the Barber Institute at Birmingham University where pupils of Year 10 produced some very individual solutions based on work in the Gallery in three dimensions, in a variety of media.

162. Progress at post-16 is average. There are gains in confidence and independence, The students are able to develop deeper critical discussion on their own and others work. Their work is large, bold and they use colour well. There has been some experimentation in ceramics with Raku and smoke glazes.

163. Pupils are interested in their work and readily talk about it. Pupils in Year 7 were excited with their string printing blocks. They are proud of their sketch books, especially the pupils from Blythe School who have worked very hard with their books. At Key Stage 3 a minority of pupils sometimes loses concentration and becomes talkative. The pupils' capacity for personal study develops as they move through the Key Stage in preparing their projects and finding out about artists. They are ready to answer questions and join in discussions. They settle down to work very quickly and can organise themselves without disruptions, particularly at Key Stage 4 where a variety of activities is carried out at the same time. The pupils work well together and respect each others' work. They are able to work in three rooms independently without any problems. Pupils with special needs work well with growing confidence and independence. There is a very good atmosphere, supported and generated by an attractive working environment and behaviour through out is good.

164. Teaching is good at Key Stage 3, very good at Key Stage 4 and good in the sixth form.

165. The teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of their subject. They make demands on the pupils and have high expectations. The teachers are a very effective team. They involve pupils in the lessons as often as possible. Question technique is good and involves all the class. Very good use is made of praise. Lessons are well planned, organised and supported by relevant resources and visual aids from many sources. Displays of artefacts and pupils' work support lessons and help provide an exciting working environment. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Objectives of lessons and instructions are clear. Time is well used and lessons are taught at brisk pace. Where end of lessons summaries are used they enhance the lessons still further. Individual Education Plans are available for pupils with special needs and are used by the teachers. Comprehensive assessment procedures are in place including pupil self assessment. Discussions with pupils are an integral part of these procedures. Homework plays an important part in the pupils' art experience. Time is set aside in lessons to make sure pupils are aware of the homework requirements and work is marked and discussed.

166. The requirements of the National Curriculum are being met. The comments from the previous inspection have been addressed. However, computer aided art and design is still inadequate, and some classes remain large.

167. The financial implications for including more information and communication technology in the department's work are insufficiently defined in the department's development plan.

168. Pupils' art experiences are enriched by artist residencies and by visits to galleries and exhibitions, although these do not often occur during Key Stage 3. Links with the community are being strengthened and the pupils' work is being celebrated by a wider audience. The department is effectively led and is an enthusiastic and hardworking team.

168. **Design and technology**

169. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and generally in line with national expectations. Attainment in GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4 is below average, but currently standards of attainment in classes at Key Stage 4 seen during the inspection are broadly average. Overall the number of pupils gaining A* – C grades in GCSE programmes at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national average. However, results in the four individual courses vary and range from good to unsatisfactory. Attainment in the sixth form is generally satisfactory, or better, and all pupils entered have obtained passes over the last few years.

170. In Key Stage 3 pupils experience a broad range of tasks and assignments within food, textiles, resistant materials, graphics and general product design. Pupils work within a framework provided by individual project booklets within which information, process and product are outlined. Pupils benefit from this structured approach which also seeks individual response and innovation. Standards in graphics and presentation are satisfactory. There is evidence of good work by many pupils, but the work of a few pupils has insufficient emphasis on technique and quality. Some design work in resistant materials shows insufficient control of accuracy and finish. The use of information technology enhances the work of many pupils, especially in the areas of graphics and word processing.

171. In Key Stage 4 some pupils produce interesting work of high quality, and their design folders reflect a range of skills, techniques and ideas. However, many pupils are producing less than satisfactory work. One or two groups are over-large for workshops and specialist rooms; these include a proportion of reluctant learners whose behaviour affects their own and others' work. Pupils' work in design planning and making often lacks quality and accuracy. Work in food and textiles is of high quality and this is reflected in external examination results. Last year the proportion of entrants gaining higher grades A*–C in GCSE courses varied considerably among food (54 per cent); textiles (41 per cent); graphics (36 per cent) and product design in resistant materials (21 per cent). Changes in staff and in the syllabus have had a slight effect in slowing pupils' progress.

172. All sixth form pupils passed A level design and technology gaining grades B – E. Pupils demonstrate a capacity for study and individual learning skills. They are able to generate ideas and develop them in a variety of design media.

173. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress as they acquire skills, knowledge and understanding through the tasks, assignments and experiences of the course. Staff complete detailed assessment sheets, which includes evaluation of pupils. This information is collected centrally. Individual pupils' profiles are used to track their progress and are available to staff for planning purposes. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make only satisfactory progress overall because a significant minority of boys lacks motivation and under-performs. Pupils with special educational needs are clearly identified by staff and generally make satisfactory progress. Design project work enables teachers to negotiate appropriate targets and provide relevant support. Students in the sixth form make good progress, as they develop independent learning skills and personal interests.

174. Generally pupils show interest in their work. They are attentive and listen to teacher input and demonstration. Behaviour is good and pupils show respect for equipment and facilities. Many pupils take responsibility for their work and develop individual skills and interests. A few do not concentrate sufficiently to produce work of higher quality, particularly in terms of presentation and finish. Pupils respect the codes of conduct in specialist rooms and are aware of the need to work safely.

175. Teachers are hard working and well organised. Discipline is sound and teachers use time and resources well. Homework is used to support work in progress. Assessment data is detailed and stored centrally but it is not used to full effect in helping pupils to progress. The quality of teaching is generally good, with examples of very good teaching. Systems for disseminating good practice are not in place. Standards of teaching have improved since the last inspection. When teaching is good there is evidence of high expectation and pace coupled to clear learning objectives and appropriate activities. The teaching team is well supported by two competent technicians.

176. There has recently been a change in leadership and the present head of department is in his first year. Documentation is full and detailed and provides important support for teachers. Currently there is inadequate emphasis on longer term development planning to enable important changes to be introduced in a manageable and logical way. There are insufficient computers to ensure that pupils use more information technology within subject studies especially in control technology and graphics. Accommodation is adequate but some furniture and equipment are in a poor condition. The furniture in food rooms is unhygienic. A few staff have yet to attend appropriate courses to enable them to handle specific machines and equipment.

176. **Geography**

177. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is average overall. GCSE examination results are below national averages at A*-C grades but have shown significant improvement in recent years at A*-G grades. They closely parallel national figures and, overall, are broadly similar to other subjects. Girls usually outperform boys in the subject. Results at A level have improved recently and are currently above the national average at both A-B and A-E grades.

178. In Key Stage 3, higher attainers have a good grasp of basic concepts and of subject vocabulary. Their understanding of complex situations, such as changing weather conditions over time, and the hierarchy of settlements, is good. They are able to organise, refine and present data and use a database. Lower attainers work at a standard that is commensurate with their prior attainments but experience difficulties in the use of terminology and have relatively poorly developed presentational skills.

179. In Key Stage 4, high attaining pupils make good use of previously acquired information and can adapt and relate it to an unfamiliar context as in the renewal of urban centres. They also have a secure and developing knowledge of the location and character of places. A minority of pupils of below average attainment lacks breadth and depth in their knowledge and understanding but successfully completes less demanding tasks such as sequencing factors causing rainfall.

180. Sixth form students' standard of work is generally above the national average. They have a secure grasp of relevant knowledge and its application. They possess the ability to analyse, to interpret and critically to evaluate well-researched material from a variety of sources. All show a growing understanding of the relationship between people and the environment and a developing awareness of the relevance of geography to social and economic issues.

181. Progress is good at all stages. Pupils in every year group consolidate previous learning and their exercise books and files reflect an increasing maturity in handling written and statistical information. They are refining their knowledge of the nature of places by the regular use of atlases and maps and the majority use subject terminology correctly and in context. The work of a minority of pupils lacks precision. They tend to answer by inference and their writing is more descriptive than explicit and contains many grammatical and spelling errors.

182. Pupils' attainment and progress are reinforced by their responsible attitude to learning which is at least good and often very good, in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Apart from a few individuals who attempt to be disruptive but are quickly dealt with by the teacher, pupils show involvement and application. They work productively and co-operate well. Lower attainers, including pupils with special educational needs, persevere when tasks are difficult. Occasionally, a limited span of concentration and short-term recall of information restrict progress. Older pupils frequently show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning, as in supported self-study units.

183. Teaching is a strength of the department. Planning of lessons is meticulous at all stages and the good use of time and of resources contributes to effective learning outcomes. With the exception of one lesson in Key Stage 3 which was satisfactory, the standard of teaching is good or, on occasions, very good. This high quality is characterised by good knowledge and understanding of the subject and by high expectations, both academic and behavioural, of the pupils. Praise and encouragement are given and tact and patience are shown. Purposeful tasks allow all pupils to succeed.

184. Where there are shortcomings in the teaching, higher attainers are insufficiently stretched by extension work, some points are not fully developed and the attention of a few individuals wanders. The assessment of pupils' work is thorough; effective oral feedback is given in class. Written comments in exercise books are not always constructive nor indicate to the pupil how to improve.

185. This is a strong department which, under a newly appointed co-ordinator, efficiently and effectively provides pupils with a good grounding in geography. Most of the issues raised in the previous report have been successfully overcome. Those regarding the greater use of the school's improved information technology facilities and extending the range of fieldwork to broaden pupils' experiences have not been fully accomplished.

185. **History**

186. Attainment is below the national expectations by the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4 and close to the national average in the sixth form. By the end of Year 9 only higher attainers achieve average standards or above. Results in GCSE examinations in 1998 were well below the national average at grades A*-C and just below the national average for pupils achieving A*-G grades. The results for girls exceeded that for boys by a greater difference than that found nationally. The provisional results for 1999 show a similar pattern. Ten of the eleven candidates obtained grades in the range B to D at A level in 1998.

187. At Key Stage 3, higher attainers explain confidently the causes of, and motives for, actions taken in the past, as for example in lessons on France on the eve of the 1789 revolution. They use a variety of sources to address historical issues and they have a good appreciation of cause and consequence. Lower attainers are familiar with personalities and events but they are uncertain of the significance of evidence.

188. At Key Stage 4, higher attainers make good use of source material and their written work, for example on the American economy in the 1920s, contains an appropriate balance of description and analysis. They see and understand that there may be different interpretations of the past. Lower attainers find evaluating the reliability and usefulness of a source difficult. Their written work is too descriptive and they are inclined to copy from the materials provided. In both key stages many pupils, particularly lower attainers, have difficulty with written work in terms of grammatical accuracy.

189. In the sixth form, higher attainers analyse, interpret and organise material as they study aspects of Russian history in Year 13. Other students have a firm base of factual knowledge but their grasp of concepts is uneven and they are insecure when analysing information to make evaluative judgements.

190. Progress is mainly satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. In Year 7, pupils develop an understanding of chronology and an awareness of the distinctiveness of a period and in Year 8 an appreciation of aspects of the culture and traditions of Imperial China. In Year 10, when studying aspects of the causes of the First World War, pupils use various sources to develop an understanding of the impact of war on individuals and society. However, in both key stages, the progress of some lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory because tasks and materials are not always adapted to meet their specific requirements; in one lesson in Year 7 their progress was unsatisfactory. Students in Year 12 are adjusting well to the rigours of study at A level.

191. Pupils' behaviour is good. They bring a sense of commitment to their work. They focus on the tasks they are given and they work productively in pairs and groups. They are prepared to answer questions, but in both key stages and in the sixth form, there are few extended oral contributions.

192. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good in the main and occasionally, in each of Key Stages 3 and 4, it was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good lessons have clear aims and pupils are stimulated and challenged; it is unsatisfactory when the pace is slow and insufficient attention is given to the needs of all pupils. Homework is set regularly but lacks variety and sometimes purpose in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils often have to rely on duplicated material as a resource. In the sixth form, homeworks are appropriate and well focused.

193. The continuing long-term absence of the Head of Department, and the use of temporary teachers, have adversely affected the progress of pupils and students currently in Years 10, 12 and 13. There is now an understanding of what has to be done to raise standards by, for example, linking assessment with curriculum planning.

193. **Information technology**

194. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in information technology is below national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupil attainment is below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C at GCSE in 1998 was below average, but a high proportion achieved grades A*-G. In the sixth form, students on GNVQ courses have satisfactory skills in the use of information technology.

195. Classroom and work observations indicate that standards at the end of both key stages are below average. However, the school is giving a much higher priority to information technology. The computer to pupil ratio is now close to the national average. A modern network has replaced the outdated system identified as an issue in the last report. Observations in the classroom indicate improving attainment. The subject is taught through subjects after an introductory course in Year 7. The contribution of each subject is well planned to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement for information technology. For example in geography, Year 9 pupils are able to interrogate a database and superimpose data onto maps. Year 7 pupils in science can successfully input results into a spreadsheet, produce graphs and export them to a word processing document. Pupils in Year 10 produce good quality newsletters using a desktop publishing program in English lessons.

196. Pupils are now making good progress in lessons at both key stages. They are becoming increasingly familiar with the improved facilities and are developing their skills and knowledge of information technology. For example, pupils in Year 7 can apply their knowledge of

formatting text to a new document. Pupils in Year 10 make good progress in their understanding of 'Omnigraph' and are able to use this successfully to graph equations. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in both key stages.

197. Pupils' attitudes towards information technology are good in both key stages. Pupils enthusiastically respond to questioning. They listen attentively. They are interested and maintain their concentration throughout the lessons. When working in pairs they do so co-operatively and support each other willingly. In most classes behaviour is good. In all lessons pupils were responsible and careful in their use of the computers. Behaviour is good in most lessons.

198. The teaching of information technology is good at both key stages. At Key Stage 3 two out of three lessons were good or very good. At Key Stage 4 all lessons were good or very good. Teaching strengths include thorough planning and the use of appropriate activities. For example pupils in Year 7 use a well-produced electronic workbook to develop their word processing skills. Lessons show a good variety of tasks involving the use of the computers, discussion, individual work and written activities. The aims of most lessons are clearly explained to the pupils. Teachers have high expectations. Discipline is good; where problems do arise they are dealt with in a firm yet non-confrontational manner. Teachers are open and approachable. Praise is used extensively and appropriately. Pupils' work is marked regularly and includes constructive comments to indicate areas for improvement. Assessment of pupils' work is used successfully to plan future teaching. Homework is set regularly. Teachers move around the rooms continuously to help and support all pupils. In this way pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately. Teachers have good subject knowledge.

199. The main area of weakness in the teaching of information technology, is the limited provision of suitable tasks for students of different attainment. For example, the same materials are used with all pupils in Year 7.

200. The provision of information technology in the curriculum is much improved since the last report. There are good schemes of work in place for Year 7. The move to teach information technology through curriculum subjects, has meant that more pupils now have access to the facilities. For example, all pupils in Key Stage 3 English complete a unit of work using information technology, during each year in this key stage. In the week of the inspection the specialist rooms were booked by departments for over two thirds of the available time. Good arrangements to assess pupils' capability in the subject are being put in place.

201. The department is well led and managed. There are clear aims and a commitment to improving all pupils' attainment. A particular strength is the good in-class support provided by the specialist staff. The recent appointment of a technician meets one of the issues identified in the last report. An effective learning environment has been created with a positive ethos.

201. Modern foreign languages

202. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils are achieving standards which are in line with national expectations. Most pupils are able to ask and answer questions on topics such as their personal and family life. They do so with reasonable fluency and their pronunciation is generally good. Pupils' writing is often poor as they make frequent errors in spelling and grammar and they do not regularly produce extended pieces of writing.

203. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment is below average. In 1998 the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C in French at GCSE was well below the national average but nearly all entrants achieved grades A*-G which is in line with national averages. In German the proportion achieving A*-C was also well below the national average. Boys performed worse than girls broadly in line with national figures. Provisional results at GCSE for 1999 show a

very slight rise in the proportion achieving grades A*-C in French and in German, and with all entrants achieving grades A*-G. Over the last four years, results in German for pupils achieving A*-C have remained steady but the French results have declined since the last inspection from nearly 48 per cent in 1996 to the current figure of nearly 25 per cent. By the end of Key

Stage 4, pupils have increased the range of topics they are familiar with, but the length and range of their reading and writing is limited. They are able to listen to reasonably long passages of more complex language and understand these, but they do not use a range of tenses accurately and they are reluctant to work from memory.

204. The number of pupils entering A Level German is very low. Pupils achieve grades in line with their prior attainment. They are able to read and listen to complex texts on issues such as homelessness but their ability to speak and write at length is more limited.

205. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. By the age of fourteen, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have progressed in their ability to use French or German in everyday situations such as talking about their weekend or holidays. However the higher attainers are not able to do so with any great spontaneity or fluency. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall at Key Stage 4. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils make better progress in German than in French. Pupils in both languages have improved in their ability to understand and give information about themselves and the topics have become more complex, involving issues such as the problems of bringing up children. Higher attaining pupils, however, do not make sufficient progress in their ability to read longer texts and do not write confidently using a variety of tenses or more complex sentences. They rarely speak or write without heavily structured support. Pupils who take up Spanish make good progress.

206. Pupils' attitudes are good at both key stages. They behave well and respond courteously to teachers and each other. Most pupils concentrate well on the tasks set except during lengthy explanations by teachers or when tasks are not set for pupils who have finished early. There is a positive attitude to learning languages. Very few pupils take initiatives or any responsibility for their learning, as teachers give them very few opportunities to do so. They only occasionally use dictionaries without being prompted and do not have well-developed strategies for working independently of the teacher.

207. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better at Key Stage 3 and 80 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better at Key Stage 4. The very good teaching seen was in German and Spanish; the unsatisfactory teaching was in French. Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach, especially when teaching their first language. Most teachers use the foreign language well for everyday classroom instructions and there are examples of pupils using French or German to ask for help and to clarify meanings. The good teaching seen involved pupils being very clear about what they had to do, and working individually or in groups on tasks set at a range of levels. There is generally careful preparation of listening exercises with suitable activities and pupils are encouraged to record their speaking on to tapes at home. With some exceptions there is insufficient variation in teaching styles. The opportunity to work independently of the teacher on activities such as individual listening or reading is not a regular feature of classroom practice. Only a limited number of reading or writing activities were seen during the inspection, especially those that involved longer texts or answers. Lessons sometimes lack pace. There are often insufficient tasks to challenge the more able. Work is marked reasonably frequently but there are inconsistencies across the department. Pupils are rarely given comments in their books about how they might improve their work but they are sometimes given verbal advice on how to improve their spoken language, especially in Spanish.

208. The new Head of Department is making strenuous efforts to improve standards in languages. The handbook is adequate but it does not outline in sufficient detail references to

the National Curriculum. References to the programmes of study are not well integrated into the various activities outlined and may be contributing to the limited range of teaching styles. There is a particular weakness in the provision in French in Key Stage 4 where progression is hard to identify and assessment opportunities are not clearly outlined.

209. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The leadership is now good and much of the teaching of middle sets is now satisfactory. Results at GCSE in French have fallen significantly but have been identified for improvement and results have remained steady in German. There is still no systematic assessment of performance in French.

209. **Music**

210. The attainment of pupils in music at the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4 is above average. GCSE results in 1998 were above the national subject average for A*-C grades. The number of pupils gaining A*-G grades was well above the national average and has not changed over the past three years.

211. Attainment in lessons matches examination results. It improves steadily throughout Key Stage 3. By the end of Year 9, pupils have competent instrumental skills and a secure understanding of the basic elements of music. They can perform the music they compose, and interpret it confidently, using keyboards and a range of other instruments. Every pupil has access to an instrument in all lessons. Music notation is used and adapted as an aid to composing and performing more extended pieces. The good skills developed at this stage provide a secure foundation for GCSE work, so that, by the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils enhance their composing with clearly notated music scores. Their playing and singing, at this stage, reflect a wide range of interests and styles, and a few pupils attain high levels of performance in external instrumental examinations. Listening skills are above average and most pupils confidently describe the music they hear in the correct musical terms.

212. Progress in music is very good in Key Stages 3 and 4 because of the high quality of teaching generally and the very good attitudes which pupils have towards music-making activities. The music they create is frequently imaginative. For example, groups in one Year 9 class improvised exciting instrumental variations on the theme of Paganini's Caprice. In another class, high attaining pupils were refining their compositions in 'Blues' style with considerable flair by adding extra ensemble parts or transposing them into other keys. Average and lower attaining pupils increase their performing and composing skills by using a variety of instruments in group music making, successfully combining short melodies with basic rhythms and chords. At Key Stage 4, pupils' composing skills develop maturely. Compositions frequently include more advanced technical features, and are well structured in contrasting sections. Pupils are confident in presenting their own compositions as performances in their GCSE examinations. Progress in performing music generally is particularly good for the significant number of pupils who participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available, where good musical standards are achieved in a professional manner.

213. Attitudes to music are very good. There is much enthusiasm in the school for both individual and group music-making activities. The take up for GCSE is good, and group sizes of those involved are larger than in many similar schools. Behaviour is very good. Pupils enjoy their work and take pride in performing it to others. They share musical ideas well when collaborating in small groups. Very good relationships exist between pupils and teachers. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to rehearse music for considerable lengths of time on their own and take responsibility for its performance. Instruments, which frequently have to be moved from room to room, are treated carefully and with respect.

214. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is satisfactory in a very small minority of the

lessons for Year 7, and very good in all the rest. Music is taught by very experienced and enthusiastic musicians who fully understand pupils' interests and needs. Each lesson is progressively planned to re-assert former targets and set new ones. Strong emphasis is laid on the successful performance of practical music-making activities, for which teachers provide good role models. Expectations are high, and the quality of support and intervention provided by teachers during group rehearsals is impressive, because they are able to quickly focus on musical characteristics which pupils can understand and achieve. Discipline is very good, and creative enthusiasm is controlled and productive.

215. The department is well led, and promotes music effectively within the school and in the wider community. At the time of the inspection, the staffing was being very successfully shared with a well-qualified and experienced trainee.

216. Since the previous inspection, assessment procedures in music have been improved, and the number of peripatetic instrumental teachers has been increased to eight. Resources have been increased and now include a good range of keyboards and an exotic range of untuned percussion instruments. Information technology has yet to be incorporated into the curriculum. The department lacks a computer and suitable software, particularly to support GCSE composing. The problems of the accommodation have not yet been fully resolved. There are insufficient practice rooms to improve the quality of group work. The second teaching room remains unattractively noisy.

216. **Physical education**

217. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes good and only occasionally unsatisfactory. Where it is good, games' skills and performances in dance are well developed and above expected levels. Pupils show good ball control in hockey and soccer and an awareness of the importance of tension and quality in dance. Where it is unsatisfactory there is a general lack of the style and control required as in gymnastics. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is below average in GCSE, A* to C passes lying significantly below the national average. In lessons at Key Stage 4, attainment is satisfactory overall. It is occasionally unsatisfactory where pupils lack control and awareness of quality in body management skills. Standards of attainment in the sixth form are good.

218. At the end of Key Stage 3 progress is sometimes very good, nearly always good but, occasionally, unsatisfactory. Where it is very good in dance pupils, both boys and girls rapidly increase their abilities to refine, choreograph and perfect performances. Progress occurs in most games' lessons, pupils showing clear improvement and refinement of skills and their applications into games situations. Where progress is unsatisfactory, no discernible improvement occurs in either quality of performance or in control of body weight, as in gymnastics.

219. In Key Stage 4 progress is generally satisfactory in lessons except where pupils endure too much inactivity resulting from poor organisation. Pupils with special needs make good progress in both key stages.

220. In the sixth form progress is good both in examination classes and in core physical education. Although the group taking A Level was small in 1998, results were good. There is good progress in GNVQ leisure and tourism, a course currently running for the first time.

221. Attitudes and behaviour are nearly always good, sometimes very good and only occasionally unsatisfactory. Where teaching is well structured, pupils show very good attitudes and motivation towards the subject and there is good collaboration and co-operation. Pupils concentrate over prolonged periods showing clear enjoyment of their lessons. Courtesy exists between pupils and relationships with teachers are good. Occasionally, at Key Stage 3, attitudes are poor amongst boys and where this happens there is inattention and a high rate

of non-participation. Pupils are always appropriately dressed for the subject. The department plays a prominent role in the extra-curricular life of the school. Teams of pupils compete with other school in a wide range of games including football, netball, basketball, swimming and cross country. Both boys and girls participate in the extra curricular provision.

222. Teaching is nearly always satisfactory, occasionally very good, and often good. Very good teaching is seen where teachers exhibit high enthusiasm for the subject and where they demonstrate effectively for pupils. These lessons proceed with good pace and with a sense of purpose as in hockey and dance at Key Stage 3 and in aerobics at Key Stage 4. These lessons, well prepared, have clear aims and objectives. Good teaching occurs in games' lessons. Teachers are confident and have secure knowledge of the subject. Occasionally, where teaching is unsatisfactory, there is too much non-participation caused by long periods of inactivity resulting from poor organisation or from teachers' failure to insist on sufficient levels of attention. Expectations are low in these instances. There is flexible teaching, particularly in the sixth form and students respond well to it, but it is not yet sufficiently established in other lessons. Teachers give generously of their time to maintain a good programme of extra curricular provision in sport throughout the school.

223. The issues raised in the previous report have largely been tackled. However, GCSE results remain significantly low compared to national averages. There is some independent learning now, particularly at sixth form level. Occasionally expectations of pupils are too low.

223. **Religious education**

224. There are no external examination results in religious education and no school records of attainment across a year group. In work seen, the attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the expectations of the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The sample of work provided for the current Year 11 has files which contain a series of disjointed and incomplete pieces of work. However, the school has recently implemented the requirement to follow a GCSE short course syllabus at Key Stage 4 and the current work both in lessons and in notebooks observed is satisfactory. At both key stages, the written work of many pupils contains significant spelling or grammatical errors. The sixth form course does not include formal written work. In lessons observed, students' knowledge of ethical theories was satisfactory; a few students lacked confidence to apply these theories in typical situations.

225. At Key Stage 3 and 4, and in the sixth form, the progress of pupils in lessons observed and in written work is satisfactory. In each case there are examples of good progress, when measured against the Agreed Syllabus skills of exploring, reflecting and responding. In Year 8 pupils who initially had little knowledge of Sikhism were able to explore aspects of the work and character of Guru Nanak by the end of a lesson. One group of Year 11 pupils responded well to the stimulus provided by a selection of newspaper cuttings selected to enable them to reflect on the arguments for and against capital punishment. A Year 12 class asked challenging questions which displayed their understanding of the application of natural law to various situations. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

226. Pupils' response in lessons is good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. No pupils have chosen to study religious studies as an option for GCSE or for GCE A level. In virtually all classes behaviour is good and pupils are attentive. They work well in small groups and make valuable contributions to whole class discussions. Where they disagree with ideas, they show respect for the beliefs and views of others. They are able to concentrate on written work, even when this mainly involves copying from a book or worksheet. Presentation of classwork and homework is always satisfactory and sometimes good.

227. At Key Stage 3 and 4, and in the sixth form, all teaching is satisfactory and in a minority of

lessons it is good. Teachers display good subject knowledge and understanding and manage pupils well. All lesson planning is satisfactory, although in some cases teachers do not make imaginative use of textbooks or other resources. Better teaching makes good use of video or includes well-managed discussion. There is an over-reliance on use of worksheets. However, since the last inspection, the department has made progress in provision of worksheets which give a variety of assignments for pupils of different ability levels. At Key Stage 3 homework is used effectively. It is not set in the sixth form nor in some groups at Key Stage 4. Assessment of pupil work by teachers is limited and there is no evidence of the use of assessment to inform teaching. There has been some progress in integration of information technology into teaching; this is an improvement since the time of the last inspection.

228. The time allocation for religious education in each year group is broadly in line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. The recent arrangement, whereby Year 10 and 11 are following a GCSE short course syllabus, has remedied a deficiency highlighted in the last inspection report, and allows for the possibility of some pupils being entered for an examination in the subject. The department does not have a procedure for recording the attainment of pupils. This means that some teachers do not have information on prior achievements of pupils, with resultant difficulties in monitoring progress systematically. The department has only a very small collection of religious artefacts. There are some opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship, for example Coventry Cathedral, or a Sikh temple. However, there is insufficient use made of visits to nearby places of worship.

228. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

228. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

229. The inspection was conducted by a team of 15 inspectors, including the registered inspector and the lay inspector. The inspection covered all National Curriculum subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form, optional subjects in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, special needs provision, careers education, personal and social education, assemblies, registrations and extra-curricular activities. 51 inspector days were spent in school, and 188 lessons were inspected. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils from each year group. The total time spent in lessons and interacting with pupils and staff during the inspection week was almost 200 hours. All staff timetabled for teaching, and present during the inspection, were seen teaching, and received reports on the quality of their lessons.

230. Meetings were held with the governing body before, during and after the inspection. Interviews were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors, heads of subjects, many other teachers with posts of responsibility and non-teaching staff. Four evening meetings of the inspection team were held during the inspection week, and the conclusions of the report represent their corporate views.

231. Before the inspection, 451 parents completed and returned the questionnaire sent to them by the school, and the registered inspector held a meeting attended by 36 parents. Views expressed by parents in the questionnaires, in writing, and raised at the meeting were noted and fully taken into account during the inspection.

232.DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	995	11	175	66

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	55.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9

Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	4.5
Total aggregate hours worked each week	16.5

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	79.9
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	26
	KS4	22

Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	2 031 410
Total Expenditure	2 026 776
Expenditure per pupil	2 107
Balance brought forward from previous year	109 664
Balance carried forward to next year	114 298

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

995

Number of questionnaires returned:

451

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	13	64	14	9	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	22	63	10	4	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	10	53	30	6	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	15	57	17	10	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	21	62	12	5	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	21	63	11	4	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	21	51	14	7	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	16	56	13	12	3
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	14	58	22	5	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	13	53	27	8	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	22	57	16	4	2

N.B. Not all parents responded to all questions

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents feel that the school does not provide adequately for pupils of varying abilities. Many parents of pupils in Year 7 felt unable to answer all the questions because of their relatively short acquaintance with the school.