

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST ANNE'S RC HIGH SCHOOL**

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106144

Headteacher: Miss Mary V Binnie

Reporting inspector: Mr B Evans  
1049

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 185603

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Glenfield Road  
Heaton Chapel  
Stockport

Postcode: SK4 2QP

Telephone number: 0161 432 8162

Fax number: 0161 443 1105

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Frances McGee

Date of previous inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> October 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
B Evans	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
B Silvester	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
F B Evans	Team inspector	English Drama	
J C Collinson	Team inspector	Mathematics	
J A Whitehall	Team inspector	Science	
R Robinson	Team inspector	Design and technology Information technology	
R Donne	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
H Boyle	Team inspector	History	
M R Gallagher	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular opportunities and other opportunities offered to pupils?
J Pickering	Team inspector	Art	
S M Wilkinson	Team inspector	Music	
S H Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education Equal opportunities	
P R Steven	Team inspector	Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
SK8 1BB

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Anne's Roman Catholic School is an average-sized mixed comprehensive school with 862 pupils on roll. There is a small but significant movement of pupils in and out of the school at times other than at the usual times. There are few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and very few who have English as an additional language. One hundred and seventy pupils have special educational needs and 18 have statements which is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is close to the national average. Standardised tests show that girls arrive with higher attainment than boys.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Overall standards are satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. They enter the school with average attainment and leave at the age of 16 with achievements that are close to the national average. In English and mathematics pupils achieve above average standards when compared with similar schools. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The headteacher gives clear leadership and educational direction and is given good support by staff. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in English and mathematics are above average.
- There are very effective strategies for improving pupils' literacy skills.
- Financial resources are used efficiently and focused on raising standards.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

#### **What could be improved**

- Monitoring and sharing of good classroom practice.
- Use of school's extensive assessment to raise standards.
- Provision of information and communication technology which does not meet
- Low expectations in science, modern foreign languages and history in Key Stage 3.
- Behaviour of a minority of pupils who disrupt the learning of others.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Good progress has been made in improving accommodation and facilities and the current building programme when completed will further enhance the learning environment. The school has satisfactorily developed initiatives to meet the needs of poorly motivated pupils in both key stages but there remains a small number of boys who are disaffected particularly in Key Stage 4. Priority has been given to developing information and communications technology and some progress has been made in developing pupils' skills but provision does not meet National Curriculum requirements. School appraisal procedures are in abeyance until new arrangements on performance management are agreed nationally. Good progress has been on implementing sound framework for financial management and whole school evaluation. The school improvement plan is a good working document. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and there are good systems and strategies in place for further raising standards.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
GCSE examinations	B	B	C	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Standardised tests and Key Stage 2 levels show that the overall profile of pupil attainment on entry to the school is close to the average for comprehensive schools.

Pupils achieve above the national average in public examinations at the age of 16. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C, 5 or more A\* to G grades and 1 or more A\* to G grades has been close to the national average for the last three years. In 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\*-C was above average compared with similar schools. Over the last six years the school's GCSE point score per pupil has risen more slowly than the national trend. In the 1999 results there were particular strengths in English and mathematics. Standards attained, during the inspection, confirm the picture given by examination results.

In 1999, the average points score achieved by pupils in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 at the age of 14 was above average when compared with all schools and well above average when compared with similar schools. However, there were significant differences between the average points score in each of the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In English, the average points score was well above the national average, it was at the national average in mathematics and in science. The overall trend in average National Curriculum points scores over the past four years has been rising close to the national average.

Standards in drama are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3; they are broadly in line with national expectations for design and technology, geography, history and physical education and below national expectations in modern foreign languages, art, information technology and music.

By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are well above average in drama, above average in art, history and physical education, close to the national average in geography, modern foreign languages, music and design and technology and well below average in information technology.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory: good in most areas but marred by unsatisfactory behaviour from a minority of pupils, mainly boys, in both key stages.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory:
Attendance	Broadly in line with the national average; there are good procedures for following up pupil absence.

Attitudes to school are good and are confirmed by pupils' average attendance rates in a context of a school which has a wide catchment area.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Of the 136 lessons observed 21 per cent of lessons were very good or excellent and 53 per cent of lessons were good or better. There were 9 per cent that were unsatisfactory and one per cent was poor. The proportion of lessons that were good or better was higher for Key Stage 4 than for Key Stage 3 although the distribution of unsatisfactory lessons was more evenly spread throughout both key stages. Overall, there has been a significant improvement on the figures for the last inspection in 1995.

Teaching is very good in English and good in mathematics; it is satisfactory in science for Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4 where teachers' expectations are higher. The teaching of information technology at Key Stage 4 has been adversely affected by teacher absence and is unsatisfactory. Pupils receive good teaching and guidance on improving basic literacy skills, and number skills are taught satisfactorily.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; meets statutory requirements except for the provision of information and communication technology. The school has experienced difficulty in recruiting specialist teachers in modern foreign languages.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; pupils with special educational needs receive their full curriculum entitlement and are fully integrated into all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory; adults provide good role models for pupils' social and moral development and all aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory; teachers know the pupils well, recognise their needs and give them sound support and guidance.

The links between the school and parents have a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory; the headteacher has a clear vision for the school and gives good leadership; senior staff have satisfactory leadership and management skills.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; the governing body gives effective support to staff in strategic planning and fulfils its statutory duties in all respects except for the provision of information and communications technology.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; there is a comprehensive bank of information on pupil performance; a sound framework for monitoring teaching and learning has been established but this is at an early stage and not fully effective in establishing a consistent approach to raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school development plan outlines school priorities in the short and medium term and these are linked to resources and finances required.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils make good progress.</li><li>• Teaching is good.</li><li>• Pupils are expected to work hard.</li><li>• School is approachable.</li><li>• Pupils like school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Homework.</li><li>• Information about progress.</li><li>• A greater range of activities outside lesson time.</li></ul>

Inspectors' evidence confirms parents' positive views of the school. Homework is generally set regularly but there is some variation between teachers. Reports to parents are informative but the computer generated format is not popular with a minority of parents. They would like more opportunities to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress. The range of extra-curricular activities is good and particularly good in physical education but the range of opportunities for pupils to participate in musical activities is limited.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

- 1 The overall profile of pupil attainment on entry to the school is close to the average for comprehensive schools.
- 2 Pupils achieve above the national average in public examinations at the age of 16. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C, 5 or more A\* to G grades and 1 or more A\* to G grades has been above the national average for the last three years. In 1999, the average GCSE points score per pupil was above average compared with pupils from similar schools. Over the last six years the school's GCSE point score per pupil has risen more slowly than the national trend. Overall boys and girls perform better in English and mathematics than in their other subjects. Standards attained, in lessons and in pupils' work examined during the inspection confirm the picture given by examination results.
- 3 In 1999, the average points score achieved by pupils in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 at the age of 14 was above average when compared with all schools and well above average when compared with similar schools. However, there were significant differences between the average points score in each of the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In English, the average points score was well above the national average, it was at the national average in both mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving level 6 was well above the national average for English, close to the national average for mathematics and below the national average for science. The overall trend in average National Curriculum points scores over the past four years has been rising close to the national average.
- 4 Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with national expectations for design and technology, geography, history and physical education and below national expectations in art, information technology modern foreign languages and music.
- 5 By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are well above average in drama, above average in art, history and physical education, below average in geography, modern foreign languages, music and design and technology and well below average in information technology.
- 6 Most pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school but it is variable between subjects and key stages. Pupils make very good progress in English in both key stages and there has been a significant improvement in literacy since the last inspection. The development of number skills is satisfactory. Pupils of all attainment levels make good progress in mathematics. In science pupils make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4.

- 7 In Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in geography, physical education and drama; satisfactory progress in art, information technology and design and technology; and unsatisfactory in history, information technology modern foreign languages and music. In Key Stage 4 progress is good in art, geography, physical education and history; and unsatisfactory in design and technology and information technology. It is unsatisfactory in a small number of lessons in both key stages where the unsatisfactory behaviour of a few boys affects the learning of others.
- 8 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in respect of their prior attainment. This is particularly where pupils are given extra support in withdrawal situations evident in English. Where progress is good it reflects good teaching in which planning and activities take account of the individual needs of the pupils. No school policy is in place in respect of the gifted or talented pupil. High attainers make satisfactory progress overall. They make excellent progress in English but unsatisfactory progress in science, art and history at Key Stage 3 and in information technology at both key stages.
- 9 The school has established since the last inspection a very comprehensive database which includes details of individual pupils' standards as they move through the school. Its potential for improving standards is not yet fully developed. However, the more effective use of this information in curriculum planning and in the classroom is a key element in the school's strategy to meet the challenging targets in 2000.
- 10 Since the last inspection standards in English, mathematics, geography and physical education and history (Key Stage 4) have improved. They have been maintained in science (Key Stage 4). They have fallen in Key Stage 3 science, modern foreign languages and information technology. They have been maintained in music.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 11 Pupils are keen to attend the school and play a full part in its life, including the satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. They have good attitudes to their work and most pupils show a high level of interest, listen well and are keen to answer and raise questions. A minority of pupils in a small number of lessons have low levels of concentration, talk when they should be working and are generally disruptive to the rest of the class.
- 12 The behaviour of the pupils in class and around the school is satisfactory. Parents are generally happy with the standard of behaviour achieved in the school. Standards of behaviour tend to vary because not all teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently or when classes are not taught regularly by the same teacher. There is no evidence of any oppressive behaviour.
- 13 In the last school year there were 50 fixed term and five permanent exclusions. These figures are above the national norm but exclusions in the school are falling. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are satisfactory. Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups and are willing to take turns and share resources. The small number of ethnic minority pupils are well integrated into the life of the school.

- 14 The personal development of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils respond well to a range of opportunities for taking responsibility around the school. The Year 11 prefects help on open and parents' evenings and assist with the supervision at lunch times. Pupils, in their form groups, organise their own assembly for the other pupils. Pupils show good initiative in raising money for a variety of charities.
- 15 Attendance in 1998/99 was 91.2 per cent and the level of unauthorised absence was 1.4 per cent. These levels are broadly in line with the national average and are good in the context of the school's catchment area. Amongst the reasons for non-attendance are illness, term time holidays (which the school discourages) some condoned absence by parents, some pupils being educated off-site and families who leave without informing the school. The level of attendance has improved by two per cent since the last inspection.
- 16 Most pupils are punctual but a significant minority arrive late. Some pupils travel into school by bus and the unreliability of the service affects punctuality. Between 10 and 15 pupils are late on a regular basis. Registers are usually taken at the beginning of each lesson there is little truancy during the school day.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

- 17 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Of the 136 lessons observed 21 per cent of lessons were very good or excellent and 53 per cent of lessons were good or better. There were 9 per cent that were unsatisfactory and one per cent was poor. The proportion of lessons that were good or better was higher for Key Stage 4 than for Key Stage 3 although the distribution of unsatisfactory lessons was more evenly spread throughout both key stages. Overall, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- 18 Teaching is very good in English and good in art, mathematics, geography, physical education and for cross-curricular information technology in Key Stage 3. It is satisfactory in science for Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4 where teachers' expectations are higher. In history, teaching is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 but satisfactory at Key Stage 4. It is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages mainly because the school has had great difficulty in recruiting specialist teachers. The teaching of information technology at Key Stage 4 has been adversely affected by teacher absence and is unsatisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory at both key stages in design and technology and music. Drama teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4.
- 19 Improvement in the quality of teaching is due to a greater priority being given by senior managers to improving classroom practice. However, there is a very limited framework within which senior managers and heads of department can monitor and support further improvements in teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum. Most of the ten per cent of unsatisfactory lessons observed across a range of subjects were due to learning being disrupted to some degree by a few pupils.
- 20 Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is a general strength in all subjects except in modern foreign languages taught by non-specialist teachers and in information technology. It is particularly good in English and mathematics.
- 21 The teaching of basic skills is good overall but varies between subjects. Basic skills

are well taught for pupils with special educational needs when individual needs are identified in planning and provided for in the context of the lesson.

- 22 Lesson planning is satisfactory and in most teachers set clear learning objectives for pupils in most lessons. It is good in mathematics where lessons begin well with mental work which prepares them for tasks that follow. Teachers' expectations are good for most higher attainers and generally satisfactory for average and lower attainers. Teachers' methods and organisation are satisfactory in both key stages. The teaching of the personal, social and health education programme is satisfactory overall but there is not enough consistency between teachers. Pupils benefit according to how effectively resources are presented to them in the lessons.
- 23 Classroom management is satisfactory. It is very good in English. Behaviour management is weak in a small number of classes and often associated with pupils' either finding the work too hard or too easy or the set tasks being too open ended leading to pupils being bored or distracted by others. Overall, teachers' use of time and resources is satisfactory.
- 24 Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in teachers' use of computer technology in English, mathematics and geography. Pupils do not have enough access to computer equipment. Teachers mark pupils' work satisfactorily and this information is used by many teachers in planning their lessons but it is not uniformly used to identify exactly what pupils have to do to make progress.
- 25 Some parents expressed concern over the amount of homework set. Inspection evidence shows that homework is set satisfactorily on most occasions and in line with the school timetable but with some variations between teachers.
- 26 There is a close relationship between the quality of teaching described in the above paragraphs and the extent to which pupils acquire new knowledge and skills. Overall in both key stages pupils of all attainment levels and pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work. They make satisfactory gains in learning. However, there are occasions when pupils are not given enough responsibility for their learning and so too quickly become reliant on teacher support and direction. When pupils have to wait for teacher support they quickly become restless. Low attainers have short concentration spans and learn more effectively when they are presented with short-term goals which are time linked. The pace of learning in most lessons is satisfactory.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

- 27 The school curriculum meets statutory requirements except for the provision of information and communication technology. Subject provision for information and communications technology is mostly linked to English, mathematics and geography. The curriculum provides breadth and balance overall. Pupils with special educational needs receive their full curriculum entitlement and are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. All staff understand the school's staged approach to special educational needs but in some subject areas, such as history and geography, it is not reflected in the content of lessons or in the resources used.
- 28 The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory. The provision is

good in mathematics, geography and physical education (where pupils in Key Stage 4 can achieve the Junior Sports Leaders Award and work towards a National Vocational Qualification) and outstanding in English. In music, art and personal, social and health education (PSHE) the timetable time allocated is below the proportion found nationally.

- 29 Provision for the teaching of basic skills is good. There are satisfactory strategies for the teaching of numeracy and there are opportunities for pupils to enhance their skills in subjects other than mathematics, such as geography, through data collation and representation and science, through the application of scientific formulae. Provision for literacy is good. All departments have literacy policies in which subject language is specifically addressed and particular literary skills required in other subjects have been addressed within the English programme of work.
- 30 Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory and very good in physical education, which has an extensive range of well supported sporting activities in which nearly half the school participates. School teams and individuals gain success at all levels. There is an annual trip to France and a biennial skiing holiday. The lunchtime computer club is well attended and there is after-hours teaching in preparation for GCSE in several subject areas.
- 31 Provision for personal, social and health education, sex education and substance abuse is satisfactory. Careers education and guidance is satisfactory overall but there is a minimal allocation of time within the personal, social and health education programme.
- 32 Arrangements for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. The schools' mission statement and aims reflect the Christian purpose of the school – 'to know, love and serve God.' There are regular school liturgies, Year Group Masses and retreats. The major classroom contribution to the development of pupils' spiritually comes within the sphere of religious education but other subject areas, notably English and drama also play their part, utilising issues which arise in the classroom – such as discussion of biblical references in 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. In science pupils have good opportunities to consider the wonder of life and living processes.
- 33 Pupils' moral development is satisfactory. The school teaches the difference between right and wrong and adults in the school provide good role models. Pupils' social development is satisfactory. It is enhanced within the timetabled curriculum by paired and group work in design technology and modern foreign languages and strong sense of teamwork and fair play in physical education. The good relationships between pupils in the geography and mathematics classrooms help to instil positive social attitudes. Opportunities for pupils to play a part in the making of decisions are more limited since the disbanding of the school council. Social skills are also well developed when rehearsing for and taking part in musical shows and concerts. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. It is developed in a range of subjects including music where pupils' cultural knowledge and understanding is increased through the study of jazz, African and Indonesian music as well as the European tradition.
- 34 Links with partner primary schools and with Post-16 education providers are sound. There is a good induction programme for Year 7 pupils.



- 35 The school has a sound policy for promoting equal opportunities. The policy seeks to support the aims of the school. In particular, it aims to promote relationships in which people will be self-confident and treat each other with mutual respect and consideration. However, there is no individual member of staff with specific responsibility for monitoring the policy. Most subject departments have an equal opportunities policy, and there is equal access to the curriculum in almost all subjects. The exception is in physical education, where boys and girls do not have equal access to dance and outdoor activities in Key Stage 3. All pupils receive equal support through the school's effective pastoral system, but there are insufficient support assistants for pupils with special educational needs.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 36 The steps taken to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The teachers know the pupils well, recognise their needs and give them sound support and guidance.
- 37 The school has adopted the local education authority's health and safety policy. Annual safety checks of the buildings and grounds are completed. Termly fire drills are completed and the moveable equipment is checked annually.
- 38 The school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. The school has adopted the local education authority's guidelines on child protection and there is a senior teacher who is responsible for its implementation. All staff are aware of the procedures to adopt if they have any concerns. The school nurse monitors well the progress of any pupils on the 'At Risk' register.
- 39 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. There is a clear behaviour policy which contains a suitable range of rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour. These are not, however, consistently used by all teachers and this at times leads to unsatisfactory behaviour. The school allocates resources to provide an alternative curriculum for a small number of pupils with behavioural problems. The school's anti-bullying policy is effective and any incidents are dealt with quickly by teachers.
- 40 The school's procedures for the monitoring, and supporting of the pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall. Academic progress is monitored by the form and subject teachers. A range of data from standardised and other tests and assessments is collated. In the best practice this information is used by teachers to modify and improve their long and short term curriculum planning. The school has clear guidelines on assessment recording and reporting, which are succinct and helpful, but they are not consistently followed by all teachers which is therefore unsatisfactory.
- 41 The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. The personal development of the pupils is monitored by their subject and form teachers and through personal and social education lessons, pastoral records, records of achievement and pupils' annual reports. Merits are given for personal achievement and service.

- 42 The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Attendance is monitored by form tutors and any concerns are taken up. The heads of year meet with the education welfare officer every two weeks and any pupils with a poor attendance or punctuality record are pursued. The Education Welfare Officer contacts parents and makes home visits. The Education Welfare Officer also offers a counselling service for the pupils. The school encourages good attendance by awarding termly and annual certificates.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 43 Parents are supportive of the school and the links between the school and parents have a positive impact on the pupils' learning.
- 44 Regular informative, monthly newsletters are sent out to parents. Pupils' achievements are celebrated at two awards' evenings which are held each year.
- 45 The school's links with its parents are effective and their involvement has a sound impact on the work of the school. The contribution of parents to children's learning, at school and at home, is satisfactory.
- 46 Parents had mixed views on how their child's attainment and progress is reported to them. A significant minority of parents did not feel well informed about how their child is getting on at school. They felt that pupils' annual reports are computer generated and impersonal and would welcome more opportunities to discuss the reports with the subject teachers. Inspection evidence shows that the school's reports follow the normal pattern but that there is some variation in their quality.
- 47 The fundraising committee is run by parents and friends of the school and has charitable status. They organise a range of fund raising events and the money raised is used for improvements to the school. Some parents have helped to carry out some internal decorations. Parents were consulted about the Home/School Agreement before it was introduced. Most parents have signed the agreement. Parents collect vouchers to obtain resources for the school and are invited to special events and productions.
- 48 Some parents expressed concern about homework but this was not generally supported by the inspection evidence. Pupils generally express satisfaction with the amount of homework provided. Most pupil planners are used to record the homework given and they are signed by parents and teachers. They can also serve as a line of communication between the school and home. Homework provision is satisfactorily monitored by the heads of year.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 49 The school is led by an experienced headteacher who has a clear vision on improving attainment levels in line with the school's aims. The headteacher's leadership style is based on sound consultative procedures and management responsibilities are delegated efficiently. After consultation with staff this vision is expressed in strategies defined in the school's good development plan and approved by the governing body. It is reviewed regularly and adapted appropriately when opportunities for new funding, initiatives or changes in staffing arise. Current management strengths in raising standards include the setting up of good assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress. Assessment data are used to set pupil targets but generally not effectively used by teachers to guide pupils on how they can make better progress.
- 50 The senior management team work well together and ensure that the school's daily routines are well organised. There is an embryonic programme of monitoring and evaluation of teachers and subsequent support for staff development. Senior staff have a shared commitment to improving standards. However, the senior management team has not established a common framework for following up on issues raised by the monitoring process, for example, in the implementation of a whole school behaviour policy in the classroom.
- 51 Heads of department provide satisfactory leadership and have sound management skills. English, drama and physical education departments are very well led. The management of information and communications technology is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4 and has an adverse effect on pupils' standards. The main weakness in most departments is that there is no coherent approach to improving and building on good classroom performance to raise standards further. For example, in science newly appointed teachers have not had enough opportunities to share ideas on good classroom practice. Provision for the induction of newly qualified staff is satisfactory. The school's appraisal procedures are in abeyance until further guidance is given by the Department for Education and Employment.
- 52 The governing body fulfils its statutory duties in all respects except for the provision of information and communications technology. Committee minutes reflect the sound support it gives the headteacher and staff and its awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body make a good contribution to enabling the school to make the best strategic use of its resources and ensure that specific grants and additional funding are spent appropriately. It takes an appropriate involvement promoting the school within the community. Educational priorities in the school development plan are supported through careful financial management. Governors oversee that the principles of best value, including comparison, challenge, consultation and competition, are applied in securing resources and services. This has been a particular issue in St Anne's since its accommodation is cramped. The new buildings under construction are a reflection of the skill with which the headteacher and governors have been able to argue a convincing case with a wide range of local and national bodies.

- 53 There is an adequate number of teachers to match the needs of the curriculum. There are shortages of appropriately qualified French and German specialists. Classroom assistants work well with teachers in supporting pupils with special educational needs although they are not enough in number. Teachers are given very good back-up by administrative and support staff who contribute significantly to the smooth day-to-day organisation of the school.
- 54 During the inspection the school library was not in use. The school is waiting for a final date on which rebuilding and refurbishment can begin. The book stock at present is low. Some books are in the English department, where they are used to encourage reading and research while the library is out of use. Other books have been removed to improve the quality of the remaining stock. The school has monies in hand to invest in new stock when refurbishment is complete. Some physical education facilities are unsatisfactory and there is a lack of space in the design and technology workshops.
- 55 There are more strengths than weaknesses in leadership and management and it is overall satisfactory. Overall efficiency of the school as measured by academic and personal achievement and attendance is satisfactory. Given the average attainment on entry, the average standards achieved by pupils by the age of 16 and the average pupil unit cost, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56 To raise standards further the governors and staff should:-

### **improve current strategies for following up on the senior management team's programme of monitoring classroom teaching and learning by:**

- agreeing a common format between senior managers for observing lessons;
- all senior managers responding to emerging issues from lesson observations in a coherent and consistent way.

[Paragraphs 50, 95, 121, 128,137]

### **make more effective use of assessment and performance data by:**

- monitoring its use by teachers in lesson planning;
- responding to variations between subjects and groups of pupils and identifying attainment targets in these areas;

[Paragraphs 24, 39, 48, 74, 137]

### **fulfil statutory requirements for the provision of information and communications technology by:**

- implementing the management plan included in the school development plan for improving teaching and learning in core information and communications technology;
- enabling all teachers to improve their information and communications skills;
- improving the management of information and communications technology in Key Stage 4 and revising the scheme of work with an emphasis on raising standards.

[Paragraphs 27, 51, 95, 112-121, 130]

All three of the above issues are highlighted in the school development plan as whole school priorities.

The following matters are identified as weaknesses, also issues in the school development plan, which should be considered by the school –

- the unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority who disrupt the learning of others. [Paragraphs 87, 95, 107, ]
- low teacher expectations in science, modern foreign languages and history at Key Stage 3. [Paragraphs 78, 109, 124]

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	136
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	19	32	37	9	1	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 - 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	862	N/a
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	126	N/a

Special educational needs	Y7 - 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18	N/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	177	N/a

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	75	95	170

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	50	49	37
	Girls	90	70	51
	Total	140	119	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	82 (79)	70 (57)	52 (44)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	45 (47)	35 (28)	14 (13)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	38	45
	Girls	91	55	61
	Total	134	93	106
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (66)	55 (65)	63 (46)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	41 (31)	25 (29)	24 (15)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	76	71	147

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	30	68	73
	Girls	37	67	70
	Total	67	135	143
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	46 (52)	92 (90)	97 (96)
	National	[46.3] (44.6)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (95.2)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	38
	National	37.8

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	N/A	N/A
	National		N/A

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	860
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	2	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	48	5
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	51.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	8.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	188

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74
---	----

#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	24.2
Key Stage 4	20.1

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/99
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	1870053
Total expenditure	1898518
Expenditure per pupil	2266
Balance brought forward from previous year	27090
Balance carried forward to next year	(-1375)



## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	862
Number of questionnaires returned	116

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	56	8	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	54	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	53	13	2	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	48	19	2	2
The teaching is good.	28	72	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	49	17	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	53	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	52	14	3	7
The school is well led and managed.	34	52	6	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	56	6	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	45	20	3	11

### **Other issues raised by parents**

None

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

- 57 Pupils enter the school with average standards in English. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils achieve well above average standards. This has been the case for the last three years. In 1999, pupils achieved very high standards when compared to similar schools. Both boys and girls achieve well above average standards but girls achieve better than boys do. Lower attainers and some pupils with special educational needs achieve at or above the national expectation. Higher attainers achieve high standards while a significant number of pupils of average attainment achieve above average standards. The overall trend is one of steady improvement since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A\*-C in 1999 is well above the national average in English language and above the national average in English literature. GCSE grades have improved for the years 1997-1999. As with the Key Stage 3 results, both boys and girls attain above the national averages for boys and girls. However, girls continue to do better than the boys and by a wider margin.
- 58 Standards in English are very high because the English department is very effective in promoting literacy development. Throughout Key Stage 3 there is a clear emphasis on teaching pupils to understand and improve the key skills of the subject. Pupils' standards of speaking and listening are good. In class, they speak clearly and confidently. Their oral responses are usually well thought out and go beyond simple observations. Pupils read aloud confidently, although sometimes with hesitation. They speak verse well with some pupils showing an understanding of rhythm and metre. Pupils read well. Reading is encouraged by the use of the reading box at the beginning of most English lessons. This creates a calm and reflective atmosphere which supports good teaching. It is part of a departmental initiative to establish a reading community in the school. It works well. The quality of the pupils' written work is good. Pupils develop a growing confidence in their writing throughout both key stages. Pupils have a clear sense of audience and write in a range of styles. Pupils in Year 7 are taught note-taking skills and used these to good effect when summarising arguments for a speech on zoos. By the age of 16, pupils develop as writers and there are some good examples of imaginative writing. Pupils in a Year 9 class learned to manipulate meaning and effect through working on the development of a simple sentence into a more complex one. They identify different pronouns and talk confidently about different genre. In a lesson on 'Romeo and Juliet', pupils learned how the language of the text reveals meaning and character.
- 59 At Key Stage 4, pupils build effectively on the skills acquired at Key Stage 3. A Year 10 class discussed a publicity leaflet for a tourist attraction and analysed accurately the language and the images used. They understand how language is used to manipulate the reader's emotions. This emphasis on word and meaning was illustrated in a Year 11 class analysing Polonius' speech to Laertes. Pupils understood the layers of meaning in the text and referred to aspects of language to support their views. The written work by GCSE pupils shows some outstanding work from higher attainers whose work is articulate and fluent. Average attainers produce good work which reflects the strengths of analysis, interpretation and comparison of texts. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs write competently and clearly. They have a real sense of what a sentence is. The

development of writing skills is a strength of the department's approach to English teaching.

- 60 Pupils make very good progress in English. The emphasis on key skills enables pupils to develop the necessary language with which to write clearly about the subject. The quality of their written responses improves as they learn to shape and craft their writing. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have made very good progress. Lower attainers make very good progress. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4. A significant number of pupils who enter the school with reading ages below their chronological age achieve the national levels of expectation by the end of Year 9. Some achieve better. At Key Stage 4, progress is good as pupils achieve results well above national averages. Pupils with special educational needs, who achieved at or just above national expectation at Key Stage 3, often go on to achieve GCSE grades C to F. This partly explains the difference in rates of progress between the two key stages. English teachers are very skilled in raising the levels of achievement of all pupils. However, at Key Stage 4, there is some variation in the number of higher attainers achieving the higher grades. The relative underperformance of boys, compared to girls, is a concern that the department is tackling well.
- 61 The response of pupils in the lessons is good at both key stages. Pupils listen carefully and speak clearly. Their written work is neat and well presented, showing evidence of sensible drafting and redrafting, as they respond to the teacher's suggestions for improvement. In their oral answers they show good understanding of the lesson. For example, a Year 9 class studying the Rime of the Ancient Mariner showed a surprisingly good grasp of the meaning and use of metre in the poem. When comparing literary texts pupils use an appropriate range of vocabulary and sentence structure, which helps them to answer questions more accurately. This leads to some good coursework at Key Stage 4. Homework is set regularly and is often used to extend learning. A number of pupils word process their essays, using different fonts and colours to enliven the text. Behaviour in the lessons is generally good.
- 62 The lack of response from the lower attainers at Key Stage 4, noted at the previous inspection, is not as evident. However, there are still some lower attaining boys whose concentration and attention are limited. It is the teachers' skilled classroom management, which keeps these pupils involved in learning.
- 63 Teaching is consistently very good in English and has a marked impact on learning, contributing directly to the very high standards achieved. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed. The quality of the teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good at Key Stage 3. It is better at Key Stage 4, ranging from very good to outstanding. The teaching has many strengths. The English teachers are dedicated, hard working and committed wholeheartedly to raising standards. There are high expectations and consistency of approach in all classes. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace. Teachers manage pupils with unflinching patience and courtesy, modelling the good behaviour they expect from pupils. They value the pupils. There is outstanding teaching of basic skills at both key stages. A combination of excellent planning and teaching methods ensures that pupils learn and make good progress. Pupils are taught about language and its structure. They are taught to craft a written response, and as a result, the quality of writing in English is good. Basic writing skills are taught as part of the literacy initiative.

These skills enhance pupils' written work in other subjects, notably science, design technology, history and geography.

- 64 Leadership and management in English are excellent. The present curriculum, which was introduced in September 1997, is the result of a concern for literacy development as a means of improving pupil performance. In this it is successful as the results at both key stages show. The head of department monitors teaching and pupils' work thoroughly to ensure consistency of approach and standards. Targets are set for pupils to achieve. Written work is marked very carefully. Pupils are not only encouraged but also told how they can improve their skills. The advice given relates to particular skills in which a pupil is weak. Assessment procedures are good, but are not yet extended throughout Key Stage 3. There is a keen interest in promoting boys' achievement and strategies are in place to achieve this, developed from the department's thorough research and analysis of data. A number of staff have left since the previous inspection: most were promoted to positions in other schools, which indicates the high professional standards in the department. There is a good policy on information and communication technology but it is not yet integrated into the curriculum. The present accommodation is in need of refurbishment.
- 65 English is a very good department, which has improved since the previous inspection. Standards are very high. Teaching is very good. Pupils are challenged by the lessons. They enjoy them and work well. There is a learning culture and a clear work ethic in English. There are still some difficulties associated with the lower band in Key Stage 4 but these are not as serious as at the previous inspection. GCSE grades are improving and significant numbers of pupils achieve GCSE grades which are better than those predicted. The most significant improvement is the structured approach to teaching English, which involves pupils in learning and promotes high standards in pupils of all levels of attainment.

#### Literacy across the curriculum

- 66 The provision for the development of the pupils' literacy skills is good. While there is no whole school policy on literacy, each department has its own literacy policy. The head of the English department and the literacy co-ordinator, also a member of the English department, work closely with other departments. For example, in science there was a concern about the quality of the pupils' writing when reporting experiments. The English department then taught the required skills during English lessons, which resulted in better writing in science. A similar approach was used in design technology to improve the quality of the pupils' written evaluations. Part of the literacy initiative is to use specific subject vocabulary, making sure that pupils understand it and can use it correctly in their writing. Often improvement is linked to the National Curriculum or GCSE grade criteria. In this way pupils acquire a subject specific vocabulary, which enables them to write more precisely about a subject.
- 67 Pupils speak well. They speak clearly and distinctly and in a considered way. Pupils listen carefully in class. Discussions, whether in groups or in class, are productive. A number of year 11 pupils are preparing for a local public speaking contest. In rehearsal, they speak confidently and fluently with a touch of humour. Drama lessons support the development of good speaking and listening skills. Reading aloud in class is usually fairly accurate and confidently done. Some pupils have a sense of verse, sometimes from their experience in drama or the school play. Pupils can recall what they have read. The 'Storytelling' group meets Year 7

pupils at frequent intervals to hear adults model good reading aloud. These conscious attempts to establish a reading community among the pupils are especially important as the school library is temporarily out of action because of the new building construction. Writing skills are satisfactory across most subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 68 At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment in mathematics is above the national average at level 5 and above, and close to the national average at the higher grades. There has been an improvement in performance since the previous inspection. Pupils' results in the end-of-Key Stage 3 assessment tests in 1999 were well above those of similar schools. There is a small but consistent difference in the results of girls and boys, with the girls obtaining slightly better results.
- 69 At the end of Key Stage 4 there has been an upward trend since the previous inspection with results overall above the national average, although there was a fall in 1999 and GCSE grades A\*-C were in line with the national average. In the last three years, the average grade in mathematics in GCSE has been consistently above the averages obtained in all other subjects in the school. There are no consistent differences between the results for girls and boys, although the results for girls have been better in the last two years.
- 70 In Key Stage 3 pupils extend their understanding of mathematics. Pupils are able to use mathematics in a range of problems which require numerical and algebraic skills, for example in determining number patterns, and in the beginnings of trigonometry. Attention is given to all attainment targets including the use and application of mathematics, where the skills of prediction, generalisation and checking are developed. Pupils' skills in mental and written calculations are practised and pupils' calculation skills show improvement as they move through the key stage. By the end of the key stage most pupils are confident in an appropriate range of topics including the use of negative and positive numbers and in drawing graphs. In Key Stage 4 pupils continue to extend their knowledge and skills in all areas of the mathematical curriculum and in the application of these skills to problems. Pupils continue to make good progress and build effectively on the knowledge and skills gained in Key Stage 3. The work for pupils of all levels of attainment is demanding. For example, higher attainers extend their understanding of algebraic formulas and the solution of equations. Lower attainers use their knowledge of angles to calculate angles at a point and draw diagrams to illustrate statistical information. Numerical topics in measurement, approximations and estimation are introduced at appropriate levels for all pupils. All pupils in the key stage take courses leading to GCSE.
- 71 Attainment in numeracy in the school as a whole is average. In mathematics lessons attention is given to the development of knowledge and understanding of number. Mental calculations and the use of number in problems improve with practice. Further attention is needed to ensure that national developments in numeracy are taken fully into account. Examples of the use of number are seen in other subjects, although there is inconsistency in the opportunities taken to develop numeracy in the curriculum as a whole. Skills of numeracy are developed in science through measurement, the use of large and small numbers and calculations involving speed, distance and time. In design and technology examples of measurement and proportion are used in food technology and a project on 'moving

toys'. There is no whole school policy for numeracy. Facilities for the use of information and communication technology in mathematics have improved since September 1999. All classes have access to computers and pupils' information and communication technology skills are used to enhance the learning of mathematics, for example in number and calculation skills and in the drawing of diagrams using LOGO. A systematic approach to the use of information and communication technology is still to be developed. The school policy on literacy is supported by the mathematics department through, for example, vocabulary displays in classrooms and the drafting and rewriting of reports in investigational activities.

- 72 Pupils on entry to the school are average in mathematics and this performance is enhanced throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The progress made by pupils of all levels of attainment is good. High standards are set for all pupils in most topics, although the standards in numeracy and calculation are lower than in other attainment targets. High attainers are challenged and extended in the work they do. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for in the setting arrangements and in the work they do.
- 73 In mathematics lessons pupils are interested and well motivated. Behaviour is mainly good, although there are a few lessons which are disrupted by a very small minority of disinterested pupils who have an impact beyond their numbers. Pupils are able to show initiative in their work, such as the investigatory activities, and when they are able to make choices and work independently they do this sensibly.
- 74 The teaching is good in both key stages. In Key Stage 3 the teaching is good or very good in more than half of the lessons; there is no unsatisfactory teaching. In Key Stage 4 the teaching is good or very good in two thirds of the lessons but there is a little unsatisfactory teaching. In both key stages the teaching has variety which includes practice in number work and mental arithmetic skills, investigatory activities for all pupils, as well as more formal approaches. In Key Stage 3 the teaching shows an improvement on that seen at the previous inspection and pupils' learning is good. Efforts have been made to improve the planning and pace and these have been successful with a beneficial effect on progress. In a lesson on Pythagorean numbers high attainers were challenged and extended by the activity. An investigation on 'Mystic Roses' provided a good use of number patterns and an introduction to a computing activity. Low attainers are also well provided for through number practice and, for example, the use of mirrors to demonstrate the symmetry of shapes. In Key Stage 4 the teaching also shows an improvement since the previous inspection. Lower attainers are suitably extended, for example in coursework such as 'Hidden Faces' which is included for all pupils. Higher attainers are successful in challenging work such as on direct and inverse proportion. In both key stages there is a little teaching which is less effective. Where this is so pupils' learning is limited, for example where whole class teaching does not provide fully for all pupils and when insufficient attention is given to the basic skills of number and calculation. There are contrasting teaching styles amongst the teachers of mathematics and there are gains to be obtained by an exchange of ideas and approaches that are used. In both key stages pupils' learning is good. In most lessons the work is challenging and the pupils are successful in it. The topics which are taught take into account National Curriculum levels which are challenging and appropriate for the pupils.
- 75 The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The leadership in curriculum development and the developments in information and

communication technology are good. There is a strong commitment to improve pupil performance and a number of strategies have been adopted to raise performance. Extra-curricular activities include a lunchtime computer session and participation in local mathematics 'challenges'. Forward planning has identified appropriate priorities with targets and success criteria, and action taken under each main heading. The systematic monitoring of the work of the department is at an early stage. The strengths in teaching have not been maximised and monitoring the teaching has a contribution to make to this. Pupils' work in exercise books is checked departmentally but the full benefits have still to be seen. The detailed records of pupil performance, which the department now has, are used to a limited extent to track or provide targets for pupils. The mathematics teachers are suitably qualified and the department has a good range of expertise and experience. The accommodation is satisfactory and well looked after and maintained. The resources are of good quality and effectively support the work of the department.

## SCIENCE

- 76 In 1999 the attainment of pupils in Key Stage 3 science tests was broadly in line with the national average and close to the average for similar schools. However, their attainment was lower than their results in English and mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining level 5 or above was close to the national average and broadly in line with the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining level 6 or above was below the national average and below the average for similar schools. The performance of girls was close to the national average and the performance of boys was below the national average.
- 77 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils entered for the combined double science award in 1999 achieved GCSE A\*-C and A\*-G grades that were above the national average and were similar to the results in English and mathematics. There has been a steady improvement since 1997. A minority of pupils study for a single award in science and the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A\*-G was better than national average. The results for boys and girls were similar.
- 78 Scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils suggest that understanding basic ideas has improved, but not significantly since 1999. At Key Stage 3 there is a lack of practical work and the initial lessons are pitched at a relatively low level, for example, pupils are asked to identify major body organs and in another section link function to property only at a simple level. However by Year 9 high attainers are introduced to atomic structure and the periodic table. Low attainers gain a good understanding of how basic electrical circuits measure the current flowing. The quality of the written work and the neat presentation of the pupils' books is of a high standard, providing evidence of the beneficial effects of the school's literacy policy. Mathematical skills are used to analyse data accurately, bar graphs in Year 7 and line graphs in Years 8 and 9. There is no evidence of the use of information technology for data analysis. At Key Stage 4 pupils attempt a satisfactory number of practical sessions leading to moderated investigations, for example, the reaction between potato starch and hydrogen peroxide. Higher attainers understood the underlying theory and could explain the need to control variables. They handled the apparatus confidently taking a wide range of measurements. Average and low attainers were not sure of the reaction, but appreciated the need for a fair test and used the equipment safely. Concepts covered in Year 11 include organic molecules in the fractional distillation of crude oil and pupils measure electrical current flowing

in more complex situations. Some pupils explain the function of electronic components and understand the structure of the eye.

- 79 The overall rate of progress is satisfactory; it is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Lack of practical work and an over-reliance on the course text book has made the course less interesting than it should be. The good progress at Key Stage 4 is influenced by the effective course material directed at the GCSE which involves moderated practical work. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 with 40 per cent of the pupils on the register remaining on the same level throughout the key stage. At Key Stage 4 progress is good.
- 80 The response of pupils to classwork is satisfactory overall, being satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3 there is a general lack of enthusiasm but pupils respond quickly to questions asked by the teacher. They produce neat accurate work. At Key Stage 4 there is a more purposeful atmosphere with the pupils showing more interest and undertaking practical work effectively. There is a satisfactory level of homework set which is completed reasonably well. The pace and efficiency of some lessons is influenced by the distractions caused by a small minority of pupils.
- 81 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3, four out of every five lessons were satisfactory or better and one in every five lessons were good or better. At Key Stage 4, three-quarters of the lessons were satisfactory or better and half the lessons good or better. At both key stages teachers have a good subject knowledge. Good planning ensures their lessons include all aspects of safety which are fully understood by pupils. At Key Stage 3 teachers' expectations are not high enough, opportunities for practical work are missed and there is too much reliance on text books. This results in a slow pace of lessons. However, the scrutiny of books and the response to probing questioning suggests that pupils are gaining knowledge at a satisfactory rate. At Key Stage 4 expectations are higher, pupils are more involved and lessons are of a good pace. Practical work is undertaken carefully and pupils co-operate well with teachers. However, in some lessons the school policy on behaviour is not consistently applied by teachers. In both key stages not enough attention is given to the need to ensure that the pupils are fully aware of what is required and the time allowed for the activity. There are some instances where teachers' marking of books is not rigorous enough with too few critically helpful comments.
- 82 Tests at the end of each module track effectively the progress of each pupil and form the basis of good teacher assessment. Teachers make good use of the resources available and make good attempts to overcome the difficulties caused by the laboratory design. In both key stages pupils with specific learning difficulties make valuable contributions to lessons.
- 83 The department has a sound management structure. Three new staff have been appointed this year but there is little sharing of good classroom practice to assist the newly qualified teachers in their professional development. There are five laboratories serviced by two part time technicians who provide efficient support to teachers. This support and the compact nature of the laboratories contributes to satisfactory teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are carried out effectively and facilitate pupil transfer where between ability groupings in bands.



## ART

- 84 At the end of Key Stage 4 GCSE grades are well below the national average in 1999 and reverse the trend of recent years in which attainment rose from significantly below national average, to above average in 1998. Girls' attainment is better than that of the boys at both key stages, but particularly at Key Stage 4 where the gap is significantly wider than the gap nationally.
- 85 The standard of work at Key Stage 3 is below national expectations but much of the work of higher attainers is broadly in line with expectations. Most of the work demonstrates under-developed drawing skills, a lack of personal research, and an over-reliance on images taken from books and other sources. Pupils' skills of design and composition are good, as is their ability to create colourful images in oil pastels, using the work of Georgia O'Keefe, and others, as a starting point. Good work is being produced by higher attainers when using coloured chalks or charcoal to make portraits or drawings of shoes and everyday objects.
- 86 Key Stage 4 work is above average. These older pupils are comfortable working in a variety of sizes up to, and beyond A1, and are confident when using a range of processes including screen-printing. Pupils use a number of quite original painting styles, for example when working on an observed still-life of flowers and drapery. Others are equally at home using their creative ability to make pertinent comment on animal cruelty or the consequences and horrors of war. The girls' work is well above the national average standard while the boys, with few exceptions, is well below; a difference due to the girls' willingness to adopt a freer, more adventurous and original approach to their work, backed up by research and effort, seldom seen in the boys. By the end of the key stage the majority of pupils, particularly the girls, are able to use their practical skills and knowledge of art and artists to carry ideas from a starting point, through their sketchbooks, to well executed final pieces of work. The artists who particularly influence the pupils are Kandinsky, Klimt, Mondrian, and those who developed cubism. There is no evidence at either key stage of the use of information technology to generate works of art in the department. Gifted and talented pupils, both boys and girls, do particularly well at Key Stage 4 and in 1998 almost four times the national average gained grades A\* or A at GCSE.
- 87 Pupils' standards of literacy are improved by their use of a subject specific vocabulary and a programme of quizzes and word searches. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4. Those pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages.
- 88 The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good overall but range from very good in some Year 8 and 11 lessons, to unsatisfactory in some Year 7 and 9 lessons. Unsatisfactory behaviour is characterised by small groups of boys who behave immaturely, disrupt lessons and prevent others making good progress. Fortunately, the majority of pupils enjoy and respect the subject and their teachers and take advantage of the opportunity to develop their talent.
- 89 Teaching in the department is good. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and often good. The teachers' ability to link the practical work of the pupils to the work

of famous artists and designers is much improved since the last inspection. One class is making good progress in their paintings inspired by Picasso's cubism, while another class, of potentially difficult pupils, benefit greatly from their introduction to the work of the Swiss artist, Paul Klee. Non-specialist teachers require further training to make this feature of their work even stronger. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is very good. The teacher's comprehensive knowledge of the many aspects of the subject, points the way for these older pupils, to develop their work in a variety of directions, at the same time giving them an insight into the potential of different processes. This quality has led to a particularly good set of work based on the patterns of a zebra; this was begun as a photo-copied image, then developed through drawing painting and collage into a well-conceived fabric print. The pupils recognise their teacher's skill and feel for her subject and respond to her high expectations with effort and a good pace of creative learning. They are less sure in the self-knowledge of their own learning and sometimes lack the confidence to reflect on their work or assess the measures necessary to improve. Procedures for targeting pupils' progress are not formalised. Sometimes, at both key stages, the homework is not sufficiently challenging and represents a missed opportunity to allow some of the high attaining boys to make full use of their ability.

- 90 The curriculum is broad but, as in the last inspection report, continues to lack balance at both key stages. The time allowed for Key Stage 3 art remains below the national figure and makes effective delivery of the National Curriculum difficult. The department's lack of facilities for ceramics seriously limits the opportunities for three-dimensional work. Critical studies do not include enough non-European art and artists. There are few opportunities for pupils to visit art galleries or to work with artists-in-residence.
- 91 The accommodation is barely adequate but is due to be significantly upgraded when the new extensions are completed. The annual capitation allowance remains low and inhibits development in the subject. Leadership and daily management of the department are satisfactory and give clear direction to the subject and its pupils. There is not an effective framework for monitoring and supporting teaching. A recent positive development is the appointment of a part-time technician whose presence allows teachers more scope and time to develop the curriculum so that recent improvements might be consolidated and built upon.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 92 The 1999 GCSE results for the subjects within design and technology show the overall attainment to be slightly below the national average for A\*-C grades. The results are in line with national average for A\*-G grades. The 1998 results were in line with the national average for A\*-C grades. In 1998 results in textiles and food were better than in the other technology subjects undertaken. However, higher prior attainment pupils choose the textile option in particular. Both 1998 and 1999 results show girls achieving better than boys. While there are stereotyped choices at the age of fourteen with more boys in electronics and girls opting for textiles, boys are now choosing food studies.
- 93 The evidence from the inspection shows that the standards achieved by pupils currently approaching the end of Key Stage 3 are generally satisfactory and in line with national expectations, although some pupils are below this standard. By Year 9 pupils understand that designing and making are linked and the majority can

follow and produce a design brief. Pupils develop knowledge of designing and can use different practical skills to produce a range of products, with higher attainers able to work with tools quickly and thoroughly and producing a good finish to their products. Average and lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs work with tools and equipment satisfactorily, especially in food studies. All pupils employ graphic skills in their work with different components. Higher attainers produce good ideas and graphic skills. With teacher guidance, lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs make good attempts to produce ideas, but they are often lacking in detail, and not enough work of a sufficiently good quality is produced over the key stage. Although there is very limited evidence of pupils modifying design proposals to improve them, this is not widespread throughout technology. While very basic research is promoted, pupils' skills are not strong in this area partly due to the accommodation arrangements with shortage of space and lack of resources. Pupils use a variety of tools and equipment to mark out, measure, cut and file cloth, food, metal and wood. In Year 9 satisfactory practical skills can be seen when pupils work with wood and electronic devices to produce a mechanical toy to their own individual design. Pupils have adequate knowledge of health and safety issues and the majority wear appropriate protective clothing in the different areas.

- 94 By the end of Key Stage 4, evidence from the inspection shows standards to be below national expectations. They are lower than at the last inspection when standards were sound. There are some good features to their work. Higher attaining pupils use their developing designing and practical skills to tackle some long and complex assignments and projects. Some work in graphics on designing greeting card shows good design skills combined with detailed research and analysis of data. This coursework is well presented and uses information technology. Some reasonably high-level information technology skills can be seen in these projects, although a high percentage of the work is carried out at home. However, not enough work of this quality is being produced. Some satisfactory designing and making skills are found in individual projects with pupils able to develop their individual interests in resistant materials and textiles. Standards are lower than they might be, however, because pupils at the end of Year 11 do not have strong underpinning skills and knowledge. Good quality ideas are not widespread amongst middle and lower attainers and research skills are limited. Their graphic skills are underdeveloped. A significant number of pupils find it difficult to complete sufficient work over the course. With the help of their teachers, pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards in making. Higher attaining pupils produce thoughtful evaluation of their work but well-thought out evaluation is not widespread. Literacy and numeracy skills, with teacher help, are adequate for the work being undertaken. Oral expression in answering teacher questions is limited. Technical language is not widely used, although words are well displayed around the department. Higher attaining pupils are able to speak more fluently about their work.
- 95 At the time of the last inspection, pupils' were described as well motivated and keen to take an active part in lessons. This is generally the situation now with regard to pupils' attitudes and behaviour, although at Key Stage 4 there is a minority of disaffected boys who do not respond well in lessons.
- 96 The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection where the majority of teaching was described as sound or good. Teachers know their subjects well and impart knowledge clearly, for

example, when introducing research methods and explaining how to carry out a survey with Year 7 pupils. Lessons are well planned and there is good preparation throughout the department, helped by good technical support. Lessons are usually well structured with a balance of teacher input and pupil activity. Appropriate worksheets, with word banks, in all areas of technology help pupils to respond appropriately to tasks. Demonstration techniques are clear, for example, when showing how to drill wood in the Year 9 mechanical toy project in resistant materials. In the best lessons, regular useful comments to individuals help to reinforce learning. While a brisk pace of learning is maintained in food technology this is not so in all lessons and a number of pupils coast along. Opportunities for pupils to reflect quietly on their work are limited. Recording of pupils' marks is carried out regularly. Marking of pupils' work is varied; some provides useful teacher comments on how to improve, other marking is too brief to be helpful to the pupil. Storage of pupils' work is well organised. Information technology is underdeveloped in the department due to the lack of up to date computers and access to a nearby computer room. There is a lack of planning and challenge for the number of disaffected boys in Year 11. At Key Stage 4 subject specific guidance for improving pupils' coursework lacks sufficient detail.

- 97 The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory overall and good in a few lessons. From uncertain attainment on entry into Year 7, pupils establish clear routines for working. Many make satisfactory progress in learning simple graphic and making skills over Key Stage 3, but research skills develop more slowly. The open plan environment and cramped practical areas are particularly detrimental to good learning for pupils, as it makes it more difficult for them to concentrate. The schemes of work provide opportunities for pupils of all abilities and interests to acquire a range of skills. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs usually make satisfactory progress across both key stages because there is scope in the curriculum to practise making skills. Some Key Stage 4 pupils lack the subject specific knowledge on how to improve their work. Independent learning is only seen with higher attaining pupils.
- 98 There is a good team spirit amongst the staff. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Resources are generally adequate, except for equipment for computer-assisted making and design, general access to computers for pupils and research materials. The lack of space in some of the practical areas for resistant materials and graphics has a negative impact on pupils' learning and is being addressed in the new building programme.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 99 From 1997-99 the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3, as judged by teacher assessments was a little above the national average. The overall figures conceal a large difference between the performances of boys and girls. Those pupils attaining the lower levels are almost all boys and more than twice as many girls as boys achieve the higher levels. In the same period the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C at GCSE was close to the national average, though the grades for 1999 were only just below the national average. This was entirely due to a fall in boys' performance, widening the gap between boys and girls to greater than the national figure for the first time. GCSE grades A\*-G also fell in 1999 to below the national average after four consecutive years in which all candidates achieved a grade. However, the proportion of candidates achieving GCSE grade A\* continued

in 1999 to be more than twice the national average.

- 100 In lessons in both key stages pupils are attaining in line with levels found nationally. In Year 7, pupils' geographical skills are well developed and standards of mapwork and graphical representation are good. In addition, pupils are gaining skills in information and communication technology through their study of geography, as advised in the previous inspection report. The geography of place is less well developed but additional time has been allocated in Year 9 to improve pupils' information technology skills. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 show a good understanding of the impact of tourism on areas of scenic attraction and the economic benefits to people in the National Parks but appreciation of the potential conflicts between different users is more limited. The subject has benefited from the literacy initiative in the school and standards of writing are good. This particularly benefits the higher attaining pupils and allows them to maximise their examination grades.
- 101 Pupils make good progress in their lessons in both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 3 gain insights into the economic realities of life for the very poor in the favelas of Brazil. In Key Stage 4, through classroom discussion, pupils' understanding of the effects of shorter working hours on leisure activities is enhanced. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their lessons through the care and support of their teachers. The lack of appropriate teaching materials, as noted in the previous report, hinders them from making progress without this support. Unsatisfactory progress was only noted in one lesson when disruptive behaviour by some pupils hindered the work of the class
- 102 Pupils' attitudes to learning in Key Stage 3 are occasionally unsatisfactory, sometimes very good and are good overall. In Key Stage 4 pupils' responses are always good. Work is neatly presented with carefully coloured and labelled maps and charts, often incorporating word-processed text and computer-generated diagrams. Pupils, with few exceptions, are usually keen to be actively involved, are interested in their work and good relationships are in evidence with each other and with their teachers.
- 103 The quality of teaching is good. Three quarters of lessons in Key Stage 3 and all lessons in Key Stage 4 were judged to be good or very good. Teachers work from a secure knowledge of their subject, give clear explanations and use good question-and-answer techniques to review and clarify pupil knowledge. Activities are well planned and varied and pupils are challenged to think and suggest possible solutions to problems. Teachers give good support to individuals experiencing difficulties but this can occasionally take up too much of the teachers' time and the class as a whole suffers. Above all, however, the discipline, management and control of classes is based on the very good relationships which exist between teachers and pupils which facilitate co-operation and good behaviour.

- 104 Leadership of the department is satisfactory overall and has many good features. There is a strong commitment to the school, its aims and values and there is clear educational direction for the department. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last report and geography is now one of three subjects through which pupils gain information and communication skills. Other recommendations from the previous inspection are not yet implemented, in particular the provision of resource materials for pupils with special educational needs. The work of the department is not monitored systematically.
- 105 Assessment systems are satisfactory and the results influence the teaching of the subject but reports to parents do not give them sufficient information about pupils' attainment and progress.

## HISTORY

- 106 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 is broadly in line with national expectations in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving at least level 5 in national tests. However, in lessons and work observed evidence points to standards being lower than some teacher assessments indicate, particularly in relation to higher attaining groups and pupils with special educational needs. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to recollect and make appropriate use of dates, vocabulary and conventions that describe historical periods. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the characters of specific periods and are able to consider the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of societies in Britain. Historical interpretation is less well developed and the evaluation of how and why history is represented is limited. Standards at Key Stage 3 have fallen since the previous inspection.
- 107 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 GCSE examinations 1999 is above national expectation. The proportion of pupils achieving GCSE A\*-C and A\*-G grades show an upward trend since the last inspection. Pupils have acquired good knowledge and understanding of historical events by the end of Key Stage 4, for example, anti-Semitism and the rise of Nazi Germany. They develop effective skills of historical enquiry and can interpret a range of source information. Pupils are able to recall, prioritise and select information with appropriate use of key words, concepts and historical terminology. Higher attainers are able to identify trends within and across periods, collect and record information relevant to enquiry and reach conclusions through well organised, accurate selection.
- 108 At Key Stage 3 pupils generally show a positive attitude towards learning. Their behaviour is generally good in class and they are responsive to questions and discussion. There is evidence however of poor behaviour within some groups marked by lack of self-control, poor concentration and poor organisation, usually as a result of disinterest. Pupil teacher relationships are good at Key Stage 4 where they promote a secure and harmonious working environment. Take up rates for GCSE history are encouraging and pupils within Key Stage 4 show maturity, self-discipline and initiative in their approach to learning.

- 109 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 was unsatisfactory in well over a third of the lessons seen and satisfactory to good in the remainder. At Key Stage 4 teaching was satisfactory in three fifths of lessons observed with the remaining two fifths good and very good. The better teaching at Key Stage 3 is characterised by high expectations, effective discipline and a range of tasks suited to the needs and ability levels of all pupils. Knowledge is reinforced through clear aims, good pace and time structured tasks. Unsatisfactory lessons are characterised by poor planning and organisation, limited use and range of resources and materials and teaching methods inappropriate for the needs of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and higher attainers.
- 110 Classroom management is not always strong enough to ensure high standards of progress at Key Stage 3 and, in a few lessons, poor pupil-teacher relationships affect the achievement of all pupils. In a significant number of lessons seen at Key Stage 3 pupils remain unchallenged by the notable absence of opportunities for independent learning in the form of research, projects, extension exercises and enrichment programmes. Progress is further limited by the absence of information technology provision particularly for pupils with special educational needs and the lack of fieldwork and cross-curricular opportunities to reinforce classwork and homework. There is a general over-dependence on teacher led approaches to classroom learning and over-reliance on 'topic books' which, although a useful source of reference does limit learning opportunities. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 has seen little improvement since the last inspection.
- 111 At Key Stage 4 pupil-teacher relationships are generally very good. This encourages pupils to offer opinions and take part in class discussion and debate. Successful lessons are identified by good teaching through relevant and interesting use of sources of evidence linked to GCSE curriculum requirements and examination skills. Pupil notebooks are an excellent knowledge base and source of reference for classwork and coursework. Good teaching is further characterised by the build up of literacy skills which have a positive impact on progress. High attainers and gifted pupils make reasonable to good progress but are limited by the absence of extended learning and pupil-centred learning opportunities through research based projects and fieldwork. There is still scope for extending the range of historical skills across all ability levels within Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 3.
- 112 Sound leadership gives direction and commitment to improving standards across the department. There has been significant improvement in standards since the last inspection at Key Stage 4 and in the introduction of effective literacy and assessment procedures. Departmental resources remain limited for the successful delivery of national curriculum. The barely adequate accommodation will be improved when the new buildings are completed.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 113 Standards achieved by pupils currently approaching the end of Key Stage 3 in information and communications technology are below the levels expected nationally.
- 114 At Key Stage 4 all pupils are taught information and communications technology through 'Computer Literacy and Information Technology' (CLAIT) course, and in Year 11 a number opt to take the subject for GCSE. There was no evidence available at the time of the inspection of the number of pupils completing the CLAIT

course and achieving the award, or of pupils completing units of work to a sufficiently high standard to be able to enter for the qualification. It would appear that many pupils undertaking the CLAIT course do not complete enough units to enter for the award or complete the work to a sufficiently high standard to achieve the qualification. This is an unsatisfactory situation given the time and facilities made available for the course. The 1999 GCSE results are well below the national average. They are lower than the 1998 results, which were also below the national average.

- 115 At the last inspection standards at Key Stages 3 and 4 were described as being barely satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and low at Key Stage 4. As stated above current standards are below national expectations at both key stages with pupils' information technology skills being underdeveloped and inadequate for the work expected at the end of the key stages. The majority of pupils do not demonstrate a high level of independent competence in the different aspects of information technology, due to lack of embedded cross-curricular work at Key Stage 3, with much staff absence and lack of detailed planning of work at Key Stage 4.
- 116 By the end of Key Stage 3 the standard achieved by pupils is below national expectations. In the recently introduced taught information and communications technology course delivered through geography, English and mathematics pupils can access the software, usually quickly and easily with teacher direction, and they become reasonably competent at using it. They are fluent in basic operations, such as using a keyboard and mouse. They word process, use spreadsheets and simple databases. Work is saved and retrieved as appropriate with some confidence for the majority of pupils. Higher attaining pupils are able to produce clear, well set out word processing work and edit a spreadsheet with ease. Pupils with special educational needs, with teacher help, attain the same standards as their peers in these distinct lessons and when using good educational software. The main weakness in pupils' achievements is their lack of knowledge and experience of using information and communications technology to enhance their learning in all subjects across the curriculum.
- 117 Evidence from the inspection indicates that the standards achieved by pupils towards the end of Key Stage 4 are below national expectations. Pupils on the CLAIT courses are not producing work to meet the examination course requirements. Many of these pupils have difficulty retaining information. In the GCSE course pupils produce some satisfactory word processing work reasonably independently. The majority cannot apply information and communications technology skills to new situations as required by the coursework criteria. Pupils do not at present have clear learning targets and this means that they are behind in their coursework.
- 118 Pupils are required to develop the use of information and communications technology capability within the subjects of the curriculum. This use of information and communications technology is at an embryonic stage of development. Some subjects make satisfactory use of information and communications technology, for example, English, mathematics, geography, music, special education needs and, to a certain extent, design and technology. Some interesting work has taken place in English with visits to a local supermarket by Year 7 pupils to assess the use of computers in everyday life. In mathematics appropriate software has been successfully introduced into the curriculum. Some good work was achieved in Year 9 geography where pupils use desktop publishing to produce a front-page news



report on a volcanic eruption and carried out simple database work on a holiday survey. There is good use of information and communications technology to collate statistical data in geography fieldwork. The cross-curricular use of information and communications technology, however, is unsatisfactory overall, and statutory requirements are not met in this regard. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the range of computer resources but access to information technology rooms hinders departmental development of skills.

- 119 At Key Stage 3 and to a certain extent at Key Stage 4 pupils' attitudes to learning are as at the previous inspection, generally well motivated and they are keen to make use of computers. Pupils enjoy the different topics and behaviour at Key Stage 3 is good. Again at Key Stage 3, pupils are supportive of each other and have good working relationships with teachers. At Key Stage 4 some unsatisfactory behaviour is to be seen from boys, although this is controlled and contained by the presence of teachers and a technician.
- 120 The quality of teaching is similar to that found at the last inspection, overall it is unsatisfactory, although it is better when it is used to support the teaching of other subjects of the curriculum. At Key Stage 3 in the cross-curricular lessons observed teaching was good, with satisfactory subject knowledge and clear explanations that enabled pupils to learn. The Key Stage 3 lessons are effectively planned to ensure necessary skills and knowledge on spreadsheets is covered, with a suitable balance of time for instruction and pupil work. Class management of these lessons is good and this ensures that although classes are large and pupils share computers, effective learning is taking place. The teaching at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. During the inspection classes were taken by a supply teacher due to teacher illness. Pupils' standards of work are adversely affected. No Key Stage 4 lesson planning or scheme of work was seen. Homework is not well used to support class work. On-going assessment of pupils' achievements and progress is at an embryonic stage at Key Stage 3 and no evidence was available at Key Stage 4.
- 121 The quality of learning of pupils in Key Stage 3 lessons is satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities make progress in these lessons and acquire information technology skills. In Year 7 higher attainers add information into the cells on the spreadsheet and enter a formula to total costs quite independently. Average and lower attainers can effect these changes also, although some lack understanding of the make-up of the formula. The quality of learning at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. A few boys have difficulty concentrating and their progress and that of others is affected by this behaviour. Pupils in Year 11 have inadequate information communication technology skills and knowledge to undertake the project work needed for the GCSE course because of lack of skills experiences earlier in school. A succession of teachers has had a disruptive impact on learning.
- 122 The leadership of information and communications technology at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. The whole school cross-curricular management of the subject is also not satisfactory. Key Stage 3 information technology management is satisfactory and although recently established is making headway in the school. Resources are inadequate to meet the cross-curricular needs of the National Curriculum. The deficiencies in the subject are recognised by the school. There are well thought out plans in hand for development in the subject. Staff in-service training is planned. The school has made satisfactory progress in improving the facilities available to pupils and modern computers have been purchased since the last inspection as recommended in the last report. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have

access to information communication technology on a regular basis, and access for pupils at Key Stage 3 is beginning. However, the standards of information communication technology skills and knowledge have not improved from those indicated in the last report.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

- 123 French attainment at GCSE A\*-C has remained constant at around the national average. The considerable improvement in 1999 is partly due to a lower entry. GCSE A\*-C grades achieved by pupils entered for the short course were above average. German results have been more erratic but generally have remained below national standards. Girls outperform boys by a considerable margin. Girls achieve better grades in French than in most other subjects. At the end of Year 9, girls also outperform boys. The percentage of pupils attaining national levels in 1999 was in line with national averages. Attainment in modern foreign languages remains in line with that reported in the last inspection.
- 124 By the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of the majority of pupils is below national standards. As a result of long-term illness and severe problems in recruiting suitable new staff, the department has been two full time members of staff under strength for some six months. It has to rely on departmental staff taking a few extra lessons where their timetable permits and on supply staff who are not always linguists. This is already having an adverse impact on standards and causing widespread discontent amongst the considerable number of pupils being affected.
- 125 Pupils' progress in lessons in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. However, skills learned in lessons are not retained over a longer period of time, except for the higher attainers who do build on their earlier learning well. Where classes are taught by full time specialist staff, lower and average attainers have relatively few problems with writing because of good literacy standards in the school. Written work is accurate with due attention paid to spelling and grammar. Careful marking with helpful comments contributes significantly to this strength. There are however, missed opportunities to practise reading aloud in French or German to give added confidence in speaking. Listening and comprehension skills are practised regularly and develop quite well but speaking is far more hesitant. Pupils need to be encouraged to ask questions in the foreign language so as to become more independent speakers of French and German. Less concentration on word lists and more emphasis on using words in phrases or sentences is required to improve recall and fluency. Only higher attaining pupils are able to attain equivalent standards in two languages because of the later start of the second language and the lower time allowance for it.
- 126 Pupils' progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Where classes are taught by full time staff, listening and comprehension skills continue to develop well but speaking does not always recover from the unsatisfactory start in Key Stage 3. Pupils still often rely on written prompts when speaking. Standards of written work are good for all ability levels and there is adequate variety. Pupils with special educational needs usually make satisfactory progress in listening and comprehension but receive insufficient classroom support in the other language skills.
- 127 The quality of teaching in lessons given by full time specialist teachers has not changed significantly since the previous inspection. It is satisfactory in half the lessons, unsatisfactory in one and good in the rest. However, some thirty per cent

of pupils are now not receiving regular specialist tuition as laid out in the schemes of work because of the staffing problem. Where classes cannot be taken by specialist staff, written work is done under supervision. Much of this work is useful but the pupils miss out on practice in the skills of listening and speaking and their learning is thus unsatisfactory.

- 128 The department is therefore under enormous constraints but is working very hard to relieve problems as far as possible. In lessons observed, the pace is usually brisk so that lesson time is fully utilised and topics can be covered in detail. Pupils respond to good teaching with good behaviour in class and with positive attitudes to learning. Pair work is often productive. In a sizeable minority of lessons pupils only half listen and there is too much background chatter. They distract other pupils and restrict opportunities for speaking practice.
- 129 In some lessons English is used unnecessarily. Pupils are very seldom required to ask questions in the foreign language. Insufficient attempts are made to explain or demonstrate the use of new or forgotten words via the foreign language rather than through English. Some teachers do not insist on full length answers. This weakness was reported at the previous inspection. The department needs to create opportunities for teachers to share best practice in the use of the target language as soon as the staffing difficulties are resolved. Subsequent monitoring will then be able to pinpoint any areas requiring further staff development.
- 130 The staffing situation combined with a range of whole school responsibilities is putting considerable pressure on the head of department. The restoration of full staffing levels to work towards stability and continuity is an urgent priority. The complex curriculum and option arrangements for languages have not always reflected pupils' needs and abilities in recent years. The school has recognised the difficulties and is currently progressing towards a much simpler and readily understandable model which matches pupils' needs and aspirations more closely.
- 131 Assessment is quite thorough and informative and includes pupil participation. The current lack of suitable computer software, Internet access and the disconnected satellite TV provision are restricting the variety and flexibility of teaching techniques. More overhead projectors are required to make presentations more attractive and lively. Accommodation is still shabby despite efforts to brighten up the learning ambience with wall displays. Annual trips to France for Year 9 are popular and help to stimulate interest in the subject.

## **MUSIC**

- 132 Pupils enter the school with limited musical skills and attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below national expectations. By the age of 16, the proportion of pupils achieving at GCSE grades A\*-G in 1999 was close to the national average and had been so for the previous three years, but the proportion achieving grades A\*-C was below average.

- 133 Standards of instrumental skill have been affected by the school's inability to fund the cost of instrumental tuition. Attainment in Year 11 is below average, although a few pupils have more developed instrumental skills. They compose and perform according to their own individual skills and work in partnership with each other where it is appropriate to do so. Pupils are meeting targets set for them in producing coursework, but planning does not contain sufficient detail and there are gaps in pupils' learning. For instance, pupils do not perform their examination pieces, perhaps in assemblies, in order to build up confidence and self-esteem and to encourage deadlines to be met.
- 134 Pupils with special educational needs make the progress expected of them. However, some pupils would benefit from simplified instructions and tasks in order that they can make better progress. Numeracy is used appropriately to support the development of pupils' musical skills. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in music in either key stage.
- 135 Good use is made of information technology. Behaviour and attitudes to work are satisfactory, Singing is now part of the experience of each year group and pupils are beginning to be able to maintain their different parts in a song during a performance but the regular teaching of vocal techniques is not yet fully developed. As at the time of the last report, the schemes of work for both key stages do not develop pupils' musical skills in small steps through the elements of music. The school is currently changing the schemes of work to help less skilled pupils to develop more quickly. Improvement since the last inspection is limited.
- 136 The quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is satisfactory. Subject knowledge is good and teaching makes interesting use of pupils' art work, for example, pupils in Year 9 begin to discuss how to compose music reflecting the mood of a picture, such as a feeling of tension and fear. Time is often lost through overcoming practical difficulties with equipment and this is holding back progress in musical skills and affects the pace of learning. Praise and encouragement of pupils' work has a good impact on learning. Planning includes few opportunities built in to work to enable pupils to develop skills of self-evaluation. As a result, particularly in Key Stage 3, pupils' personal development and independent learning is being held back. Homework set is appropriate but does not always ensure that work extends learning in lessons and develops pupils' independent learning.
- 137 The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers many styles and cultures. For instance jazz, music from the European tradition, and from other cultures such as from Africa, Indonesia, Asia and the Caribbean are studied. The school presents a show each year and this is good. However, extra curricular musical activities such as a choir or instrumental ensemble do not take place on a regular basis. This was commented upon at the parents' meeting, and is a weakness.
- 138 Management overall is unsatisfactory. Leadership of the practical areas of the subject is satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the management of the curriculum and assessment of music. The schemes of work do not provide pupils with the satisfactory development of musical skills. The monitoring and evaluation of pupils' performance in music meets requirements at Key Stage 4 for GCSE but for Key Stage 3 there is insufficient information available in order to take effective action to improve the performance of pupils. There is good use of information and communications technology through computers linked to keyboards but the use of other technology such as multi-track recording equipment is little used, even for

GCSE, and pupils do not yet develop their understanding of audio recording techniques in either key stage. As a result, the evidence base of work done is limited so that it is difficult to compare and moderate the standards achieved. Resources of untuned percussion are not sufficient to allow the textures and timbres of music to be explored as required by the National Curriculum and examination syllabuses.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 139 The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C in the 1999 GCSE examination was close to the national average, and all pupils who entered the examination gained at least a grade G. In 1998 GCSE results were well above the national average. There has been a notable and improving trend in results since the last inspection. Girls outperformed boys in the 1999 GCSE examination, because, although the boys were good practical performers, the girls' diligence, and their application to the theoretical aspects of the course, were greater than the boys in this cohort. Pupils' results in physical education were, on average, higher than in many of the other subjects that they studied.
- 140 Evidence gained during the inspection indicates that attainment by pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 is average, and near the end of Key Stage 4, is above average. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 3 are similar to those observed in the last inspection, but standards at Key Stage 4 have improved. By the time they have reached the age of 14, most pupils have average standards in games, and some pupils are performing at a higher level. Many pupils perform skilfully, and show good understanding of the principles of play in the major games. Pupils refine their skills, alongside the development of tactical awareness, as seen in netball and football. Good standards are attained in hockey, where Year 8 pupils, including some identified as having special educational needs, demonstrated effective reverse stick play in a small sided game. Standards in gymnastics are sound, and pupils of all levels of attainment demonstrate good body tension and control, as they work in threes to produce a group balance. Pupils make a very good beginning in dance. They show a sense of rhythm and versatility, as they recall previous learning and introduce new, and often complex, movements into their own rock and roll dance. Planning and performing skills are developing satisfactorily in all lessons, but pupils' skills of evaluation develop at a slower rate, as there is a lack of opportunity to observe, analyse and comment on performance against specific criteria. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the effects of exercise on the body, they know how to warm up before strenuous exercise, and can name the muscles they are stretching.
- 141 By the age of 16, improvement in games continues to an above average standard. GCSE students show a particularly high standard of attainment in basketball, and their written coursework reflects a sound knowledge and understanding of theoretical aspects. Pupils' achievements in extra curricular sport are high and a strength of the school.

- 142 Pupils are well-motivated, have good attitudes to learning and make effective gains in knowledge, skills and understanding in the majority of lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated in to the physical education programme, and achieve at the same rate as their peers. Boys and girls are taught separately but make equally good progress. The potential for high attaining pupils to progress is not fully exploited in some lessons, however, because they are not always given the opportunity to extend their thinking through discussion.
- 143 The quality of teaching is good, resulting in good learning, at both key stages. Three-quarters of the teaching is good, and sometimes very good, and the rest is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 has improved since the last inspection. Relationships are very good. Teachers' management and organisation are of a high order, and contribute significantly to the pupils' high level of participation. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject, and lesson planning is particularly good. Lesson objectives are clear and pupils know what they are required to learn. High standards are expected and attained in every respect. For example, in a GCSE theory lesson, the teacher used skilful questioning to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding of the function of muscles, and matched tasks to pupils' abilities to focus their learning at an appropriately demanding level. The high quality of teachers' observation, assessment and feedback is effective in promoting good standards of attainment and improvement in both key stages. There are some inconsistencies when, in a few lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and teaching is insufficiently focused. Teachers' marking is up-to-date and encouraging but pupils are not always given advice on how to improve their work, and there is little indication of the progress they are making.
- 144 Outstanding leadership and management by the head of department has resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in overall attainment and in the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 4. The strong departmental ethos, and good team spirit amongst the staff is reflected in their positive response to the issues raised in the last inspection. The SPORTSMARK award and Challenge Funding has triggered several curriculum initiatives that enhance learning in Key Stage 4, particularly in community links. However, boys do not have access to dance and girls do not have access to the outdoor and adventurous activities. The new floodlit hard play courts are a splendid resource. Three issues, reported in the last inspection, remain and continue to have an inhibiting effect on pupils' attainment and progress, namely the poor condition of the all-weather pitch, the unsatisfactory showering facilities for boys and girls and the unsatisfactory condition of the hall floor after break and lunchtimes.

## **DRAMA**

- 145 The GCSE results for 1999 in grades A\*-C are well above the national average and represent a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Results have improved over the last four years from well below average in 1996 to the present position, when results at GCSE exceeded national averages for the first time. Girls achieve well above the national average for girls. Drama is now a popular and established subject with large numbers of pupils choosing it at Key Stage 4.

- 146 In drama lessons, pupils learn to create and sustain a role. For example, year 8 pupils use voice and gesture to build up a character and can interact convincingly when in role. This sense of making drama is a strength of the subject. Year 9 pupils work enthusiastically to create a piece of non narrative theatre. This involved working well together to establish a character's personal response to the theme of family life. The pupils showed sensitivity in their roles and their use of language reflected character well. Group work skills are good and the final performance, enhanced by lighting effects, had shape and realism. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils can use a range of dramatic skills effectively and have developed a good sense of the discipline of the subject. They are open and honest in their evaluations of a performance. In one class, however, while these skills are present, there is a lack of self-discipline which leads to weak characterisation and structure in group work.
- 147 At Key Stage 4, pupils explore literary texts, which support their English coursework. A group of year ten pupils work on the dramatic impact of the witches in Macbeth. Pupils work energetically to create a sense of mystery and apprehension as the witches meet Macbeth for the first time. In their work, pupils grasp the emotions underlying the text and work imaginatively to convey these to an audience. Year 11 pupils evaluate their GCSE work, recognise weaknesses in performance and seek to improve it.
- 148 At both key stages, the evaluation by pupils is good, showing a critical sense. Speech is clear and distinct. Some pupils speak verse well, managing intonation and character. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4. Their response is usually good. Most pupils listen carefully and engage happily in the creative tasks that mark drama lessons and this raises achievement.
- 149 Teaching in drama is generally very good. There are strengths in the teaching. The specialist teachers use the studio space very well to train pupils in the self discipline that drama requires. This enables them to create drama and performance with pupils, encouraging them to use imagination, belief and feeling in their work. There is a sense of theatre, which can raise the level of performance, when lighting and music are used to enhance a presentation. Evaluation by pupils and teachers is good. Where teaching is unsatisfactory it is associated with a lack of response by one group of pupils. Overall, teaching in the subject is very good and promotes improvement in standards.
- 150 Leadership and management are very good. Assessment is good at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. There are now two specialist teachers who work well together. Drama has established very good links with English, which helps pupils to understand texts and develop speaking skills. There are links with other subjects, such as history. The subject is enriched by theatre visits and by professional theatre companies visiting the school. The school's recent production of Romeo and Juliet was ambitious and worthwhile. It showed many of the strengths of the subject and created a real enthusiasm and interest in Shakespeare's story and familiarity with his verse. As noted at the previous inspection, drama is a strong subject. The teaching is promoting higher standards as is confirmed by the improved GCSE results.