

INSPECTION REPORT

REEPHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Reepham

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121161

Headteacher: Mr C Hassell

Reporting inspector: Ann McGough
2939

Dates of inspection: 8 – 12 May 2000

Inspection number: 185719

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Comprehensive |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 11 - 16 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Whitwell Road Reepham Norwich Norfolk |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr T Lawton |
| Date of previous inspection: | 13 – 17 November 1995 |

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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:

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a mixed 11-16 comprehensive school of below average size with 723 pupils on roll. There are slightly more boys than girls which creates some imbalance in the current Years 8 and 11. Pupils are drawn from 8 feeder schools across a large rural catchment area. Standards on entry to the school are broadly average. Though a below average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals, pupils come from the full range of social backgrounds with a degree of social disadvantage in some areas of the local community. The school is socially inclusive taking all pupils from the area including some excluded from other schools. The exclusion rate within the school is low. The number of pupils on the school's register of special educational need (SEN) is broadly average but the proportion with statements of SEN is above average. There is a very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. 69% of pupils go on to full-time education when they leave the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school that has made remarkable progress in raising standards and improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Outstanding leadership and management have led to major improvements in provision working in partnership with the wider community. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- There has been consistent improvement in standards over a four year period and by the end of Key Stage 4 results in GCSE examinations are better than those of similar schools.
- Teaching is very good, encouraging and supporting effective and independent learning.
- Pupils respond very positively to the high quality of provision made to support their personal development, particularly their understanding and response to moral and social issues. They show a strong sense of responsibility and relationships are very good.
- There is outstanding leadership and management which have led to very effective development through the effective use of resources and a shared commitment by all staff to achieve further success.
- The school is well supported by its governing body who fulfil their statutory duties well and have a significant role in planning and in monitoring performance.
- There are well established links with industry, partner institutions and the wider community that enrich and enhance the provision made for pupils, particularly in its development as a Technology College.

What could be improved

- Curriculum planning, content and challenge in music, particularly at Key Stage 3
- Assessment and target setting to ensure that existing good practice is consistent across all subjects
- The amount of in-class support provided for SEN pupils at Key Stage 3
- The quality of accommodation for science, art, mathematics, physical education and modern foreign languages.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Reepham High School was last inspected in 1995. Since that time, major improvements have been made in standards, teaching and in the management of the school. National test results are above average and GCSE results have risen consistently over the past four years to well above average. At the time of the last inspection, nearly 20% of teaching was unsatisfactory. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and over 80% is good or better. Criticisms of management, financial planning

and the strategic role of governors have been very successfully addressed and these aspects are now major strengths of the school. Budget surpluses have been prudently targeted to meet needs and resources enhanced by the success of the school in obtaining sponsorship to achieve Technology College status and further develop provision. There has been a major review of the curriculum which now provides a wider than normal range of options for a school of this size. Most non-specialist teaching has been eliminated and the small amount remaining is largely effective. Statutory requirements on collective worship and information for parents are now met. The school now has considerable strengths and few weaknesses; areas for improvement will refine and build on good practice.

STANDARDS

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 |
| GCSE examinations | B | C | A | B |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

Test results of pupils in 1999 by the end of Key Stage 3 were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals) results were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. Key Stage 2 results and other test data, however, indicate that attainment on entry is broadly average and that pupils make good progress to achieve above average attainment by the end of Key Stage 3. Though there is some variation across year groups, results over a four year period indicate the performance of pupils exceeds the national average with boys results well above average in all three subjects and girls above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. In last year's GCSE examinations, the average points score of pupils was well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE was also well above the national average and the proportion achieving one or more A*-G very high. Twenty five per cent of entries achieved the highest grades A*-A. Standards were particularly high in art, science, DT, French, mathematics and geography but below average in music though small numbers make comparisons unreliable. Standards of literacy and numeracy are good. Results exceeded the targets set by the school and the trend in the average points score at GCSE is above the national trend. These results indicate very good added value particularly at Key Stage 4 given that attainment on entry is no better than average. The difference between the attainment of girls and boys is less than that seen nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils show an enthusiasm for school that leads to very positive attitudes and high levels of interest and commitment both in and out of lessons. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour is very good. |
| Personal development and relationships | The quality of relationships is very impressive as is the initiative and sense of personal responsibility shown by pupils. |
| Attendance | Attendance has been above the national average over a three-year period. Unauthorised absence was broadly average in 1998/99. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged 11-14 years | aged 14-16 years | Aged over 16 years |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Good | Very good | N/A |

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 a very real strength of the school and a major factor in the high standards achieved. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the lessons observed. Teaching was good or better in 82% of lessons of which 46% was very good or excellent. This is a major improvement from time of the last inspection. Teaching is particularly strong at Key Stage 4 where 90% of lessons were good or better. Teaching is always good or better in English and science, good overall in mathematics and very strong in art and design and technology. There was, however, some lack of pace in geography and of challenge in music. Teachers have a very good command of their subjects and plan very well to meet the needs of pupils. Classroom management is very good and resources are used well. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught in English and mathematics and developed across the curriculum. Good teaching supports pupils with SEN and English as an additional language. In response to the quality of teaching, learning is always good and is very good at Key Stage 4.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and RE at both key stages. It is broad, balanced and enhanced by the high quality and range of extra-curricular provision, community links and work-related learning opportunities. There is a need for more coherent curriculum planning in music. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good arrangements enable pupils with SEN to make very good progress. Though in-class support is of good quality it is insufficient to meet all the needs of those with very limited literacy skills. Very good provision is made for these pupils, parents are appropriately involved and procedures for review meet requirements. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | The few pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and imaginative provision is made to meet their individual needs. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Excellent provision is made to enhance pupils' moral development and support for social development is very good. Provision to support both their spiritual and cultural development is good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Care for pupils is very good and there is a high level of concern for their safety and well-being. There is good monitoring and support for both their academic and personal development though assessment and target setting need to be further developed. |
| Working in partnership with parents | A large majority of parents feel that the school works closely with them through very effective links. There is more involvement of parents in the work of the school than is usual with pupils of this age. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher has provided exceptional leadership in developing learning opportunities and promoting high standards in a caring and supportive environment. Effective management by all key staff ensures that planning is well implemented and effective. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors fulfil their responsibilities extremely well. Their planning is well considered, there is a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and financial planning and management, criticised in the last inspection report, are now very good. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | A range of statistical data is very well used to analyse performance and inform future planning. There is very good monitoring of teaching to raise standards and inform professional development. |
| The strategic use of resources | Seen as an area of weakness at the time of the last inspection, resources are now very well used to support needs and strategic planning is a considerable strength. |

The school is well staffed with well qualified and experienced teachers and non-teaching staff but SEN support, though of high quality, is insufficient to cater for all needs particularly at Key Stage 3. Considerable improvements have been made to the school's pleasant and well-maintained site since the last inspection but there remain some shortcomings. Science accommodation is poor and mathematics and language teaching are adversely affected by split accommodation and the facilities within temporary classrooms. Some art and DT areas are small and congested. Though outdoor provision for PE is good, indoor teaching space is inadequate. Departments are generally well resourced though there is some shortage of textbooks and up to date ICT provision in some subject areas.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils work hard and make good progress • Teaching is good • They feel comfortable approaching the school • Their children like school • The school is well led • Behaviour is very good | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Information on pupils' progress • The range of activities provided for pupils |

The inspection team fully agreed with the positive views expressed by parents in the meeting with the registered inspector and through the questionnaires. It was difficult to ascertain the precise concerns over homework as there was some difference of opinion as to whether there was too much or too little. In the view of the team, an appropriate amount is set and this is well structured to support classwork. Information about pupils' progress was also seen to be good and more detailed than in many schools. A significant number of parents were unaware of the range of activities available which could be indicative of the difficulties some pupils might experience in participating in after-school provision because of transport problems.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average. In the three core subjects in 1999, results as measured by national tests showed that attainment was average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Though there is some variation across years, results over a four year period indicate that the performance of pupils exceeds the national average with boys' results well above average in all three subjects and girls above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. In comparison with similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals) results in the latest year were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. Key Stage 2 and other test data, however, indicate that pupils' attainment on entry to Year 7 is broadly average and that pupils make good progress to achieve above average attainment by the end of Key Stage 3. The lower test results achieved in 1999 in comparison with either those of 1997 or 1998 were not seen by the inspection team as representing a significant trend in results overall.

2. Observations during the inspection confirmed the consistent good progress made by pupils at Key Stage 3. Attainment was particularly strong in design and technology (DT) and art and good in English, mathematics, science, history, modern foreign languages (MFL) and religious education (RE). It was satisfactory in all other subjects. By the end of the key stage, all pupils have improved their basic literacy skills and good standards of numeracy are established enabling pupils to cope well with mathematical requirements across the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well established. Very good progress is made by pupils with special educational needs (SEN) though there is too little specialist support for a small number of very weak readers to improve their basic literacy skills and consequently they make less progress than others.

3. Progress is enhanced at Key Stage 4. In last year's GCSE examinations, the average points score of pupils was well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE was also well above the national average and the proportion achieving one or more A*-G very high. Twenty five percent of entries achieved the highest grades A*-A. Standards in English have been well above the national average for the last three years and have improved at least in line with the national trend. Attainment in both mathematics and science is significantly above the national average. Results in 1999 were particularly high in art, science, DT, French, mathematics and geography but below average in music though small numbers make comparisons unreliable in this subject. Results exceeded the targets set by the school and the trend in the average points score at GCSE is above the national trend. These results indicate very good added value particularly at Key Stage 4, given that attainment on entry is no better than average. Though there are some variations across years and between subjects, the difference between girls and boys attainment is less than that seen nationally. Boys have made particularly good progress in English, mathematics and science and their attainment is significantly stronger than in most schools nationally. There is no evidence to suggest that girls under-achieve and their progress is generally better than that of boys in MFL, art, history and DT.

4. Literacy, numeracy and skills in ICT are further developed at Key Stage 4 though middle and lower attaining pupils do experience some problems in writing different types of essays.

5. Pupils with SEN continue to make very good progress across the curriculum. The teaching of English is particularly strong in both key stages and those pupils who follow a modified mainstream curriculum also make very good progress. The school has three pupils from Kosovo who are making very good progress with the acquisition of both English and Italian. Gifted and talented pupils show considerable maturity and make good progress at both key stages.

6. Standards of attainment at both key stages have risen since the last inspection with very considerable improvements made in textiles and aspects of ICT which were below average at that time.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Much of the credit for the high standards achieved lies in the very positive attitudes shown by the pupils themselves towards all aspects of school life. In 90% of lessons observed, their response was good or better; it was never unsatisfactory.

8. Pupils show a high level of interest in their work. They listen well to each other and to teachers, are confident and, with few exceptions, very ready to volunteer ideas and respond to questions. They co-operate well, working constructively in pairs and small groups. They also show considerable independence in their learning, continuing work after the end of lessons in, for example, ICT and English. The response to extra-curricular activities and extension lessons after school demonstrates a high level of commitment shown by pupils. Pupils with SEN are interested, keen to be involved and make a good contribution in lessons. Some need a great deal of support which is provided by much very skilful teaching ensuring that pupils learn to cooperate in group activities and to stay on task. Pupils with English as an additional language work hard and are very well motivated.

9. Behaviour in class, around the school and on the school buses is generally very good with isolated incidents of poor behaviour quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils respond well to the emphasis placed by the school on creating and maintaining a safe, happy environment that allows pupils to develop to their full potential. Staff and pupils enjoy good relationships and generally benefit from an appropriately relaxed style of interaction. The well-enforced school uniform code ensures that pupils are readily identifiable as such, contributing positively to the image of the school. The emphasis on a proactive approach to dealing with behavioural issues before they escalate has resulted in a low level of exclusions and some success in re-introducing pupils with difficulties into main-stream school life. Inter-agency co-operation, notably with a local LEA Pupil Referral Unit has proven particularly effective in this regard.

10. The school has a simple and clearly articulated policy on anti-bullying measures which is seen by pupils to be effectively applied in practice. This is strongly supported by a trained group of Year 10 and 11 pupils who provide effective peer counselling and support fellow pupils through a "drop in centre" which they staff on a rota basis. This epitomises the care and concern shown by pupils for each other. There is a high level of mutual respect throughout the school. Pupils respond well to the moral and social themes raised across the curriculum and in assemblies and tutor time and often demonstrate remarkable maturity when considering these issues in such subjects as English, drama and art. They demonstrate the ability to reflect on their own and others beliefs and values in RE and to refine their own views as they gain in understanding. A play written by Year 9 pupils in history was evidence of a moving ability to empathise with the situations of people in the past.

11. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative and independence in their learning as for example in DT and in ICT where many are becoming discerning and selective users of the Internet. They respond well to opportunities to take responsibility for their own work as in mathematics, English and geography. A wider sense of responsibility is very evident in the effectiveness of the prefect system and the peer counselling initiative. Pupils value the opportunity to contribute effectively to wider school issues through the School Council. They show initiative in organising fund-raising activities to improve provision in school as for instance in matching funds donated by the Rotary Club for resources in child care and raising funds for activities week. Conversely, they support the wider community as in the part they played recently in raising funds for the Mozambique Flood Relief efforts. Activities proposed for charitable fund raising events are considered and co-ordinated by the school council so as to maximise opportunities and income, whilst preventing overload of effort.

12. Attendance rates for the 1998-99 academic year were 92.4%, placing the school above the national average (91.0%). Unauthorised absences in the same year were broadly in line with national averages. However, attendances in Year 11 had fallen below 90% and compare less favourably with national averages. The school has improved monitoring and follow up arrangements, there is an exemplary working partnership with the Educational Welfare Officer and a credible scheme to recognise and reward pupils with good attendance records.

13. The good behaviour and attitudes noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and improved upon and are now a considerable strength of the school. Overall attendance has improved though attendance in Years 10 and 11 remains lower than that for the rest of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is a very real strength of the school and, combined with the positive attitudes of pupils, is a major factor in the high standards achieved by pupils. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the lessons observed. Teaching was good or better in 82% of lessons of which 46% were very good or excellent. This is exceptionally high and a major improvement from the time of the last inspection when teaching, though sound or better in over four fifths of lessons, was only occasionally very good. As in 1995, teaching is best at Key Stage 4 with 90% of lessons now judged to be good or better. Teaching is particularly strong in English, science, art and DT. Some exceptional teaching was observed in a number of subjects most notably in English and DT.

15. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and their own enthusiasm and enjoyment is very effectively communicated to capture the imagination of pupils. The amount of non-specialist teaching, criticised at the time of the last inspection has been reduced and, where this does occur, is confident through the commitment shown by teachers and sound preparation. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well developed in English and mathematics and reinforced across the curriculum as, for example, through the extension and use of language skills in science, art, geography and DT. Impressive improvement has been made in developing ICT skills since the time of the last inspection through both discrete lessons and appropriate specialist application across much of the curriculum.

16. Lesson planning is generally very good to provide a variety of activities and set clear objectives as, for example, in PE where effective demonstrations and explanations ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to improve performance and in MFL where clear structures set appropriate expectations. Teachers' knowledge of course and examination

requirements is very well used to prepare pupils for external examinations as in science and mathematics.

17. Much of the teaching is challenging and sets high expectations for pupils though insufficient demands are made upon pupils in music and some lessons in geography. In many lessons, innovative work encourages thoughtful responses from pupils as in the sensitive approach to bereavement in RE or in a visit to the Duxford museum that had a profound effect upon the quality of pupils' art work. Use of a different context such as an aerobic session was very successful in consolidating vocabulary skills in MFL and a practical history session on the school fields encouraged pupils to visualise medieval farming strips and explore the derivation of words.

18. Very effective use is made of different teaching methods to meet the needs of all pupils as for example in one Year 10 English lesson with lower attaining pupils where a wide range of strategies were used to develop research skills. Skilful questioning is used to very good effect to draw out information and extend understanding in science, mathematics, English and DT, to encourage participation in RE and to develop self evaluation skills in art. Questioning is, however, too generalised in music particularly in extending listening skills and developing opportunities to explore the powerful impact that well-chosen pieces have had upon the pupils. Teacher demonstrations are well considered and skilful use made of pupils' work to illustrate good practice as in ICT.

19. Management of pupils within the classroom is very good and owes much to the high quality of relationships throughout the school. Pupils are well known to their teachers and they respond very positively to the care and courtesy shown to them and to the support they receive within lessons and across a range of extra-curricular activities. Most lessons are well paced and resources are used effectively to enhance learning.

20. Pupils with SEN are taught in smaller groups for English, mathematics and science and receive some in-class support of high quality across the curriculum from non-teaching assistants. Though very effective, this support is limited in quantity and could usefully be extended. Teachers in all departments have very good awareness and knowledge of pupils' particular difficulties and circumstances. They employ carefully considered strategies and well-matched resources so that, for example, in Year 7 where pupils were planning a day out, they had to read and think about possible options, discuss their ideas and listen to those of others. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson, pupils played a card game to practice mental arithmetic. Expectations of SEN pupils are high, much praise and encouragement are given and, as a result, learning is good.

21. Good use is made of assessment to support learning and set targets for improvement across many subject areas as for example in science. There is, however, a need to further refine procedures in ICT, ensure consistent practice in humanities and RE and set more specific targets for pupils in English. A clear assessment strategy needs to be developed in music to provide pupils with a clear understanding of what constitutes high quality and how their own work can be measured against this. Homework is set regularly, is purposeful and relevant and is regularly marked often with constructive comment.

22. Pupils learn well in response to this good teaching. They acquire appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding and can apply these well and appropriately across the curriculum. They work with interest and concentration, time is used well and there is a very evident willingness by pupils to extend their learning beyond formal lessons.

23. The quality of teaching has improved very considerably since the previous inspection, time-tabling constraints have been effectively addressed and the issue of non-specialist teaching largely resolved.

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

24. The school offers a balanced curriculum that fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and RE and provides equality of opportunity for pupils. The quality and breadth of provision is unusual for a school of this size, particularly at Key Stage 4, where classes after school offer the opportunity to take additional examination subjects as, for example, in science, RE, ICT and MFL. A major curriculum review and changes to the timetable have met all main criticisms made at the time of the last inspection. The introduction, however, of a twenty-five period week has led to some reduction in the length of lessons in humanities at Key Stage 3 that imposes constraints on in-depth study. Though Key Stage 3 schemes of work in music have been revised, these still need further development to ensure that each project clearly builds on previous experience.

25. Effective provision is made to develop literacy and numeracy skills. A good foundation in basic skills of reading and writing, speaking and listening is established in English at Key Stage 3. These are well developed across the curriculum and particular attention paid to familiarisation with subject specific language. Appropriate emphasis is given at an early stage to good standards of numeracy in mathematics which are then well applied in subjects such as geography, science and DT.

26. The formal curriculum is enhanced by the extensive programme of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school. Take-up is good for a rural area where pupils are heavily reliant on school transport. As well as providing additional classes and support for learning, there are a variety of special interest groups and a very good range of sporting activities for which the school has recently received the Sportsmark Award. Drama and extra-curricular music are very strong with concerts regularly held within the school and the wider community. As a result of an Education Extra award received in recognition of the breadth of provision, the school has been able to establish a homework club in one outlying village and intends to further develop this practice in collaboration with feeder primary schools.

27. The special needs department aims to ensure that all pupils follow a mainstream curriculum. Most support is provided through small group teaching as in English, mathematics and science or through in-class support. Such support is of good quality and generally well focused. Arrangements are flexible and sometimes pupils are withdrawn from class for special help. Though the school uses its resources appropriately, these are not sufficient to meet all needs particularly those of pupils with very limited basic literacy in Key Stage 3. All teachers have copies of pupils' individual education plans which match needs but targets are expressed in very broad terms. Eight pupils are currently disapplied from modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4. They are provided with a very good alternative curriculum that includes extended work experience, the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme and GNVQ. Despite limited resources the school has responded very imaginatively to the needs of the three Kosovan pupils who follow a mixed Year 10 and 11 timetable in part, as well as studying Italian towards GCSE after school with a native Italian speaker. A volunteer provides English conversation twice a week.

28. All pupils have one lesson per week of personal and social education effectively taught by a dedicated group of teachers. A balanced and imaginative range of topics relevant to each stage of pupils' personal development are covered and include an appropriate emphasis on health education and issues relating to drug misuse. Sex education is well addressed through PSE, science, RE and child care courses. The school has a health education co-ordinator and has won a 'Healthy School Award'.

29. Work-related learning is well embedded into the curriculum. All subject areas have identified potential industrial and business links that are being developed as, for example, in food studies. The school was a pilot school for Intermediate GNVQ and offers a well-structured and taught course in leisure and tourism. Though take-up is small, it is intended that further courses in art and DT will attract more pupils across the full ability range. The quality of careers education for the school as a whole is good. A Year 9 Industry Day involves pupils in the ideas of design, production, marketing and advertising. In Year 10 there is a two-week period of work experience which is very highly regarded by pupils and very well organised with debriefing providing an opportunity for reflection after the event. In Year 11 arrangements are made for pupils to have mock interviews. This year it was only possible to arrange these for pupils who needed or requested them but the intention is to make such interviews available to all pupils next year. All these activities are made possible by the very generous support of people in business, industry, professional agencies and the community locally.

30. Careers education forms part of the PSE provision at Key Stage 4 and has a number of notable strengths. All pupils have their own record of work that includes self-assessment as well as information on opportunities and ways forward. There are special work related-programmes and careers guidance for pupils with SEN and UCAS information is available for pupils wishing to consider future university courses. The careers library is very well organised with the help of volunteer pupils and good use is made of ICT including the Internet. All pupils have interviews with their form teacher and a senior member of staff; those who request one can also have an interview with the careers adviser. Very careful records are kept for all pupils of their tutor interviews, career aspirations, predicted grades, applications made, interviews and outcomes. Documentation as a whole is very thorough.

31. The school has cultivated and uses an impressive range of community links that benefit pupils in a variety of ways and enhance their educational experience by developing a strong ethos of personal responsibility and community spirit. Pupils are encouraged to take a full part in community life and do so through a range of activities from assisting at an elderly persons' day care centre to organising educational trips for primary school children. There is a very successful and widely appreciated concert and event calendar and many sporting links. The esteem in which the school is held is most easily demonstrated by the success of its recent quest for sponsors to enable it to pursue its successful bid for Technology College status and by the willingness shown by members of the wider community to contribute to the curricular experience of pupils.

32. The school has maintained good pastoral links with feeder primary schools and strengthened curriculum liaison criticised at the time of the last inspection. Technology college status has enabled the school to provide some specialist support in science teaching for its feeder schools in the current year which will be extended to mathematics and DT in the future. In turn, primary school colleagues plan to share their expertise on the literacy and numeracy hours with staff at Reepham. Liaison with further education colleges is developing through linked courses and shared teaching.

33. Provision to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Spiritual development is well supported through assemblies and tutor periods and three annual events, a Harvest Festival, a traditional Carol Service in Reepham Parish Church and a Remembrance Day Service, remarkable for the presence, not only of representatives of the community, war veterans and the British Legion, but also for the involvement of a headteacher from a school in Germany. RE makes a particularly strong contribution and the spiritual dimension an art class drew from its visit to RAF Duxford is typical of other curricular contributions to this area of pupils' personal development.

34. Assemblies are valuable occasions delivered alternately and with sincerity by a team of clerics who meet termly to plan their contributions and by a member of the senior management team. One assembly observed explored self-discovery and effectively used visual aids to explore issues relating to drinking, drugs and peer group pressure. It included an act of worship as did a later assembly given by the headteacher which further developed the theme; this was also reflected in tutor time as the restricted size of the assembly hall precludes all pupils attending assemblies each day. By such means the school is able, not only to meet its statutory obligation to provide a daily act of corporate worship for all pupils but also to set a moral and spiritual tone for the school. Assemblies are also well used to reward success, to inform and to develop a sense of pride in the school.

35. The school's spiritual and moral policy is well written and provision for moral development is especially good. An effective code of conduct reflects the aims of the school agreed by a committee of pupils, teachers, parents and governors. The example set by staff provides a good role model for pupils of right and wrong, tolerance, good sportsmanship and co-operative and safe working practice. A visiting community policeman engaged a Year 7 class on "crime and its consequences" leading to a role play exercise built around a trial and was a typical example of the skilful way in which a strong moral dimension is offered. Such comprehensive provision is reflected in the positive response of pupils who show respect and commitment for the school and enjoy positive and productive relationships. .

36. This is an outward looking school with a wide range of links. Numerous opportunities for group work in lessons, an extensive range of extra curricular activities, fieldwork, work experience, and a variety of trips such as Year 8's annual visit to France, underpin the very good provision the school makes for social development. Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibility throughout the school via the school council and its successful charities' sub-committee or as members of the Reepham High School Review team. Increasingly, as they move through the school, they are encouraged to provide support for others in the library, in ICT, in careers, as school guides, as peer counsellors, in community work, as subject mentors and as prefects.

37. There are many curricular opportunities for pupils to enrich their knowledge and experience of their own cultural traditions though such subjects as English, drama, art and music. Very good provision is also made for pupils to learn about other cultures. Geography makes a major contribution as for example in the way in which ICT and a visiting speaker were used to bring colour and reality to a Year 8 lesson on Italy. An appropriate emphasis is placed on world religions in RE though the relevance of this needs to be constantly reinforced for pupils who have little direct contact with people of other faiths. Through MFL and the Comenius project, the school is involved in exchanges and work with other European schools and has staged European days to heighten awareness of and links to other cultures across the curriculum. Use of the Internet, the art department's "Multi-Cultural Time Warp" project and studies of ethnic foods are examples of many initiatives which enrich cultural understanding across the taught curriculum.

38. Since the last inspection, the range of opportunities offered to pupils has been considerably extended. There is much more extensive use of ICT and shortcomings in collective worship and RE have been resolved. Both now meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Care for pupils is of high quality in all aspects of their school life. There is good monitoring and support for both their academic and personal development and a high level of concern for their safety and well being.

40. The school places great emphasis on providing an attractive and well maintained environment for learning. Health and safety issues are addressed both systematically and effectively through regular review by governors and staff. Appropriate measures are in place for child protection with a designated child protection officer and training on procedures for all staff when they join the school.

41. Pastoral care is a clear priority in this school where staff ably demonstrate a high level of knowledge of individual and collective needs through a well structured tutor system. There are well established links with feeder primary schools and the support provided for pupils when they enter Year 7 is appreciated both by pupils and their parents. There is an excellent handbook for new pupils in Year 7 and good collaboration between schools ensures that staff understand the individual needs of pupils before they enter the school.

42. The pastoral care group, chaired by the headteacher, meets regularly to consider issues affecting whole school and individual pupil needs. There is good liaison with the Educational Welfare Officer who visits on a weekly basis to discuss individual care with the senior management member responsible for the attendance and welfare of pupils. Heads of year regularly attend these meetings to consider issues relating to their particular year groups, overall providing impressive and effective arrangements where the needs of pupils are addressed with appropriate skill, knowledge and consideration.

43. There are effective procedures to monitor and improve attendance with attendance certificates issued to all pupils whose attendance is high. Any problems with attendance are dealt with appropriately working in close co-operation with the educational welfare officer. There is, however, a need to ensure greater consistency in record keeping and in the monitoring and storage of attendance registers. The very effective code of conduct clearly reflects high expectations on behaviour, courtesy and consideration for others. Good behaviour is rewarded through a merit system with an appropriate system of sanctions in the event of poor behaviour. Very effective measures are taken to eliminate bullying and oppressive behaviour. The Active Listening Forum run by Year 10 and 11 pupils has been very effective in dealing with a range of pupil centred concerns and is an impressive initiative which contributes positively to the school as a caring community. Much of its success can be attributed to the dedication and commitment of individual teaching staff who have freely given of their time and expertise to support the young peer counsellors. Youth workers are involved in both training and supporting the scheme.

44. Arrangements for the care of pupils with special needs are good. The SENCO visits all pupils in Year 6 at their feeder schools and, where there is particular need, as early as Year 5. Consultation between the SENCO, subject areas and pastoral staff is good so that staff are well informed about support for pupils especially those with emotional and behavioral difficulties. The progress of pupils with SEN is monitored frequently though much of this is informal. The department should now consider how best to develop more focused target setting, the use of available assessment data and the regularity of review processes so that monitoring is more systematic. Statutory arrangements for pupils with SEN are met and good information provided for annual reviews of statemented pupils.

45. The school makes effective and increasing use of a range of assessment data to inform teaching and set targets for improvement. Test data is used at Key Stage 3 to establish teaching groups and to enable year tutors to monitor progress. At Key Stage 4, minimum target grades are shared with pupils and parents through the reporting system and used by subject teachers as a basis for further improvement. Academic monitoring and mentoring has been introduced to encourage and motivate pupils and to set pastoral and academic targets. Some pupils are also offered industrial mentoring and all Year 11 are interviewed by a member of the senior management. Monitoring of attainment at departmental level is good overall but further work is needed in ICT to ensure that pupils

know what they need to do to improve skills and in music to set clear targets for improvement. More specific target setting would help pupils further improve their work in English and history.

46. The school has an appropriate policy that sets clear guidelines for teachers on the purpose and use of assessment and of the need for consistency of practice. Coursework and homework are generally well marked, often with constructive comment. In many cases, procedures for assessing pupils' work and recording progress are good as for example in mathematics and PE. Thorough procedures in science and art ensure that pupils have a good understanding of their own capability. There is, however, need for further development in history to ensure consistency of practice and a clear assessment strategy in music to give pupils clear targets for improvement. Assessment practice in most subjects, particularly through departmental moderation, is appropriately used to inform curriculum planning.

47. The good standards of personal support noted in the last inspection report have been maintained. The use of assessment data has greatly improved though the school recognises that this is an area needing further development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The school enjoys a very good relationship with parents. The meeting held between parents and the registered inspector prior to the inspection indicated a high level of support for the school as did the response in most of the questionnaires. These included a remarkable number of written comments by parents identifying and supporting the school's efforts to work with them. Parents generally feel both welcome and involved in the educational experience of their children. They appreciate the good progress made by their children, the quality of teaching and expectations on behaviour. A very high percentage feels that their children like school and that the school is well led.

49. The evident trust between parents and the school ensures that links are effective. Parents' views are sought as for example in their contribution to the development of the code of conduct. Questionnaires used at parents' evenings allow opportunity to raise issues and ideas to improve these important liaison events. A number of constructive suggestions have been received and are being considered for action prior to the next round of such meetings. The Friends of Reepham School are active in organising fund-raising events and the level of involvement and commitment to the school on the part of the governing body, which includes a significant number of parents, is impressive. Parents of pupils with SEN are kept well informed about their progress and are invited to the annual reviews of pupil with statements. These are handled very well and sometimes held at the pupil's home when this is appropriate.

50. The quality of information provided for parents is very good and far more extensive than in most schools. In addition to the well produced prospectus and course handbooks, parents receive detailed information on course content in each year which encourages understanding of the work undertaken across subjects. Though there was some degree of dissatisfaction with the information provided on pupils' progress, scrutiny of reports indicated that these were of good quality. The two interim reports, though brief, contain helpful guidance for parents on the grades achieved. The detailed annual record of achievement includes constructive comment by pupils as well as staff and targets for improvement. Those written by year tutor show a very good understanding of individual pupils and their needs; subject specific targets are often very generalised and could usefully be made more specific to encourage further progress. There is a Home/Partnership scheme that seeks to identify and affirm responsibilities for staff, parents and pupils.

51. Though there is only a limited amount of direct involvement by parents in their children's learning, as in most secondary schools, it is more extensive than most. The homework diary provides a regular means of contact between parents and teachers. Understanding of course content also makes a significant contribution to support for learning. Sponsorship and fund raising activities involving pupils, staff and parents helps to raise significant funding to improve resources with some individual donations of equipment to further enhance school facilities. Many parents support the extra-curricular activities, sometimes in a practical way, as for instance, training in the use of mountain bikes. Attendance at school concerts and productions is good and very appreciative.

52. The school continues to encourage parental involvement as it did at the time of the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The school is very well led and managed. Much of this is due to the exceptional vision and leadership of the headteacher in developing learning opportunities in the school and promoting high standards. In this, he is very well supported by other members of the extended management team who together have ensured that planning is well implemented and effective. Re-organisation of the management structure has ensured that the skills of key staff are fully acknowledged and well employed to support pupils and their learning.

54. The governing body also fulfils its responsibilities extremely well. Planning is well considered and there is appropriate delegation of responsibility to the management team. Governors have good insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses which enables them to provide effective and practical support as critical friends of the school. Their financial planning and management, criticised at the time of the last inspection, are now very good. The headteacher, extended management team and the governing body have developed effective and efficient working arrangements where each clearly understands the relationship with the other and complement their efforts.

55. The school has clear aims and values that underpin all its work. These are reflected in well considered policy documents. Whole school development planning links decision making and use of resources to a clear focus on educational priorities and the improvements needed to support learning. Aims are high but have proved both realistic and achievable as in the bid for Technology College status. Analysis of performance and consultation are appropriately applied in the planning process. Departmental development planning is more variable and lacks detail in ICT, MFL and RE, coherence in music and prioritised and costed targets in history.

56. The school places a strong emphasis on promoting effective teaching and learning through classroom observations. There is regular monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and particularly the deputy head whose timetable includes two such observations per week. Monitoring and peer observation is also undertaken at departmental level as, for example, in English where observation of both teaching and of pupils' work has had a major impact on standards. Such monitoring could usefully be extended in geography. All teachers are regularly appraised and performance management is appropriately linked to the staff development programme.

57. The school manages its finances very well and through a dynamic sponsorship drive has been able to successfully fund a £100,000 bid for Technology College Status. This is a remarkable achievement considering the largely rural environment of the school that inevitably reduces the number of available sources of such funding. Imagination and rational

risk management approaches are applied to good effect both in securing and using funds. Budgetary planning incorporates costed proposals to assist with prioritisation and equalisation of resources across the whole school. Budget headings are carefully monitored and responsibility for spending is appropriately devolved with realistic limits set for spending levels. These practices have led to a practical and responsible approach to budget management that has served the school's needs well.

58. Financial controls and procedures involve both management and governors primarily through a finance and premises committee. The committee chairman, headteacher and the administrative finance officer meet regularly to monitor current spending levels and priorities and consider detailed output from the financial management system. The school bursar is a senior member of the teaching staff. As he can commit only part of his time to this role, support is provided by a member of the administrative staff who maintains the computerised financial management system. Whilst these arrangements have served the school well, there is recognition that the increasing volume and complexity of finance management has created a need to review and enhance current provision. Good use is made of new technologies to develop and maintain the school's data base and to support administrative procedures.

59. Pupils are encouraged to take a responsible part in school affairs and have a voice in shaping policies and practice. A school council has been re-instigated and helps identify issues for consideration by management. In turn, the council has a small delegated budget that they are encouraged to use creatively to enhance school facilities. The council play a key role in the co-ordination and assessment of activities intended to benefit charities. The peer counselling scheme is also a very good example of how pupils are given and respond positively to responsibility.

60. Arrangements for the support of special needs pupils are good. The SENCO provides very good leadership to the team of assistants and a clear sense of direction in the school as a whole. Staff are committed and caring, relationships are good and there is interested and committed support from the link governor. Organisation is good and there is a clear statement of policy but documentation does not clearly identify how the principles will be achieved. The SEN dept has maintained the good standards reported at the last inspection but monitoring of individual education plans has not really been addressed.

61. The school is well staffed with well qualified and experienced teachers. There is a balance of men and women on the staff but only one member of the senior management team is female and the majority of heads of department are male. Non-teaching staff are very experienced and provide valuable support across the school but are small in number to meet all needs particularly in SEN and administration. There is a very effective induction programme for all staff new to the school and for students on initial teacher training. Staff development is well managed and relevant to the needs of all teaching and non-teaching staff through use of staff training days and support for teachers attending in-service sessions. Imaginative use is made of a limited staff development budget as for instance in the provision of in-house courses in ICT which are also open to teachers from feeder primary schools.

62. The school is set in attractive countryside on the edge of Reepham. The school site is well-designed and very well cared for by the site manager and his team. Pupils respond by showing respect for the environment; there is little litter and no graffiti. The governing body has worked hard to improve accommodation since the last inspection and much is very good. Technology college status has enabled the school to improve areas for DT, mathematics and ICT through refurbishment and added resourcing though there is still one small DT workshop that becomes congested when used for large groups and another with inadequate dust extraction. Art rooms are cramped and the size of both the gymnasium and

sports hall restrict indoor PE activities. Science laboratories do not have main services on benches resulting in cramped conditions that have an adverse effect on learning. The prefabricated classrooms become hot and stuffy in warm weather, are isolated from the main teaching areas and create problems for teachers and technicians in moving equipment and resources around.

63. Library provision has improved since the last inspection. It has been doubled in size and the library staff have worked with subject staff to re-stock both fiction and non-fiction sections. It now provides a pleasant working area that is well used by the pupils. The school is generally well resourced, particularly in ICT where the ratio of pupils per computer is above the national average, although some of these are old and outdated. There are, however, insufficient ICT resources in art, humanities and MFL and insufficient textbooks for mathematics, history and MFL.

64. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. Aspects of management, use of resources, the strategic and leadership roles of governors and financial planning, all seen as areas of weakness at that time, are now very considerable strengths. The school has worked very hard to improve accommodation but it is recognised by the governing body that, despite their efforts in this respect, some weaknesses still remain.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The school should now raise standards and the quality of provision further by:
- (1) providing support for the music department to develop planning and improve curriculum content and challenge particularly at Key Stage 3 (paragraphs 18, 24, 135, 136, 141);
 - (2) improving target setting for pupils and ensuring that assessment procedures are appropriately developed in all subjects (paragraphs 21, 45, 46, 72, 118, 124, 138, 141);
 - (3) increasing the level of SEN support as resources allow (paragraphs 2, 20, 27, 72);
 - (4) continuing to work with the Local Education Authority to further improve accommodation (paragraphs 62, 64, 88, 96, 102, 133, 145).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of lessons observed | 137 |
| 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 |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 10 | 36 | 36 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 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– Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|---------|------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | 723 | NA |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 53 | NA |

| Special educational needs | Y7 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 28 | NA |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 79 | NA |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 6 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 17 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 25 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.4 |
| National comparative data | 7.9 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.2 |
| 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

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | 1999 | 67 | 77 | 144 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 45 | 52 | 49 |
| | Girls | 59 | 44 | 42 |
| | Total | 104 | 96 | 91 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 73 (86) | 67 (68) | 63 (68) |
| | National | 63 (57) | 62 (60) | 55 (60) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 24 (61) | 45 (45) | 31 (42) |
| | National | 28 (23) | 38 (37) | 23 (29) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 49 | 50 | 50 |
| | Girls | 60 | 53 | 44 |
| | Total | 109 | 103 | 94 |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 5 or above | School | 77 (79) | 72 (70) | 65 (69) |
| | National | 64 (60) | 64 (63) | 60 (61) |
| Percentage of pupils At NC level 6 or above | School | 28 (36) | 45 (44) | 36 (47) |
| | National | 31 (28) | 37 (37) | 28 (29) |

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 | 65 | 56 | 121 |

| 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 | 40 | 63 | 65 |
| | Girls | 35 | 52 | 56 |
| | Total | 75 | 115 | 121 |
| Percentage of pupils achieving The standard specified | School | 62 (56.1) | 95 (93.5) | 100 () |
| | National | 46.3 (44.6) | 90.7 (89.8) | 95.7 () |

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

| GCSE results | | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Average point score Per pupil | School | 43.9 (38.4) |
| | National | 37.8 (36.8) |

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 | 4 0 |
| | National | N/a |

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 723 |
| 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 | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 32 | 3 |
| 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) | 40.84 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 17.97 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 10 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 308.6 |

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

| | |
|---|------|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 79.9 |
|---|------|

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 3 | 23.5 |
| Key Stage 4 | 21.6 |

Financial information

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

| | £ |
|--|-----------|
| Total income | 1,492,451 |
| Total expenditure | 1,487,384 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2153 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 57,635 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 62,702 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 723 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 171 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 46 | 50 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 45 | 50 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 35 | 58 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 20 | 54 | 18 | 4 | 3 |
| The teaching is good. | 36 | 59 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 39 | 44 | 13 | 3 | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 57 | 38 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 68 | 27 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 40 | 49 | 9 | 1 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 48 | 45 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 43 | 49 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 30 | 42 | 7 | 1 | 19 |

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

ENGLISH

66. Results in the Key Stage 3 English tests in 1997 and 1998 were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. In 1999 the results were in line with the national average and below average for similar schools as measured by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Boys' attainment has been well above the national average for this period and girls' attainment just above. The 1999 results have been analysed carefully by staff and their judgement that this year group was academically weaker on entry to the school is supported by test data.

67. By the end of Key Stage 3, all pupils have improved their basic skills in reading and writing and most can listen attentively and express a point of view about what they are learning. High attaining pupils can analyse literary texts and write different types of essays with increasing confidence using mature vocabulary. Middle attaining pupils in Year 9 can discuss the imagery and ideas used by Bob Dylan in his songs. Low attaining pupils can read a range of texts and with skilful teaching can understand the themes and language of Shakespeare, as in a Year 8 lesson on Henry V. Although girls' attainment is stronger than boys this is less so than in most schools. Standards in reading and speaking and listening are especially good.

68. At Key Stage 4 results in English have been well above the national average for the last three years and have improved at least in line with the national trend with boys achieving much better results than they do nationally. In English literature standards at GCSE are high although the numbers entered are relatively low in comparison with other schools. By the end of Key Stage 4 high attaining pupils can write fluently and perceptively about a range of topics and their creative writing is of a very high standard. Middle attaining pupils can read effectively and write with increasing accuracy.

69. Tests indicate that on entry to school, pupils' standards of attainment are in line with the national average. By the end of Years 9 and 11 attainment as observed in lessons is above the national average. Progress at both key stages is very good. Pupils learn well across the school.

70. In Year 7 most pupils develop confidence in expressing their ideas in class discussions and many develop a mature vocabulary and a good control of spelling and punctuation. Their progress is very good. In a Year 7 lesson on ballads pupils read fluently and used literary critical terms to assist their understanding of the poems. By the end of Year 9 high attaining pupils can write imaginative and well structured essays. Low and middle attaining pupils have learned how to draft their work and make notes on the books they are studying. Pupils with learning difficulties improve the accuracy of their reading and the spelling and presentation of their work. Boys and girls progress at a similar pace although a higher number of boys find writing difficult. At Key Stage 4 many higher attaining pupils can write formal academic essays making sophisticated responses to poetry. They read widely and can make comparisons between texts illustrating their points with appropriate quotations. Much of their written work is enhanced through the use of computers in school and at home. In Year 10 progress is good although standards of work are not quite as good as those seen in Year 11. Middle and low attaining pupils continue to make good progress although they do experience problems when writing different types of essays.

71. The school's library is well used for research work in a range of subjects including history, art and English. Pupils use these facilities well including opportunities to use the

Internet. In science, considerable attention is given to ensuring that pupils understand the meanings of scientific terms and in Year 7, art sketchbooks have vocabulary lists in them which pupils must refer to when writing accounts of their work. In DT, pupils are encouraged to extend their vocabulary when writing technical descriptions. This is particularly effective in food technology. In many classrooms across the school key subject words are displayed in classrooms and pupils are encouraged to extend their oral vocabularies. Language skills are well taught across the curriculum but could be improved further if more attention was paid to teaching pupils how to write different types of essays.

72. The quality of English teaching is very good and in some lessons excellent. It is never less than good. Teachers have high expectations and lessons are very well planned and interesting. In a Year 10 lesson with low attaining pupils the teacher used with great skill and flexibility a wide range of strategies including use of the internet to develop pupils' research skills. The pace of lessons is often brisk as in a Year 7 lesson on visual communication, where the teacher, through skilful questioning worked hard to extend pupils' understanding of visual imagery. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well taught but would benefit from more support at Key Stage 3 from classroom assistants. The quality of this support when available is very good. Teachers' classroom management skills are very good. There is a relaxed atmosphere in classrooms and relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and enjoy teaching the subject. The school is fortunate that they all have different strengths and skills and should maximise opportunities for the sharing of ideas within the team. Homework is set regularly and is marked constructively. More specific targets for pupils would help to improve further their work. Classroom display boards are used well to display pupils' work and to reinforce key learning points.

73. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They work hard are well disciplined and are prepared to learn from each other and their teachers. In a Year 8 lesson almost half the group stayed behind at break to continue their work. They work effectively in groups and respond enthusiastically to the considerable challenges presented in English lessons. When given the opportunity they can evaluate and take responsibility for their own learning. In many English lessons they respond in a mature way when discussing moral issues such as the use and abuse of power in a Year 8 lesson on 'Lord of the Flies'.

74. Progress has been very good since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have improved and teaching is now very good. The new head of department has provided clear leadership and direction. The department is well organised and subject documentation is clear and helpful to staff. Teachers are involved in discussions about the future direction of English teaching and the priorities described in the departmental development are appropriate and should help to improve further standards of teaching and learning. Monitoring of pupils' work and teaching in classrooms has had a major impact in helping to disseminate good practice. The relatively new English accommodation provides a bright and attractive learning environment that is well cared for and used by staff and pupils. Resources for learning are good and when the department's computers are networked this should have a significant impact on teaching and learning.

DRAMA

75. Drama is taught as a separate subject in Year 7 and as part of the PSE programme in Years 8 and 9. There is one option group in both Years 10 and 11. The quality of this entire provision is very good and makes a significant contribution to developing pupils' social skills and in raising standards of speaking and listening.

76. In Year 7 pupils use movement and mime to describe characters and to relate stories. They work hard and enjoy the challenging pace and high expectations of the teacher. In Years 10 and 11 standards are very high and in the 1999 GCSE examinations many pupils achieved their highest grades in drama. The maturity, sensitivity and response of pupils at Key Stage 4 is impressive. Standards of improvisations and scripted performances are very high and pupils use confidently a wide range of drama techniques. Drama makes a significant contribution to the moral and social development of pupils by encouraging reflection and co-operative learning. The subject is well taught and makes a significant contribution to extra-curricular activities and to pupils' cultural development. Accommodation is satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

77. Standards of attainment in mathematics for the school as a whole are very good.

78. When pupils enter the school at the beginning of Year 7 their standards of attainment overall are slightly below the national average. During Key Stage 3 they make good progress so that at the end of the key stage their overall standards of attainment are above the national average. This is confirmed by the results of national testing in the summer of Year 9. In 1999 the performance of pupils of the school was above the average for the country as a whole, though below the average for schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. For the four years from 1996 to 1999 taken together the performance of girls of the school was well above the average for all girls nationally, and the performance of boys of the school was well above the average for all boys nationally.

79. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils have developed some facility with the use of the four rules of number. They are familiar with fractions, decimals and percentages and can use a calculator for straightforward operations. They are accustomed to the use of letters to represent numbers in algebra, and can simplify algebraic expressions and solve simple equations. They are familiar with a variety of shapes in two and three dimensions, with angles and with symmetry. They can tabulate data and represent it appropriately and have better understanding of the concept of probability than is usual for pupils of their age.

80. On this good basis, pupils make very good progress during Key Stage 4, so that by the end of this key stage their attainment is well above the national average. This was confirmed by the results of public examinations taken in the summer of Year 11. In 1999 all pupils in the year group were entered for the GCSE examination in mathematics. Almost all pupils obtained a grade in the full range A*-G, and more than three out of every five pupils were awarded a grade in the higher range A*-C. The proportion of grades A and A* was almost three times the national average and was excellent.

81. Over the three most recent years the performance of girls has shown improvement, with the results of 1998 the best of the three years and well above the national average for girls. The results of boys have improved spectacularly, by almost thirty percentage points over the same period. For boys the results of 1999 were the best of the three years, were significantly better than those of girls and were high in relation to the results of boys nationally.

82. By the end of Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils can solve numerical problems working with numbers of any size. They are familiar with graphs of algebraic functions and can use a variety of strategies to solve equations. They can find the perimeters, areas and volumes of a range of shapes in two and three dimensions. They have been introduced to trigonometry and can use a scientific calculator or a graphical calculator for an extended

range of operations. They can use more sophisticated techniques for the display and analysis of data and for calculation of probability. They can carry out an extended enquiry into an area of mathematics, can justify their generalisations or solutions, and can write them up as a well presented report of considerable mathematical merit.

83. The mathematics department makes good provision to meet the needs of individual pupils. In Year 7 pupils are taught in their mixed ability form groups, with the lowest attaining pupils withdrawn to form a separate group for more individual help. From Year 8 upwards pupils are grouped in sets made up according to their prior attainment in the subject. These groups are kept under review so that pupils can move to another set when it is in their best interests to do so. The lowest sets are smaller than the others enabling pupils encountering more difficulty to receive more individual attention all the way up the school.

84. The scheme of work for mathematics is written at three levels. Teachers interpret these to meet the requirements of pupils within their own classes. Pupils with special educational needs are placed in sets appropriate to their attainment in mathematics. There is support in class for some pupils with SEN. All pupils are well known to their teachers and there is extension material available for those pupils working most quickly. There is additional support available after school on three afternoons each week for pupils preparing for GCSE examinations. On this basis, all pupils have the opportunity to achieve as well as they can. Good standards of numeracy are established at an early stage, enabling pupils to cope well with the mathematical requirements of other subjects such as geography, science and technology.

85. The standard of teaching in mathematics is good. It was at least satisfactory in all the lessons seen, at least good in most, and very good in almost half. The subject knowledge of teachers was well up to the subject material in all the lessons seen. Lessons are well prepared in accordance with the appropriate level of the scheme of work. Exposition is clear and accurate, and skills of questioning are good. Homework is set regularly in accordance with school policy, and marking is consistent and conscientious, in some cases very good. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' work and for recording their progress, and preparation for GCSE examinations is very thorough.

86. Teachers use a good variety of teaching strategies in accordance with department policy. The scheme of work is effective in moving knowledge forward at a good pace, and the level of challenge in many lessons was very good. Very good work was seen in lessons with mixed ability groups in Year 7, introducing pupils to the use of co-ordinates to define the position of a point, and moving them straight on to co-ordinates in all four quadrants using both positive and negative numbers. A very good enquiry using work related mathematics was seen in Year 8 and another involving practical work and possibility space was used to investigate probability in Year 10. Both of these were with lower ability groups; the level of challenge in both was excellent and resulted in very good extension of the appreciation of pupils of the range of applications of the subject. In Year 11 a very good lesson was seen on the use of trial and improvement methods in examination conditions.

87. Part of the credit for their good progress is due to the good attitudes to their learning of pupils themselves. They listen carefully to their teachers and pay attention to the work on the board. They respond politely and usually accurately to direct questions, and are willing to speak at greater length and to contribute to the work on the board. They apply themselves well to written exercises, taking care to set out the calculations as they were shown and to draw accurate graphs and diagrams. They co-operate well with each other for practical work and when using computers. Behaviour was very good in almost all the lessons seen. The level of maturity shown by Year 11 pupils in Set 1 in relation to their studies was impressive.

88. The department is very well led and teachers work well together as a team. Since the last inspection they have brought about very good progress in relation to raising the standards of attainment of their pupils. Their current development plan is realistic and achievable. They are working closely with the contributory primary schools to implement the national numeracy policy; they are developing the use of their new computers and have planned for the purchase of some of the new textbooks that are now needed. The main accommodation for mathematics is very good, but includes only three classrooms though at least five are needed on a daily basis. This means one teacher has a classroom in another building and another a mobile classroom some distance away which is very hot in warm weather.

89. In addition to the measures they already have in hand teachers in the mathematics department could consider:

- further development of work in the use and application of mathematics. That seen was of high quality, but work for this attainment target could be better integrated with that for the other attainment targets, and investigative approaches could be used more often in the introduction of new theory in order to enhance the interest and relevance of the work
- development of the use of oral work in mathematics lessons. Question and answer work is very capably taken, but pupils could be invited to explain their reasoning at greater length, or to suggest alternative approaches. This work should be aimed at clarifying and extending the thinking of members of the class as a whole in order to raise their attainment further

SCIENCE

90. Standards achieved in science by the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4 are significantly above national averages. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests were above average and close to the average of those schools having similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. The average points scored by boys in 1999 was significantly higher than that of the girls. Over the past four years, the average points score has been well above average and has followed the national trend. This equates to an advantage of two term's progress compared to the national picture. The GCSE results in double science in 1999 were significantly above average with boys performing better than girls. The proportion gaining the highest grade A* was over three times the national average. Additionally all seven candidates entered for the separate sciences, biology, chemistry and physics gained at least a grade B. Over the past year pupils, particularly boys, have made significantly better progress in comparison with national norms than in their other subjects. The results in double science were not quite as high as those of 1998 but significantly better than those of 1997 when girls outperformed boys. The results in the separate sciences were similar to those of 1998. The 1999 GCSE results were well above the average of schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and also well above those of schools with pupils who performed similarly two years previously. A detailed analysis of the 1999 examination results revealed underachievement by some girls at GCSE and strategies which include closer monitoring have been introduced to address this.

91. Pupils enter the school with attainment levels that are close to average. The average performance of the present Year 7 pupils in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in science was below average. They make good progress throughout and, for the majority of older pupils, progress is very good. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards are above average and well above by the end of Key Stage 4. The comprehensive well structured examination preparation programmes delivered throughout contribute significantly to pupils' success in

public examinations. Pupils have a good knowledge and secure understanding of the subject matter in each of the attainment targets. Year 7 pupils soon learn how to measure and observe accurately and record appropriately. In one lesson they planned an experiment, ensured it was a fair test, made accurate predictions and carried out the experiment working safely and productively in groups. Most Year 9 pupils describe the status of matter in terms of particles and lower attainers apply their knowledge of separation techniques to suggest how mixtures may be separated. Higher attainers competently calculate pressures and apply simple inheritance rules. Lower attainers in Year 11 understand food chains and describe predator/prey relationships. Most pupils have a very good understanding of atomic structure and types of bonding and higher attainers calculate molar quantities and explain factors affecting rates of chemical reactions in terms of collision theory and activation energy.

92. Skills required in experimental work develop to well above expected levels by the end of each key stage and many Year 11 pupils gain high marks for interpretation and evaluation of their experimental results. Pupils have the numeracy skills to process their experimental results and present them in various graphical forms. They are careful to use correct scientific terminology and their standards of presentation are high. Pupils with SEN make very good progress in most lessons. They are placed in smaller groups and teachers are well aware of the difficulties of individual pupils. They provide them with suitable tasks and give them additional help whenever possible. In some lessons there is extra effective in-class support.

93. The good learning and progress results primarily from the high quality teaching and the very positive attitudes of pupils. The quality of teaching is a particular strength and has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is now always good or better and very good or excellent in almost half of the lessons. Teachers know pupils extremely well and use the knowledge to question them skilfully and challenge them to draw out information and to check understanding. Very occasionally questioning is not sufficiently targeted to focus individuals and to ensure an even distribution of response from boys and girls. Prompt starts are made to lessons and in one observation, the teacher gave a quick revision test immediately to focus pupils. Teachers have very good knowledge of course and examination board requirements and use it extremely well to prepare pupils for examinations. In one lesson pupils quickly appreciated the need to match the detail and extent of answers to the number of marks allocated. Teachers know their subject very well and make it comprehensible, often by relating to everyday occurrences familiar to pupils or by describing relevant personal experiences. They adopt a lively and enthusiastic approach and use a variety of strategies. Class management is very good and pupils respond well to the high expectations of behaviour and effort. The quality of the pupil-teacher relationships promotes confidence and pupils readily respond, put forward ideas and seek further help as required.

94. Lessons are well planned often providing good variety of activity and are conducted at a suitable pace. In an excellent lesson Year 10 pupils quickly interpreted their experimental results after skilful exposition and questioning by the teacher. They were fully engaged in a sequencing activity that also benefited development of their literacy skills. By the end of the lesson they understood how the movement of particles changes when a solid is heated. Competent demonstrations making effective use of resources by the teacher reinforced this knowledge and understanding. Some groups in one lesson were too large which resulted in too few pupils being fully involved. ICT is now used much more as an effective tool to aid learning and in one lesson observed, pupils competently accessed a program which enabled them to understand functions of logic gates much more quickly than would be achieved by other methods. There will be more opportunities for pupils to gain 'hands on' experience of data capture and logging of their experimental work when the new equipment on order arrives. Homework tasks are purposeful often reinforcing work done in

lessons. These are marked promptly with much use of informative comments which help pupils move forward.

95. The curriculum has good breadth particularly at Key Stage 4 with Certificate of Achievement and courses in the separate sciences in addition to the main double award course. Pupils taking the three separate sciences have a lesson each week after school to enable them to cover the work. This willingness is testament to the commitment of both pupils and teachers. Assessment procedures are thorough with much more use being made of the data, for example to set individual targets for pupils. The liaison with feeder schools is much more effective and lessons are taught in each of the feeder schools on a regular basis. This promotes good continuity and ease of transition over the key stages and is much appreciated by the feeder schools.

96. Teachers are well qualified and there is a good balance of experience and gender. They are deployed effectively making good use of specialisms and expertise with particular groups. They work hard as a team and receive excellent support from the technicians. Very good and much appreciated support is provided for the newly qualified teacher and one undergoing training. An extremely competent and enthusiastic head of department provides clear direction with a commitment to high standards and continuous improvement. Apart from the inadequacies and insufficiency of the accommodation the department has successfully addressed the issues highlighted in the last inspection report. Four of the five laboratories do not have mains services on the central benches and this adversely affects the quality of learning as was observed in one lesson where pupils would have completed the practical task much more quickly if the space had been available. The external prefabricated building becomes uncomfortably hot and much time of technicians is taken up in transferring equipment to it across the playground. The major improvements which have taken place since the last inspection are indicative of the capacity for future further improvement.

ART

97. In 1999, the proportion of pupils, both boys and girls, gaining the higher grades A*-C at GCSE was very high in comparison with the national average. Consistently good results have been achieved since the previous inspection and have shown an improvement each year. Girls' results are slightly higher than those of boys though the differential between boys and girls performance is much less than the national norm. Over half the pupils taking the examination in 1999 achieved the highest grades A*-A, an exceptional performance. There has been a 100% pass rate for grades A*-G in recent years.

98. On entry, standards of attainment are broadly in line with the national average. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards of attainment are very good. During the key stage, pupils are introduced to a broad range of art skills and techniques that contribute to their thinking and making capability. They learn through keen observation with very good use made of drawing as a means of exploration and discovery. Examples were found of well-developed observational capability in the majority of pupils' folders and sketchbooks throughout the key stage. This was typified by displays of work by Year 9 pupils around the school where pastel drawings using strong and bold colour described carefully studied plant forms. Sketchbooks are used extensively by all pupils at all levels for the purpose of gathering information and researching ideas. Resources for learning have been developed by art staff to meet specific learning needs. These are in regular use, act to stimulate pupils' thinking as well as to provide stimulus and information and have a major influence upon the progress made by the pupils. This is highlighted in work in Year 7 where pupils researched shapes found in company logo's in a preliminary exercise, prior to designing their own motif's for a repeated

pattern design. The resources used in lessons contribute to the quality of pupils' work and their standards of attainment. SEN pupils achieve good levels of attainment and make very good progress throughout the key stage. They are well integrated into classes and teachers are fully aware of their particular educational needs. Artists' work from different cultures and periods of art are studied within pupils' own practical work and used as a resource for their learning. The process is very successful as depicted in Year 8 work based upon the Cubist Epoch. Pupils studied Cubist artists such as Juan Gris, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in a project that involved them in measuring and other mathematically related skills.

99. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards of attainment are very good and some work is outstanding in its quality of intellectual content and technical skills. A large proportion of the cohort show themselves capable of analysing and responding to visual stimulus with a maturity rarely found at this stage. This was most evident in the work produced by Year 11 pupils as a result of a visit to RAF Duxford military aircraft museum. The visit had a profound effect upon the quality of pupils' work. Responses of individuals vary; one pupil had developed a series of large paintings based upon the structure of the museum building conveying a feeling of light and space. Another pupil's work combined the study of the modern artists, Kenneth Noland and Robert Rauschenberg with RAF and US aircraft motifs and insignia. There was a strong sense of moral focus in some of this work and one or two pupils had reflected upon the darkness of air warfare. Artists' work is used constantly in all pupils' work and each has a very good knowledge of individual artists and the work of other cultures. This was strongly illustrated in a Year 10 project titled, Multi-cultural Timewarp. Pupils had developed work based upon a combination of cultural comparisons involving associated art disciplines, as for example punk rock music of the seventies, or John Lennon and Yoko Ono music and art of the sixties with visual artists such as Edvard Munch from other cultures and periods of history. Pupils are capable of researching from many sources and are resourceful and investigative. Attainment of SEN pupils at this key stage is good and high in relationship to their abilities.

100. The department has continued to improve upon the good standards reported at the last inspection. Pupils use a wide and descriptive art vocabulary, an area considered weak at the time of the last inspection. Assessment procedures are thorough and pupils have a good understanding of their own levels of capability at both key stages. Pupils' understanding of artists and their work was reported as being in need of sharper focus in the last report; it is now a strength. The head of department was quick to address this issue and has worked with the library staff to build up an impressive art section in the school library. Resourcing was considered to be broadly adequate. It remains adequate in provision for two and three dimensional art work but is under resourced in ICT provision with need for at least one more computer. Display remains a strength within the department and has been extended out into many areas throughout the school. Excellent displays are mounted in the corridors, the mathematics department, the offices of the senior management team and the school library.

101. Departmental staff are well-qualified and their complementary specialisms bring a breadth of expertise to the department. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is used effectively in providing incentive and challenge for pupils. Lessons have strong pace and there is good and effective challenge. Teachers consciously employ well-considered questioning techniques when working with pupils, a strategy used to best advantage when discussing work with individuals and in helping to develop self-evaluation skills. Pupils respond well to teachers questioning and are reflective when talking about their own work. There is a strong match between verbal description and pupils' artwork. Language, particularly the technical language describing cultural aspects and art movements, is well used. Competent technical skills are introduced through well-resourced lessons, for example, printing techniques in Year 7. Some of the laminated resource sheets are used to provide simple stage-by-stage information, others offer ideas and alternatives. Excellent

relationships between pupils and teachers have a marked effect upon the quality of work produced at both key stages. Teachers give freely of their time and the art rooms are constantly in use after school and at lunchtimes. Visits and out of school art activities provide rich experiences for pupils. These experiences are valuable in the development of individual pupils, as evidenced in their sketchbooks that reflect the excellent development as they progress through the school. Teaching is consistently very good at both key stages and has a marked effect upon pupils' learning. Teachers are assisted in their work by a highly competent and hard-working technician.

102. Some limitations are imposed upon the department by small and congested art accommodation. The cramped conditions have a serious effect upon storage of work and opportunities to engage pupils in large scale work at Key Stage 3 and group work at both key stages. The newly appointed art teacher has good qualifications in art-related ICT but is unable to develop this area of art activity fully due to a serious lack of ICT resourcing.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. GCSE results have improved in all design and technology subjects since the last inspection and in 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A*-C was well above average overall. Improvement has been most significant in textiles, food subjects and graphic products. In 1999, both girls and boys achieved results significantly higher than the national average in graphic products, electronics, textiles and food. The performance of the small number of girls entered for resistant materials was better than that of boys; boys' results were in line with the national average and represent a major improvement from the time of the last inspection when these were well below average. Girls' results are significantly higher than boys in graphic products and food subjects. No boys took textiles and no girls took electronics.

104. On entry to the school, pupils' standards of attainment are broadly average. By the end of Key Stage 3, they are very good. Pupils are provided with a full range of learning opportunities that include food technology, resistant materials, textiles, graphics and ICT related applications. Designing and making skills are promoted from the moment pupils enter the school, as observed in Year 7, where pupils showed themselves capable of designing and making a cook's spatula. They made preliminary investigations of use, and interviewed adults who cook regularly in order to gain information of what constituted a good spatula. The information gained from this survey was then incorporated into their designs, as for example, the inclusion of notches or hook-shapes to prevent the spatula from slipping into the frying pan when in use. Pupils also demonstrated a good knowledge of the properties of materials, identifying beech as the best type of wood to use for a spatula for its close grain that was unlikely to splinter or absorb liquids. Positive links are made with other subject areas as in textiles where Year 7 pupils reinforced their learning in science when they explored the properties of fibres and threads through investigation of their tensile strength and the properties of insulation, strength, water-resistance and absorption. They then showed good subject knowledge when matching these properties to products such as rucksacks, tents, belts, parachutes and protective clothing. Pupils have a good command of ICT and demonstrate this well in Year 8, where they use Scantek. They confidently operate computerised learning equipment to explore pneumatics, materials and processes, electronics, mechanisms and robotics. SEN pupils are successfully integrated into DT classes, teachers know these pupils well and have well-developed strategies and resources to meet their individual needs. SEN pupils achieve good standards of attainment.

105. At Key Stage 4, standards of attainment are very good and reflect examination results. Pupils work independently in researching ideas and are able to follow the process of

a design through to a conclusion. Very good research skills were observed in Year 11 food technology where pupils investigated main course ethnic foods. Working in pairs, they prepared commercially manufactured products according to the instructions and then made an in depth evaluation of the product. They were capable of working to criteria that investigated aroma, texture, taste and visual appeal, prior to coming to conclusions regarding the quality of the product in relationship to its cost. Pupils acquire good technical skills in all DT disciplines, they are able to work independently and are capable of making and constructing products accurately and with a good finish. In a Year 10 resistant materials class, pupils were competent in the skills of joining various types of metals. When questioned, they were able to describe the most appropriate methods to meet specific needs and understood the importance of quality and safety when joining metals as, for example, when oil pipelines are welded in off-shore installations. Pupils are competent in the use of ICT for research as observed in child development where Year 10 pupils investigated products suitable for young children. The lesson encouraged active and interested response from the pupils to achieve very good standards of attainment.

106. The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment have been raised from generally sound to mainly very good at Key Stage 3 and from being broadly in line with the national average to very good in most DT subjects at Key Stage 4. Pupils' attitudes have improved and they are now capable of working confidently on individual projects. The most notable improvement is in teaching which is now consistently very good in comparison to sound in 1995. All major health and safety issues have been addressed. As a result of adverse comments on planning in the last report, the department has drafted a full and comprehensive departmental plan. The most significant contribution to the development of the department since the last inspection has been the successful bid for technology college status.

107. The overall standard of teaching is very good and in many cases outstanding. Teachers are very well qualified and their expertise matches their subject responsibilities. Relationships throughout the department are exemplary and have a significant effect upon the quality of pupils' learning. Staff demonstrate a strong sense of unity and, under excellent new leadership, represent a strong team. All lessons observed were well-prepared and resources used effectively as in a Year 7 textiles class where good use was made of a resource bank of photographs illustrating various uses of textiles in product design. The department's technicians provide effective support though, due to the expansion of the department, it is now important to review time allocation and task priorities. Teachers plan their time effectively and ensure coherence in lesson coverage. Pupils are motivated by well-constructed questioning techniques evident in the majority of classes as, for example, in a Year 11 food technology class where the quality of pupils' response was initiated by good questioning. Pupils were encouraged to compare commercial products with a previous project of their own, when they had prepared ethnic food using fresh produce, herbs and spices. The skills of evaluation are reinforced at all stages, pupils are articulate when discussing their ideas and constructive when judging the quality of their final products. The departmental policy of enriching the subject vocabulary and extending the use of technical terms allows pupils to express themselves more fluently. Investigation through the design process is rigorous and pupils learn much from processes such as disassembly, as in Year 9, where they disassembled ties to understand manufacturing techniques, the materials used, and pattern and style. Technology college status has extended resources within the department, particularly through ICT applications. There is regular use of ICT and in-service provision supports teachers in the development of new skills. There are very strong community and partner institution links and lecturers from Norwich City College work with Year 10 resistant materials pupils on a weekly basis. Another excellent link is through the Bernard Matthews group who have generously sponsored and supported the growth of technology within the school.

108. There are few weaknesses within the department and these relate mainly to accommodation. One resistant materials workshop is small and becomes seriously congested when accommodating large groups. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of storage for pupils' bags and coats during lesson time. The newly refurbished accommodation is excellent although a large chest freezer and two low refrigerators restrict space at the back of one of the food preparation bays, constituting a possible health and safety risk. The larger of the two resistant materials bases has ageing, noisy and inefficient dust extraction units that restrict space and cause unnecessary obstruction. The hose from the band saw extends into a walkway and represents a health and safety hazard.

HUMANITIES

109. The head of humanities manages history and geography. In Years 7 and 8, most teachers deliver modules of both subjects to their classes. From Year 9, each subject is taught mainly by specialist teachers. Though the overall time allocation for humanities is broadly average, the length of lessons limits opportunity for in-depth study in Key Stage 3 and time allocation tends to disrupt the continuity of learning in Years 7 to 9. Teachers are committed and well motivated. There is a good team spirit and the proximity of the main teaching rooms allows regular informal daily contacts to resolve issues and discuss problems. Some teaching takes place away from the main departmental base. This creates difficulties of access to resources.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Pupils enter Year 7 with a diversity of experience of geography in Key Stage 2. From this, not always secure start, a progressive syllabus enables pupils to make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is broadly in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 suggested that pupils had exceeded these expectations. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a growing awareness of place, direction and distance, are beginning to acquire a useful body of geographical knowledge and to broaden their awareness of geographical skills. This satisfactory progress is maintained through Key Stage 4 for the relatively small number of pupils, predominately boys, who opt to continue with the subject to GCSE where results have been enigmatic. From 1996 to 1998, results were below national averages and those achieved by pupils in other subjects. This was similar to the position at the time of the last inspection report. In 1999, results improved dramatically with 90.6% of the 34 candidates gaining at least a grade C against a national average of 53.1%. The proportion of higher grades A*-A was also much better than the national picture and pupils, on average, achieved significantly better grades in geography than in the other subjects they entered. These were excellent results and there was no apparent discrepancy by gender as there is nationally. If such outstanding results could be sustained, then progress would be truly exceptional but attainment in the current Year 11 groups appears much closer to national norms.

111. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. It is always earnest and committed, never unsatisfactory, but its impact on the quality of learning is variable. As at the time of the previous report, a wide range of teaching styles is used with an emphasis on case studies based on a variety of sources. Fieldwork opportunities are well used. An ICT lesson observed was well handled with pupils researching Italy via the Internet and then rewriting their findings in their own words. Pupils were given clear guidance and all proved confident in their handling of the technology. Practical work on micro-climate successfully motivated one Year 8 group and, in another, a visiting speaker held the pupils' attention drawing

intelligent and eager questions and giving the class a colourful insight into Italian life. Homework is well used to extend and reinforce classwork and for examination preparation. There was, however, some lack-lustre teaching in both key stages that lacked pace, focus and challenge. In such lessons, the pupils' concentration flagged and progress was barely adequate. In most lessons though, the attitude of pupils was wholly positive. They showed interest, listened attentively and contributed willingly. Some high quality project and coursework shows that many pupils accept responsibility for their own progress and work effectively on their own.

112. Line management of geography is through membership of the humanities faculty. There is much team work and sharing of tasks. Development planning currently focuses on evaluating methodology and methods of assessment, on strategies for supporting pupils with SEN and on the still greater use of ICT. It could usefully be extended to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching is even more effective. Geography, however, lacks the clearly defined subject specific leadership needed to reverse the low and declining take-up by pupils at Key Stage 4 and to foster and disseminate good practice. There is a need to address discrepancies in teaching and to improve and focus strategic planning so that the outstanding GCSE results of 1999 become a regular feature.

HISTORY

113. The quality of teaching is usually good and occasionally very good. It is, however, much more focused at Key Stage 4 where specialist teachers are familiar with and have confidence in the assessment objectives of the GCSE. In Key Stage 3, although there are common schemes of work, assessment practice and curriculum emphasis is not so evenly balanced in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers have a good command of subject matter. Non-specialists prepare lesson content well and teach confidently. Staff manage pupils with care and courtesy, expecting and receiving good behaviour. Good relations are evident and this usually generates a purposeful ethos. Teachers know pupils well and provide appropriate individual attention to help lower attainers succeed with classroom tasks. This helps pupils with SEN to make effective progress and compensates to some extent for the relatively small amount of in-class support from special needs assistants. Teacher presentations are usually clear and not too long and most of the time pupils know what they have to do. Teachers use appropriate teaching techniques and some really capture the imagination of pupils. A practical session on the school fields, using non-metric measuring chains, helped pupils visualise the size of medieval farming strips. This provided a basis for discussion of the derivation of words such as fallow, furlong and balk as well as the origins of the length of a cricket pitch. There are high but appropriate expectations in most lessons. This applies particularly in Key Stage 4 and to the higher teaching sets in Key Stage 3. Although books are marked, there is no consistent code of practice, published in a simple format, for reference by pupils and parents. A more uniform approach including a progressive series of common assessment tasks, targeting the specific skills and knowledge developed by the history schemes of work, would improve reliability of the end of year and end of key stage judgements on learning and attainment. Such a strategy would complement a current departmental objective to improve attainment of average ability pupils, by diagnosing weaknesses to aid identification of subsequent individual targets.

114. Pupils' attitudes towards history are very good. Most behave very well and willingly follow classroom routines. They are polite and cheerful. They listen to the teachers and to each other and work well in pairs and small groups. Concentration is usually maintained even at the end of a long day. Most pupils volunteer responses and are confident enough to

speak out before their classmates. Sometimes they become talkative but soon settle down when asked to do so. They respond well to the courtesy shown by their teachers.

115. It is, therefore, not surprising that the overall level of learning is good, with most pupils making sound or better progress in both key stages. During Key Stage 3, there are clear gains in knowledge and in appreciation of time and sequence of events. Pupils are aware of the importance of sources and appreciate that information from the past can take many forms. Time pressures and the pattern of lessons, however, impose some constraints on in-depth study. This means that skills of interrogating sources are not as well developed as they should be by the end of Year 9. Even so, most pupils understand that all sources are important to the historian but that some are more reliable than others. They appreciate the link between cause and effect and some are able to demonstrate this in their work in a sophisticated way. The highest attainers have good research skills with impressive levels of productivity. Some of the more creative work shows a strong appreciation of past conditions. Comparisons with modern circumstances do not appear so often in written work. The pace of learning is greatest in Key Stage 4 with a strong focus on GCSE assessment objectives. Examination technique develops well. Information seeking skills continue to develop, with pupils using a range of sources, exploiting the potential of information technology by using the Internet and CD ROM and word processing software. Information handling skills are less secure.

116. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is above national expectations. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of work generally confirms that though teachers are inclined to be a little generous when making their end of key stage assessments, these are not too unrealistic. The best work is very good indeed. A play written and performed by a small group of Year 9 pupils about the impact of war on a German soldier, demonstrated in a creative and moving way a sophisticated ability to empathise with situations of people in the past. The level of attainment strengthens considerably during Key Stage 4 where specialist teachers teach confidently to the requirements of the GCSE examination. Although results have varied during the past three years, overall attainment has remained above national averages. 1999 results were lower than the very high levels achieved in 1998 but attainment of girls proved to be well above average with most securing the higher grades A*-C grades. The larger group of boys were not so successful in this respect though nearly all secured certification. The combined A*-C attainment of boys and girls was therefore just above the national average. Over the last three years, although individual boys have attained very high grades, boys generally have not done as well as girls. This is against the trend in the school results as a whole. Departmental appraisal of the results rightly concludes that teachers need to concentrate on improving the attainment of boys of average ability.

117. The subject has thoughtful and sensitive leadership. There is a professional team approach based upon good relationships, daily contact and shared aims and objectives. This has produced significant achievements and the subject has clearly improved since the last inspection report. Pupils are encouraged to apply a range of ICT skills in the research and presentation of their work. Attainment has risen. Staff expertise is deployed effectively and schemes of work identify specific contributions to cross-curricular themes such as economic awareness and citizenship. The department also supports the work of RE, through timing the teaching of selected syllabus topics. Above all, pupils enjoy the subject, receiving good support and encouragement. When GCSE choices are made, the subject continues to recruit well.

118. Even so, there are aspects for development. There is no subject development plan with prioritised targets, costed in time money, which sets out to influence and inform the school development plan. Assessment practice is inconsistent and lacks a clear focus on the specifics of the subject. There are not enough new textbooks to support independent learning and the range of differentiated reference material is not wide enough to allow some

lower attainers to work without regular individual support. The IT facilities in the department need up-grading to provide pupils with more natural access.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of experiences in information and communications technology. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with that expected of year nine pupils nationally. However a number of Year 9 pupils attain above the levels expected and demonstrate a high degree of competence in using certain software packages. All pupils by the end of the key stage are confident users of ICT, having a sound knowledge of the hardware and good basic skills with the range of software used.

120. At Key Stage 4 pupils attain broadly in line with national expectations. Those taking GCSE Information Studies, however, achieve above average results. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A* - C was 5% above the national figure, a similar performance to that seen in 1998 and a continued improvement on the figures for 1997. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The numbers taking the examination are quite small and are therefore no guide to the standards being reached by the majority of pupils. Observation and scrutiny of work, however, confirms that attainment for the majority of pupils is at least in line if not marginally in advance of the standard expected.

121. Pupils in Year 7 quickly develop their skills to become competent users of computers. They display a confidence that enables them to carry out the tasks set efficiently and with the minimum of guidance. Pupils observed showed a good understanding of how procedures can be used, quickly progressing from simple shapes to more complex constructions when working with Super Logo. Whilst pupils in Key Stage 3 develop their skills and become familiar with software packages during the discrete ICT lessons, they also have many opportunities to use their knowledge and understanding of ICT in all other curriculum areas. Good examples were observed in, for example, mathematics, where Year 8 pupils worked on scatter diagrams using Excel; design and technology pupils working with computer controlled robot arms simulating industrial practice. Pupils in Year 9 demonstrated some very well prepared Power Point presentations on topics of their own choosing. Most pupils were able to use a large range of the facilities available, for example importing music and video clips to enhance their presentations.

122. Pupils at Key Stage 4 continue to develop their skills, increasing the level of sophistication when making use of spreadsheets, databases or using Power Point. Pupils have the opportunity to achieve up to NVQ level 3 during the key stage, providing a good grounding for the following stage of their education. Use of ICT across the curriculum is equally evident in Years 10 and 11. Pupils in science competently used revision packages and using a ripple tank program achieving a level of understanding more quickly than through a conventional approach. Those pupils taking information studies GCSE, taught in an additional session after school, have a good knowledge of peripheral equipment, being able to describe function and application clearly.

123. Throughout both key stages, pupils regard the ICT facilities available as tools to be used to aid their learning. All pupils have access to the Internet; it is used widely in subject areas and extensively by pupils during lunchtimes and after school. Many pupils are becoming discerning users, developing skills that enable them to be selective and efficient in their use of the technology. Attitudes to ICT are very good, both in discrete ICT lessons and in all other areas of the curriculum. All subjects have ICT built into their teaching programmes.

124. All teaching is at least sound and much is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils and an awareness of the needs of those with SEN. All teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and effectively stimulate pupils' interest and motivation. In the good lessons observed, pace was maintained and pupil progress was monitored well. Teachers explain software concepts clearly and demonstrate effectively, some using the large screen to ensure all pupils can clearly see the processes involved. Good examples were seen of teachers using pupils' work to illustrate good practice and thereby encouraging others. All pupils accepted this, behaving very maturely when asked to make critical comment as, for example, during Power Point presentations made by Year 9 pupils. Learning is generally effective and at a pace which reflects good teaching. Where challenge is missing for the most able, learning is least effective. Interest and concentration are good. Pupils show a very good ability to work independently. This is regarded as an expectation and pupils almost resent the interruption when the teacher wishes to interject. Assessment systems are not yet fully in place and further work is required to ensure that pupils are made aware of what they have achieved and what they need to do to further improve their ICT skills. Year 9 pupils are producing some good evaluations of their work, a process which when extended to other years, will undoubtedly enhance understanding and personal development.

125. The department is well managed by a committed and well-respected head of department who has the support of his staff. There is a governor linked to the department whose contribution is valued. Further development of monitoring of teaching is necessary to ensure the appropriate professional development is achieved for the personnel involved and to meet the aims of the department. The department benefits from having excellent support staff. Planning and documentation are good but would benefit from increased detail on intended outcomes, differentiation, timing and SEN support.

126. Since the last inspection, the area has made tremendous strides forward. Overall provision has moved from being wholly cross-curricular to discrete lessons in all but Year 11. Equipment levels and quality have increased significantly. Staff teaching in the area, although initially non-specialist, have improved their ICT skills through personal endeavour and the significant support of the head of department. The introduction of CLAIT and NVQ certification coupled with discrete lessons will undoubtedly ensure that pupil attainment continue to improve and exceed national expectation. The school has moved forward impressively since the previous report and to ensure that improvements continue the department needs to address the issues of assessment, monitoring of teaching and further integration of subject specific work within the discrete ICT lessons. The co-ordination role will become an increasingly important aspect of the head of department's role as the school continues to develop its ICT provision.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

127. In the GCSE examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 in 1999, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in French was well above the national average. The proportion gaining grades A*-C in Spanish was below the national average. Overall, results showed an improvement on the previous year. Since the last inspection, most pupils now take a GCSE examination in a foreign language and the entry numbers for Spanish across the ability range have greatly increased. About 10% of pupils take a Certificate of Achievement. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 indicates that pupils' attainment is above average. In the lessons observed, attainment at both key stages was broadly average with pupils achieving appropriate standards.

128. By the end of Key Stage 3, there is good development of listening skills and pupils are able to identify key information in short spoken and written texts in a familiar context. They are able to take part in basic dialogues and some are beginning to use the target language to make classroom requests. Written work is well developed and there are examples of well presented work processed work of a good standard such as Year 9 opinions of Impressionist painters following an earlier visit to France. The lowest attaining pupils are achieving well within a more limited framework. They are able to recognise and use a small but useful range of vocabulary in short oral exchanges. In writing, they are learning to copy correctly and pay attention to detail.

129. By the end of Key Stage 4, average and higher attaining pupils are using a range of tenses and gaining some understanding of language patterns. Dictionary skills are developing well. Pupils with SEN receive good encouragement and are developing their vocabulary. Since the last inspection report, (with regard to the development of speaking skills) pupils are committing more language to memory but do not yet combine language from different topic areas and are not using language spontaneously for real purposes. The introduction of written course work in Year 10 is having a beneficial effect on the development of writing skills. There were examples of word processed, fairly accurate writing on the local region and an ideal town in Spanish. Sometimes, pupils lack confidence in listening skills. Pupils in both key stages would benefit from a more structured approach to extended reading skills including reading for pleasure.

130. Pupils in both key stages respond well to expectations of good behaviour. They carry out instructions, concentrate well and work together co-operatively in pairs and groups. When given the opportunity to practise language in freer situations such as class surveys, songs and competitive games in Years 7 and 8, they join in such activities with enjoyment and enthusiasm. The small number of dual linguists in Year 11 are highly motivated and in subsequent years more pupils are choosing to study two languages.

131. Teaching is generally good or better with one in four lessons being very good. Teachers know their pupils well and this promotes confidence. All lessons are clearly structured and pupils know what they are expected to do. With few exceptions there is good use of the target language for all aspects of the lesson that is fostering listening and speaking skills. Resources are effectively used and teachers employ a variety of appropriate techniques on one theme to present new materials and help learners acquire vocabulary. This was well demonstrated in a lively Year 8 aerobic session in French which engaged attention and enabled pupils to consolidate vocabulary and practise giving instructions. Sometimes, however, pupils would benefit from hearing a correct model as further reinforcement after group or pair work.

132. Assessment is regularly carried out in both key stages and in Key Stage 3 pupils are set their own targets so they are made aware of what is required for improvement. At Key stage 4, teachers are equipping pupils with good strategies for preparing for examinations. Marking is consistent but further consideration needs to be given to how errors are followed up by pupils.

133. The head of department efficiently manages an energetic, hardworking and committed team. There is monitoring of teaching and learning and new members of staff feel well supported. The department has realistic targets for development but the implementation of longer term targets would be facilitated by identifying interim targets. The department takes an active part in cross-curricular activities such as the European Awareness day to raise the profile of languages. New initiatives to raise standards and motivation since the last inspection include lunch time classes to provide extra support with homework and increased use of ICT though there is still scope for further development in this area. Accommodation is generally satisfactory although one member of staff does not

have a base and has to move between different rooms. Accommodation in one mobile unit is cramped when occupied by large classes.

134. Resources are generally satisfactory but there are insufficient textbooks at Key Stage 3 for pupils to take home for independent study and there is need for more Spanish resources.

MUSIC

135. The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory overall. It is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. As practising musicians, both teachers are good role models for their pupils. They have good knowledge and understanding of their subject that they pass on effectively to pupils. Teachers use a range of resources successfully. The overhead projector is well used to provide information and display the words of songs. Video material widens the pupils' experience of performers such as Paul Simon and a CD system provides good quality sound reproduction. Instrumental resources are also used well. These include keyboards and pitched and unpitched percussion instruments upgraded in response to the last inspection report. Pupils' orchestral and other acoustic instruments are unfortunately not used in the classroom and computer technology not yet used as an aid to composition though this is planned. Teachers manage pupils satisfactorily. They choose suitable methods for each of the activities; class, group and individual work are all used appropriately. Individuals or groups of pupils are supported in their practical work. Low attaining pupils and those with SEN are well supported particularly at Key Stage 4. Teaching is good when the lesson objectives are clearly stated at the outset and all activities related in order to deepen pupils' understanding as in a Year 8 lesson on African music. In several of the lessons observed, however, though teachers presented a worthwhile range of experiences for pupils these were unconnected, leaving the pupils without a clear understanding of the objectives. Homework is set regularly. Fact-finding homework at both key stages encourages independent research and supports the work of lesson satisfactorily. At Key Stage 3, however, practical homework sets those pupils without a keyboard of their own at a disadvantage. Insufficient demands are made upon pupils in terms of consistently challenging tasks and pace of working particularly with listening tasks at Key Stage 3 where the pupils' listening is not always directed and rehearsed. Questions about music are often too generalised and opportunities lost to explore the powerful effect that the music so demonstrably has on them. This was particularly evident in a Year 8 lesson listening to Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor and in a Year 9 lesson listening to Copland's Fanfare for the Common Man. Although pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject, insufficient challenge means they do not make the kind of intellectual, physical and creative effort of which they are capable resulting in some underachievement in relation to their abilities.

136. Curriculum arrangements also have a negative impact on achievement. Though some progress has been made in revising the Key Stage 3 schemes of work criticised at the time of the last inspection, these are still only in outline. There is a need to clarify how each successive project is designed to build up pupils' performing, composing and listening skills and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Opportunities and criteria for assessment are not sufficiently clear with the result that pupils have do not always recognise what is required of them, particularly at the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils are encouraged to assess themselves at the end of composing and performing projects but these evaluations fall short of providing them with a clear understanding of what makes a good composition or performance and how their work measures against this understanding. This is compounded by a lack of regular reflection in lessons when the language could be learnt. The schemes of work are a little more successful at Key Stage 4 where the examination criteria also provide a clearer focus for pupils' progress.

137. Pupils at both key stages enjoy music. Their attitudes to the subject are generally good particularly at Key Stage 4 and in extra-curricular activities. Pupils at Key Stage 3 enjoy playing the keyboards. At Key Stage 4, their interest in the subject is more focused, they concentrate well particularly during listening tasks and their compositions show suitable individuality. Pupils work co-operatively and enjoyably together as was evident in a Year 9 lesson working at their compositions on Shakespeare. Pupils behave well and respect each other.

138. Attainment in music at the end of Key Stage 3 is average. Observation in lessons and scrutiny of taped compositions and performances confirm that the majority of pupils in Year 9 are achieving the expectations of the end of key stage statements. The majority can play the keyboards with some confidence using a good five finger technique. They understand and use basic compositional techniques. Pupils' listening techniques are not so well developed. Observations and discussions with the pupils suggest that they are capable of higher attainment. Key Stage 3 attainment could be strengthened further by progressively demanding tasks in composition and performance and by more focused listening. Data from Key Stage 3 teacher assessments is not collected and analysed and therefore comparison with national figures is not possible. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is mixed and depends on the background and abilities of individual pupils in the small cohorts. Pupils in Year 11 have composed effective pieces of music, many are competent performers and they answer listening questions on timbre, tone colour and expression with understanding. Pupils in Year 10 have widely differing ability profiles in music but all appear to be making sound progress. Although all pupils gained a grade between A*-G at GCSE in 1999, only 46% of them gained an A*-C grade against a national average of 66.1% for all schools. This represents a considerable drop in the last three years from the high of 1997 when 80% gained grades A*-C. Although a percentage comparison can be misleading with such small numbers, a comparison of the average points score with national figures reveals that this has also fallen to below average. Pupils are not achieving as well in music as the average of all other subjects.

139. The department makes good extra-curricular provision with a fine orchestra and enthusiastic Soul Review. Each section of the orchestra also has a separate weekly rehearsal. The orchestra also includes some members of staff and, at one recent concert, parents also took part fostering good social and community spirit. Teachers work extremely hard to produce the concerts held regularly both in the school and in the community which are received with enthusiastic appreciation.

140. The school has made several improvements in response to the last inspection. The music room has been refurbished and re-organised and the majority of lessons are now taught in specialist accommodation. There has been some increase in staffing and both teachers are specialist musicians. The resources have been well upgraded.

141. The head of department is hard working and dedicated particularly to the orchestra and extra-curricular music making. This dedication is reflected in the high standards achieved by these groups. The department as a whole, however, still lacks a coherent strategy for development which will unify all aspects of provision to raise standards of attainment in music at Key Stage 3 and for those pupils taking GCSE courses. The curriculum at both key stages, but particularly at Key Stage 3, needs to be rigorously re-constructed, monitored and reviewed. A clear assessment strategy needs to be developed which will enable the pupils to be given clear targets for improvement. Data from teacher and assessments and GCSE results needs to be analysed and used to create targets for the subject. Strategies also need to be found to boost the numbers of pupils learning instruments in school following the change in funding that reduced these significantly.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. Overall standards of attainment in physical education are well in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 3, on evidence drawn from a limited base, overall levels of physical fitness are above average and skills in athletics match expected national standards. At the end of Key Stage 4 most boys show considerable competence in tennis and rounders and some girls reach this standard. In the most recent GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A*-C was well above the national average and over the past four years the trend has been clearly upwards. Standards on entry are variable as is the nature of the pupils' prior experience. From this base most pupils make good progress including those with SEN. In a Year 7 cricket class, for example, most boys have quickly reached a good level of competence in keeping the bat straight in stroke practices. In Year 8 many pupils, both boys and girls, show clearly improved technique in long-jumping. Within Key Stage 4 standards in tennis are in many cases above average and, in examination groups particularly, most boys play the game to a high standard. They make strong and confident ground-strokes both competently and consistently and their volleying is sharp and accurate. The school produces high attainers in a wide range of sporting activities with boys and girls representing the school in district and county teams.

143. The quality of teaching is consistently good, sometimes very good. All teachers have a good command of the wide range of activities offered. In most lessons, they are able to give both effective demonstrations and explanations when setting clear learning objectives. This enables the pupils to have a sound understanding of what they need to do in order to improve. Consequently, they are quickly and eagerly engaged in their work and show very good levels of concentration that are well sustained over long periods. Well-devised practices show very good planning to meet the needs of all pupils and a positive, encouraging style of delivery has built very good working relationships both amongst the pupils and between pupils and their teachers. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils relating to both attainment and attitude. The pupils' response is most impressive particularly so in the high standards of attendance, participation and personal kit. This reflects strongly a positive and committed approach.

144. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met at both key stages. The balance currently achieved is a clear improvement on previous arrangements that provided insufficient time for creative activities. The GCSE course offered now has become increasingly popular over the last few years and results indicate clearly how well the subject measures up to the schools overall performance in examinations. The arrangements for assessment fully meet requirements and are now much more advanced through being based on the GCSE requirements so there is a clear link between learning objectives, assessable targets and levels of attainment. Planned future development will examine ways of measuring all aspects of the subject in more detail including levels of personal fitness and healthy lifestyles. The extra-curricular programme provided by the PE department is popular and well supported, not only by the pupils but also by parents. The provision of machines, tuition and training in mountain biking is indeed a fine example of parental support.

145. The department is very well organised and its day-to-day activities run smoothly. The documentation is in good order, comprehensively written and provides a clear statement of policy that is readily translated into good practice. The developments that have been made since the last inspection indicate the capability and commitment of the head of department and the current team of teachers. Specialist outdoor facilities are good, though indoor teaching space is small and does not allow all pupils to experience the same national curriculum activities concurrently across the year group.

146. Since the last inspection much has been achieved by way of improvement. Standards of attainment are now consistently in line with national levels there are no weaknesses. GCSE results are much improved. The quality of teaching is consistently high and makes a significant contribution to the pupils commitment to their learning. The school has moved much closer to ensuring that almost all lessons are delivered by specialist teachers. The recently received "Sportsmark" Award confirms the department's success in raising overall standards of provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147. The RE schemes of work have been harmonised with the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus and there are sufficient lessons to allow pupils to achieve the appropriate objectives. The GCSE short course provides Key Stage 4 pupils with a challenging core programme which can be extended after school for those who would like to take the full GCSE examination. The RE curriculum meets all the legal requirements.

148. The quality of RE teaching is at least satisfactory and more frequently good. Although some teachers are non-specialists, they are helped by clear schemes of work that include suggested approaches and resources. All members of the team have a personal commitment to the subject. Some have other specialist skills such as drama, which are used to stimulate interest and sustain motivation. Using some non-specialists has not reduced the quality of the programme or lowered attainment. The best lessons are well planned, maintain a good pace and target clear objectives. The aims are often declared at the start of the lesson but providing a brief, written board summary would give a constant reference point and framework for pupil thinking. Teachers encourage pupils to follow the normal conventions of classroom discussion. Most do so. Carefully selected videos, giving a balanced view, are used to support the learning objectives and never merely to occupy or entertain. Teachers are now developing a range of material, catering for the needs of pupils of different abilities. Some lower attainers can only use current work sheets with direct individual support. Good target questioning encourages broad participation. Positive contributions are valued and pupils are encouraged by the courteous and sensitive way in which lessons are conducted. There is a good balance in the schemes of work between learning about religion and learning from religion. This is reflected in the planning of most lessons. As well as an appropriate emphasis upon the signs, symbols and beliefs of Christianity and a selection of world faiths, pupils explore some contemporary moral issues. Innovative work, drawing on specialist expertise, on topics such as bereavement, is sensitively handled, promoting thoughtful and sometimes moving responses in the written work. Despite all the good features, all staff need to adopt best practice and make sure that pupils are reminded frequently about why some topics are taught. This particularly applies to the study of world faiths. Pupils have little contact with people of other faiths and do not readily appreciate the importance of this aspect in relation to the cultural diversity that they may encounter when they leave school.

149. Pupil attitudes are very good. They behave well. Most appear to enjoy what they are doing although a few lack motivation. They make sensible points and volunteer personal opinions. They listen carefully to each other and many are confident about presenting their views to the rest of the class. Occasionally, calling out and excessive chatter has to be curbed but the general demeanour is one of co-operation and a willingness to respond. They work well in pairs or groups and teachers exploit this to good effect.

150. This combination of purposeful teaching and good pupil attitudes promotes a good level of learning and effective progress. SEN pupils manage well and are encouraged to participate fully. Work and information sheets, pitched to meet differing levels of ability,

would help them operate more independently than at present. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have a reasonable knowledge of the symbols and basic beliefs of Christianity and other world faiths they have studied. They are beginning to recognise that there are common elements, despite the diversity of worship practice. More perceptive pupils reflect on this and start to appreciate that religious belief influences the way in which many individuals live their lives. In Key Stage 4 most pupils gain appropriate factual knowledge and enhance their interpretative skills to cope with the demands of the GCSE short course examination. About two thirds of Year 11 pupils have chosen to take the examination. There is some slippage in motivation with a few of those who have chosen not to do so. Most contribute to discussions on contemporary moral issues and during the key stage they begin to refine their attitudes as they appreciate the complexities, which underpin such topics as abortion, euthanasia, war and issues of conscience. Many are willing to alter initial views in the light of the arguments of others.

151. Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average. Most pupils have sound knowledge and can recall facts well. They understand the technical terms. The higher attainers reflect on what they have learned and produce well written work which shows they are beginning to relate what they have learned to their own lives and beliefs. This particularly applies to work on moral and social issues. Key Stage 4 attainment is more sharply defined by the requirements of the GCSE examination. Of the 58 pupils who chose to take the 1999 GCSE short course examination, well over half gained A*-C grades. All but one secured grades A*- G. Attainment in the full course GCSE was even higher. Although only 16 pupils took the extension course, three-quarters gained A*-C grades. All secured grades at A*-D. This result is well above national figures.

152. Subject management is quietly effective and the head of department has achieved much during her first year in the school. There are now schemes of work more closely aligned to the Norfolk agreed syllabus, providing all team members with information on subject content, timing, suggested teaching methods and possible resources. Displays of work in the RE room and the adjacent corridor promote the subject. New worksheets are being written to meet the needs of different ability groups. A standard assessment policy, with common assessment tasks, is developing to monitor attainment and progress and improve consistency of marking. The subject now makes a major contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimension of the school. Development planning could be better focused with clear priorities with associated costs and in-service training requirements. This is needed to plot the longer-term development of the subject. Although the overall use of staff and resources is generally effective, about one third of all RE lessons are taught away from the main RE room and resource base.

153. There has been improvement since the last inspection report. Standards of teaching and attainment have strengthened. The pace and challenge of most lessons is now more demanding. The curriculum continues to be refined so that subject content has increased relevance and appeal.