

INSPECTION REPORT

CHEADLE HIGH SCHOOL

Cheadle, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124431

Headteacher: Mr M Webber

Reporting inspector: Mr T W M Comer
15109

Dates of inspection: 17 – 21 January, 2000

Inspection number: 185803

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11- 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cheadle High School
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend David Yabbacombe

Date of previous inspection: December 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr T Comer	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Quality and range of learning opportunities Leadership and management
Mrs J Harrison	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mr C Radley	Team inspector	Vocational Courses	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Mr C Griffin	Team inspector	English	
Mr J Paddick	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Mr B Leek	Team inspector	Science	
Mr J Clay	Team inspector	Art, Information technology	
Mrs H Marsland	Team inspector	Design & technology	
Mr D Howorth	Team inspector	Geography	
Mr A Pearson	Team inspector	History	
Mr M Flatman	Team inspector	Music, Religious education	
Mr J Ratcliffe	Team inspector	French, German	
Mr A Henderson	Team inspector	Physical education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cheadle High School is a comprehensive school educating 761 pupils in the 11-18 age range, comprising 366 boys and 395 girls. The roll is rising, reflecting the school's growing local reputation as an improving school. The school serves a wide and mixed catchment area including both the town itself and surrounding villages. Cheadle is a former mining community; though there is some established and new industry, there is also considerable unemployment. An average proportion of pupils are known to be entitled to a free school meal. The school has no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds nor with English as an additional, rather than the first language. The school's register of special educational needs comprises 88 pupils (a below average proportion) and 24 pupils (above average) have formal statements. The attainment of the 1999 Year 11, when they began Year 7, was below average though the present Year 7 intake was above average. The Moorlands Sixth Form Centre, is shared with the adjacent Roman Catholic High School.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Cheadle High School is an improving school. In the past, there was considerable underachievement, especially at GCSE. The Headteacher and governors are determined that the school will raise its standards. In 1999, they set challenging targets for GCSE which the school achieved in full and the examination results rose very substantially to meet the national average. The school is rapidly becoming a more effective school and gives satisfactory and improving value for money.

What the school does well

- The Headteacher and other senior staff provide strong leadership and are moving the school forward.
- The Headteacher, governors and senior staff monitor the school's work effectively.
- Music is well taught and standards are good throughout the school. Mathematics is a strong subject in Key Stage 3. The GCSE results are very high in physical education.
- The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE pass grades is well above average.
- Teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good.
- The curriculum is good and is very well planned to give the pupils a broad education.
- The Moorlands Sixth Form Centre provides a very good education for its students.
- Relationships and partnerships with other schools and with the community are very constructive.

What could be improved

- Standards are too low at Key Stage 3 in science, art and information technology, and at Key Stage 4 in information technology and modern languages. The A-level results in French were unsatisfactory in 1999.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4 in one lesson in eight.
- Heads of subjects do not check up on standards in lessons rigorously enough.
- Boys do much less well than girls at GCSE.
- The setting of homework is uneven.
- Teachers are not using information on pupils with special educational needs to plan lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December, 1995. Since then, it has made satisfactory overall improvement and in some areas it has improved well. GCSE results rose very substantially in 1999 though some weaknesses in teaching still remain in Key Stage 4. The new leadership of the school is now much more effective and has raised teachers' expectations and morale. The governors now fulfil their responsibilities well and give clear direction. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is being rapidly transformed though further improvements are still needed. Other points for improvement raised by the previous inspection have been tackled satisfactorily though legal requirements are still not met for daily collective worship.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	D	D	C	D
A-levels/AS-levels	E	D	B	

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

The results of the 1999 Key Stage 3 tests were close to average in English, mathematics and science. The results were average over the period 1996-99, and improved in line with the national picture. The gap between boys' and girls' results is less than found nationally. Girls generally do better than boys in English but less well in mathematics and science. Taking into account pupils' attainment when they joined the school in Year 7, the Key Stage 3 results are satisfactory. Standards of work seen at this key stage are good in mathematics and music and satisfactory in English and all other subjects except science, art and information technology where there is some underachievement. Music is the strongest subject and information technology is the weakest.

The 1999 GCSE results were in line with the national average and this represents satisfactory achievement for these pupils. The results exceeded the targets set by the governors. A higher proportion of pupils gained grades A*-C in at least five subjects than the national average and a much higher proportion (97%) gained five or more passes (grades A*-G). The results were very high in physical education and well above average in English literature and German. They were above average in science and close to average in English and mathematics, and average in other subjects. The music, results were high though there were few candidates. Pupils did better at GCSE in physical education, German, English literature and art than in their other subjects, and did less well in English, French and geography. Girls performed much better than the boys. Standards of work seen are above average in music and physical education (though some older girls do not participate) and average in all other subjects except information technology and modern languages, in which standards are below average. The strongest subjects are physical education and music. Information technology is the weakest.

The table above gives the results of the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre as a whole. When the results of Cheadle High School students are separated, they were below average in 1997, above average in 1998 and below average in 1999. All students passed their A-level examination in art, business studies, chemistry, English subjects, geography, physical education, music, physics, psychology, sociology and technology. None of the four candidates passed in French. The three candidates for GNVQ all passed with merit. Standards of work seen were well above average in music and above average in science and sociology. They were average in all other subjects inspected except modern languages and technology, in which they were below average. With the exception of French, students' achievements in the 1999 examinations represent satisfactory achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school. Many pupils (40 per cent) regularly participate in organised extra-curricular team games. Attitudes to work are unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4, because pupils are too inclined to be casual about their work and are easily distracted.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well around the school. Behaviour is rarely unsatisfactory and is exemplary in the sixth form.

Personal development and relationships	Well developed. Relationships are generally good. Pupils are friendly towards one another and their teachers. Older pupils take responsibility easily and willingly.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	good	unsatisfactory	good

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.

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of lessons and was very good or excellent in 13 per cent of lessons. Seven per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory, mostly in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3, teaching is satisfactory in English and good in mathematics and science, and in Key Stage 4, it is satisfactory in each of these subjects. The strength of the teaching is the teachers' good knowledge of their subjects and their enthusiasm. Most teachers ensure that pupils work hard, enjoy their lessons and make progress but a few teachers lack effective discipline and these weaker teachers do not correct pupils when they are inattentive, restless and not inclined to work. This affects a number of subjects and pulls the overall quality of teaching down at this key stage. Homework is not set as often as it should be. Teachers make insufficient use of computers and pay insufficient attention to pupils' special educational needs. Teaching is good in the sixth form

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good and is very well planned. Some particular features are: all pupils study both French and German at Key Stage 3; very good careers education; large choice of 23 A-level subjects and three GNVQ courses in the sixth form; all sixth formers take a Diploma of Achievement which acknowledges their personal achievements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed. Provision is improving rapidly to rectify the previously unsatisfactory picture.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school does much to develop pupils' personal qualities in and out of school, for example, in the Youth Action Group. The personal, health and social education programme is very good; social development is very good; spiritual development is satisfactory; both moral and cultural development are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The monitoring of pupils' progress and personal development is good and procedures to protect children and ensure health and safety are sound. Procedures to tackle rare instances of bullying are effective. However, the discipline system needs improvement. The school is approachable and has an effective partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher	The Headteacher and the senior staff exercise strong leadership and are moving the school forward. They know where improvements are needed but subject heads do not monitor lessons well enough to see

and other key staff	how to eliminate weak teaching and raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their duties well. All legal requirements are met except those for religious education in the sixth form and for daily collective worship more generally.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The Headteacher, senior staff and governors monitor standards and quality well and know the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	The school's income is low but money is spent wisely. The school has enough teachers but is short of books and computers. The school gets best value when placing contracts. Taking into consideration the school's performance it gives satisfactory and improving value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent improvements in standards and management. • They find the school approachable. • The school expects children to do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on their children's progress. • Setting of homework. • The range of extracurricular activities • Behaviour.

Inspectors generally agree with the parents' positive views and with some of the negative views. They find that reports are satisfactory though they could state more clearly how pupils could improve their standards of work. They agree about homework – it is not set consistently or frequently enough in some subjects. Inspectors do not agree about extracurricular activities because the school works hard to provide a generously wide programme. Behaviour is generally satisfactory though some pupils are too inclined to chatter in lessons and do not concentrate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were broadly average in each key stage and in the sixth form. Music was a strong subject and information technology was weak. Some underachievement was found at each key stage in most subjects, especially of higher and lower attaining pupils.

2. Examination and test results, evaluation of samples of pupils' written work, discussions with them and lesson observations show that overall standards are broadly average throughout the school.

3. In 1999, the school's national Key Stage 3 test results were broadly average overall and average in English, mathematics and science. The results were below the average for other similar schools; that is schools with similar proportions of pupils taking free school meals. Over a four-year period (1996-99), the overall three-subject performance was close to average and there was a trend of improvement, which broadly reflected the national picture. Over this four-year period, the overall performance of boys and girls was closer than found nationally. Girls outperformed boys in English but less so than nationally, whilst boys outperformed girls in mathematics. Boys and girls performed equally in science.

4. In English, standards reached by the Year 9 pupils are average for their age, in line with the test results. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to the pupils' starting points on entry to the school. Standards in speaking and listening are average though some pupils do not listen well and make little contribution to discussions. Standards of reading and writing are average though there are some weaknesses in punctuation and paragraphing. Spelling is satisfactory. In mathematics, standards of work are rising and Year 9 pupils' work is now above average. This represents good achievement in relation to the pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of the previous key stage, which was only average. Numeracy is satisfactory in middle and upper ability sets; however, the lowest attaining pupils struggle in mathematics lessons with basic calculations involving subtraction, multiplication and division and this weakness in basic numeracy extends into the lowest sets in Key Stage 4. In science, standards of work in Key Stage 3 are below average, especially in experimental and investigative science, in which standards are unsatisfactory, particularly in Year 9, so that there is some underachievement. Though the results of the Key Stage 3 tests in 1999 were average, the tests do not assess performance in practical science and this accounts for the difference between the test results and the findings of the inspection. Standards of work are above average in music; they are average in design and technology, geography, history, modern languages, physical education and religious education and below average in art and information technology.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. Though their attainment is still significantly below expected standards in most subjects, their achievements are satisfactory.

6. The strongest subjects at Key Stage 3 are music and mathematics, whilst the weakest is information technology. The results of the teachers' assessments in foundation subjects at the end of Year 9 were well below average in design and technology and information technology. Despite the teachers' assessments, the inspection shows standards are average in design and technology subjects; the assessment in this subject is too severe.

However, low standards found in information technology lessons confirm the accuracy of the teachers' assessments.

7. All pupils take GCSE examinations in at least five subjects and most pupils take nine subjects. The pupils' average GCSE points score was below average in each of the three years 1996-98, and was gradually declining. However, this trend was sharply reversed in 1999, when the examination results improved very substantially in response to vigorous action taken to improve them. In 1999, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in five or more subjects increased by 14 percentage points over the previous year. The proportion was above the national average, though no better than that for similar schools (on the basis of the proportion entitled to a free school meal). The proportion of pupils gaining A*-G grades in five or more subjects was well above the national average and well above the average of similar schools. All Year 11 pupils passed at least one GCSE. Over the three-year period 1997-99, the difference in boys' and girls' performance was greater than found nationally, as was also found at the time of the previous inspection, and this indicates that boys are underachieving. In 1999, the GCSE examination results were average in English, mathematics and science. The school's targets for GCSE examination results were set at realistic though high levels and all were achieved.

8. Year 11 pupils achieve satisfactory standards in English. Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are generally satisfactory. Spelling is also satisfactory but some pupils' work shows inaccurate punctuation. The overall standard of work of the Year 11 pupils in mathematics is average. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to these pupils' attainment at the start of the key stage. A good proportion of the pupils reach high standards, for example, in trigonometry and algebra. Average pupils present work consistent with the standard required for grade GCSE grade C, notably in algebra and graphs. Standards of work are average in science.

9. At Key Stage 4, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and generally achieve foundation grades E, F and G in English, mathematics and science and also in other subjects. However, inspection of lessons shows that, in their writing, lower attaining pupils have weaknesses in letter formation and accuracy. Again, the lower attaining pupils are held back by their weaknesses in numeracy but are still on course to achieve foundation grades G or F at GCSE. Though pupils' individual education plans specify targets for improving literacy they do not do so for numeracy. An important difference in the written work of the higher and lower attainers in mathematics is the attention to setting out and showing of numerical working, which is missing in the work of the lowest attaining pupils. This will result in marks being lost in the examination and will adversely affect the GCSE results of the pupils concerned.

10. The GCSE results for 1999 were well above average in English literature, German and physical education. In physical education, a very high 44 per cent of the candidates gained A* or A grades. The GCSE results were above average in art, broadly average in design and technology, history, French and geography. The results were not significantly below average in any subject. The strongest subjects at GCSE in 1999 were music, physical education, German, English literature and art, whilst the weakest subjects were French and geography. Standards of work of the present Year 11 seen during the inspection were broadly average overall and therefore generally in line with the examination results. Standards of work are below average in modern languages and, in information technology, which is the weakest subject, they are also below average because of weaknesses in the teaching and because information technology skills are not applied and developed sufficiently in other subjects. In religious education, standards are average and but improving. In non-GCSE Year 11 physical education lessons, a substantial minority of girls

do not participate and are underachieving.

11. The Moorlands Sixth Form Centre presents the examination results for the two partnership schools together, in aggregated form. These results, over the three-year period 1997-99, show a clear trend of improvement from 1997, when they were well below average, to 1999, when they were above average. The extracted results for Cheadle High School students were well below average in 1997 and above average in 1998. In 1999, the results were below average but there were only 26 Cheadle High School students taking A-level examinations and the numbers involved were too small in most subjects for the results to be statistically significant. However, none of the four students taking French passed the examination yet two of these students each achieved grade A in English language: the only two A grades achieved by Cheadle High School candidates. Though no Year 13 lessons in modern languages could be seen during the inspection, the French A-level results were quite unsatisfactory. The inspection of lessons and samples of work show that standards are above average in science subjects, and average in English and mathematics. Standards are above average in sociology, and average in other subjects except design and technology in which they are a little below average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Almost all pupils have good attendance records and the attendance figures are good. In 1998-1999, the overall attendance figure was above average and was above 90 per cent in each year group. Pupils are generally punctual in arriving at school.

13. The school building has narrow corridors and staircases, which demand common-sense behaviour and orderliness. The pupils respond well. At their meeting with the Registered Inspector, parents expressed satisfaction with the behaviour of pupils and described the school as orderly though the questionnaires returned by parents showed that a significant proportion feel that there is some misbehaviour. The number of fixed-term exclusions is above average though all of these are well documented with clear reasons given. Pupils identified as having behavioural difficulties rarely disrupt lessons because they are supported effectively by the learning support assistants. The inspection found that pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are generally good in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form. In Key Stage 4, pupils have satisfactory attitudes in most lessons and there is very little disruption or misbehaviour but attitudes are unsatisfactory in about one lesson in eight when pupils are uninterested, inattentive and fail to concentrate on their work. These unsatisfactory attitudes are linked to the quality of teaching. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection.

14. Pupils' personal qualities are well developed; for example, pupils accept responsibility sensibly for the planning and organisation of their own work. They often show initiative and older pupils willingly take responsibility for others, for example as prefects, undertaking a range of duties, and looking after younger pupils, especially those in Year 7. Throughout the school, pupils actively participate in decision-making, for example, through membership of year, school or sixth-form councils, and their concerns and recommendations are considered and often implemented by the senior staff. Pupils enjoy team-building activities, for example in the school's activities week, and work hard for charity and in the community. Pupils mostly enjoy school and participate well in extra-curricular activities such as music or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. About 40 per cent of pupils, a high proportion, regularly take part in organised team games.

15. Relationships are satisfactory. Pupils are open and friendly with one another, with

teachers and visitors. They are aware of the feelings and needs of others; for example, they have designated this year as 'Anti-discrimination Year', highlighting issues of bias and discrimination and dealing with these in their assemblies. Parents and pupils feel that the school is safe. Bullying is rare and is handled swiftly and sensitively when it does occur.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4. Of all the 146 lessons inspected, 93 per cent were found to be at least satisfactory and the remaining 7 per cent were found to be unsatisfactory including one which was poor.

17. All of the sixth form lessons were at least satisfactory. Teaching was good or very good in more than three quarters of them, and one excellent lesson was seen. In Key Stage 3, teaching was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of all lessons and good or very good in more than half of them. In Key Stage 4, however, teaching was satisfactory or better in only 88 per cent of lessons and therefore not good enough. Teaching was good or very good in only 35 per cent of lessons in this key stage.

18. At the time of the previous inspection, teaching was found to be in need of improvement, especially for the most and least able pupils. Despite the unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4, it has improved and is much better than found at the previous inspection, when 20 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. Parents know that teaching is improving and are pleased that more importance is now given to examinations.

19. The teaching of English is satisfactory. It is satisfactory in each key stage and good in the sixth form. Three unsatisfactory lessons were seen: one in Key Stage 3 and two in Key Stage 4, when class control was ineffective and the teacher allowed pupils to chatter unchecked.

20. Mathematics teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Some very good teaching was seen in Year 9 and in the sixth form.

21. Science teaching is satisfactory overall. It is generally good in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Two unsatisfactory lessons were seen when discipline was ineffective. Some very good teaching was seen in the sixth form. In Key stage 3, there are insufficient practical lessons for lower attaining pupils because the necessity to control behaviour makes the teachers reluctant to allow pupils to undertake experiments in pairs or groups. Consequently, these pupils' work in investigative science is underdeveloped.

22. In other subjects, teaching is good in Key Stage 3 in art, geography, history, modern languages and music and is satisfactory in design and technology, information technology, physical education and religious education. In no subject is teaching unsatisfactory overall in this key stage but five unsatisfactory lessons, in addition to the six seen in English, mathematics, science, occurred in design and technology, information technology, physical education and religious education. In Key Stage 4, teaching was found to be very good in music, good in history and physical education and satisfactory in each of all the other subjects except information technology in which half of lessons were unsatisfactory. In the sixth form, the best teaching is in sociology, music and science.

23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is improving rapidly and is now especially effective in the small groups withdrawn from English. In these lessons, pupils have precise targets and a good range of language activities and learning support assistants are used effectively. The setting system works well and is essential in mathematics to cater for pupils with weak numerical skills. In general, subject teachers do not yet plan to meet individual needs by using individual education plans. However, lessons for lower attaining sets are planned appropriately for pace and content, and this was clearly seen in English and mathematics.

24. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory overall, and is particularly sound in English, mathematics and geography, though the school has no formal strategy for literacy or numeracy. Only English and mathematics have policies or plans for the development of literacy, and the contribution of the different subjects to the development of basic skills is therefore uneven. At present, the learning support department is giving particular emphasis to the development of reading, handwriting, spelling and sentence construction. The pupils concerned recognise the importance of this and are working hard to acquire the necessary skills. The use of information technology could be improved in most subjects, especially in science and in mathematics, for example, to carry out calculations and produce graphs. Music teachers do not make sufficient use of information technology for pupils to compose and revise their musical ideas, and the music teachers need further training in this aspect of their work. The school has not yet begun to use information technology specifically to teach pupils with special educational needs.

25. The strengths of the teaching are the teachers' secure subject knowledge and enthusiasm, especially in mathematics, science, design and technology, history and modern languages, physical education and vocational GNVQ courses.

26. The previous inspection found that some pupils' unsatisfactory attitudes were overlooked by teachers and this remains the case. The main weakness lies in class control and discipline in a minority of lessons, mainly for average or below average attaining pupils, and mostly in Key Stage 4, and accounts for the 11 unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection. In these lessons, pupils were inattentive and uninterested and failed to concentrate on their work. This does not occur in all subjects; for example, in mathematics, geography and history, pupils generally respond well to firm and effective discipline and enjoy their lessons. Higher ability sets are well motivated.

27. Marking is good in mathematics, art and physical education. Although work is marked regularly in geography, comments do not show clearly enough how pupils could improve their work. In design and technology also, marking is not sufficiently helpful for pupils to improve and too little is marked, and too late.

28. A significant proportion of parents' questionnaires indicated some dissatisfaction with the setting of homework. Observation of lessons and examination of homework diaries showed a general inconsistency in setting homework; though it is set regularly in modern languages and in physical education examination classes, it is not frequent enough in science, mathematics or design and technology. In history, homework is less frequently set for lower attaining pupils. However, homework is used well in geography lessons to extend the work done in class.

29. In general, pupils lack opportunities to work independently. Pupils are generally aware of their strengths and weaknesses in physical education but they have insufficient

opportunities in Key Stage 3 to plan and evaluate their progress in games. In science, particularly in Key Stage 3, pupils do not have enough opportunities for investigation, to make decisions and take responsibility for their own learning.

30. At the meeting with the Registered Inspector, parents commented that bright pupils are challenged much more than they were. The inspection of lessons and pupils' written work shows that work is generally well matched to attainment, especially in art. In design and technology, work normally matches the class but teachers need to ensure that extension work is provided when pupils finish the work set. In design and technology also, lessons were seen in which pupils were copying from textbooks. In some religious education lessons, the work is not appropriately matched to the pupils' abilities. In history, work matches pupils' needs well and makes use of adapted worksheets and other resources for lower attaining pupils so that they make good progress. Science lessons are varied and often interesting but there are also some dull lessons. In some unchallenging information technology lessons, the tasks failed to interest the pupils and the teacher did not organise the lesson to ensure that all pupils were working; consequently, pupils underachieved.

31. Teachers generally use time well, and most lessons proceed at a reasonable pace; however, in some geography lessons, teaching is too ambitious and lessons do not come to a conclusion by the end of the period. In physical education, lessons are purposeful and busy. In sixth-form vocational courses, teachers make students responsible for their own learning and ensure they keep to tight deadlines.

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

32. A system of setting in each key stage enables pupils of similar attainment to be taught together in those subjects where the school finds it appropriate. Pupils with special educational needs take the same range of subjects as others in Key Stage 3 though some follow a smaller number of subjects in Key Stage 4. Some of these pupils receive intensive teaching in English in smaller classes. The school makes individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs for whose special needs they are required. At present, the targets expressed in the plans are not used sufficiently by subject teachers in lesson planning.

33. The school is planning a literacy policy. A numeracy policy is also needed. Although standards of literacy are average, the contribution of different subjects to the development of literacy skills is uneven and only English and mathematics have formal strategies in place to guide teachers in the teaching of literacy. The use of information technology is generally underdeveloped and is not fully satisfactory in most subjects or in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. This is partly due to the lack of equipment but teachers also need further training. However, some good work was seen in history and geography and in a project on planets related to work in science.

34. The curriculum is generally well planned in Key Stage 3 and includes all subjects and courses legally required. All National Curriculum programmes of study are covered in sufficient depth. In their study of modern languages, all pupils take both French and German. This is a good feature and goes beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum, and broadens pupils' education. In science, lower attaining pupils have insufficient opportunities for practical work and investigation.

35. Most pupils take nine GCSE subjects in Key Stage 4, and all take at least five. Some parents think that the range of subject choice is too restricted in Key Stage 4 but inspectors do not agree. They find that the Key Stage 4 curriculum is very well planned to give as much choice as possible within the time given for teaching whilst enabling the pupils to gain as many worthwhile qualifications as they can. Some parents said that there was a lack of opportunity to study information technology to GCSE level. Until the present academic year, this may have been true but, since last September, all Key Stage 4 pupils now take at least a short GCSE course in information technology, and this is a good feature of the curriculum. At present, there are no GNVQ courses in Key Stage 4, though arrangements have been made from September 2000, for pupils who would benefit from work-related education to attend a college of further education and take vocational and apprenticeship courses leading to NVQ qualifications.

36. Partnership with the Roman Catholic High School enables Cheadle High School to provide a much wider choice of subjects and courses for its sixth-form students than could be managed by one school alone. Students have a choice of 23 A-level subjects and three GNVQ courses. Students have a very good complementary studies programme which does much to broaden their experience. All students take A-level general studies and all take a Diploma of Achievement which recognises and usefully validates key skills. Though the general studies course includes religious education, it is not planned so that it meets the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus. Physical education is provided and students have good opportunities for games and other physical activities, including outdoor pursuits.

37. The school has achieved the LEA's award for high quality in its careers education programme. The programme is a good one and covers decision-making skills, job applications, mock interviews, work experience, a school industry day, and advice and help on higher education. The school works closely with the local careers advisory service, and this benefits the pupils considerably.

38. Pupils have good opportunities for extracurricular activities and a homework club. Some parents said that the school gives insufficient emphasis to sport; however, the inspectors cannot agree with that and found that the school provides a wide range of team games and other physical activities. A high proportion of pupils, 40 per cent, regularly participate in organised team games after school. Musical activities are also a strong feature. The school's dramatic productions are well received by the community though the parents say, and the Headteacher agrees, that there could be more of them.

39. A good programme of personal, social and health education is taught throughout each of the two key stages. Parents greatly appreciate what the school does for their children through this programme, and describe it as excellent. A particular feature is the very beneficial and carefully planned contributions made by external speakers, and this was seen during the inspection. Extracurricular activities and projects also contribute to the pupils' understanding of fair play, and to their understanding of rights and responsibilities, citizenship, democracy and justice. Older pupils benefit also from the organisation of an Industry Day, mock interviews by professional people from the community, and involvement in Young Engineer and Young Enterprise projects. One of the sixth-form Young Enterprise companies won the county award for best business plan.

40. As inspectors noted in the previous inspection, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall. However, the provision for spiritual development is only satisfactory, as the legal requirements for daily collective worship for all pupils are not fully met. However, some year assemblies present pupils with opportunities for spiritual

reflection. Religious education, history and modern foreign language lessons make good contributions to the development of pupils' beliefs, for example, through the study of views of right and wrong at different times in the past.

41. Moral education is well developed, and moral themes are regular features of school assemblies, for example, in dealing with ethical aspects of warfare and of decision-making. The school's expectations of pupils' behaviour are well understood. Pupils are taught right from wrong; for example, history lessons compare the moral perspectives and social conditions of people in different ages. Pupils are taught to consider the issue of global inequality, for example, the uneven consumption of natural resources.

42. Pupils' social development is very good and pupils have many opportunities to exercise responsibility. Prefects perform a range of demanding duties with good nature, sensitivity and firmness. Younger pupils work as library assistants. At the time of the annual harvest festival, food packages are delivered to a local hospital and to members of the local community.

43. Cultural provision is good, especially through art, music and dance; for example, many pupils participate in choral singing or instrumental groups. Pupils are made aware of the culture and lifestyles of other nations, for example, in geography and modern languages. A biennial exchange with a school in Gottingen, alternating with school trips to France or Germany, broadens many pupils' experiences. Parents expressed satisfaction with the development of their children's awareness of the multicultural nature of modern British society, which is explored, for example, in religious education lessons.

44. The school has excellent links with the community, which make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, some Year 10 pupils experienced practical aspects of citizenship when they worked successfully with older people to make decisions about local issues. The school has constructive links with the University of the Third Age, which helps to run the homework club and the school's Activities Week. The local community also benefits from these constructive links; for example, pupils planted 4000 trees as part of a local project to improve the environment. The school's excellent sponsored newspaper *Highlife* is distributed to every home in the local area and contains interesting contributions from pupils and staff. About a hundred pupils are members of the school's Youth Action Group. This group takes action to improve social amenities for young people and to inform them about matters which concern them, for example, the misuse of drugs and combating discrimination. Local businesses provide placements for the school's programme of work experience.

45. The school has excellent links with other educational establishments. The shared sixth form arrangement is a particularly good example. Links with local primary schools are also strong through the activities of the Youth Action Group and in the school's induction programme for Year 7 pupils. Some members of staff teach each week at the primary schools to help smooth the transfer from one school to another.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The pastoral system works well. Form tutors and heads of year remain with their classes and year groups thus providing continuity of personal contact between pupils and pastoral teachers.

47. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are effective. Registration takes place

in accordance with statutory requirements. At the time of the previous inspection, registration of the sixth form was insufficiently thorough; this has improved and arrangements for the registration of sixth-form students are now satisfactory. The school's plan for development includes an ambitious overall target of 95 per cent attendance and a minimum of 91 per cent attendance for each year group.

48. When pupils they enter the school, their abilities are measured by nationally standardised tests. The results of these tests, together with the results of the Key Stage 2 national tests in English, mathematics and science, are used effectively by the senior managers to place pupils in appropriate classes at the outset and to assist the monitoring of the pupils' progress throughout each of the key stages. The school subscribes to external services which provide school-based data enabling the school to predict and evaluate the performance of groups and individuals at GCSE and A-level. The school is developing the effectiveness of the use of its assessment data to take action to raise the performance of underachieving pupils, though this aspect of its work is still at an early stage. In 1999, for example, underachieving Year 11 pupils identified as performing at the GCSE grade C-D borderline subsequently improved the standard of their work. This was a significant factor in the substantial improvement of the school's GCSE results. The monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress in the sixth form is very good.

49. The progress of lessons is often adversely affected in Key Stage 4 lessons by persistent social chatter which is sometimes ignored by the teacher. Disruptive pupils are sent from lessons to a supervised room. Though this procedure enables teachers to proceed with the lesson, these pupils do not follow the same work as the rest of the class, which affects their progress adversely.

50. Rare instances of bullying are usually dealt with quickly and effectively by pastoral and senior staff. Pupils themselves play an active part in strategies to combat bullying through the work of the school's Youth Action Group. A system which links the new Year 7 pupils with older students works well and most pupils are confident that the school acts quickly and effectively to resolve the few incidences which occur. However, the school does not keep a record of bullying to monitor and identify trends.

51. The arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare are satisfactory. Child protection procedures match statutory requirements and follow the recommendations of the LEA's guidelines. The named senior member of staff responsible for this aspect of the school's work is alerted immediately when concerns arise. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are sound and no matters of concern were noted during the inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school has effective links with parents and a satisfactory educational partnership. Parents' views in the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector and in questionnaires were positive. They recognise improvements made recently, are pleased with the standard of education provided and are broadly satisfied with standards as they are now. They have more confidence in the school and say this is reflected in the rising roll. Parents report that the Headteacher is providing impetus for change; there is now more emphasis on revision for examinations and homework is also more consistent than it was. Parents of children with special educational needs are satisfied with the support that their children receive and also say that pupils are treated as individuals and that bright children are suitably challenged.

53. Parents' questionnaires indicated some concern about homework, information about their children's progress, pupils' behaviour, and the range of extracurricular activities. The inspectors agree that the homework set does not always correspond to the homework timetable and is generally not enough. The inspectors find some inconsistency in the checking and reading of home-school diaries. Whilst reports on pupils' progress are good and meet statutory requirements they could state more clearly how pupils can improve standards of work. The inspectors agree that there could be more extracurricular drama, but consider that this is more than compensated for by the good opportunities for sport and music.

54. A well-established parent-teacher association holds a variety of social events and raises funds to supplement the school's resources. Since the previous inspection, the school has increased the involvement of parents in the school's work; for example, through canvassing their views about the behaviour policy and proposed changes to school uniform.

55. The school provides helpful information for parents; for example, in respect of children new to the school. Parents support the school in many ways, for example, by their regular attendance at the annual consultation meetings with subject and pastoral teachers. Some parents also help with sporting activities and field trips.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The school provides satisfactory education for all its pupils. All pupils take the full range of statutory curriculum subjects and the school's management does its utmost to provide equality of opportunity for all. Governors ensure that the school's admission procedures, guidance, allocations of resources and teaching do not discriminate against pupils on grounds of gender, race, ability, creed or disability.

57. The effectiveness of management has greatly improved since the previous inspection. The governors have a much clearer idea of their responsibilities and fulfil them well. They monitor and support the work of the school effectively, receiving regular reports on the quality of education, for example, of outcomes of lesson observations and subject department reviews. Governors therefore understand clearly where improvements are needed. All statutory requirements are met except the full coverage of the Local Agreed Syllabus for religious education in the sixth form, and for daily collective worship in the other two key stages. Governors ensure that an effective system of the appraisal for teachers is in place, which is carried out by observation of the teachers' lessons and a professional interviews with the Headteacher. The governors monitor the school's finances effectively and take appropriate measures to guarantee the pupils' health, well-being and safety.

58. The Headteacher took up his post in January, 1998. Following this appointment, the senior management team was restructured as the Strategy Group, seven strong, and with well-defined responsibilities and accountability.

59. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, ably supported by the Strategy Group, work very well together to provide strong leadership and clear educational direction for the school. With the full support of the governors, the Headteacher is committed to raising standards and improving the quality of education. Together, the Headteacher and the Strategy Group have made changes to the running of the school which are leading to higher standards, as reflected in the rapid improvement in GCSE results. Teachers now

have higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve and perceive themselves as accountable for standards.

60. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher monitor the quality of educational provision and standards through regular reviews of the performance of subject departments, paying particular attention to the results of external tests and examinations. They are therefore clear about where standards can be raised further. In general, however, the heads of subject do not yet monitor teaching and learning in their departments rigorously enough to enable them to see how to make improvements in teaching and how to raise standards.

61. The school aims to become the best school in Staffordshire by 2003. Its development plan's main priorities include raising standards and improving teaching and learning; it identifies accountability and sets deadlines. Ambitious targets are set for examinations, all of which were exceeded in 1999.

62. The management of education of pupils with special educational needs has improved greatly over a period of a term since the appointment of a new co-ordinator though much still remains to be done. The policy of integrating pupils with learning difficulties into mainstream classes is a good feature and assessment procedures to identify pupils' particular needs have also improved. The school plans to develop a reading rescue package and to provide further training for the learning support assistants. The national Code of Practice is now in place. More work is needed to ensure the monitoring of pupils' progress, and to give more attention to the needs of the highest and least attaining pupils.

63. Financial management and control are effective and rest on a formal schedule of procedures and regulations. The Deputy Headteacher monitors the budget regularly and reports are presented to the governors' Finance and General Purposes Committee once a term. The most recent auditors' report, in December 1998, commended the school on its financial management, though it made some recommendations for improvement which have since been adopted. The governing body ensures that specific grants, such as the Standards Fund, are used for their intended purposes.

64. The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to match the needs of the curriculum and the ages and abilities of the pupils. There are sufficient learning support assistants to give pupils with special educational needs effective help in lessons. The clerical and administrative staff ensure the school's smooth day-to-day running. Sufficient technical staff are in post to release teachers from routine tasks.

65. The last inspection report highlighted the lack of a systematic process for identifying staff training needs and the system for the appraisal of teachers was unsatisfactory. These matters have been dealt with, and the school has achieved the Investors in People award. Professional development is closely linked to the school development plan and to the Headteacher's regular review of subject performance.

66. A thorough induction programme benefits newly qualified teachers. Despite the improved procedures for professional development, however, the school is not at this stage in its development ready to provide initial training for teachers.

67. Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation since the previous inspection. The former lower school has been completely refurbished to house the new joint sixth form provision. The main building has been improved but some classrooms are too small for large groups in art and food technology. The indoor facilities for physical education are unsatisfactory, for example, changing rooms.

68. The school's income per pupil is below average. Though the budget has been in deficit for two years, the means of returning to a balanced budget have been identified.

69. The result of very tight finance is that the school is short of textbooks, works of reference and fiction for the library, and also computers. The proportion of the school's income spent on teaching staff is below average and falling; however, fixed running and maintenance costs and a relatively small income leaves little for spending on books and equipment. The increase in income accruing from the rising roll should gradually put the school in a more comfortable position. Generous and welcome subscriptions to supplement school funds are received from the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association, local commerce and the community.

70. The school is fully committed to the principles of best value and constantly seeks to ensure that it obtains discounts by adhering to strict tendering and contract procedures, and by comparing costs carefully. Recent examples of this are in the purchase of closed circuit television for external security, and of computers for school administration. In view of the improving effectiveness of the school, the pupils' backgrounds, and the relatively low level of funding, the school gives satisfactory and improving value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to make this a more effective school the Governors, Headteacher and staff should

1 improve the school's management by

ensuring that heads of subject monitor the quality of teaching and learning and identify strengths and weaknesses so that teaching can be improved and underachievement eliminated (paragraphs 60,80,99,112,127,153);

2 improve teaching and raise achievement at Key Stage 3 by

(a) providing more planned work in practical and investigative science (paragraphs 95,99);

(b) planning more demanding three-dimensional work in art (paragraph 103);

3 improve teaching and raise achievement at Key Stage 4 by

(a) insisting that girls participate in physical education lessons; (paragraphs 10,150);

(b) taking strategic steps to improve boys' GCSE results to match those of girls; (paragraphs 7,73,109,113,147);

4 improve teaching and raise achievement in each key stage by

(a) ensuring that pupils concentrate on their work and make better progress, especially in Key Stage 4; (paragraphs 98, 128-130,139,158);

(b) making better use of information technology in all subjects; (paragraphs 13,26,101,132,144,155,160);

(c) paying more attention to pupils' individual education plans when planning lessons (paragraph 32);

(d) setting homework consistently in all subjects according to the homework timetable (paragraph 53);

5 raise achievement in the sixth form by

taking steps to ensure that A-level French results at least match the national average (paragraphs 11,133).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	146
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	12	41	38	6	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	683	78
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	79	-

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	24	-
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	88	-

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving
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26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	67	56	123

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	34	41	35
	Girls	40	35	32
	Total	74	76	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	60 (52)	62 (61)	54 (56)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (26)	39 (37)	20 (27)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	47	38
	Girls	37	36	31
	Total	69	83	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	56 (57)	67 (68)	56 (62)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (36)	40 (40)	28 (36)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	28 (30)

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	54	54	108

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	22	52	54
	Girls	34	53	54
	Total	56	105	108
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	52 (38)	97 (89)	100 (94)
	National	46 (45)	91 (90)	96 (95)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	37 (34)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	12	26

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	11.7	15.5	13.6 (20.4)	0	0	0
National	-	-	17.9 (17.6)			

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	10	60
	National	-	-

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	683
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	55	4
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 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	42.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	164

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	1358338
Total expenditure	1373886
Expenditure per pupil	1958
Balance brought forward from previous year	12230

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.1
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Balance carried forward to next year	-3298
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	30
Key Stage 4	26

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	761
Number of questionnaires returned	189

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	43	7	4	2
My child is making good progress in school.	49	43	4	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	43	8	6	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	40	21	4	2
The teaching is good.	37	49	9	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	36	21	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	43	5	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	33	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	41	16	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	41	43	5	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	49	4	4	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	43	14	6	4

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

ENGLISH

71. Most pupils have usually entered the school with below average attainment in English according to results in national tests and other data provided by the school, although attainment of the intake is improving and for younger pupils it is broadly average. Standards of work at the end of each key stage are average, representing satisfactory overall achievement. GCSE results are lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection, but recent results have improved.

72. In 1999, the results of the national Key Stage 3 tests were average. This was a good achievement for this year group given their below average standards on entry to the school. The proportion reaching the higher of the expected levels (level 6) was above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the overall results were below average although the proportion reaching level 6 was above average when compared with similar schools. Over the period 1996-99, the results improved at a faster rate than the national trend, with the most impressive improvement over the last three years. Girls did better than boys, but not significantly so.

73. At Key Stage 4, the 1999 GCSE English examination results matched the national average. Though below average in comparison with those of similar schools, on the basis of free school meal entitlement, the results represent satisfactory achievement in relation to the pupils' results in their Key Stage 3 tests. A significantly higher proportion of girls passed at grades A*-C than boys. Results in 1999 show an improvement from 1998. In the 1999 GCSE English literature examination, the proportion passing at grade C or higher was above the national average. However, a smaller proportion of Year 11 pupils took this examination, especially boys, than found nationally.

74. In the sixth form, the numbers taking A-level English literature and English language are too small to make a reliable comparison with national averages, however, in 1999, all candidates passed in both subjects. Two of the three candidates in English language achieved A grades. In 1998, all candidates passed English language at grades A-C. All but one passed the literature examination with grades in the range A-E.

75. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards of work, in relation to those expected for their age, are average by the end of Key Stage 3. This represents good achievement in relation to the pupils' below average starting point on entry to the school. Standards of speaking and listening are average overall though some pupils do not reach expected standards; they do not listen well and answer only briefly. Most, however, listen well and exchange opinions and information confidently and fluently. Reading skills are average. Middle ability Year 9 pupils showed good understanding of the elements of humour and of the characters in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and good understanding of Shakespeare's language. The reading of a smaller number of pupils is below the standard expected, with weaknesses in fluency and understanding. Most pupils write with the expected levels of accuracy and control. Some higher attainers use vocabulary effectively to establish mood and character. This was also evident among younger pupils, such as the Year 7 class who had written journals based on a Joan Aiken novel. In examinations, higher attaining pupils in Year 9 check and correct work carefully. Some pupils' writing is below expected standards because of weaknesses in punctuation and paragraphing, although their spelling of common words is usually correct.

76. At Key Stage 4, overall attainment is average for sixteen year olds. Pupils'

achievements satisfactorily reflect their previous attainment. Although some pupils find it difficult to express their ideas effectively in discussion, most do so. Year 11 pupils relished the opportunity to pass on their knowledge and understanding of the characters of George and Lennie in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Coursework shows that most read with good understanding of the texts they study. High attainers analyse work closely and cope effectively with some challenging briefs, such as discussing how Abigail adds to the themes of chaos and confusion in Miller's *The Crucible*. However, some pupils are more limited in their responses to reading, for example, showing only occasional glimpses of the nature of the relationship between George and Lennie. The negative attitudes of some pupils also prevent their showing what they know. Most pupils write with the expected standards of accuracy and control. Some middle attaining pupils do not achieve this because of some punctuation inaccuracy or the lack of consistently appropriate written expression. A smaller number of pupils have weaker writing skills and weaknesses in letter formation and accuracy.

77. Standards in the sixth form are average but there is evidence of good achievement because most students have successfully adapted to the increased difficulty of A level. Year 12 pupils identified the ambiguity and effect of the poet's choice of language when discussing U A Fanthorpe's poetry. They responded well to the challenge of the teacher's questioning. In an A-level English language class, Year 13 students showed the ability to develop a character through their choice of idiom and vocabulary to create an appropriate 'voice'.

78. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. A small proportion of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory. In four out of ten lessons teaching was good or better. Teaching is consistently good in the sixth form, where challenge and high expectations help the students to make good progress, both in the quantity of work covered and in the quality of their understanding. The strengths of the teaching are the good subject expertise of most teachers. This was especially evident in the pupils' literature coursework in Key Stage 4. Teachers make sure that pupils know exactly what they have to do and there are frequent activity changes so that pupils concentrate and are kept busy as for example, in a Year 7 lesson on *The Ice Maiden*. In some lessons, the control of negative behaviour was ineffective. In unsatisfactory lessons, pace was often slow. Teachers did not expect enough work in terms of quantity and there was not enough emphasis on the quality of the pupils' writing. Too much chatting was allowed when pupils were working; too much time was given to some activities, leading to slow pace. In these lessons, pupils did not achieve or learn as much as they could have.

79. Pupils' attitudes to English are mainly good. They are very good in the sixth form where the students enjoy the intellectual challenge of the texts they study and respond well to the stimulating teaching they receive. At Key Stage 3, pupils show care in redrafting work for their folders and presentation in exercise books is mainly good. The length of coursework at Key Stage 4 indicates conscientiousness and interest from most pupils. These qualities are not reflected in the attitudes of all pupils in all lessons. Talking, even amiably, when working reduces pupils' levels of concentration. Some pupils persistently talk over the teacher. Although not abrasive or confrontational, these attitudes impede the progress of the lessons and harm the quality of learning.

80. The department has responded satisfactorily to the points raised in the last inspection. The quality of learning at Key Stage 3 has improved. Marking is mainly good but sometimes does not tell pupils what their strengths and weaknesses are or how they can improve their work. The Head of Department generally provides clear direction but monitoring of teaching and learning are not yet systematic or frequent enough. The

department is beginning to use assessment data to help raise standards but this is not yet fully established. Pupils are not sufficiently aware of their standards, what their potential is, and how they could realise it. The curriculum is good, although there is some lack of challenging texts for higherattainers at Key Stage 3. The department's schemes of work cover the National Curriculum but not specific texts or topics.

81. The school has started to devise a literacy policy, which is much needed. Although standards of literacy are average, the contribution of different subjects to the development of literacy skills is uneven, lacking the direction and focus that a whole school policy would provide. With the exception of English and mathematics, no department has a policy for the development of literacy skills in its lessons.

82. In science, higher attaining pupils use their speaking and listening skills well to make presentations. They speak with confidence and clarity. Year 9 pupils use their skills well to devise and evaluate a dance sequence in physical education. There is only limited use of class discussion in art and information and communications technology. In geography, Year 10 pupils make good presentations on their research into population in Japan. Technical vocabulary of history is well developed.

83. There was less evidence of reading taking place in different subjects. Pupils read around the class in history and when reading original sources, they cope well with archaic language. In mathematics, comprehension skills are below expectation in the lower sets but there are opportunities for pupils to read aloud. There was little evidence of extended reading in science and other subjects except in the sixth form. Pupils experience a range of writing situations in their different lessons. In history, higher attaining pupils write well organised pieces at Key Stages 3 and 4. Sixth-formers produce good notes and well-argued essays. In geography, teachers consistently stress the importance of using the subject's specialist vocabulary. A range of writing was observed including poetry on the rain forests (Year 8), an empathetic piece about rural to urban migration in India (Year 10) and a research piece on renewable energy (Year 12). In music, there is an emphasis on concise expression to describe the form and structure of a piece of music. There is some extended writing in science but misspellings of terms such as pollution go uncorrected.

84. The library has a smaller than average number of reference books for a school of this size though it is well stocked with works of fiction. Loans are increasing and boys use the library more than they did though less than the girls.

MATHEMATICS

85. The results of the Key Stage 3 tests in 1999 were average compared with those of all maintained schools and were similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. Since then, results s have been average in some years and above average in others with little difference in the performance of boys and girls. Compared with results of schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were below average in 1999.

86. GCSE results in 1999 were broadlyaverage compared with those in other subjects, and similar to those achieved at the time of the last inspection. In 1999, the proportion achieving grades in the range A*-C was above the national average. There were, however, more pupils failing to achieve a pass in the range A*-G than normal, and fewer grades A* and A than in an average school. Results were similar in 1998. Over the two years, girls' results have been slightly better than those achieved by boys.

87. A-level results in mathematics have been broadly average over the last three years, both in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A and B, and the pass rate at A to E. As numbers are small it has been necessary to aggregate them for the three years to make a valid comparison with national averages.

88. The pupils' achievements have been broadly satisfactory since the time of the last inspection; they have made expected progress through the school. This is clear from a comparison of each year's GCSE results with the Key Stage 3 scores achieved by the same pupils two years earlier.

89. Evidence from lessons and samples of written work shows that standards of work are rising at Key Stage 3. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment is above average for their age. This represents good achievement because the pupils entered the school with only average results at the end of Key Stage 2. In Year 9, the highest attaining pupils understand index notation and can factorise algebraic expressions and manipulate equations. They have no problems with circle calculations using formulae. Hence, they are competent to at least National Curriculum Level 6. The vast majority of pupils in the third and fourth sets out of five are able to access work at the same level, and are competent at Level 5 in topics such as rounding, estimating, and work with significant figures. The lowest achievers are able to access the National Curriculum at Levels 4 and 5 in topics such as graphs and plotting co-ordinates but many struggle with the four rules of whole number, especially subtraction, multiplication and division. In number, therefore, they are not competent beyond Level 3. This weakness is also still evident with some pupils in the lowest sets in Key Stage 4 and means that they cannot answer a considerable number of questions at the foundation level of GCSE. However, even though this weakness exists, pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress in their work across the attainment targets taken as a whole. It would be beneficial if many of these pupils' individual education plans were to contain numeracy targets.

90. The standard of work in lessons shows that attainment is average by the end of Key Stage 4. The work of several of the highest attaining pupils shows competence consistent with A* and A grades at GCSE. For example, they are able to use the cosine rule fairly easily, manipulate the formula and change its subject. They can also relate a series of algebraic equations describing parabolas to drawings on graph paper. Average pupils are producing work consistent with grade C at GCSE. They can work out tables of values from algebraic equations and draw the associated graphs related to co-ordinate axes. They are fairly competent with topics such as bearings and substitution into formulae. The lowest achievers are held back by their weaknesses in numeracy but many are producing work consistent with a grade G or F at GCSE. A strong characteristic of the work of the highest three sets is the attention to setting out and the showing of numerical working. This is missing in the work of some of the lowest attaining pupils in the fourth set, who as a consequence, will not achieve GCSE results commensurate with their skills and understanding unless the weakness is addressed before the examination.

91. In Year 13, A level students have already completed assessed module examinations which count towards their final award. The results recorded so far indicate average standards of attainment at the end of the course, and achievement which is largely as expected from their results at GCSE. All students are producing work of pass standard in the range A to E. Standards are higher in Year 12 where students confidently explain their work to the class.

92. Pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. They usually listen well to the teacher, and to the other pupils in the

class when they are giving answers orally. They are prepared to contribute to lessons well by answering questions using their time fully, and settling down to written work promptly when asked to do so. Homework is normally completed properly. These good attitudes, which promote good rates of learning, result directly from the quality of teaching. They are stronger in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form, where they are good, than in Key Stage 4 where they are satisfactory.

93. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. It is good in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. When the usual staff are at school all pupils receive at least satisfactory teaching. Teaching is very good in a sixth of lessons, good in a further half and normally satisfactory in the rest. The overall good standard of teaching promotes good rates of learning in a majority of all lessons. Teachers manage pupils well, and they keep them interested through lessons which are structured and carefully planned. Work is well matched to the needs of the pupils, and questioning in class is of a good quality. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they keep lessons flowing well through careful sequencing of different activities. Marking is good and clearly tells pupils how to improve their work. There is a regular programme for homework but some classes do not receive enough. Lessons could often be improved further by using more visual aids to relate the work to the world at large, so that pupils are not just learning to use mathematical skills out of context. The use of computers is insufficient, particularly of spreadsheets to carry out calculations and draw pie charts and graphs.

94. Management of the subject is making changes which are helping to raise standards. A confident start has been made with measuring pupils' progress, introducing work which encourages pupils to become independent learners, and planning improvements in teaching literacy skills. Since the previous inspection, however, there has been insufficient development in the use of information technology in mathematics. Rooms are still too spread out to afford subject cohesion and to facilitate the sharing of ideas and good practice. The superb three-dimensional interactive display in one of the four classrooms provides a stimulating environment for learning.

SCIENCE

95. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment, particularly in the experimental and investigative aspect of science. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, taken by pupils nearing the end of Year 9, results were close to the national average for all schools but were below those achieved by similar schools. The results show an improving trend over the last four years, broadly in line with the national trend. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards of work by the end of Key Stage 3 are below average and below what the pupils could achieve. The standard of experimental and investigative science, which is not included in the National Curriculum tests, is unsatisfactory, particularly in Year 9. The skills of planning an experiment, recording evidence, analysing results and drawing conclusions have not been satisfactorily developed from the promising start pupils make in Year 7. Standards of work in the areas of knowledge and understanding are higher. There are no significant differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls.

96. The 1999 GCSE results showed a significant increase over the two previous years and matched the national average for all schools. They were better than the average for similar schools and similar to the results in English and mathematics. Although the results in 1997 and 1998 were not as good as in 1999, they were close to the national average and generally the trend of improvement is in line with the national pattern. Girls generally achieve better results than boys do but this difference is no greater than that found

nationally and in one year, boys achieved better results than girls. Evidence from the inspection generally confirms the examination results although there are variations in the achievements of different ability groups. Pupils are taught in sets that are formed by grouping pupils of similar prior attainments together. The higher sets have very good attitudes to learning and achieve well, the middle and lower sets contain a significant minority of pupils who have poor attitudes and these pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

97. The numbers studying either physics, chemistry or biology in the sixth form fluctuate widely from year to year. In 1999, the number of students was too small for any meaningful comparison with national figures. In 1998, five students out of 17 entered for A-level biology achieved a grade A and all but two achieved a pass grade. In chemistry, five out of the nine candidates gained grades A-C and although there were only 3 candidates in physics they all achieved a grade A or B. These results overall are broadly in line with national averages. Although it was only possible to observe two lessons in the sixth form, these observations and additional evidence from students' books indicated that standards by the end of the A-level course are above average and that pupils are achieving well.

98. The teaching in lessons at Key Stage 3 is generally good although it is better in Year 7 than Year 9. At Key Stage 4, it is satisfactory. No very good teaching was seen in either key stage and one lesson in each key stage was unsatisfactory. This decline in the quality of teaching to older pupils is mainly because an increasing proportion of pupils, in the average and below average sets, have poor attitudes to learning, and not all teachers have the necessary skills to deal with this problem. The noise level grows owing to pupils' chattering and various off-task activities. Pupils are not badly behaved but the noise adversely affects the learning of the whole group. In the good lessons, pupils are set tasks that motivate them and are well matched to their abilities. Pupils usually experience a good variety of activities, relationships are good and control is firm and effective. When these ingredients are in place, pupils respond well; they work hard, co-operate both with each other and the teacher, show pride in their finished work and learn effectively. The weaker lessons lack a number of these features and other strategies designed to reduce disruption are adopted. Unfortunately these almost always reduce learning opportunities. For example, practical work is reduced, particularly in Key Stage 3, as are the opportunities for pupils to make decisions and take responsibility for their own learning. However, almost all the teaching of the higher ability sets was consistently good, as was the teaching in the sixth form. There is a clear correlation between pupil attitudes, the quality of teaching and the pupils' achievements.

99. There have been some improvements since the previous inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have been introduced and although these have brought about some improvements, the evaluation needs to be more rigorous if it is to be fully effective. GCSE and A level results have been maintained and the overall quality of teaching remains good although some unsatisfactory teaching is still present. However, all pupils' in Key Stage 3 could achieve higher standards through increased emphasis on investigative science, and a significant minority of average and below average pupils in Key Stage 4 could do better. There has been little progress in the approach to marking. It is still inconsistent, as noted in the previous report, and does not give sufficient guidance as to how the pupils might improve.

100. Overall, there is much more the department could do to raise standards of work in Key Stages 3 and 4. In addition to the points already made, more emphasis should be placed on developing literacy skills. Whereas many pupils develop their speaking skills well through class presentations, their writing is often unsatisfactory.

101. Recording of work done in class is often incomplete and inaccurate. Spelling of scientific words is poor and not always corrected. Reading in some classes is confined to worksheets. Homework extends pupils' learning well but it is not set consistently to all classes. Information technology needs to be used more in order to measure, record and analyse data, to provide simulations of investigations which cannot be performed in the laboratory, and to give pupils an additional research tool.

ART

102. Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are below average. Teachers' assessments at the end of the key stage in 1999 show only half of the pupils reach the expected standard. Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are average but there are wide variations. During the past three years the proportion of pupils entered for GCSE examinations in art and design who achieved grades A*-C have been average and comparable with other subjects in the school. In 1999, the proportion gaining A* and A grades was well above the national average. However, many pupils do not complete their coursework and are not entered for the examinations. Standards of attainment of pupils currently in the sixth form are average for both the GNVQ course and A-level. There have been no recent entries for these examinations. The relative achievements of boys and girls differ from year to year but are similar overall.

103. Overall standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are below average because there has been unsatisfactory, fragmented staffing in art for a long period which resulted in unsatisfactory progress. Although the staffing has improved, attainment is still below average. Standards of work in observational drawing and painting are average. Whilst there is some good work in clay, three-dimensional work is generally below average. Pupils study the work of different artists when creating their own work but the range of sources needs to be broadened further. In Key Stage 4, some pupils taking GCSE reach average standards by the end of the course. Pupils taking the drawing and painting option have a consistent and well planned course and as a result make good progress and achieve good standards. A smaller number of pupils taking the three-dimensional design course option and, in the past, these pupils have experienced disruption in the continuity of teaching which has resulted in failure to complete work and, with a few exceptions, poor standards. These pupils have not achieved their potential. In the drawing and painting course pupils achieve good standards of observational drawing and experiment well with different techniques and media. In the sixth form, pupils are taking a more analytical approach to their work, which is becoming more individual and there is a satisfactory range of two and three-dimensional work.

104. Over recent years, the teaching of art was unsatisfactory owing to lack of continuity. However, as a result of a recent temporary appointment, the teaching is now satisfactory overall. It is good in Key Stage 3, where 80 per cent of lessons are good or very good. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Teaching is well planned, and progression between lessons is good. Marking is consistent and thorough. Pupils are given clear objectives for each lesson. Tasks are well matched to the prior attainment of the pupils so that all make sound progress. Those pupils who have had a previously fragmented experience now make good progress. Individual teaching is good and allows pupils to make their own decisions.

105. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour vary. Those pupils who have had consistent teaching work hard and are keen to succeed whereas those who have not lack interest in their work,

particularly in Year 11. However, there has been a significant improvement in attitudes and behaviour in Key Stage 3 classes. Nevertheless, most pupils lack confidence and the ability to work independently.

106. Since the previous inspection all the issues raised have been tackled and standards have improved. The department is now well managed and has a clear and appropriate plan for development. Monitoring and support of the teaching of the temporary staff have been thorough. The staffing problems have not yet been resolved permanently but the temporary arrangements are working well. In spite of difficulties, overall standards have been maintained and the proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades in the GCSE examinations has increased.

107. Resources are unsatisfactory and this has an adverse effect on the standards achieved, especially in three-dimensional work. The department lacks essential reference books about different artists which pupils should use to develop their own work. There is no satisfactory provision for computer graphics.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. Overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is average though in 1999 the teachers' assessments indicated that a well below average proportion of pupils reached the level expected for their age. These assessments are liable to inaccuracy because the teachers lack familiarity with the National Curriculum levels. The pupils' average attainment represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their starting point at the beginning of Year 7. The strength lies in some good work in graphics: pupils' drawing is precise and they use colour well. Pupils apply and develop their mathematical skills, for example, to measure floor areas and making accurate scale drawings in the form of floor plans. In food technology lessons, many pupils use computers effectively to enhance the appearance of their written work; they carry out research using questionnaires, and present their findings well in graphical form, for example, in bar and pie charts. Pupils have a clear understanding of hygiene in relation to food production and make use of their nutritional knowledge to plan healthy dishes. However, Year 7 schemes of work in food technology contain a large proportion of sweet and high-fat dishes. Eliminating some of these and replacing them with healthier ones could provide a better foundation for the study of healthy eating in Year 8. In their work with textiles, pupils use sewing machines competently and confidently but their design work is below average and often poorly presented. Experimental work with fabrics is very limited in scope and there is generally a lack of depth to the work.

109. Standards of work seen in Key Stage 4 show that, by the end of the stage, pupils' attainment is average though there is some underachievement. The 1999 GCSE examination results were not significantly below average overall but the differences in performance between boys and girls were greater than seen nationally with 59 per cent of girls but only 26 per cent of boys gaining grades A*- C, against the national figures of 58 and 41 per cent respectively. As in the previous key stage, the best work was in graphics; however, in the Graphics Products course design work lacks flair and creativity although it is technically accurate. Pupils following the Resistant Materials course work with tools and materials competently and confidently but their design work is well below average. Design work is satisfactory in food technology with appropriate understanding of industrial applications. Pupils adapt dishes well to suit specific dietary needs and circumstances.

110. In 1999, A-level results were below average but represent satisfactory achievement for the students concerned. All of them passed the examination, though no A or B grades

were awarded. Standards of work seen during the inspection indicate that Year 13 students are on course to achieve similar results.

111. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good teaching was seen in almost half the lessons observed at Key Stage 3. The strengths of the teaching lie in the teachers' secure subject knowledge and their enthusiasm for the subject. In most lessons, teachers match work accurately to pupils' attainment levels; however, on one occasion, the teacher was unaware that a pupil had finished his work in the previous lesson, no extension work was provided and the pupil therefore made no progress. Some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in both key stages when pupils were copying from textbooks, homework was not set frequently enough and marking of work was not sufficiently helpful for pupils to improve their work. In some lessons, the teachers failed to correct pupils when they were inattentive, wasted time, failed to concentrate on their work and indulged in social chatter or played with mobile telephones. The quality of learning matches the quality of teaching, and pupils make best progress when teachers set appropriate standards of work and behaviour. Although relationships are generally good, pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory in a significant number of lessons. However, there has been a small improvement since the previous inspection when some poorly motivated pupils disrupted lessons.

112. The priorities for improvement are to eliminate unsatisfactory teaching and learning and to raise boys' attainment, particularly at Key Stage 4. In order to achieve this, the subject management needs more effective monitoring of teaching and learning. Though schemes of work are better than they were, further improvements are necessary to provide more challenge and help to raise standards, especially of boys. The marking of pupils' work continues to be inconsistent despite clear guidance on common standards. The teachers have very little technical support and spend time on tasks which would be more efficiently done by a technician. The one-hour lessons are not well suited to this practical subject because they are too short for the teacher to monitor progress sufficiently well; this is compounded by some large classes. The accommodation is drab and provides little stimulation.

GEOGRAPHY

113. The previous inspection reported that GCSE and A-level results were average and that teaching and learning were satisfactory. Both GCSE and A-level results are now lower, in relation to national averages, than found at the previous inspection. The continuity of teaching of some examination classes was adversely affected by staffing difficulties in 1999, to the detriment of pupils' progress and their examination results. However, the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE A*-C grades has steadily improved over the last three years and is now slightly below the national average. The GCSE results in geography are generally lower than in their other subjects. Girls' results are much higher than the boys' results and the difference is greater than that found nationally. The A-level results are satisfactory and in 1999, all students passed the examination. The results of the teachers' assessments of the pupils' attainment in geography at the end of Key Stage 3 were slightly below the national average.

114. The inspection shows that pupils' standards of work are broadly average at the end of each key stage and the sixth form. Pupils have a good sense of place, on a local and an international scale. They gradually extend their knowledge and understanding of the complex interactions between physical and human geography.

115. In recent work, Year 7 pupils measure the width, depth and speed of a local stream

and use information communication technology well to produce accurate sections. Pupils explain the erosion of the stream bank in relation to the speed of the water. Pupils who apply their good mathematical skills effectively to calculate the discharge of water achieve the highest attainment. Many pupils extend their knowledge gained from the local study to research the major rivers of the world. Year 8 pupils are studying the climate and vegetation of tropical forests; though many pupils can explain the relationship between the two, very few understand the idea of an ecosystem. An interesting feature of the pupils' work in this subject is the poetry seen, which comments on the exploitation of forests and its effect on global warming. This indicates an awareness of important environmental issues and the effect of exploitation on pollution and climatic change. Year 9 pupils are making sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of population growth and distribution. Most pupils can draw and read population pyramids but few apply and relate these to the stages of economic development. However, in extended written work, higher attaining pupils show that they understand the model of demographic transition.

116. At Key Stage 4, pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of the physical features of rivers and coasts. They explain the formation of these in terms of the processes of erosion and deposition and use clear annotated diagrams to illustrate their writing. Pupils demonstrate good graphical skills constructing flood hydrographs and the highest attaining pupils explain how these may differ in relation to local environments. Pupils develop their fieldwork skills effectively using appropriate sampling techniques to collect, record and illustrate data which tests the hypothesis that land use at Chaddle fits a model of urban growth. Higher attaining pupils write more detailed conclusions, are aware of the influence of relief on urban structure, understand the limitations of their findings and suggest how to improve their studies. Such work is of high quality. Most pupils continue to extend their IT skills to handle and present data and word process these reports.

117. In the sixth form, A-level students are making sound progress. Though their work is average overall, some good work was seen when students explained in depth the complex issues of urban growth and urban regeneration in relation to economic costs. Students use IT effectively; for example, when they carried out research to explore the renewable energy resources of the British Isles, using the internet. Some of these students wrote detailed and illustrated reports of high quality on the contribution of renewable energy to our total energy needs.

118. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form in both key stages and in the sixth form. In Key Stage 3, they are very good in two thirds of lessons and good in a third. In Key Stage 4, half of the lessons are good and the rest are satisfactory. In the sixth form, all lessons are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory and no undemanding tasks are given to the pupils. These are significant improvements since the previous inspection. The best teaching ensures that pupils learn quickly and thoroughly by demanding their total and sustained concentration. It sets them challenging work and involves them in their own learning. These features were evident in Year 9 lessons on population. Good teaching has clear objectives, shared with the pupils. It is carefully planned with different work for pupils with special educational needs and extension work for the higher attaining pupils. This enables all pupils to make good progress. Teachers' knowledge and understanding, expectations and management of pupils are all good. Teachers do not always make the best use of resources. Homework is used effectively to reinforce and extend learning rather than to complete work. Marking is regular but lacks comments on how pupils could improve their work.

119. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good in both key stages. In the sixth

form they are satisfactory. These attitudes have a positive impact on learning and attainment. Pupils and students like learning about people and places. They are interested in their work, particularly when learning about the issues arising from different people's interaction with the environment and especially when they are planning and organising their own work. This was clear when they were involved a decision-making exercise on the development of national parks and in their preparation of reports on the population of Japan. Pupils are aware of the social, economic and moral issues of the contrast between rich and poor in third world countries. They produce extended pieces of empathy writing on the contrasting lifestyles in Japan and on rural to urban migration in India.

120. Teachers are trying to raise standards but subject planning does not yet include targets for examinations, strategies to improve the boys' attainment, or to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

HISTORY

121. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils and students achieved average standards in examinations. In 1999, GCSE results were average compared with all maintained schools. The proportion of girls who achieved A*-C grades was higher than the national average whilst that of boys was broadly average. The difference between girls' and boys' achievements was greater than that found nationally. GCSE results in the previous two years were close to, but below national averages with no significant difference between girls' and boys' achievements. A-level results were above average in 1998 but declined to below average in 1999. In 1999, pupils' attainment, as assessed by their teachers at the end of Key Stage 3, was broadly average.

122. Inspection of lessons and written work shows that overall attainment is average at the end of Key Stage 3, with no evident difference in standards of work between boys and girls. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the characteristic features of the periods which they study is generally good and many pupils, including those of below average attainment, can describe events and developments in satisfactory detail. Appreciation of cause and effect is also good and lower attaining pupils can explain how industrial change led to poor housing conditions in nineteenth century towns. Higher attaining pupils can explain long and short term causes of events such as the English Civil War and express and justify opinions. The capacity to make connections across historical periods is less evident. Pupils use a variety of historical sources to select information for their tasks. Some are able to make comparisons between sources and assess their usefulness in support of conclusions, such as identifying the most important change brought about by the advent of the railways. Awareness of different interpretations of past events is underdeveloped. All pupils use a reasonable variety of means of organising and presenting information and ideas, including extended writing, the representation of data as graphs and the use of information technology, for example, by producing leaflets on the development of textile machinery during the Industrial Revolution.

123. By the end of Key Stage 4, overall attainment is average. Most pupils are able to write at reasonable length in developing their ideas and there is some redrafting of work. They develop research skills, know how to extract relevant information from sources and are aware of bias, for example, in contemporary accounts of Mormon attempts to settle in the American West. Some coursework is impressive and deploys well-chosen evidence; for example, to support their writing about the death of President J F Kennedy. A minority of pupils find difficulty in analysing source material and in developing a coherent view of

developments over time, for example, in public health.

124. It was not possible to observe lessons in Year 13 during the inspection but the available evidence, including examples of coursework, shows average standards of work by the end of the A-level course. Year 12 students take notes independently and talk confidently about their work in preparing an essay on Italian fascism. They organise themselves very effectively, for example, in sharing aspects of research into the reasons for the rise of the Nazi party in Germany.

125. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching was good in six of the ten lessons observed and satisfactory in the remainder. Teaching is most consistently good in the sixth form where teachers are very confident and secure in their subject knowledge, using it effectively to challenge students and stimulate their interest in broadening their background knowledge of the periods they study. In the other key stages, teachers use their subject knowledge effectively. This shows in class discussions which help to develop clear understanding of the topic in question. Lessons are well prepared, generally meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The work proceeds briskly most of the time helped by the use of time limits for activities; however, in some lessons, pupils indulge in social chatter and fail to concentrate on their work. The range of teaching strategies is good and includes role-play and games. Teachers carefully monitor pupils' progress in lessons and are quick to intervene when they have difficulties. Homework extends and develops learning but it is not set consistently, particularly for below average pupils, for whom it is less frequent than for others.

126. Pupils are interested in and, for the most part, enjoy their history lessons. A greater proportion of pupils choose history as an optional examination subject in Key Stage 4 than is the case nationally. They volunteer to read for the class or clear up after practical activities and are polite and helpful to visitors. They collaborate effectively in groups or when sharing tasks in pairs. Independent work is encouraged through regular assignment tasks and some pupils spontaneously bring relevant books into school in support of lessons. Pupils' behaviour is good, except for a small minority of boys who generally respond well to teachers when admonished. A minority of pupils find concentration difficult for the whole of the hour long lessons and many more are easily distracted through social chatter which affects the pace of working.

127. The planning of lessons and assessment does not currently give sufficient emphasis to all aspects of the National Curriculum for history. Monitoring of the quality of teaching is not yet being used systematically to raise standards. Some improvement has been made since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment have been maintained and the overall quality of teaching has improved. Planned improvements to the quality of accommodation for the subject are currently being implemented. Some weaknesses in learning caused by pupils' attitudes still remain but are no longer directly attributable to teaching styles or planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

128. Standards of work seen in lessons are below average at the end of each key stage and most pupils are underachieving. This conforms the results of the teachers' own assessments made at the end of Key Stage 3, which indicated that only a quarter of pupils reached the standard expected in 1999. The pupils' written work also shows that most pupils fail to reach the expected standard. Recent changes have improved the curriculum, which was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, but the effects of the changes have yet to be seen in improved standards. All pupils now take at least a short

course GCSE course in information technology in Key Stage 4. The GCSE course is planned over both key stages; pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making good progress. Most pupils in Key Stage 4 are making some progress but a significant proportion of pupils do not concentrate on their work and are inattentive and noisy and these pupils are underachieving. A pilot entry of 19 pupils for the GCSE short course in 1999 gained an average proportion of grades A*-C however, the examination entry represented only a small proportion of the pupils who had been studying the course for one year. In the sixth form, an AS level course in information technology has begun and students are making satisfactory progress. GNVQ students use their ICT skills satisfactorily in the key skills aspect of their courses. Pupils make satisfactory use of e-mail and the Internet.

129. The overall standard of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 but half of the lessons observed at Key Stage 4 were unsatisfactory. In these lessons the tasks did not interest the pupils and the teacher did not organise the lesson to ensure that all pupils were working. Consequently pupils were underachieving. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and provide thorough and effective individual help in Key Stage 3, which ensures that most pupils make satisfactory progress. The technician and support assistants make a significant contribution to learning through their individual help to pupils.

130. Many pupils, particularly in the lower sets in Key Stage 4, find lessons uninteresting. Whilst the pupils' behaviour is not disruptive, the teacher intervenes frequently to keep the pupils on task. Pupils share computers because there are insufficient for all and when together they distract one another and engage in social chatter. However, when the pupils do find the lesson teaching, for example, in programming, pupils respond and work harder.

131. The policy of entering all pupils for a GCSE examination in information technology is beginning to raise standards. The school has insufficient computers and this affects standards. More attention to monitoring teaching is needed to ensure that pupils make better progress.

132. The use of ICT in the subjects of the curriculum is underdeveloped. Computers are used in in geography for research; in design and technology for drawing; in English and history for word processing. However, there is little consistency and the use of ICT to support pupils with special educational needs is also under-developed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French and German

133. All pupils take both French and German but the main language alternates with the year group. Years 7,9,11 and 13 have German as their main language and for Years 8,10 and 12 it is French. GCSE results for the last three years have been below the national average apart from the 1999 results for German, which were well above average. Pupils' results in modern languages were better than in their other subjects in 1997 and 1998 but below in 1999. Girls achieve higher standards than boys but the gap is less than found nationally. A-level results (for German) were above average in 1998, but none of the four students passed the examination in 1999 (in French) yet two of them gained grade A in English literature.

134. Standards declined after the previous inspection, during a period of staffing changes, but attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is now very close to average national standards,

both as observed in lessons and in the 1999 teachers' assessments. Pupils make good progress and achieve in two hours a week a standard similar to that of other schools which give a longer time to a single language. At the end of Key Stage 3, almost all pupils have basic transactional language in both French and German, one more developed than the other. They can exchange personal information, describe themselves to others, and can order food and drink, They have a satisfactory understanding of grammar and tenses, so that pupils in Year 8 top and second sets can for example, say what they have been or will be doing on holiday.

135. All pupils take GCSE and some reach high standardshowever, by the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment is below average and below that found at the previous inspection. Learning is related to real life needs, for example health-related issues, and this extends vocabulary. Pupils' knowledge of, for example, the perfect and pluperfect tenses, develops satisfactorily. In both these key stages the main strength is systematic study of grammar and vocabulary, which underpins good writing, notably in Year 7 which supports the view that standards of literacy of the intake are rising. Weaknesses in pronunciation detract from the quality of speaking.

136. No Year 13 lessons forCheadle High School sixth-form (German) students could be seen during the inspection, neither could samples of written work be seen, as the students were away from school studying for mock A-level examinations. However, a lesson for other Year 13 students was seen which was well taught. The scrutiny of Year 12 students' written work and observation of lessons show that students are making good progress in their A-level course in French. Their cover of verb structures is especially thorough.

137. The teaching of French and German makes a valuable contribution to the development of pupils' literacy. Grammar and punctuation are taught, and pupils are trained in the use of suitable reference books, as well as keeping their own current record of grammar and vocabulary. Numbers are taught for everyday purposes, such as prices or times.

138. All teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, and more than half of the lessons were good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the languages they teach and make good use of them in teaching. They have high expectations as regards both work and behaviour, and homework is set regularly. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, and some get good support their learning from the use of computers.

139. Pupils are encouraged to develop good learning skills, for example, in keeping their own records of grammar and vocabulary and in using dictionaries. Most make an appropriate intellectual effort, showing interest and sustaining concentration for the full sixty minutes of the lesson. Generally they show good understanding of what the requirements are and what they need to do to meet them. In about half the lessons seen learning was good; otherwise it was satisfactory except when a minority of Year 11 pupils displayed negative attitudes, and were noisy and inattentive. With this exception, attitudes were generally good. Pupils behaved well and co-operated well with their teachers. Opportunities exist to take part in the school's exchange arrangements with a partner school inGöttingen or travel to France or Germany on one of the annual trips for pupils in Years 7 and 8, and these opportunities broaden pupils' experiences and make positive contributions to their cultural development.

140. The department is now well led, and there is a clear vision as to what can and should be achieved. In a relatively short time, declining standards have begun to improve radically,

beginning with the youngest pupils, so that in Key Stage 3, outcomes are now average. Some above average work was seen, especially in Year 7, and more ambitious targets are in place for older pupils and sixth-form students. Teaching and learning have begun to be monitored and the head of subject observes lessons in alternate weeks, recording the outcomes.

MUSIC

141. As at the time of the previous inspection, music continues to be a strong subject in this school. Although GCSE results have been above the national average, the numbers opting for music have been relatively low. In the last three years, between 71 per cent and 100 per cent of GCSE entrants have gained A* to C grades with a significant proportion gaining A* and A grades. Though only a small number of students are involved, A-level results are very high and all students passed the examination in 1999.

142. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is above average and improving. Pupils have a good knowledge of score reading, form and structure. All pupils have a good grounding in performing, composing and listening and most can read from traditional scores and perform individually to a good standard on at least one musical instrument. By the end of the GCSE course, attainment is again above average. Standards are high because pupils are committed and able musicians who perform and compose confidently. Most of the examination pupils participate fully in the school's extra curricular activities and this helps them to gain valuable experience in practical music making.

143. Standards of the wind band are high and approximately forty pupils confidently play a good range of music, currently from the popular musicals, with sensitivity and professionalism. The choir of forty are less musically competent but sing well in two and sometimes three parts and contribute much to the social and cultural life of the school. Other groups such as the recorder and string ensembles are extending and challenging pupils to develop and enhance their musicianship and personal skills.

144. The teaching of music is very good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and overall is good at Key Stage 3. In the lessons that are particularly well taught, the teacher prepares thoroughly, meticulously arranges appropriate resources and challenges pupils to perform and compose using traditional notation. In these lessons, all pupils come with their own musical instruments and enjoy playing from scores especially prepared for their abilities. Pupils in the sixth form are challenged to research into the music of Smetana, for example, and to observe all the orchestral techniques employed by the composer to evoke pictures. In the Year 11 lessons, the teacher successfully encourages pupils to prepare for their listening tests by listening critically to various combinations of instruments and the structure and form of the pieces. In the good and satisfactory lessons in Key Stage 3, the teachers successfully motivate pupils to sing, play recorders and to compare and contrast various musical patterns. Both teachers are experienced and understand the requirements of the National Curriculum. The department does not, however, make sufficient use of information technology for pupils to explore, develop and revise musical ideas, and the teachers need further training in this aspect of their work. Teachers are aware of the specific needs of pupils with learning difficulties and give these pupils additional time and attention.

145. The attitudes of pupils to music lessons are very mixed. The most able often go on to study to A-level and are motivated to gain high grades. At Key Stage 4, GCSE pupils are nearly all highly motivated and have positively chosen to study the subject because they

have a genuine interest in making music. GCSE groups are relatively small in view of the number of pupils taking instrumental tuition. Girls significantly outnumber boys in these GCSE groups. In Key Stage 3, pupils generally settle well and take their music making seriously. Girls generally have a more positive attitude than the boys and in particular enjoy the singing and instrumental work. All pupils observed during the week of inspection behaved well and showed respect for their teachers. Pupils in the various extra curricular groups are mainly enthusiastic and committed.

146. The department is well led. The head of department has successfully maintained and enhanced the status of musicianship throughout the school. The visiting instrumental teachers are well managed and supported. The number of instrumentalists has doubled in four years and the department has been successfully involved with major musical projects with national organisations and orchestras, such as the BBC Philharmonic, and makes a good contribution to the local schools' music making. School concerts are popular and enjoyable. The department maintains full records of pupils' progress; it has an excellent development plan and provides a full range of extracurricular activities. The department is aware that greater use of IT is needed and that boys are not as involved with music as girls. The IT equipment is inadequate, the learning resources in the library need enhancing and accommodation for instrumental tuition and practice is cramped.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Since the previous inspection GCSE, results in physical education have improved substantially. In 1997, results were below the national average but they rose in 1998 and 1999. In 1999, the proportion gaining A* - C grades had risen to 72 per cent, and both boys' and girls' results exceeded the national average. A quarter of those taking the examination gained the highest A* grade, six times the national proportion. Girls' results were better than those of the boys. A comparison of results show that, in 1999, pupils' performance in physical education was very much higher than in their other GCSE subjects. This, together with the well above average standards and high proportion of A* grades, represents very high achievement. Only a few students have chosen to study physical education to A-level in the recent past, but this is improving. Recent results are average. In both 1998 and 1999, all candidates were successful; although there were no A grades high proportions of students gained B or C grades. Students' achievement in A-level physical education is satisfactory.

148. Standards of work seen in lessons show that attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is average overall. Most boys and girls reach the expected standard, including those with special educational needs. The strengths lie in dance and swimming, in both of which standards are above average. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is above average overall and some boys and girls reach particularly good standards in games and swimming. Pupils following the GCSE course reach standards which are well above average in both practical and written work.

149. Pupils make satisfactory overall progress in Key Stage 3, including for those pupils with special educational needs. In Key Stage 4, many pupils make good progress, leading to high achievement particularly in upper band classes and in the GCSE classes. Notable examples of good progress were seen in Year 11 mixed hockey, and in Year 11 swimming, in each case owing to well-structured lessons and good teaching combined with high expectation of pupils' efforts. In the sixth form, A-level students satisfactory progress and reach average standards. Their achievements are satisfactory.

150. In general, pupils co-operate with their teachers and behave well in lessons. Attitudes are positive, and pupils are interested and enthusiastic. Participation rates are

mainly good, except for some Year 11 girls, and pupils have good learning skills. They work hard, listen well to advice, and act upon it to improve their performance. Written work is mature and well researched. However, whilst behaviour and commitment are predominantly good, the poor attitudes of lower band girls in Year 11 are a cause for concern.

151. The quality of teaching is good. Subject knowledge and understanding are very secure. Lessons are effectively structured, although more opportunities are needed in Key Stage 3 to involve boys in the planning and evaluation of their work and progress in games. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has been maintained, and has improved in the GCSE course. A Year 11 basketball lesson was unsatisfactory because strategies to promote girls' interest and co-operation were unsuccessful and disruptive behaviour slowed the rate of progress for the whole group. Elsewhere, relationships and discipline are good, teachers know their pupils well, and lessons are purposeful and busy. Homework for examination classes reinforces and extends knowledge and understanding. Marking is rigorous and helps pupils to improve their work.

152. A good assessment profile system works well in Key Stage 3. It could usefully be extended to Key Stage 4 and more involvement of pupils in setting targets for their own performance could also help to improve progress further.

153. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching does not yet take place on regular basis. However, subject documentation, including planning for development, and risk assessment procedures, is very sound. The indoor provision is unsatisfactory, providing only one teaching space which has inadequate changing facilities. Examination work suffers from the lack of a dedicated classroom to promote subject identity and provide appropriate storage of records and class materials. Resources are adequate but funding allocated for physical education is low. As a result, equipment is well worn and gymnastic provision is outdated. There is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities for boys and girls, which enhance the curriculum. These include house competitions and school teams and are popular and well supported, enabling some pupils to attain high standards, both individually and within their teams.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. Standards are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. In 1998, half of the small number of GCSE candidates gained A* to C grades. In 1999, there were no GCSE or A-level candidates.

155. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is broadly average in terms of the Local expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. The standard of pupils' work is satisfactory but there is a wide variation in the attainment of the different classes. The majority of the pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity but a more limited understanding of Islam and Hinduism. Pupils do little background reading and produce little homework. Their information technology skills are underdeveloped. The more able are still underachieving and there are comparatively few materials to extend these pupils either for class or homework. Pupils with special educational needs reach acceptable standards although in-class support from additional teachers is limited to three hours weekly.

156. The attainment of the current Year 11 GCSE class is below average. Since September 1999, all Year 10 pupils have been working towards the GCSE short course examination to be taken in 2001. The standards of work of these pupils are broadly average. They have a sound grasp of Christianity and a growing knowledge of philosophy

of religion and science, and good and evil. The school is also incorporating into this course the requirement of the syllabus to teach two other religions: Islam and Hinduism.

157. Most pupils' progress and achievements are satisfactory. However, the pupils in Year 11 who are currently studying for a full GCSE course are progressing slowly and over half of them have not yet fully grasped the importance of producing high quality classwork and homework. The vast majority of Year 11, who are following the final two terms of work on the Agreed Syllabus are concentrating on the moral and social aspects of religious experience. Progress of pupils in Year 10, who are all following the short course, is sound. Most are progressing well in their knowledge of creation stories and have consolidated knowledge about the biblical and scientific explanations of creation including the account in the Bible, the 'big bang theory' and Charles Darwin's proposition of evolution. Pupils have also worked hard to understand the concepts of good and evil, and the theology of the cross and resurrection. By the end of Year 9, pupils have fully considered and understood the importance of fasting and feasting and the place and importance of numerous religious festivals and customs celebrated by people of many countries and various religions.

158. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The Year 11 GCSE class is taught soundly and the syllabus is covered adequately. The teaching of Year 10 has taken on a new lease of life, with both teachers of religious education now preparing pupils for GCSE examinations. The syllabus is being taught enthusiastically but the quality of the teaching varies from very good to unsatisfactory. The teachers monitor Year 10 pupils' progress but have not yet begun to discuss with them their targets for success. Pupils are sometimes presented with the topics and they respond well to debate, practical learning activities and to written work. In some other lessons, the work is not appropriately matched to the ability levels of the pupils and discipline is not sufficiently firm, fair or challenging. Teaching of pupils in years 7-9 is generally sound and sometimes good. When it is good, pupils are encouraged to think about religious issues and to reflect upon religious values and attitudes in an objective manner. Where teaching is ordinary it tends to be worksheet driven and lacking in dynamic interaction and engaging activities which would extend the pupils' knowledge and horizons.

159. Recently a small group of pupils have requested the formation of a Christian Union. This is a positive sign. However, since the previous inspection few pupils have opted to take examination courses leading to GCSE and A-level. The attitudes of Key Stage 3 pupils are much more positive than those of Key Stage 4 pupils. The younger pupils are mostly better behaved and are generally attentive; however, some lower ability Year 10 pupils are underachieving because they are poorly motivated and lack effort and concentration.

160. Management of the subject is sound. Since the previous inspection progress had been made despite much teaching by teachers without specialist knowledge or qualifications. This has adversely affected pupils' progress. All Year 10 pupils are now taking the GCSE short course. The time allocation for religious education is now satisfactory. The department is not using information technology adequately and pupils are not benefiting from the vast array of CDs and programmes which could support teaching at A-level, GCSE and elsewhere. Although all students have religious education as part of the A-level general studies course, this does not fully cover the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

161. The Moorlands Sixth Form Centre has established courses for GNVQ Leisure and

Tourism (Advanced), Business (Intermediate) and Art & Design (Advanced). The courses are demanding and are a suitable preparation for higher education or, in the case of Business, to proceed to A-Level or GNVQ Business (Advanced).

162. There was one Cheadle High School candidate for GNVQ in 1998, who achieved a pass with merit. In 1999, three students following the Leisure and Tourism course achieved merit grades. In Business (Intermediate), two students achieved merit and six achieved passes. Attainment in the current year in both courses being studied is average and students have a sound grasp of the basic skills of action planning, information seeking and handling and evaluation. The students' work shows progress in key skills, which are taught by specialists. All the teaching seen was of good quality. The teachers are suitably qualified and very enthusiastic, which has a significant effect on the motivation of the students and the standards achieved. They make students responsible for their own learning, ensure they keep to tight deadlines, and maintain detailed records of the steps taken in their work, for example in the use of information technology, a log of errors made and corrected, and how this was achieved. The students have good access to computers, which are vital to their work in, for example, word processing, graphics and block charts.