

INSPECTION REPORT

TUXFORD COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Tuxford, Newark

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122882

Headteacher: Mr C Pickering

Reporting inspector: Mr Ross Maden
2793

Dates of inspection: 7 – 11 February 2000

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Landa Grove Tuxford Newark Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	NG22 0JG
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ray Eade
Date of previous inspection:	2 – 6 October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Ron Elam	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety; Partnership with parents and carers; Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
John Brigden	Team inspector	Art; Sixth form	Quality and range of opportunities for learning.
Jeffery Cooling	Team inspector	Geography	
Christine Harrison	Team inspector	Science	
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Andrew Lagden	Team inspector	History; Special educational needs	
John Mitchell	Team inspector	Support for science	
John Morrell	Team inspector	Music	
Graham Preston	Team inspector	Design and technology; Information and communication technology	
Carmen Rodney	Team inspector	English	
Gillian Salter-Smith	Team inspector	Physical education	
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Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tuxford Comprehensive is a mixed 11-18 school with 1057 pupils on roll (including 165 in the sixth form). The number of pupils from ethnic minority families is below the national average, reflecting the numbers living locally, and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school caters for the full ability range and the number of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with national averages. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is well below the national average, reflecting the local education authority's policy with regard to statementing. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 7.8 per cent which is well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Most pupils are achieving good levels of achievement. The strengths of the school outweigh the weaknesses. Standards are good in the core subjects at both key stages and pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. The leadership of the school is determined that the first priority is to raise standards, particularly through improvements to teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is good. The school provides good value for money and the narrow range of sixth form A-level courses is cost-effective.

What the school does well

- Pupils' behaviour; their attitudes to learning and the quality of relationships within the school
- The consistency of good teaching within the school
- Pupils' good attendance
- Achieving standards at Key Stages 3 and 4 in English, mathematics and science which are above the national average
- Leadership in the school provided by the headteacher, senior managers and most middle managers
- The extra-curricular provision, especially for sporting activities
- Good personal development of pupils and in particular their moral and social development

What could be improved

- The standards in information and communication technology
- The standards in music
- The accommodation, particularly for physical education and the library and its level of resources
- The quality of assessment and its use in setting targets for pupils
- Ensuring the school meets all statutory requirements and tackles the health and safety issues identified in the report.

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 October 1995. The school has made satisfactory progress in tackling the key issues from the last inspection. Some progress has been made in developing teaching strategies to provide better for higher attaining pupils and in monitoring the quality and consistency of curriculum. There has been good progress in promoting independent learning. There has been some improvement in information technology but this still remains a weakness. Similarly, better use is made of assessment and examination data than was made in 1995 but weaknesses still remain. Improvements have been made in meeting statutory requirements but the absence of a daily act of collective worship remains a weakness. The proportion of pupils obtaining five GCSE grades A*-C has increased from 50 per cent in 1995 to 52.5 per cent in 1999. There has been a steady increase in the average A-level points score since the last inspection with the exception of 1999 when there was a dip. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests, GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Key Stage 3 tests	B	B	B	C
GCSE examinations	A	B	B	D
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	D	

Key

well above average A

above average B

Average C

below average D

Well below average E

Similar schools are schools having the same proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are above the national averages. Standards are also above the national averages for drama, English literature, geography, history and physical education. They are in line with national averages for all other subjects except for music and information and communication technology where standards are below. Results at A-level are usually good but in 1999 results dipped. The school has set appropriate targets for GCSE in 2000. Most pupils are achieving at a good level. They enter the school with average attainment and leave with standards above the national averages. They make good progress when receiving enthusiastic and inspiring teaching. Most concentrate well and persevere with their tasks.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They are keen to learn and are well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in and out of classrooms is good. There has been a high number of fixed period exclusions but the numbers have dropped significantly during the last two terms.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships within the school are good. Pupils willingly help each other in lessons and are able to organise their own work. Relationships within the school are good.
Attendance	Attendance is good and is consistently above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	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.

The quality of teaching is very good or excellent in 23 per cent of lessons. There is a higher proportion of these lessons within Key Stage 3. Teaching is good in over two-thirds of lessons and at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in three per cent of lessons observed. The quality of teaching is very good in drama. It is good in most subjects. In information and communication technology, design and technology, art, music and religious education it is satisfactory. The strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy skills are satisfactory. The school effectively meets the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. The strengths of teaching include good planning, good management of pupils and effective teaching methods. The use of on-going assessment to raise attainment is less well developed. The quality of learning is good and particular strengths include pupils' interest and concentration in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a mainly broad and balanced curriculum but there are some weaknesses in religious education. In the sixth form there is a limited range of A-level courses. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. National Curriculum requirements are not being met for music, and information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for moral and social development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory but preparing pupils for living in a multi-cultural society is less well developed. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for child protection are good but there are some unsatisfactory health and safety issues. The school's partnership with parents is good. The local community is effectively used to support learning. There are weaknesses in the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership in the school is good. Development plans for improvement are good and finances are targeted to meet priorities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide good leadership but the governors are failing to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum requirements for information and communication technology, music and to a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring within the school is good but the evaluation of the work of the school is less well developed.
The strategic use of resources	There is a good targeting of resources to meet the priorities for developments within the school. Staff development is good. Accommodation and learning resources are unsatisfactory. The principles of best value ensure the school provides good 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 school expects pupils to work hard • The school is approachable • Teaching is good • Their children are making good progress • Their children like school • The school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Information about how pupils are progressing • The range of activities outside of lessons • The school to work more closely with parents

Most parents are very satisfied with the quality of education the school provides for pupils. The inspectors' judgements endorse the positive views expressed by parents. The inspectors agree with parents that reports do not contain sufficient information on what pupils can do. However, the inspectors' judgements on homework are that the amount of homework set is satisfactory and the range of tasks set for homework are, in the main, appropriate. Inspectors judge that there are sufficient opportunities for parents to work closely with the school. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or above in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 in English, mathematics and science was above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of 6 and above was above the national average in English and mathematics and well above in science. Results over the period 1996 to 1999 indicate that performance was above the national average in all three subjects. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score is broadly in line with the national trend. Girls' performance is above that of boys in English, mathematics and science. When compared with that of schools of a similar type (schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals) pupils' performance in English and science is average. Test results in mathematics are below that of schools of a similar type.
2. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades at A*-C was above the national average in 1999, as it was over the period 1997 to 1999. The proportion of pupils gaining five grades A*-G was close to the national average in 1999 as it was over the period 1997 to 1999. Girls' performance is well above the national average while boys' performance is above. The trend in the school's average points score was below the national average and when compared with similar schools the average GCSE points score is also below. The main reason for this is because many lower attaining pupils are entered for Certificate of Achievement courses. The results from these courses do not count towards the average GCSE points score.
3. In the 1999 GCSE examinations there were good results in drama, chemistry, English literature, French and mathematics. Results for German, information technology and music were poor. Taking the last two year's results, pupils, when compared with their performance in other subjects, do well in drama, science, and geography. Their relative performance is poor in information technology, music and art.
4. In the 1999 GCE Advanced level examinations (A-level) the average points score was below the national average. Over the period 1997-1999 the average points score was above the national average. Although the actual average points score dropped significantly in 1999, the analysis of the students' A-level results when related to their prior attainment at GCSE indicate significant achievements in many subjects, particularly in business studies, French and physics. Only the results in history did not match the predictions based on prior attainments. In 1998 there were four subjects where results did not match the predictions, even though the overall average points score was higher than in 1999. In 1999 all candidates entered for chemistry, expressive arts, French, biology and mathematics gained a pass grade of A to E.
5. Taking into account the standards of work seen, the inspectors' judgements are that standards by the end of Key Stage 3 exceed the standards expected nationally for pupils of that age in English, mathematics, science, drama and physical education. Standards are in line with national expectations for all other subjects except for music and information and communication technology where standards are below.
6. The inspectors' judgements, based on lesson observation, the scrutiny of pupils' work and test results are that standards by the end of Key Stage 4 exceed the standards expected nationally for pupils aged 16 in English, mathematics, science, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. Standards are in line with national expectations in all other subjects except for music and information and communication technology where standards are below.
7. Inspectors' judgements are that standards at the end of the sixth form exceed those expected at A-level in art, geography, history and English. They are in line with expectations for all other subjects except information and communication technology and physical education; where they are below.
8. Most pupils are achieving at a good level. They enter the school with average levels of

attainment, based on their performance in Key Stage 2 results and cognitive ability tests. Many pupils are achieving good levels, especially when they are receiving enthusiastic and inspiring teaching. Particularly in English, mathematics, science, drama, history, physical education, and modern foreign languages, most pupils are working at full stretch, concentrate well and persevere with their tasks. In other subjects achievement levels are satisfactory except in design and technology, information and communication technology and music. They are unsatisfactory in music because in Year 10 many pupils are unco-operative and take a long time to settle to their work and progress is restricted in Key Stage 3 because of the lack of continuity in music lessons in Year 8. Achievement is unsatisfactory in design and technology because progress is inhibited by weak design skills in food and limited time to produce higher quality products in resistant materials. In information and communication technology it is unsatisfactory because pupils have few opportunities to develop their skills in measurement, modelling and control and few opportunities to practise their skills in other subjects across the curriculum.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They have a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and make good progress when they receive individual support. These pupils respond well in lessons and when withdrawn from lessons for individual tuition.
10. Higher attaining pupils make good progress. There is no policy within the school to promote higher standards for the gifted and talented children. There is no evidence at subject level of policies or strategies for gifted children except in mathematics at Key Stage 4. The strategy in the school is to target pupils who were borderline GCSE grades C and D. These pupils are well supported by mentors. The evidence from the school when they tried to enlarge the target group was not a success because the available mentoring skills were being spread too thinly and they have reverted to targeting the C/D borderline group of pupils.
11. The school sets appropriately high targets for examination results. The governing body, in conjunction with the local education authority, has agreed appropriate targets for the Year 2000. At GCSE the targets include 57 per cent of pupils gaining five grades A*-C; 98 per cent gaining five grades A*-G and an average total points score of 44. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils gaining five grades A*-C, five grades A*-G and one grade A*-G at GCSE has remained consistent over the last five years. At A-level there was a significant increase in the average points score until 1999, when results dipped.
12. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop considerable expertise in monitoring the progress of individuals and groups of pupils within the school. Increasing use is made of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 data to monitor progress during Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The detailed monitoring of performance by the local education authority provides evidence to show that the school adds significant value and performs well in comparison with many other schools in the County. Whilst monitoring is a strength there are some weaknesses in evaluating the data to set targets for raising standards, particularly in Key Stage 3.
13. Since the last inspection the school has tackled the issue of underachievement by the most able at both key stages. Weaknesses in information technology were identified in the last report and these weaknesses still remain.
14. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills, which promote good standards in all areas of the curriculum. They speak confidently and use talk effectively to develop their work in virtually all subjects. Good opportunities are given to pupils to improve their oral skills and oral work is exploited in many subjects, including personal and social education. In science, pupils in Year 7 work in pairs using a question and answer approach to revise their work and reinforce subject specific vocabulary. Discussion skills are widely used in most subjects: they were a particular strength in a Year 13 geography lesson; students used good role play to debate the impact of industrial pollution. In history, pupils are encouraged to give presentations, as illustrated in Year 9 lessons where pupils gave addresses on the Nazis' persecution of the Jews. Oral skills are emphasised in mathematics during investigation work when pupils discuss their work. In these lessons, they talk about making deductions and comparisons as well as arriving at a certain hypothesis and using an analytical approach to solving a question.

15. The standards of reading are good and pupils read competently with expression and understanding. They can select, use, and present information accurately. However, wide reading and research skills are not strong features in most subjects. Independent reading is encouraged in mathematics, history, geography and art. Research skills are particularly strong in geography, where pupils read and bring into lessons a range of materials including CD ROMs, newspapers, and reference and fiction books. Key words are displayed in some subjects.
16. Pupils write in a range of formats and at length, planning, drafting, revising and editing their work in geography and design and technology, using desk top publishing and word processing skills in science, history and English. Word processing skills are used in mathematics to present work, and in art, pupils record and evaluate their work in diary form and use it as a resource to develop their ideas. With the exception of the lower attaining pupils, who have difficulty with spelling and handwriting, the presentation of pupils' writing and work is good, and most write with consistent accuracy.
17. Number work in the school is good and is based on the secure foundation of number and graphical work in mathematics. In science, pupils' graph drawing skills are very good. They are able to draw graphs representing the motion of objects and from them deduce the speed and acceleration. They are able to re-arrange equations involving calculations of speed and calculate appropriate stopping distances. There is a weakness in re-arranging equations in physics in the sixth form. In design and technology, pupils studying food and resistant materials use scale drawings in a wide range of activities but the use of spreadsheets in information and communication technology has only just begun. The planning and making of containers in art complements earlier work in mathematics. Spatial awareness is developed through sculpture, and perspective; figure and scale drawing help to develop the sense of proportion. In English, the results of surveys are recorded numerically. In both key stages and in the sixth form, geography provides opportunities of increasing difficulty in using maps and grid references, and presenting and analysing statistical information from pupils' own surveys.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good and contribute to the good progress that most pupils make. This finding reflects that of the previous inspection. It also confirms the views of parents, who consider that behaviour is good and that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
19. The pupils are keen and enthusiastic, as seen when Year 9 pupils were comparing the different foods in England and Spain during a Spanish lesson. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and usually settle quickly to the task given. Pupils concentrate well during class work and work diligently both independently and with others. In a Year 12 art and design lesson their eagerness to improve their textile samples resulted in a willingness to review others' work as well as their own. They are interested in the life of the school and enjoy the extra-curricular activities, fund raising and other activities organised by the school and these contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Pupils' attitudes generate a good working atmosphere throughout most of the school.
20. Pupils behave well both in the classroom and around the school. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors. They know right from wrong and are generally polite and courteous to teachers and their peers. They move sensibly about the school, showing particular care going to lessons when many people are using narrow corridors. Pupils handle resources with care, putting away tools and equipment in science and design and technology lessons. Their respect for the school premises is highlighted by the absence of litter and graffiti. Nevertheless, there were some examples of pupils being unco-operative and chatting inappropriately, as, for example, in a Year 10 music lesson where the pupils appeared to resent their regular teacher being absent. Instances of bullying are rare and younger pupils are aware that the school has appropriate procedures to deal successfully with any incidents that may take place. Exclusions increased for a period after the last inspection but since then have reduced significantly reflecting a change in approach by the school; 49 pupils were excluded for a fixed period in the summer and autumn terms of 1999.

21. Pupils have constructive relationships with their peers and with adults. During a Year 9 English lesson groups of pupils collaborated very well, sharing information when discussing the main characters in a novel. Pupils respond well to opportunities to reflect on what they do and its impact on others. They do this well particularly where their own and others' feelings are concerned in personal and social education lessons. During a basketball lesson, in Year 10, pupils listened to one another's advice and gave it in a sensitive manner. Pupils discuss varied topics and accept that others may have a different view or belief from their own. This understanding was shown in assemblies on the theme of tolerance during the inspection week when pupils were discussing differences between people. Compared with the last inspection, pupils have more opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility. Nevertheless, many of the pupils are dependent on guidance from their teachers and, even by the time they reach the sixth form, they are not all independent learners.
22. Attendance is good. Last year it was 93 per cent and has been above the national average for the past three years. In the term before the inspection attendance was above 90 per cent for all year groups. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. Absences are usually due to medical reasons, though a number of parents take their children on holiday in term time. Punctuality is generally not a problem, with the great majority of pupils arriving on time. However, many pupils are dependent on buses, both public and contractors, with several not arriving on time in most weeks. Because of the need for pupils to move between different buildings the start of some lessons is delayed by a few minutes.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching is very good or excellent in 23 per cent of lessons. There is a higher proportion of these lessons within Key Stage 4. Teaching is good in over two-thirds of lessons and at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in 3 per cent of lessons. There is a consistent quality of good teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. The high proportion of good teaching is a particular strength.
24. The quality of teaching is very good in drama. Teaching is good in all other subjects except for art, design and technology, information and communication technology, music and religious education, where it is satisfactory. The majority of unsatisfactory lessons were taught by supply teachers.
25. At all key stages teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. In the best lessons the enthusiasm teachers have for their subject is conveyed to pupils which in turn enables them to acquire good skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils' intellectual efforts are well demonstrated in most lessons. Their levels of interest and their ability to concentrate during lessons ensure that the quality of learning is good. Particularly in drama pupils' creative efforts are well developed. As a result of good teaching pupils are encouraged and supported to think and act creatively. Pupils' physical efforts are particularly effective in physical education lessons because good teaching makes high but achievable demands in raising their levels of skills.
26. The school has recently embarked on a number of changes to introduce strategies to promote basic literacy skills across the curriculum. Some of these include a common spelling book, each department developing links with and visiting a primary school to observe the literacy hour in action, a survey to audit the work in departments and each department identifying and piloting an area for development in the next development plan cycle. The English department has taken a leading role in pioneering this work, with a particular focus on developing good reading skills and being part of a sub group that has received appropriate in-service training. It is too early to evaluate any of the changes. At this stage the literacy strategies lack a sharp focus as they are without a co-ordinator to lead and manage the expected changes. A common policy including marking is not in place to guide practice. A wide range of reading skills is used in most subjects and opportunities are provided for pupils to read often in lessons and to model their reading on their teachers.
27. The school does not have an overall numeracy policy but realises that it must make a response to the national numeracy policy and this is in the school development plan.

28. The effectiveness of teachers' planning is good in most subjects, where there is a variety of activities which are well planned to meet the needs of pupils. Planning in design and technology does not allow for pupils to develop their design skills effectively in food lessons and in resistant materials pupils do not have opportunities to produce high quality products.
29. Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils. This is particularly evident in science, information and communication technology at Key Stage 3 and in physical education. In a minority of lessons in music expectations are low. The management of pupils is good and high standards of behaviour were evident in most lessons. On the rare occasions when pupils exhibited challenging behaviour, they were expertly dealt with by their teachers. Some supply teachers, but not all, tended to experience more challenging behaviour than other teachers, especially in science and music.
30. The use of time is good in most lessons. There is a good pace to learning. On occasions, time is not well used in geography and music. For example, in a Year 10 music lesson pupils did not learn quickly enough because some pupils were not motivated to work and they were given too much time to spend on tasks.
31. The school meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs effectively. Pupils with special educational needs show good attitudes in lessons and when withdrawn from lessons for individual tuition. These pupils respond well to the sensitive and effective support they receive from teachers and learning assistants when it is provided.
32. The level of resources to provide a variety of activities is good in most subjects. The major weakness is the lack of computers to enable all subjects to use information and communication technology to support learning.
33. The quality and use of assessment and marking of pupils' work are satisfactory. There are some good examples such as in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages where marking is effective and pupils know what they have to do to improve their work but there is a lack of consistency across all subjects. Not all pupils understand, for example, when a teacher says that work is good, what they have to do to make it very good. Homework is satisfactory. Most teachers set appropriate amounts of homework and the tasks set reinforce or extend what pupils have learnt in class.
34. The quality of learning matches the quality of teaching. Learning is good because pupils are interested in their lessons. Most pupils concentrate well for the whole lesson and want to succeed. They work well without constant supervision and it is very rare to see the pace of lessons drop because teachers have to spend time on managing behaviour.
35. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. In the last inspection the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. It is now good. Teaching was better in the sixth form than in Key Stages 3 and 4. There is now a consistent quality of teaching across all key stages. At the time of the last inspection there were few opportunities for independent learning and there was a lack of challenge for the more able. These are no longer weaknesses. However, inconsistencies in marking still remain.

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

36. The school provides a mainly broad and balanced curriculum but there are a number of weaknesses. Statutory requirements are being met in all subjects with the exception of music at Key Stage 3 and information and communication technology at Key Stages 3 and 4. Not enough time is made available for the teaching of music at Key Stage 3 and for religious education at Key Stages 3 and 4. At Key Stage 4 there is a range of different courses for pupils for whom fewer GCSE subjects are more appropriate but the provision lacks coherence and opportunities for vocational courses are limited. In the sixth form, there is a narrow range of courses and there is no provision for religious education for all students. The weekly teaching time of 25 hours in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and meets the DfEE recommendation. Registration, assemblies and tutor time at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth

form are organised as a part of the pastoral system. Homework is set in most subjects and for all pupils. Each pupil has a study planner in Key Stages 3 and 4; parents and form tutors inspect the diary each week and are kept well informed about the homework that is set and completed. The curriculum provides an appropriate range of learning opportunities for all pupils with special educational needs.

37. At Key Stage 3 the curriculum builds on good links with the main primary schools from which Tuxford School draws its pupils. It is planned effectively in most subjects to ensure that pupils' learning continues smoothly when they move from their primary schools. All National Curriculum subjects, together with personal and social education, form the basis of the curriculum. Sex and health education are taught in accordance with local education authority guidelines and approved by the governing body. There is no art in Year 8, although the overall time allocated during Key Stage 3 enables the National Curriculum programme of study to be covered. Technology receives additional curriculum time in Year 8 to compensate for below average time allocated to Years 7 and 9. Planning for continuous development of pupils' learning in art, music and design and technology is difficult because pupils cannot practise subject skills on the regular basis needed to ensure they make good progress. Curriculum provision for information and communication technology does not meet National Curriculum requirements because of a lack of attention to modelling and measurement. French is taught in Year 7, with the benefit of a second language of either Spanish or German taught to pupils in Years 8 and 9. There are no formal policies for literacy and numeracy but, in order to improve standards, the English and mathematics departments are developing a range of appropriate strategies.
38. At Key Stage 4, pupils are provided with a broad core curriculum. Some curricular arrangements for lower attaining pupils lack coherence. Some pupils have been 'disapplied' from science, French and technology and so take fewer GCSE subjects. They undertake work placements and receive additional help with their learning in the student support centre. An ASDAN course is provided for selected pupils, while others have the opportunity to extend the one-week work experience that is the entitlement for all pupils. The school does not, at present, offer many vocational subjects and this restricts opportunities for those that might be better suited to such courses. School management and governors have recognised this and highlighted the issue as a priority for school improvement. Plans include broadening the 14-19 curriculum to provide a more coherent and co-ordinated provision at Key Stage 4 and beyond. Within complementary studies, that currently include religious education, health education, careers, community studies and study skills, there are good opportunities to build on the self-awareness programme, introduced in Key Stage 3, to help pupils prepare for working life or further education. However, the provision for religious education is unsatisfactory; there is insufficient time to cover the Agreed Syllabus. There is an extensive and effective careers and work experience programme in Years 10 and 11 that includes interviews for all pupils and the effective use of the careers service and local school business partnerships and institutes of further and higher education.
39. In the sixth form, a good range of post-16 academic courses is offered at Tuxford School. There are currently 15 A-level subjects available to students and they have the opportunity to re-sit GCSE English and mathematics to improve their grades. They are provided with a wider choice of A-level subjects and GNVQ courses through the Retford Consortium. Although a small number of students take advantage of the consortium, most continue their studies in the sixth form. Current curricular provision at the school is narrow and does not meet the needs of all students. There are limited opportunities for vocational courses and insufficient attention is given to the importance of study skills. For example, over the last three years there has been a relatively high drop out rate in A-level courses such as history and physics, caused by students leaving for employment, finding the work too challenging or being unprepared for the study skills needed for A-level. Work experience, general studies and recreation are compulsory elements in the sixth form and, together with extra-curricular activities and opportunities for community service, these contribute to enriching the current curriculum. However, the provision for religious education is unsatisfactory, although there are some opportunities in a general studies course to consider spiritual and moral issues. Effective pastoral and careers guidance is provided and students value this. Students are currently sharing a partnership and community room, which they are using as a study and social area. The current library, learning resources and space for their private study are inadequate. In recent years there has been a gradual rising trend in the number of students entering the sixth form. There are plans to increase numbers and to recruit

65 per cent of Year 11 to the sixth form by 2002. The school is making well-planned preparations through its 14-19 curriculum review process and the work of a sixth form development group.

40. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum. Where appropriate, they receive additional support within lessons. Pupils are withdrawn from a small number of lessons in order to provide effective specialist teaching in literacy and numeracy.
41. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities that are popular with pupils and students, often linked with class work, and which increase their interest in the school. A number of subject based lunchtime and after-school activities provide additional learning support and an opportunity for pupils to pursue their interests and hobbies. These include annual French, German and Spanish days. In science there are good sessions at lunchtimes and a club after school as part of the 'Learning Café' with primary school pupils. Provision in drama includes theatre trips and a successful Year 8 club working with Year 6 pupils from feeder schools and with theatre companies and actors. There are good activities in art with a tradition of an after-school session open to older pupils, students and adults from the village community. The range of activities in physical education is very good and the participation rates for many sports, health and fitness related activities are high. Visits out of school include good fieldwork opportunities and a residential experience for A-level students in geography. In art, there are visits to galleries and pupils and students work alongside artists and designers. They also work with representatives from a local textile company to manufacture fabrics they have designed. There are trips to France and Spain and an arrangement for exchange visits to Germany. In the sixth form, students work for charities and are encouraged to work in ways that would benefit the school community.
42. The school has a good working relationship with its main partner primary schools. Regular meetings between the deputy headteachers of these schools and Tuxford School has led to a number of effective initiatives to enhance the process of pupils' transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. All pupils in Year 6 now begin work in the final term of their primary school and complete it at Tuxford School. The idea of extending these 'bridging projects' is being planned to include work in the core subjects, to focus on specific issues such as literacy. The school has well established working links with the Retford Consortium of schools and is actively widening its network with local colleges and educational agencies to provide and resource a broader work-related curriculum at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school also works with Initial Teacher Training institutions such as Nottingham University. This contributes to subject teachers' professional development and enables them to consider from another perspective issues related to the curriculum and teaching and learning.
43. Good links with the local community are a particular strength of the school. Recent developments are successfully building on existing provision and enhancing the learning of pupils. Valuable links with a number of local community organisations such as parish councils, community newspapers, millennium committees and rotary clubs ensure that the curriculum in a number of subject areas is relevant to local needs. The school actively seeks the opinions of the local community through successful developments such as monthly community surgeries and questionnaires in order to strengthen links with the local community further.
44. Improvements since the last inspection include a more coherent approach to the personal and social education and complementary study programmes. The good curricular balance has been maintained at Key Stages 3 and 4. Overall, progress in curricular and other opportunities has been satisfactory.
45. The school functions as a well ordered community in which pupils relate positively to others. Understanding of moral and social values is well promoted. Cultural values are satisfactory. However, the multi-cultural and spiritual dimensions are less well developed. Pupils respect each other and their teachers.
46. The school's lack of large community areas limits the number of daily year group assemblies. Behaviour in assemblies is good and members of staff speak on a variety of moral themes

which are planned in advance. Assemblies make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. These themes are picked up and reinforced in tutor groups. However, as no regular daily act of collective worship takes place, either at assembly or in tutor groups, the school does not meet the statutory requirements. In this regard the school has not made progress since the last inspection.

47. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The religious education and personal and social education areas of the curriculum give support to pupils' spiritual development in all year groups, although planning for this in other areas of the curriculum is limited. There is no formal recognition of the contribution that other subjects make or could make to the spiritual development of pupils.
48. Provision for pupils' moral development is good and the moral climate of the school encourages pupils to distinguish right from wrong. The school's rules and code of conduct create the framework in which pupils are encouraged to be self-disciplined, respect one another and co-operate with members of staff. Moral and ethical themes are explored in a number of subjects. For example, racial prejudice is discussed and acted out in drama; the impact of industrial pollution on society is a feature of Year 13 geography investigation; the themes of justice and responsibility are explored in English at Key Stage 3. There is also a wide range of extra-curricular activity, including sport, to encourage and support pupils' moral development.
49. Pupils' social development is supported not only through co-operative and collaborative work in lessons but also through a range of school initiatives. Older pupils at Key Stage 4 act as mentors to younger pupils experiencing learning or behavioural problems. A forum to discuss school issues contains representative pupils from each tutor group. A study support club entitled "The Learning Café" is well attended by pupils during twilight hours.
50. Pupils' understanding of their own cultural heritage and that of others is promoted through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. School journeys abroad take place on a regular basis. Travelling theatre groups visit the school to support existing drama clubs. Sporting and outdoor activities also support cultural development. Provision for extra-curricular music does not make a sufficient contribution to pupils' social development. Although some subjects such as mathematics, art and geography provide opportunities for the stimulation of multi-cultural awareness, the school's overall provision for preparing pupils for a multi-cultural society is a weakness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff are very caring and know and support the pupils well, including those with special educational needs. All staff - teachers, learning support assistants, midday assistants and administrative staff - make a significant contribution to supporting the pupils. Overall, the school provides pupils with a safe and secure environment, which supports their education, though there are weaknesses with regard to health and safety. In addition, the procedures for monitoring academic performance are unsatisfactory.
52. A health and safety policy is in place, with copies of the policy provided to all staff and a senior manager with overall responsibility. The governors have had training in risk assessment. An extensive health and safety audit was carried out by the local education authority in May 1999. While a number of recommendations from that report have been implemented, there are no procedures in place to ensure that all have been actioned.
53. Several health and safety issues were identified during the inspection, notably the state of the grounds with many potholes, uneven surfaces and loose paving. There were several health and safety issues identified for physical education. There are satisfactory arrangements for administering first aid with many qualified staff. A senior teacher is the designated person for child protection, the school follows local guidelines and the school is aware of the need to ensure that all staff have training to ensure that correct procedures are followed. The teachers make pupils aware of health and safety during lessons such as science, and personal and social education. The policy for and teaching of sex education and promoting drugs awareness are appropriate.

54. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of consistency across subjects. English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages all have good procedures in place to assess pupils' attainment and monitor their progress and assessments in these subjects are reliable and accurate. Pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and know what they have to do to make greater progress at many points throughout the school year. However, the systems to ensure that teachers' assessments across the subjects are reliable are not in place in music, information and communication technology, design and technology and geography at Key Stage 3. Pupils in these subjects are not reliably informed of their attainment. Across the school pupils find out how well they are doing through the annual record of achievement and half-yearly progress review. The quality of the teachers' comments about pupils' progress in the record of achievement is variable. Some give plenty of detail and help pupils to write realistic subject specific targets. Others give only a very general picture of pupils' progress and targets are not specific to a subject. The half-year progress review includes a grade for effort, behaviour and homework but does not inform parents or pupils about attainment or progress.
55. Since the last inspection the school has made some improvements in its use of assessment information to inform curricular planning. However, this is still a weakness in a number of subjects across the school. The school has started to use information on pupils' attainment at Key Stages 2, 3 and on GCSE courses to predict their attainment at Key Stages 3, 4 and in the sixth form respectively, and set targets for the school. In Key Stage 4 the school identifies pupils who are underachieving and offers them effective support through the school's mentoring system. The school requires subjects to analyse examination results at GCSE and A-level and most subjects make some improvements to curricular plans. There are good examples of subjects using assessment information to improve provision. For example, in the science department relatively lower attaining pupils taking three separate sciences are monitored closely and given the opportunity to take double science award examinations to ensure that they gain A*-C grades. However, too many subjects do not use the information about pupils' previous performance provided by the school to set realistic and challenging targets for individuals or groups of pupils. Nor do they identify clearly enough for pupils what they need to do to improve. The use of assessment to inform curricular planning is unsatisfactory in design and technology, information and communication technology, music, religious education and in Key Stage 3 geography.
56. The support of pupils' personal development is good, though the monitoring of academic progress during the year is unsatisfactory. The school has recently changed the pastoral system to ensure that tutors and the heads of year stay with pupils for most of their time in Years 7 to 11. This enables them to develop a good understanding of their pupils enhanced by the information they receive from subject teachers. In discussion with their tutors pupils undergo a self-review assessment of their effort and attitudes, both in individual subject areas and in the school generally. However, the limitations on tutor time mean that, for many pupils, this may take place only once in each year. The outcomes from these assessments are noted on the records of achievement which are provided for parents. These records are inadequate for providing information to parents as there is little detail of what the pupils have learnt or the skills they have acquired.
57. Procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs are good. The individual education plans provide satisfactory background information for teachers but are not sufficiently detailed to enable progress to be measured. The learning support assistants have full details of the individual education plans, enabling the pupils to receive good appropriate support. All statutory requirements for those pupils with statements of special educational needs are met.
58. The procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are generally good. The overall ethos of the school encourages pupils to want to come to lessons. The tutors are responsible for ensuring that valid reasons are provided for absence and analyses are produced regularly to identify any patterns or areas of concern. Subject teachers also take a register to identify any absences from individual lessons. There is a lack of sufficient study areas for sixth form students. Registration at the beginning of the day takes place and sanctions are imposed for lateness (unless the cause was the late running of buses). However, pupils arriving late do not

always report immediately to the office, preventing an accurate record being kept of which pupils are on site.

59. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are also good. A clear policy emphasises rewards and provides a good structure for supporting pupils. The system in use recognises good behaviour as well as any that is unacceptable. These are recorded in order to present the heads of year and tutors with an analysis to identify any patterns in behaviour and any pupils with particular problems. These procedures also help the identification of any extremes of behaviour such as bullying or sexist and racist remarks.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with inspectors, parents showed that they are generally very pleased with all that the school does. They are satisfied with the level of support their children receive and consider that the school promotes positive attitudes. These reactions are similar to the comments made at the time of the previous inspection. Some parents were concerned about the range of activities outside lessons but the inspectors judged that the provision of clubs and other activities at lunchtime and other times are good. Some doubts were expressed about homework but the inspectors' findings are that the amount of homework and coursework set is appropriate. A few parents also felt that they were not well informed about the progress of their children, though the great majority were satisfied with the amount of information received. The inspectors judged that the number of reports provided were satisfactory but improvements in the quality of information could be made.
61. The school has established good links with parents and these contacts are effective. A considerable amount of information is provided to parents about what happens in the school. Parents are invited to evening meetings about, for example, drugs awareness and bullying. Parents also receive more frequent information on their children's work from the student planners where the pupils record their homework and which are generally checked by the tutor each week to ensure that they have been seen by parents. These are also effectively used for messages between tutors, subject teachers and parents. Letters go home when pupils receive merits. Formal contact with parents regarding progress of their children takes place three times a year; parents' evening, record of achievement and a review sheet. The record of achievement helpfully provides details in each subject of the pupils' attitude, effort and behaviour. However, it has little information on the skills and understanding that the pupil has acquired. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to participate in the review of the individual education plans, though the plans have no space set aside to record their comments.
62. Parents' involvement with the school makes a satisfactory contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. The parent teacher association is very supportive, arranging both fund raising and social events and has successfully campaigned for lockers for pupils. The school consults the association regularly to see how the school can improve. Parents generally are also consulted both in the termly mailing and with a more structured and detailed questionnaire once a year. Parents help their children in various ways. Some find placements for work experience and take them to and collect them from firms during their time with them. At other times parents actively seek ideas on how to help at home, with some 80 or so parents coming to meetings for advice on mentoring, revision techniques, coursework, with written details sent to those parents who cannot attend. No details are sent home on what the pupils study in lessons, though the school is planning for departments to provide parents with information about the curriculum.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. The leadership provided by the headteacher and senior management is good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future direction of the school and has identified detailed strategies to raise standards. In particular, he recognises the importance of raising standards of teaching and learning and the school is involved in a project with Nottingham and Cambridge universities in raising the quality of education within the school. He is well supported by his senior management team. They meet regularly and provide effective leadership of the school. The composition of the senior management team includes the head of the support staff and also allows for an additional senior member of staff to join the team for a term, which provides the individual with valuable professional development in the issues of senior management.

64. The quality of most curriculum and pastoral leadership is good. The quality of department planning is good. There are for most subjects good schemes of work and an effective evaluation of realistic department plans. Leadership of music is unsatisfactory as a result of the long-term absence of the head of department.
65. The special educational needs department is well led and managed; management responsibilities for this area have been clarified, which represents an improvement from the previous inspection. The code of practice is fully implemented. Detailed and helpful documentation is provided in the departmental handbook. The student support centre provides a good base for the co-ordination of special educational needs and for supporting pupils withdrawn from lessons. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the team of learning support assistants work together effectively.
66. Overall, the governing body satisfactorily fulfils its responsibilities. Members of the governing body meet regularly. They are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Many of the governors have close connections with the school over a long period of time. Inspectors support the judgement of the headteacher 'that the governing body operates in such a way as to support and facilitate progress and not hinder it.' In setting the budget for the current financial year they planned a slight overspend, in agreement with the local education authority, to restructure the senior management team as a result of the promotion of a deputy headteacher to another school. The governing body fulfils many of its statutory duties effectively except that it does not ensure that all pupils receive a daily act of collective worship. In addition, pupils are not receiving their National Curriculum entitlement to information and communication technology, music at Key Stage 3 and the provision for religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form does not meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.
67. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in monitoring the work of the school. It makes much better use of assessment and examination data in planning strategies and this is reflected in the quality of the school development plan. While monitoring by the senior management team is a clear strength, less well developed is the evaluation of the work and the identification of strategies for improvement. This is also a weakness in middle management.
68. The school development plan is part of a three-year programme. It is has been built on a detailed analysis of the previous plan. There are 15 targets, which is a large number, and some of these targets are less important for raising standards. The strength of the plan is that finances are targeted to meet the priorities; and the allocation of resources to departments is based on departments producing detailed spending plans linked to the priorities of the school development plan.
69. Some progress has been made on the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching and this area of the school's work has shown significant improvements since the last inspection. The involvement of working with Cambridge and Nottingham Universities shows a commitment to improvement, although it is too early in the project to form a judgement of the contribution it makes to raising standards.
70. The school is well placed to respond to the future demands of performance management and the governors have already identified specific targets for the headteacher. Teachers are receiving their entitlement to appraisal. There is a genuine commitment and enthusiasm from the governors, headteacher, senior management and middle management to seek improvements within the school. The management expertise is in place to provide the school with the means to raise standards further.
71. There is a satisfactory match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. The support team are a strength and work as a united team with teachers to provide a good quality of education for pupils. Staff development is good. New teachers to the school are well supported and staff development opportunities for teachers and other staff are closely linked to the priorities of the school development plan. The school gained the Investors in People award, which reflects the importance it attaches to good and appropriate staff development.

72. The expenditure per pupil is low when compared with the national average. The sixth form provision is cost effective and there is a slight shift of resources for sixth form students to subsidise courses at Key Stage 4. Finances are well managed, as reflected in the most recent auditor's report. In setting the budget for the previous two years the governing body effectively targeted resources to meet the priorities from the school development plan. There was a small planned over-spend but the planning for the next financial year will eliminate this deficit. The newly appointed resources and operations manager applies the principles of best value to ensure that the school provides good value for money in the quality of education provided. Specific grants for special educational needs and the standards fund are effectively targeted on the purposes for which they are intended.
73. Overall the accommodation is unsatisfactory for the school's curriculum and the number and the age range of the pupils. Pupils and staff make efficient and effective use of the facilities available and there is good support from premises staff to maintain an attractive and welcoming environment. The strong sense of community is evident in the absence of litter and graffiti and throughout the school the good standards achieved by pupils are demonstrated in well-produced displays of work.
74. The range of buildings reflects the history and development of the school and, while additional accommodation has been provided by mobile classrooms and some refurbishment and adaptations have taken place, this has not overcome the deficiencies described in the last inspection report. The size and layout of classrooms in humanities and music, for example, result in cramped conditions for full groups. Specialist areas such as those for design and technology, information and communication technology and the library are inadequate in size to support the full range of activities for all pupils. In science a significant number of pupils have to be taught outside laboratories and this disrupts the order in which activities can be introduced. Some of the laboratories are cramped for the size of groups and the shortage of storage areas results in apparatus being stored in the laboratories, thus further reducing working space. In physical education the addition of new changing rooms, offices and storage space has improved some aspects of provision. The gymnasium is very small for full groups and the indoor sports barn is a poor environment because of roof leaks and inadequate heating. Outdoor facilities for physical education are generally adequate, with the exception of the tennis courts, where uneven surfaces are potentially hazardous. For English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and art accommodation is satisfactory or better.
75. In order to improve the quality of education and to support the school's targets for raising standards, the governors, headteacher and senior staff have prepared a thorough analysis of current accommodation and have identified priorities for further development. With the support of the local education authority detailed plans have been submitted for a major capital building programme. The school has also submitted bids for funding from the National Lottery to improve facilities for physical education and sports and enhance the accommodation for dance and drama.
76. Learning resources are inadequate. Resources for departments are mainly satisfactory but there are significant weaknesses in the resources for information and communication technology and in the library.
77. Since the last inspection, the school has tackled the issues mentioned in the last report. The library has been restocked, and there has been a regular financial input for computers and software. However, owing to the growth in school population and lack of building expansion, the adequacy of learning resources is still unsatisfactory. The appropriateness of books in most departments is good. Despite the increase in computers, the ratio of pupils to computers at 14:1 is significantly worse than the national average of below 8:1. Many departments are unable to use information and communication technology to support learning.
78. After the last inspection, the library was relocated to a smaller, more secure area. The current area is too small for the number of pupils within the school. When the library is being used by one class for reading, there is no room for sixth form students' private study, nor is it possible for other classes to use the reference section. The library now has 8,500 books, which have been chosen in consultation with both teaching staff and pupils and students. However, the

number of books is below the recommended ratio of 12 books per pupil. There are shortages of reference books in music, art, religious education and modern foreign languages. There are two computers in the library connected to the internet and the software on the school network. When those computers are in use, there are no other opportunities for pupils or students to access CD-ROM and there are no facilities for playing video tapes. The library is heavily used both at lunch and break times, as well as during lessons. The librarian has experienced some difficulties in persuading some pupils to return borrowed books.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- **Raise the standards in information and communication technology by:**
 - Improving the level of resources and accommodation;
 - Ensuring that all National Curriculum requirements are met at Key Stages 3 and 4;
 - Ensuring that all subjects make sufficient and appropriate use of information and communication technology to support learning;
 - Improving the assessment and monitoring system for information and communication technology.
(paragraphs 5, 6, 32, 76, 77, 132-138)
- **Raise the standards in music by:**
 - Improving the accommodation and technical support for music;
 - Ensuring that all National Curriculum requirements are met at Key Stage 3 by improving the level of resources;
 - Improving the management of the department by implementing a detailed scheme of work for all years and implementing policies for assessment and the monitoring of teaching and learning;
 - Ensuring that the amount of time for music in Year 8 does not restrict pupils' progress in the subject.
(paragraphs 5, 6, 37, 64, 147-154)
- **Improve the accommodation, particularly for physical education, and expand the library and its level of resources by:**
 - Working with the local education authority to provide sufficient permanent accommodation for the number of pupils in the school by implementing the building development plans agreed by the governing body and the local education authority;
 - Expanding the resources and facilities within the library to enable more pupils to work independently and in particular expand the provision for private study for sixth form students.
(paragraphs 58, 74, 75, 78, 166)
- **Improve the quality of assessment and its use in setting targets for pupils by:**
 - Ensuring consistency across all subjects of the best practice already identified within the school;
 - Ensuring a greater use of assessment data to set targets for improvement for individual and groups of pupils;
 - Providing to parents more detailed information on pupils' levels of attainment.
(paragraphs 33, 54, 55, 60)
- **Ensure the school meets all statutory requirements and tackles the health and safety issues identified in the report by:**
 - Providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils;
 - Ensuring pupils receive their full National Curriculum requirements for music at Key Stage 3 and information and communication technology at both key stages;
 - Ensuring that pupils receive sufficient amounts of time for religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus;
 - Tackle the health and safety issues identified in the report.
(paragraphs 38, 46, 52, 53, 66, 165)

In addition the governing body may wish to include the following less important issues for consideration within the action plan:

Multi-cultural education (45); Numeracy policy (27); Vocational courses (36); Modern foreign languages (37); Timetable arrangements (37); A-level history (39); Spiritual development (47); Independent learning (21).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	185
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.1	21.6	45.5	29.2	2.2	0.5	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	892	165
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	52	N/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	225	0

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	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.3	School data	0.7
National comparative data	7.9	National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	1999	77	92	169

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	42	50	46
	Girls	83	71	68
	Total	125	121	114
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	74 (72)	72 (69)	67 (68)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	35 (34)	46 (44)	33 (30)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	33 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	38	51	49
	Girls	80	76	71
	Total	118	127	120
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (61)	75 (72)	71 (72)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	25 (24)	56 (42)	40 (36)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	93	69	162

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	42	80	87
	Girls	43	66	68
	Total	85	146	155
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	52 (49)	90 (93)	96 (99)
	National	46 (44)	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	41 (40.6)
	National	37.8

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	31	48	79

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	14.8	11.9	13.1 (18.2)	0.7	3.7	2.8 (2.4)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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	[9]	[44]
	National		

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	1055
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	160	1
Other minority ethnic groups	1	

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)	55.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	294

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	25
Key Stage 4	22

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	2,109,128
Total expenditure	2,107,938
Expenditure per pupil	2043
Balance brought forward from previous year	-10,000
Balance carried forward to next year	-8810

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1057
Number of questionnaires returned	284

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	52	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	55	8	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	53	17	4	2
The teaching is good.	32	60	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	47	14	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	40	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	29	52	13	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	35	51	4	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	55	5	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	51	12	1	6

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

ENGLISH

80. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form are good. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum test have improved significantly since the last inspection and there is an upward trend in performance. In the 1999 Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests, 74 per cent of pupils achieved Level 5 and above with the majority achieving levels that are above those expected nationally. Between 1996 and 1999, standards have been above the national average. Attainment on entry is average and throughout the key stage the quality and quantity of pupils' work improve to achieve good standards by the end of Key Stage 3. Although results are above the national averages in both key stages, pupils perform less well in English in comparison with their performance in mathematics and science. However, standards when compared with similar schools are average. Boys' results are in line with the national average but girls continue to achieve higher levels. The department is addressing this issue.
81. Results in both English and English literature are good and have been in line with or above the national averages since 1997. Pupils achieve a high standard in literature and in 1999 over 72 per cent achieved grades A*-C in GCSE examinations with over 47 per cent achieving the top grades A*-B. The rate of entry, however, fluctuates each year and is usually lower than the national average. The 1999 English results were just above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A* -G in both subjects has been in line with the national average for some time. Girls do better than boys, but there is an upward trend in performance and boys achieve good results in the literature examination. Standards in the sixth form were above the national average between 1997 and 1998 but dipped significantly in 1999. The dip is attributable to factors beyond the control of the department. Overall, students achieve higher grades in English than they do in other subjects and evidence confirms that good standards are being maintained.
82. Standards in speaking and listening are good in all year groups and pupils use talk effectively to approach and develop their learning. They join in discussions, raising questions and arguing their viewpoints. In Key Stage 4, pupils use good oral skills to reflect viewpoints as seen in a Year 10 lesson with higher attaining pupils using 'hot seating' to review Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls'. Sixth form students and pupils ask penetrating questions about their work and can evaluate their learning. Overall, pupils are articulate and confident when giving feedback. Group work is a positive feature in all year groups and contributes significantly to pupils' and students' developing a good understanding of their work. They listen attentively to each other when sharing ideas and opinions. Group work also involves the younger pupils in Key Stage 3 using drama to explore their understanding of literature as seen in a Year 9 lesson where pupils used role play to look at the theme of conflict in 'Romeo and Juliet'.
83. Reading skills are good in both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. The department actively promotes good reading skills and the study of literature is a strength of the department. Pupils and students in the sixth form are exposed to a wide range of literary texts including texts from other literary heritages. The younger pupils in Years 7 and 8 enjoy reading aloud and many read clearly with good intonation. The lower attaining pupils, including pupils with a special educational need, read hesitantly and stumble at unknown words. In Year 8 they use scanning and skimming techniques to gather research evidence. This was well illustrated in a Year 8 library lesson where pupils used both primary and secondary source materials to collect background information on the text, 'Goodnight Mr Tom'. Textual analysis is sound in Year 9 where pupils use evidence accurately to support their views.
84. The higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 read competently and have a secure understanding of implicit meanings. They give mature responses when analysing texts as seen in their work on 'Macbeth' and Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales'. They have a good understanding of writing from other cultures, well illustrated in Kwesi Johnson's 'Sonny's Lettah'. Pupils use good research notes to develop their understanding of a writer's world as shown in their research

notes on the Elizabethans' perception of Jews when analysing 'The Merchant of Venice'. Sixth form students read texts closely to understand the subtlety of language and style and demonstrate good critical skills when responding to literary texts from other heritages.

85. Writing skills are good among the higher and many average attaining pupils in both key stages and good in the sixth form. Their writing shows control and fluency. They use a wide vocabulary and a range of sentence structures and punctuation marks as shown in the well argued and structured Year 11 assignments in which pupils compared the Prioress and The Wife of Bath in Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales'. Throughout Key Stage 3, the quality and quantity of pupils' written work improve and the higher attaining pupils write accurately, planning, drafting and editing their work. The lower and middle attaining pupils use their planning notes but are not fully secure in their use of technical features and editing skills. However, pupils of all abilities write imaginatively and narrative writing is a strength. Sixth form students plan and write well-structured essays and they make good use of extensive notes.
86. The quality of teaching is predominantly good; occasionally it is excellent. It is occasionally merely satisfactory; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers pass on their good subject knowledge and expertise, selecting and using a wide range of materials in preparing pupils for the examinations. Lessons are always clearly structured, with specific objectives and timed activities. These features contribute to pupils co-operating with their teachers and knowing what they need to achieve by the end of the lesson. In very good and excellent lessons, teaching is lively and good use is made of pace, activities, good quality resources and a range of teaching styles. In such lessons, the effective use of time and resources contribute to motivating pupils. Energetic teaching inspires pupils, as seen in a Year 8 lesson in which pupils wrote inspirationally when they were given a range of resources and pushed to use their creative writing skills. Teachers pitch the level of work to the needs of groups, using a range of approaches including whole-class teaching, group work and drama to impact on pupils' learning. Lessons are well balanced. The direct teaching approach is used effectively in the sixth form to reinforce practical criticism and pass on examination tips. All teachers continuously broaden pupils' literary skills and vocabulary, providing background information on texts, particularly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
87. Teachers' high expectations elicit good responses from pupils in all year groups. Speaking and listening skills are emphasised and oral work is well managed. Pupils make good gains in developing their oral skills and in understanding all areas of their work. Teachers use feedback sessions to increase attainment and extend pupils' understanding of their work by drawing attention to specific points. They provide good support for pupils with a special educational need and the control and discipline are good. Good classroom management and organisation lead to pupils intervening and lessons are conducted in a relaxed environment, geared towards teaching and learning. Good use is made of homework to extend and reinforce learning.
88. Pupils have very good attitudes to their English lessons and behave well in lessons. They accept the set challenges and persevere with their work, working within the time constraints and responding well to instructions and requests. They work constructively in groups sharing and developing their ideas and are not easily distracted by a small minority of pupils exhibiting negative attitudes. Pupils in Key Stage 3 enjoy their lessons; they are highly motivated and willingly share their ideas and materials from home. The sixth form students are mature and dedicated to understanding literature. There is a high level of participation in oral work and contributions are given willingly and a positive interest is maintained. Pupils' positive attitudes are a direct response to the good quality teaching they receive.
89. The department is led by an inspiring head of department who has a clear vision for the development of the subject. There is a strong sense of team identity and members plan and work together to improve pupils' and students' literacy and literary skills. The curriculum provides breadth and balance and has good procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' achievements, although target setting for the end of each key stage is not rigorous enough to raise standards further. The head of department, supported by the second in charge, has introduced many far reaching changes such as individual and whole-class target setting, schemes of work that provide greater continuity and progression and independent learning in the sixth form and wide reading in Key Stage 3. The response to the last inspection report has been very positive. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and this has produced

the improvements in standards. Curriculum planning is now a strength and speaking and listening skills and language study as well as procedures for assessing work are fully integrated in schemes of work and lessons. The department has made less progress in the use of information and communication technology than expected. This is now being addressed in the development plan.

MATHEMATICS

90. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school is in line with national averages in mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is above national averages and this is maintained at Key Stage 4 and pupils make good progress in both key stages. In the sixth form, attainment is in line with national averages. Attainment in mathematics is comparable with that in science but higher than that in English in GCSE examinations.
91. At the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, attainment of girls is higher than that of boys and is significantly above national averages in the four-year period up to 1999. In the same period, boys' attainment at Key Stage 3 has shown fluctuations but, in general, is in line with national averages. In comparison with similar schools in 1999 in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3, attainment was below average at Level 5 but in line with that in similar schools at Level 6. In the higher grades of GCSE, attainment by girls is significantly above national averages, attainment by boys is in line with national averages so that, overall, attainment is above national averages. Attainment of boys has shown a significant improvement between 1997 and 1999. The number of pupils who do not receive a grade in GCSE is slightly above the national average, these pupils receiving accreditation by Certificates of Achievement. Decisions on the entry policy for these pupils and for the different tiers of GCSE are taken after considering the performance of pupils in end of module tests and course work assignments.
92. Attainment of students in the sixth form in A-level examinations has shown fluctuations during the period 1996 to 1999, with a decline in results in 1999. In that year, although all students achieved pass grades, some achieved the highest possible grades with others just achieving a pass grade. The number of students in the first year of the sixth form is significantly higher than previously, owing to the good relationships between teachers and pupils and good assessment arrangements for pupils in Year 11. The course in the sixth form includes pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics and the modular nature of the course enables pupils to be accredited at AS level as well as A level. A group of pupils are repeating GCSE in the sixth form to improve their grades and effective work by students was observed in all sixth form groups. Lesson observations during the inspection and scrutiny of pupils' and students' work confirm the standards evidenced in national examinations.
93. The overall standard of teaching is good at both key stages and in the sixth form. It is at least satisfactory in all lessons and good in the great majority, with some of it very good. All teaching is based on good knowledge, careful planning, good teaching of basic skills, high expectations of pupils and enthusiasm for mathematics. Good class management ensures good relationships between teachers and pupils and good behaviour by pupils. Pupils make good progress throughout the school in the development of basic skills. Pupils' listening skills are good in response to good questioning technique by teachers. Pupils read questions with understanding and speak with clarity in response to questions. Respect is shown to the answers of other pupils and pupils co-operate with each other, when working in pairs or larger groups. Writing skills vary from single word answers and sentences to extended writing for investigations at Key Stage 4 into the applications of mathematics. In Year 8, pupils predict the results of rolling two dice, tabulate their results and give explanations against their predictions. In Year 9, pupils design a suitable box from a variety of shapes, the areas of which are calculated. In Year 10, the relationship between the volume of solid rectangular and cylindrical figures and their dimensions is investigated. Throughout Year 10, pupils of all attainments make good progress. Higher attaining pupils develop skills in dealing with more complex equations in algebra. Pupils of average attainment use fractions in calculations of probability. Lower attaining pupils use number and graphical skills in a wide range of line graphs. At both key stages opportunities are taken to support mathematics with information and communication technology. During the week of the inspection, pupils in Year 7 found the least number of moves according to definite rules in the game of 'frog'. Pupils in Year 9 speedily and accurately investigated straight line graphs and in Year 10, they modified questionnaires as part of a project in data collection and analysis.

Support for pupils with special educational needs is effective with support assistants available for some but not all lessons. All pupils have full access to mathematics and these pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

94. The development of number starts in Year 7 with basic calculations and fractions. Number values are substituted in formulae to find the areas of rectangles and triangles in Year 8. Number is closely linked to the development of equations, angle properties and graphical work in Year 9 and Key Stage 4. A study of graphs in Year 11 illustrated how graphs can be used to misrepresent information by using axes with different scales. A minority of pupils in Year 7 and some lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 were inattentive towards the end of lessons. For these pupils in Year 7, there was a lack of appropriate input from teachers to direct their work and at Key Stage 4, insecure time management led to a similar difficulty. The monitoring of the progress of lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 will continue to require careful attention. Homework is set and marked and corrected on a regular basis. The department has developed a useful series of homework question books for each year with three levels of difficulty. Although marking of routine work is not related to National Curriculum levels, pupils understand their strengths and weaknesses and topics needing revision.
95. Leadership of mathematics and the management of staff, resources and accommodation are good. The department has clear aims and a commitment to raise standards. All requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Schemes of work have been revised on a modular basis and include regular end-of-module tests, which enable pupils' attainment and progress to be measured and assessed. Pupils' response to the improved opportunities for independent learning and to investigations into applying mathematics has improved considerably. Higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are identified so that they are entered for the A* extension paper in GCSE. The provision for information and communication technology is fully outlined in the scheme of work. Mathematics has made a good improvement since the last inspection and has the capacity for further improvement.

SCIENCE

96. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of pupils at the age of 14 achieving Levels 5 and above was above the national average and the proportion gaining Levels 6 and above was well above average. The average points score which pupils achieved was well above the national average and average for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. Girls gain better results than boys at this stage. The results in science in 1999 were better than those in English and mathematics. Test results in science have been consistently above the national average for the last four years and are now further above average than they were in 1996.
97. In the 1999 GCSE examinations in the three separate science subjects, the proportions of pupils gaining grades A* to C were above average in chemistry, average in biology and slightly below average in physics. However this school enters around a third of its pupils for the separate science subjects, compared with only four per cent nationally. In the 1999 double award science examinations, taken by around half the pupils in the year group, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C was below the national average but these results were adversely affected by the number of pupils taking separate sciences rather than the double award examinations. In the single award science examinations, taken by the other pupils in the group, no pupils gained grades A* to C but the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to G was average. Overall, the GCSE examination results in science represent attainment which is above the national average. In 1999 pupils achieved significantly better results in science subjects than they did, on average, in their other subjects. The exception was physics where the results were similar to the average across the subjects. Girls and boys achieved similar results in the separate sciences and single award science but boys gained better results than girls in double award science. Results in science have remained broadly the same over the last three years. In the 1999 A-level examinations in biology and chemistry, the average points scored by students matched national averages. The very small number of candidates in physics gained results which were above average.
98. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards of attainment at the age of 14 and 16

are better than those expected nationally for pupils of the same age. These standards broadly reflect the attainment in recent test and examination results. Pupils have at least satisfactory knowledge of the topics they are studying and many higher attainers have much better understanding than expected for their age. For example, in a mixed ability Year 9 group, pupils understand the differences between physical and chemical change and know about simple chemical reactions, while higher attainers can discuss the conservation of mass in chemical reactions and suggest possible difficulties in proving it. Higher attainers in Year 11 use their knowledge of the principles underlying fractional distillation to deduce the variation in the boiling points of other hydrocarbons. Pupils have good practical and investigative skills. Lower attaining pupils usually understand the basic ideas but have difficulty in recalling the details of topics they have studied. Most pupils have good numeracy skills and are particularly adept in drawing graphs.

99. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment broadly matching the national average and, at the end of Key Stage 4, their attainment is above average. Hence their achievement in science is good.
100. In the current Year 12 and Year 13, standards generally reflect those indicated by recent A-level examinations, except in physics where standards are now broadly average. Students enter the A-level courses with attainment which is average for students beginning such courses. Their achievements in the sixth form are good in chemistry and satisfactory in biology but some students underachieve in physics.
101. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both Key Stages 3 and 4, though better in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in the sixth form. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject and plan lessons carefully. They make the aims of the lesson clear so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers provide appropriate learning activities for pupils of all levels of attainment and pupils with special educational needs are usually enabled to make progress which matches that of the others in their group. However, in Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching varies significantly between individual lessons; with most lessons being either very good or satisfactory. In the very good lessons, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning, pupils are thoroughly involved in the lesson and learn quickly. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on the birth of a baby, pupils' misunderstandings were clearly and sensitively corrected. Other features of very good lessons include a high level of challenge to which pupils respond enthusiastically. For example in Year 9, pupils of all levels of attainment were asked to calculate the stopping distance for a car; some required a few prompts from the teacher but all succeeded in the task and the higher attainers could not wait to move on to the more demanding questions. In Key Stage 4, teaching is more consistently good or very good and teachers often use interesting techniques to revise the meaning of key words, reinforce important learning points and give pupils satisfying proof of the progress they have made. In satisfactory lessons, in both key stages and in the sixth form, the learning activities are useful but less varied and imaginative. In these lessons, pupils remain generally quiet and well behaved but there are lapses in concentration which reduce the efficiency with which they learn. There are only occasional lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory. In Key Stages 3 and 4 such lessons arise from unsatisfactory arrangements in which pupils are being taught by more than one supply teacher. In these lessons, there are weaknesses in the planning of activities and, in Key Stage 4, pupils have developed negative attitudes towards the subject. In the sixth form there are weaknesses in the teaching of some aspects of physics when the teacher does not demand enough from students, particularly in terms of the precision of their written answers. There is not yet enough use of the very good teaching skills which exist within the department to inform and improve the practice of other teachers.
102. The science department is well led and teachers, technicians and support assistants work effectively together as a team. The management of the department is satisfactory. There are valuable departmental reviews which lead to good strategies to raise pupils' attainment. However, there has been insufficient support and guidance for an inexperienced teacher in his first year of teaching A-level physics and the current arrangements for supply cover are unsatisfactory.

103. The department does not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning in science. This is mainly because there is no appropriate computer equipment for use in the laboratories. However, the department is also missing opportunities to use the whole-school computer facilities which could provide more activities in science. The department's accommodation is inadequate because 39 science lessons each week take place in classrooms rather than in laboratories. This situation means that teachers have to adjust the order of learning activities according to whether the lesson is in a laboratory or not, rather than choosing the order which best promotes pupils' learning.
104. The department has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. There has been an improvement in the test results at the end of Key Stage 3 but, in other respects, pupils' attainment at all stages, and the quality of teaching which pupils receive, remain broadly the same as they were at that time. The department has provided more opportunities for pupils to assess their own progress and there is no longer a shortage of appropriate work for higher attaining pupils. The deficiencies in the accommodation for science remain.

ART

105. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards in art are in line with national expectations. In 1999, the majority of pupils were reported to be meeting or exceeding the national expectations. Girls' performance was better than that of boys. Attainment in lessons and the artwork seen was in line with expectations.
106. Pupils use their sketchbooks effectively to select and record visual information for class work. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. All pupils, including those on the special educational needs register, use a range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials such as paint, textiles, plaster and mixed media to express and communicate their ideas. They know about artists from different times and places, including examples from the arts and crafts movement and the surrealist style, but they lack understanding about the purpose and relevance of the examples they study. All pupils use a satisfactory range of technical terms when they talk about the practical processes and techniques that they use. Higher attaining pupils are acquiring the skills needed for them to make decisions about the purpose of their work and how to improve it. Pupils' numeracy skills are in line with expectations when they measure and use methods to judge size and proportion to make accurate portrait and figure drawings. Opportunities to use information and communication technology skills include searching the Internet and printing images for coursework projects.
107. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national average. In 1999, two-thirds of the pupils entered for the examination gained A* - C grades, which is above the national average, but their performance was lower than that shown by results for other subjects. The performance of girls was significantly higher than that of boys. Over the last three years, there has been a gradual rising trend in the number of pupils attaining the higher grades and standards have been improving. In lessons and in the work seen at Key Stage 4, attainment in art is in line with national expectations. Pupils are competent when they use graphic techniques such as pencil, colour wash and collage to create designs for paintings, sculptures and textile work. Lower attaining pupils explore a narrower range of ideas and techniques and are too reliant on copying. Higher attaining pupils combine visually interesting images and some technical control to produce work such as stamp designs and distorted images that incorporate letterforms. They flourish when they are given scope to develop their technical skills and to use their initiative to respond to the themes that they are set. In textiles, pupils knot, weave and embellish intricate coloured grounds and texture. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is in line with national expectations.
108. In 1999, standards in A-level art showed a wide spread of attainment. Over the past three years, the numbers and prior attainment of students entered for the examination in art have fluctuated. However, there is an indication that standards are improving owing to an increase in the number of students being entered for the art textile examination. Sketchbook and finished work shows a developing technical control when students use mixed media techniques to make bold and colourful still life paintings of everyday objects. In textiles, highly imaginative and inventive

approaches are used when students create technical experiments with silk painting, appliqué and stitching to exploit the expressive qualities of the materials.

109. Overall, teaching in art is satisfactory throughout the school but it is sometimes good or very good. At Key Stage 3, teachers give practical demonstrations to provide pupils with the steps to be successful. Year 9 pupils use plaster bandage skilfully to make masks as a part of a project about gargoyles. Teachers use technical terms and phrases to explain visual ideas and concepts. Pupils are helped to recognise the visual qualities and effects they are developing in their work. They are acquiring the skills and confidence associated with reviewing and refining their practical work as it progresses. They value their work and consequently their attitudes and behaviour are good. At Key Stage 4, checklists are used effectively when pupils are preparing for their GCSE art examination. Year 11 pupils plan the resources they need and the visual qualities and effects they will show in their work in an attempt to meet the examination requirements. Pupils are motivated and inspired by seeing examples of teachers' own artwork and working alongside professional artists and designers. Consequently, most pupils enjoy art and cope well with the challenges they are given. In the sixth form, high expectations are set in some lessons about the need for technical control and accomplishment. In Year 12 art textile lessons, students practise techniques and are pushed to the limit of their practical skills. Students are keen to discuss and evaluate their work and show a high level of commitment.
110. At Key Stages 3 and 4, insufficient practical guidance is given about ways of using resource material to present a range of interesting ideas. Average and lower attaining pupils lack the confidence to make decisions about their own work and are too dependent on the teacher. Pupils lack opportunities to practise and consolidate analytical and practical skills. Opportunities for them to develop understanding about the artwork of others or to develop expertise in drawing, painting and sculpture are limited. Teachers know the subject strengths and weaknesses of pupils and keep close and detailed records of their progress and attainment. However, too few examples of pupils' work are shown in lessons to help them know the level they are working at or to help them plan how they will improve the standard of their work. Homework is mostly set to support class work; sometimes it is used to extend it, particularly in the sixth form. Pupils on the school's register of special educational needs are making satisfactory progress throughout the school.
111. The head of department provides clear leadership and staff work well together as a team. Art teachers are dedicated to promoting the status of the subject and to raising standards. Currently, there are inadequate arrangements for the head of art to work regularly with a line manager to set targets and to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the subject. Subject priorities for improvement are identified but these are not focused sufficiently on raising standards and not enough attention is given to the need to raise boys' achievement in art. Although medium-term planning is good, there is no long-term planning to provide a picture of how continuity and progression is managed in art. There is no technician support time for art and this is unsatisfactory given the number of staff, rooms and courses provided for art in the school. Resources for practical activities are good and the subject makes very good use of links with local industry and artists and designers to help Key Stage 4 pupils and sixth form students to understand the relevance of the subject beyond the school. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. At the end of Key Stage 3, Year 9 pupils reach standards broadly in line with national averages. At the end of Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C is in line with national averages.
113. By the end of Key Stage 3 all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have achieved satisfactory standards in relation to their attainment at the beginning of the key stage. There are greater strengths in making skills across a variety of different materials. In using timber and plastics, pupils show care and accuracy in measuring and competently use a variety of hand and powered tools. Pupils also show secure making skills in textiles and in a Year 8 project worked well together in producing a wall decoration. In food technology, pupils develop a range of skills in preparing and making different cooked products reflecting different cultural

traditions. Higher attaining pupils have a developing understanding of electronic systems in the newly introduced course, and those pupils also show good presentation skills in graphics work (for example, in a Year 8 promotional packaging project) and most are able to carry out simple product analysis in food technology. However, pupils have a limited awareness of the design process, particularly in the food textiles technologies, where the opportunities are most limited.

114. In design and technology, GCSE attainment is now rising after a significant fall in 1998. The 1999 results have not wholly retrieved the higher standards previously reported in the last inspection, though the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C is now close to the national average, with girls achieving noticeably better than boys. At present, pupils do less well in the subject when compared with their results in other subjects. Current progress in the GCSE courses is satisfactory, with greater gains being made in knowledge and skills in graphic products and electronic products. In graphic products, higher attaining pupils know about different forms of projection, have a wider range of presentation and finishing techniques and good design ideas. In the electronic products course, the greater understanding of the higher attaining pupils is reflected in product design. Lower attaining pupils have some difficulty with the more challenging knowledge required in the course but are able to assemble electronic circuits with some accuracy. Progress, though satisfactory in resistant materials and food technology, is inhibited by less developed design skills in food and limited time to produce more sophisticated, higher quality objects in resistant materials. This means that those pupils do not achieve as well as they can.
115. Teaching in design and technology is always at least satisfactory and in nearly half the lessons it is good. Teachers are mostly specialists and use their knowledge well: for example, in electronics, higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged to develop a good understanding of background theory. Staff share considerable experience in teaching practical skills and provide constructive individual support, so enabling pupils to develop a secure range of largely manufacturing skills with more accurate use of measurement in making plans and safe and accurate use of tools. Teaching was sufficiently supportive to meet the learning needs of all pupils and on occasion, those with special educational needs benefit from additional support - for example, in a GCSE food technology lesson, where a pupil received individual support from a classroom assistant. Teachers also manage the workshops context well, both in terms of organising relevant and interesting activities and in ensuring safe behaviour. As a result, pupils are mostly fully involved and make sufficient progress. The best teaching makes effective use of the long lessons by varying the learning activities and using different approaches, including group work, so enabling pupils to be more actively engaged in design and research. The less effective teaching does not address the design and make process sufficiently, nor does it have a sufficiently strong industrial and commercial context. This results in pupils developing limited solutions to design problems. Although staff are conscientious and mark regularly, there is a lack of a coherent and shared approach to assessing pupils' work. Pupils do not always know how they can make better progress and assessment is not linked sufficiently to National Curriculum levels or GCSE criteria. This was a weakness in the last inspection and remains one.
116. The Key Stage 3 programme of study meets the National Curriculum requirement with systems and control in the process of being much improved. The increased range of GCSE courses is now good, with opportunities for pupils to take specific courses in food, resistant materials such as timber and plastic, electronics and graphics. The school also recognises that the pupils studying the new GCSE child development course also need to take a design and technology course in Year 11 in order to meet the statutory requirement. The management of the subject is satisfactory despite the dispersal of the teaching areas that has worked against a shared approach to the subject. However, pupils' progress is slowed somewhat by carousel arrangement in Key Stage 3 and the limited time for the GCSE courses, as well as the financial constraints on staff and resources. The level of technician support is very limited, the food technology rooms, though adequate, are cramped and there is a lack of reliable and accessible computer equipment, which limits the development of information and communication technology skills.
117. The recent improvements in provision and results indicate that there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection, though several weaknesses need to be tackled concerning the learning and assessment schemes, as well as accommodation, resources and technical

support.

GEOGRAPHY

118. On entry to the school attainment is largely in line with national expectation. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 attainment was assessed by the school to be above national standards. Girls achieved better than boys. During the inspection attainment overall was judged to be in line with national expectations but within the mixed-ability groups there is a wide range of levels.
119. Geography is a popular choice within the options at Key Stage 4. The proportion of pupils who continue with the subject is above the national trend. In the last three years standards achieved by both boys and girls as measured by those obtaining higher grades A*-C have been above national averages. In line with national performance, girls achieve better than boys. The proportion of pupils gaining a pass grade between A*-G is in line with the national average.
120. At A-level in the sixth form students have achieved good pass rates during the last three years. In 1999, 37 of the 38 candidates gained a grade between A and E. The proportion of higher grades at A to C was lower in 1999 than in the previous two years.
121. Achievement at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is good. As pupils progress through the school they make advances in geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, especially where additional support is provided in lessons.
122. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. Overall it is good and this leads to effective learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, expectations are high and work is carefully planned. In the strongest lessons, where the teaching is very good, there are very clear objectives and pupils acquire greater confidence in knowledge, understanding and skills and learning is very effective. For example, in a Year 11 class, follow-up work on a local field study looks at the quality of life in two contrasting areas within Nottingham. Pupils confidently use a range of information from interviews, census statistics and photographs to analyse evidence and make judgements and then present their findings using a variety of graphs, maps and diagrams. In a sixth form topic that examines economic development and the influence that this has on the natural environment and people, students responded to the well-planned lesson using a role-play activity that stimulated discussion and deepened their understanding of the different viewpoints. In about one-third of the lessons where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the rate of learning remains sound but pupils do not make as much progress as a result of less detail in the planning. Occasionally teachers do not make an effective use of time and resources. Standards of behaviour in lessons are good. Pupils show interest in their work and they are increasingly able to take greater responsibility for their learning. Relationships are good between pupils and teachers and there is a respect for people and property. On the rare occasions where unsatisfactory behaviour occurs this is dealt with effectively by the teacher. Teachers manage pupils well with a strong emphasis on encouragement and praise. Work is marked regularly and feedback to pupils helps to identify how standards can be improved.
123. Geography is part of the humanities faculty and the subject is well managed. The head of department leads an effective team that combines a good range of experience and expertise. There is detailed documentation with a well-focused development plan that is clearly linked to whole-school priorities and supported by well targeted resources. The curriculum has been developed and the schemes of work at Key Stage 3 have been revised to provide more rigour. The course choices for Key Stage 4 and for A-level are well matched to the interests and needs of the pupils. Good opportunities are provided for fieldwork across the different age groups and A-level students benefit from a residential course. There is good support for whole-school initiatives to raise standards of literacy and numeracy and the department is making increasingly effective use of information and communication technology.
124. Resources for learning are satisfactory and well used. Accommodation is overall unsatisfactory as many of the rooms are small and full classes in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are cramped, which restricts the variety of teaching methods that can be used. Staff and pupils make good use of the available accommodation and there are good displays of pupils' work.
125. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' work in Key Stage 3 are not yet fully developed and insufficient use is made of assessment information in planning and setting even more challenging targets. The department has made sound progress since the last inspection and in

some aspects of its work progress has been good. The subject is making a very good contribution to the school's aims and values and the department has the commitment and capacity to raise standards even further.

HISTORY

126. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards in history are in line with the national average. In 1999, the majority of pupils were judged by the school to be attaining broadly in line with the national average for their age. In lessons and in work seen, pupils' standards of attainment are better than those expected for pupils of the same age nationally. All pupils, including those on the special educational needs register, have a good knowledge and understanding of the period of history being studied. Higher attaining pupils use sources competently to make deductions and communicate findings effectively in writing and orally. Year 9 pupils gave confident presentations based on research about the plight of Jewish families persecuted by the Nazis.
127. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average. In 1999, just over half of the pupils entered for the GCSE examinations gained A*-C passes, which was in line with the national average. Results vary from year to year but were better in 1999 than in 1998. In lessons and in work seen, pupils' standards of attainment are better than average for pupils of the same age nationally. Most pupils have a good knowledge of terms and events related to the history of medicine and the American West. When discussing the gunfight at the OK Corral, Year 10 pupils of all attainment levels successfully selected information from various sources and made it relevant to specific questions.
128. In the sixth form students' standards of attainment are below the national average. In 1999, the proportion of students entered for A-level examinations obtaining grades A-E was below the national average; this was a decline from the previous year. However, in lessons and in work seen, students' standards of attainment are better than those expected for students of the same age nationally. The difference in standards is accounted for by the difficulties encountered in co-ordinating the teaching of A-level in 1999. Year 13 students, when discussing Hitler's foreign policy, showed the ability to use a variety of source materials, including primary sources, to formulate complex views supported by appropriate evidence; views are clearly expressed orally. Achievement in both key stages and in the sixth form is good. Gains in confidence and expertise are noticeable from one year to the next; the range and depth of pupils' historical knowledge and their ability to evaluate sources develops well as they move through the school.
129. At Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject and plan lessons in detail. Pupils know what they are expected to learn because objectives are clearly stated at the start of each lesson. Teachers provide a varied range of learning activities, which are effective because of good pupil management, clearly based on friendly relationships and the appropriate use of humour. Regular marking of pupils' work, often with detailed and helpful comments, allows pupils to set targets for further improvements. The quality of teaching inspires, challenges and enthuses pupils, allowing them to learn effectively; higher attaining pupils in particular are successfully engaged in debate. At Key Stage 4, role playing by the teacher together with appropriate music, brings the study of Ambroise Pare to life, enthusing pupils to develop skills of listening, critical analysis of events and their causes. Year 12 students are inspired to give successful presentations of the problems of the Weimar Republic from the perspectives of different social groups, developing good analytical and research skills. Consequently, attitudes and behaviour of pupils of all levels of attainment are good. They listen attentively to explanations, quickly settle to work, sometimes without instruction from the teacher, and work collaboratively having good relationships with each other.
130. The department is well led and managed. A particular strength is a positive team ethos, focusing on raising levels of attainment, and characterised by good relationships and a concern for professional development. A clear and comprehensive departmental handbook contains detailed development plans together with schemes of work which are closely followed by members of the department. Rather cramped accommodation in some of the teaching areas affects the quality of pupils' learning because it restricts the variety of teaching methods that can be offered to pupils. The department recognises the need to investigate strategies to reduce

the non-completion rates for students following the A-level course.

131. The department has made good progress since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved. The stock of textbooks has increased and they are appropriate to the ages and abilities of pupils taught. Increased access to information and communication technology has improved learning opportunities for pupils. There is improved library provision for pupils following history courses, especially for students in the sixth form, where useful journal articles are provided in order to update students' knowledge and extend the learning in the classroom.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

132. Progress in raising pupil attainment since the last inspection has been hampered by weaknesses in the level of resources and the management of the subject. The new information and communication technology co-ordinator, supported by colleagues, has made significant improvement, though development continues to be restricted by limited resources.
133. Standards in information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 3 were very low in 1999, with less than a third of Year 9 pupils reaching the expected levels compared with two-thirds nationally. The significantly better teaching and management of information and communication technology have improved standards seen in the taught lessons, with most pupils making satisfactory progress. However, this has yet to have full impact on achievement at the end of Year 9 and pupils' skills across the main computer applications are still below the national average. Pupils demonstrate stronger skills in areas largely covered in the taught programme, such as communicating and handling information through the use of word processing, desk top publishing and databases. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were able to set up their own database and higher attaining pupils appreciated various uses of data storage and retrieval. The special educational needs pupils benefited from specific learning support. Year 7 pupils also show growing confidence in the use of logo as part of an introduction to control. Even so, pupils have very limited opportunities to practise and develop their information and communication technology skills in other subjects, particularly in those applications used for modelling, measurement and control.
134. Standards in 1999 were very low for those taking the GCSE course, with under a quarter achieving grades A*-C compared to over half nationally. Except for those taking GCSE information and communication technology, most pupils in Years 10 and 11 have few planned information and communication technology opportunities within other subjects. As a result, progress in the subject is unsatisfactory, despite increasing numbers making use of computers at home and out of lessons. The majority of pupils make only modest improvements in their information and communication technology skills and, at the end of Key Stage 4, the achievement levels for these pupils are low. For those pupils taking GCSE information and communication technology, progress is satisfactory. In a Year 10 class, for example, pupils were learning to create a pop festival flyer by combining text and clipart and a small number of higher attaining pupils were able to produce more varied publications by changing the format and styles. Achievement in Year 11 lessons is clearly higher than the most recent GCSE results suggest, though still below national average. A minority of higher attaining pupils confidently use the main applications such as word processing, desk top publishing, spreadsheets and databases, though most have less secure background knowledge of computers and their applications in society.
135. In the sixth form, there is only a small group of students who are taking GCSE information and communication technology, mostly retaking the course to improve grades. Others show improving research skills through increased access to the Internet facilities, and a number use mainly word processing for course work and essays. However, overall levels of information and communication technology skills for sixth form students are below those in similar schools.
136. Teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory, overall, with some good and, on occasion, very good practice. A main strength includes much improved Key Stage 3 planning providing more coherent and challenging learning opportunities that enable pupils to work at levels closer to national standards. Teachers contributing to the taught course provide sound and supportive individual guidance, so helping pupils make progress in their learning activities. Given the limited resources and accommodation, most classroom activities are well

managed and sustain pupils' interest and good behaviour. Most lessons rely on teacher-led demonstration and individual working, partly because of the cramped conditions of the main computer room which limit other approaches that encourage independent and collaborative learning. Furthermore, despite the teaching improvements, there is a lack of a clear and shared monitoring and assessment system and this hinders pupils knowing how they are progressing in their information and communication technology skills, both within the taught course and in other subjects.

137. In both key stages the school does not meet statutory requirements because the Key Stage 3 programme of study is insufficiently covered and the school has no system in place to provide for a coherent development of knowledge and skills for all pupils in Key Stage 4. Much of this is the result of only limited progress in the development of information and communication technology across the curriculum, a weakness highlighted in the last inspection. Some subjects, such as geography and mathematics, make worthwhile use, but most other subjects make, at best, only a weak contribution - including science, English, modern foreign languages and design and technology. The previous report described the long-term planning, monitoring and evaluation of the subject as poor and attempts to improve this have been hampered until most recently by ineffective subject leadership. The new information and communication technology co-ordinator has done much to improve the teaching and is engendering a more positive attitude towards curriculum and staff development in other subjects. However, the heavy teaching load of the co-ordinator conflicts with the considerable responsibilities for network management, departmental responsibility for the taught courses, and whole-school development of information and communication technology. In recent years, the school has had to reconcile the various demands for improvement in accommodation and resources and the subject has consequently suffered. The number of computers per pupil is well below the national average, with much of the equipment and software being increasingly out of date.
138. Since the last inspection the school has made unsatisfactory progress in the development of information and communication technology, though there is a commitment to improvement and recent changes are raising levels of achievement. However, several weaknesses have yet to be remedied, including curriculum, assessment, management and resources.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

139. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils achieve standards in line with national expectations in French, German and Spanish. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are above the national averages in all three languages. In GCSE examinations the percentages achieving A*-C grades in French and Spanish are well above national averages. In German the proportion of candidates achieving A*-C grades is well below the national average in 1999. Results at A-level are normally in line with national averages but in 1999 were below national averages. Pupils' achievements in reading writing and listening are good at all key stages but achievement in speaking is below what is expected nationally.
140. By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils identify the main points and specific detail from short texts containing familiar language, lower attaining pupils using glossaries and with some guidance. Listening skills are well developed. All pupils respond appropriately and with little hesitation to routine instructions and questions in the language being learned and higher attaining pupils interpret some unfamiliar language for others. Pupils identify detail from extracts of speech at near normal speed in a variety of topic areas, higher attaining pupils with little need for repetition or guidance. All pupils copy and label accurately and average and higher attaining pupils write at some length to produce brochures, posters, letters and some detailed descriptions of family and holidays. They express simple opinions and describe events in the present and past, lower attainers following a model or using set phrases. They recall previously learnt language and take part in simple dialogues exchanging information. However, listening and responding spontaneously are less secure in all languages; the majority of pupils rely on written prompts and lack confidence in speaking independently. Responses, although usually correct, are often brief and limited to single words or set phrases. Average and higher attainers have a good understanding of the way the languages work and are beginning to adapt the languages to suit their own needs.

141. Based on the scrutiny of work and lesson observation, pupils' standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are above national averages. They are able to describe events in the past, present and future in some detail, using glossaries and following models. Average and higher attaining pupils in French can discuss family relationships, using a good range of vocabulary and structures, some giving reasons for their views. Pupils following the National Certificate course in French achieve in line with the requirements of the course in all skill areas.
142. By the end of the sixth form students achieve high standards in French in reading, writing and listening and are able to understand texts from a variety of sources including the press and literature. They understand speech on a variety of issues and broadcasts at normal speed. They write at length and with a fair degree of accuracy, using a good range of language, including idiom, for a variety of purposes including note taking and debate. Students use a variety of styles; for example, in coursework they produce diaries seen from the point of view of the main characters in literature they have studied. They debate contemporary issues such as the distribution of wealth, empathise with others and take part in interviews and role plays but although they speak accurately, when speech is not prepared for in advance the majority of students are hesitant in their use of French .
143. Pupils have positive attitudes towards language learning. They are very well behaved, have good relationships with their teachers and the majority are concerned to do well. In lessons they listen attentively and concentrate on tasks set. When asked to work in pairs they do so sensibly and most are keen to participate in oral work and show pleasure in trying out the languages for themselves.
144. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in French, Spanish and German. All lessons observed were judged to be satisfactory or better . Two-thirds of lessons seen were good or better; examples of very good teaching were seen in Spanish in Key Stages 3 and 4, in German in Key Stage 4 and in French in the sixth form. Teachers have a good command of the languages they teach and use the language effectively and often exclusively in lessons; as a result pupils' listening skills are effectively developed and higher attaining pupils are challenged by being required to interpret more complex instructions for others. Teachers manage pupils skilfully, have good relationships with pupils and expectations are usually high, resulting in a calm, supportive and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Questioning and resources are used well to enable pupils to identify and apply patterns in the languages successfully: for example, in a Year 11 French lesson pupils were confident in giving directions because of prompts written on the board. In one Year 9 Spanish lesson a rap song stimulated pupils' interest and increased their confidence in using food vocabulary. Pupils are keen to participate in oral work and in a German lesson in Key Stage 3 pupils responded enthusiastically to a brainstorming session recapping words and phrases for personal description. When pupils are given the opportunity to practise informally in small groups and pairs they respond well and concentrate on the task; for example in a Year 11 Spanish lesson pupils were encouraged to compare notes before listening to a tape a second time and this increased their confidence and helped them to develop checking strategies. In the more effective lessons pupils are required to use the language to solve problems, as seen in a lesson finding out about lost property. Often speaking activities are restricted to rehearsal; further opportunities could be developed for pupils to use the languages for real purposes, to exchange information, use more than one skill and develop strategies for coping with unfamiliar language or less predictable responses.
145. Teachers monitor pupils' progress effectively and intervene sensitively, they provide good support materials for pupils with special needs and for lower attaining pupils to enable them to make appropriate progress in reading and writing. Presentations of new materials are usually clear and flashcards are used to clarify meaning and focus attention but for some lower attaining pupils, particularly in Key Stage 4, speaking and listening activities based on the text book require further adaptation to fully meet their needs. In the sixth form students studying French make rapid progress when they are required to use their initiative in conducting interviews or role playing but activities are often dominated by the teacher requiring very brief responses from the students and decreasing opportunities for them to increase in independence in using the language for themselves.

146. The department is very well led and works very well as a team to share ideas and develop effective teaching strategies and provide a very good range of activities for pupils, including French, German and Spanish days, trips abroad, extra conversation practice in lunchtimes for pupils in Year 11 and the sixth form and work experience abroad for A-level students. Teachers use display very well to celebrate pupils' achievement, promote the languages offered and to reinforce learning. Assessment is used well to involve pupils in tracking their own progress but is not yet being used sufficiently to plan for specific learning outcomes for groups of pupils within lessons and to enable pupils to take responsibility for their own progress. Equipment available to the department is inadequate; there is no access to information and communication technology within the department and no subject-specific software available. Since the last inspection the department has made good progress. Standards achieved in GCSE have improved significantly in French and Spanish, accommodation has improved but some classrooms are very cramped and this restricts the range and variety of learning experiences provided. Curricular provision at Key Stage 3 is good, with all pupils studying two languages in Years 8 and 9, but leads to some inefficiencies because the majority cannot continue with German or Spanish in Key Stage 4 unless they also continue with French.

MUSIC

147. Standards in music at the end of Key Stage 3, based on teachers' assessment, are above the national average, with 89 per cent of students achieving or exceeding expectations. They are an improvement on the results in 1998 but it was not possible to scrutinise the means of assessment for either year. However, results in 1999 in GCSE are well below the school average, and are also below the national average. There has been a steady decline in GCSE results since the last inspection. A-level results are also below the school average, although the number of candidates entered makes comparison with national statistics insignificant.
148. Present standards in Key Stage 3 lessons are below average. Although present work is of an adequate standard, pupils lack sufficient background knowledge. In Year 7 pupils are able to recognise the elements of music and compose their own graphic scores. Pupils in Year 8 study Indian music and compose their own rag, tala and drone, and pupils in Year 9 listen to examples of variation in music and learn about major and minor scales. Standards observed in Key Stage 4 lessons are below average. The majority of pupils in Year 10 are reluctant to follow the scheme of work set by the present members of staff. Pupils in Year 11 are working below the required standards as a result of shortcomings in the curriculum exacerbated by the absence of the head of department since November 1999. Standards in the sixth form are average for students following such courses, thanks to the temporary appointments to cover the head of department. Students in Year 12 are learning to set up the equipment for and record live performances; students in Year 13 are working hard on assembling their composition portfolio.
149. Overall achievement in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. It is good in Year 7 but only satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. Progress is restricted in Year 8 by the lack of continuity of music lessons throughout the year. Pupils in Year 7 listen to Chinese music and identify the correct graphic score from a choice of four. They then practise and perform one of the remaining scores, and learn and sing a Chinese song. Pupils in Year 8 proceed to record the three parts of their composition on an electronic keyboard, and improvise a melody while the keyboard is playing the pre-recorded accompaniment. Pupils in Year 9 are devising their own variations on well-known themes, exploring the possibilities of playing the original melody in a minor key, adding chords, or playing the melody as a round. Achievement in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 10 are being encouraged by staff to learn some basic rudiments of music to enable them to tackle the questions in the GCSE listening paper more effectively, but this is met with indifference by some pupils. Pupils in Year 11 are making every effort to complete their course-work for the examinations at the end of this academic year, and practise answering questions similar to those expected in the listening paper. Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory. Students in Year 13 are trying to overcome recent setbacks and are working on the arrangement section of the examination and also preparing for the written paper.
150. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the subject in Key Stage 3 are good, although in Year 9 they are sometimes merely satisfactory. Pupils are eager to settle down to work, hoping to achieve a worthwhile mark in assessments. They listen attentively both in listening exercises and to

performances by their peers, raise their hands to answer questions and stop playing their instruments when requested to by the teacher. Pupils work well in pairs or groups, discussing and negotiating the shape and content of their composition. They evaluate other groups' compositions, making constructive but sensitive comments. The department does not identify pupils with special educational needs. These pupils work alongside the remainder of the class and are either supported by the remaining pupils in the group, or work in groups of similar ability where they achieve as well if not better than the more "academically able". Pupils in Year 9 are not sufficiently motivated to tackle the extension tasks in work on the occasions when tasks are graded to allow pupils to work at their own level.

151. Attitudes and behaviour in Key Stage 4 are unsatisfactory. In Year 10 they are poor, whilst in Year 11 they are satisfactory. A large majority of pupils in Year 10 arrive for the lesson in an unco-operative mood, and take a long time to settle down. The remainder wish to continue with their studies, but are prevented from doing so by the continuing unrest of the majority. Pupils in Year 11 behave well and are co-operative in lessons, but some of them are unmotivated and unconcerned by the fast approach of the deadline for completion of coursework. Attitudes and behaviour in the sixth form are good. Pupils are keen to learn and do not waste any opportunity to gain experience. They recognise the efforts the school has made to provide them with expert tuition and respond accordingly. However, there is a need for some students to meet homework deadlines more reliably.
152. The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the processes which contribute towards sound learning. They explain tasks with clarity sum up pupils' observations about their peers' compositions. Clearly outlined tasks enable pupils to approach their work knowing what they have to do, how they are going to do it, and how long they have to achieve it. Lessons are well planned, mostly contain a variety of contrasting activities and time goals, and opportunities for pupils to perform the outcome of their efforts at the end of the lesson. Teachers make good use of questioning to enable the pupils to discover knowledge for themselves, and there are generally good relations between the pupils and between pupils and staff. However, there are occasions when such relations become unsatisfactory, - for example, when teachers' expectations are insufficiently high or pupils are left working on the same task for too long. Teachers occasionally try to talk over pupils' conversations, or run out of time, thus depriving the pupils of the opportunity to perform at the end of the lesson. Teaching in the sixth form is good and sometimes very good. The teachers have a sound working knowledge of the equipment and techniques involved in recording and editing performances. They impress on the students the need for clarity of expression when describing equipment, and the need to make the most of the short amount of time available before the A-level examinations.
153. Since the last inspection academic standards have deteriorated, masked by the success in extra-curricular activities. The teaching of basic skills was abandoned for an initially more attractive practical curriculum, and extra-curricular activities for pupils studying conventional instruments were not nurtured. The current head of department is absent from school owing to illness, and the teaching is being sustained by the part-time music teacher, two supply teachers and a recording technician. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The department is housed in a single classroom, linked to a recording studio. There is also an untidy ensemble room. The music classroom is too small for the size of class and the displays are tired and out-dated. There are no practice rooms for groups to rehearse in during practical lessons and consequently pupils' progress is hampered. Resources are insufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, especially computers, which are not effectively used in Key Stage 3. There are also too few pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments and keyboards.
154. The department handbook does not include many department policy documents and there is no departmental plan. Departmental monitoring and appraisal lack rigour. Individual targets for all students are not set and there are no individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs. There is a lack of strategies for providing appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. Homework is not set in Key Stage 3. The timetable does not allow pupils in Year 8 to attend music lessons throughout the year, which restricts progress in Key Stage 3. The current allocation of time prevents adequate coverage of the National Curriculum. The

handbook contains an overview of the curriculum, but no detail of each lesson, activities, resources, and time allowance.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average and this matches the most recent teacher assessments. In 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades was close to the national average. The small number of students who took A-level physical education in 1999 all achieved a grade but there were no higher grades and overall performance was below the national average. This is partly because there were no highly skilled practical performers. A-level results have been below average over the past three years. However, the school's analysis shows that over the past three years all pupils have achieved well in comparison with their prior attainment at GCSE.
156. In the 1999 GCSE examinations boys achieved slightly better than the girls, with higher achievement in practical work. Pupils achieve higher grades in physical education compared with their other subjects and the difference is similar to that found nationally. Over the past few years results in GCSE have improved from being just below the national average to close to it. The differences between girls and boys has changed each year and there is no pattern.
157. Students in the sixth form consistently achieve well in A-level classes and examinations relative to their prior attainment. However, standards of attainment are below average in relation to course criteria. A small number achieve above average standards. Students have a good understanding of contemporary issues. Higher attaining students write well on historical aspects. Students of average and lower prior attainment struggle to exemplify concepts in essays on skill acquisition and show some confusion in their understanding. Students achieve high standards in recreational physical education. They plan their own fitness and games activities very well based on sound knowledge and understanding. Football is a particular strength.
158. Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 overall are above average and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Standards in GCSE theory, dance and basketball are around average. The practical element of GCSE is stronger than the theory. In dance a small number of pupils perform with expression, good control and good use of dynamics. Other pupils, although they contribute effectively to choreography, need to improve the overall quality of their dance. Year 10 boys have a good technical knowledge and understanding of basketball skills which they use to analyse each other's performance and suggest improvements.
159. In relation to the National Curriculum pupils achieve standards that are above the national expectation. They work independently on planning sports competitions. They officiate confidently and analyse the performance of officials accurately. They need to apply these skills to improving their own skill level and knowledge and use of advanced game strategies. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both National Curriculum and GCSE lessons. Teachers are aware of their needs and usually make suitable adjustments. For example, in GCSE theory the teacher prepared a worksheet which helped pupils to organise their findings more clearly.
160. In Key Stage 3 pupils achieve consistently well as they move through the key stage. Pupils in Year 9 have a good knowledge and understanding of health-related exercise. They plan their own warm up activity and circuits of exercise. Year 8 boys perform to a high standard in gymnastics and basketball. Year 7 pupils achieve a high level of independence in planning and undertaking competitive games. Two Year 7 pupils lead the class warm up with great confidence. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in physical education lessons. Teachers know who they are and adjust activities to meet their needs.
161. The quality of the teaching is good and has many strengths. It has a positive impact and results in pupils' very good attitudes to physical education. Consequently, pupils learn a great deal and make progress. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In Key Stage 3 the teaching is most

frequently good, occasionally only satisfactory but sometimes excellent. There is more very good teaching in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form than in Key Stage 3. Teaching is very good in half of Key Stage 4 lessons and over one-third of lessons in the sixth form.

162. Teachers know the subject well and are particularly knowledgeable about examination requirements, dance and health related exercise. The level of questioning in A-level classes challenges students to give considered answers. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils. They expect pupils to behave well, listen, and follow instructions. They expect improved performance and pupils' total involvement in planning and evaluating their own work and that of others. They expect A-level students to read around a subject and prepare detailed presentations for seminars. Pupils respond very well to these high expectations by behaving well in all lessons and maintaining good levels of interest and physical activity. Teachers' planning is good. They bring a clarity of purpose to lessons. In most lessons teachers refer back to learning targets so that pupils know how well they have done in a lesson and what they have learnt. However, teachers do not consistently set targets for the next lessons, either for the whole class or for groups and individuals within the class.
163. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils based on mutual respect. They approach lessons in a calm, friendly but firm manner and use humour well to help pupils to enjoy the lesson activities even more. Teachers use a good range of teaching approaches. Since the last inspection the department has broadened the range of teaching approaches to ensure that pupils, in both practical and theory lessons, can work effectively independently of the teacher. For example, in the examination course pupils frequently carry out research on their own using the good range of resources in the library or the Internet. In practical lessons pupils take responsibility for warming up, planning and evaluating dance and gymnastics, planning and leading games tournaments. Consequently, pupils are gaining confidence in planning and leading a wide range of sporting activity based on a sound knowledge and understanding.
164. In some lessons teachers use whiteboards and written material well to help pupils to learn the language of the subject in practical lessons. Handout material and worksheets for examinations are well reproduced and are sometimes, but not on all occasions, adapted to meet the needs of the lower attaining pupils at GCSE. Teachers ensure that learning takes place at a good pace. In the best lessons they set time targets for sections of the lessons to ensure that pupils complete tasks. However, in some health-related exercise lessons there are long periods of low level activity. Teachers know how well pupils are achieving and they build effectively on pupils' prior knowledge and experience. They mark homework regularly, give useful guidance to pupils and award marks which relate to examination criteria. However, teachers do not always set specific targets to help pupils to know exactly what they have to do to improve their grades.
165. In some lessons teachers do not pay full attention to health and safety concerns. For example, pupils leave laces loose, long hair loose or do not remove socks when working on wooden floors and these can be hazardous during activity. Methods of sharing information researched by students in A-level classes are not always efficiently organised and information is repeated rather than developed and expanded. Opportunities are missed to help pupils use and understand the language of the subject. For example, the whiteboard could be used more in dance and games lessons to promote key words and objectives for lessons.
166. The subject has made significant improvements since the last inspection, particularly with regard to broadening teaching approaches and raising standards. The subject is very well led and managed. A highly committed team share an enthusiasm and drive for higher standards. A very good range of extra-curricular activities, supported by a number of staff from other areas of the school, helps pupils to achieve well. Although some parts of the accommodation have been improved since the last inspection, the overall provision remains poor. The sports barn is in an appalling condition. The roof leaks; the ten pillars within the working area are a hazard; there is no heating or ventilation; it is dismal and dirty and a most unsuitable environment in which to promote young people's interest and enthusiasm for sport and healthy living, to which the department is so highly committed. The department has not carried out risk assessment and the health and safety policy for the department does not include sufficient guidance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

167. At both key stages and in the sixth form, attainment is in line with national averages. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are able to speak confidently and write well on Christian and other faiths. They are able to move from the concrete to the abstract and examine how religious practice influences people's lives. For example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils demonstrated in a very practical way a link between food and religious faith.
168. At Key Stage 4, religious education is taught through a complementary studies course as part of the overall humanities curriculum. There is no full GCSE course, although a pilot short course in Year 10 has been established. Pupils are able to discuss and debate different religious and moral issues with sensitivity. They are also able to reflect on their spiritual dimension. For example, in a lesson on the death of Princess Diana, pupils found time to pray for those in the school community who have also died in tragic circumstances.
169. In the sixth form, there is no A-level course. Religious education is taught to the majority of students through the general studies programme which is enhanced in Year 13 by a short philosophy course.
170. Pupils show enthusiasm and interest in religious education. They work well both independently and collaboratively. They respect one another and their teachers. They also show that they can reflect very deeply on religious issues.
171. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. It is good at Key Stage 4. Better teaching is characterised by good planning, clear aims, a concern for literacy issues and appropriate resources which take into account the different abilities of the pupils. There is a good pace in the best lessons, with a variety of appropriate activities. For example, in one lesson clearly timed tasks – an outdoor ceremony, video presentation and practical work on memorial plaques – maintained pupils' interest and prompted further extension work.
172. Not enough curriculum time is allocated to religious education, so that the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus cannot be fully covered. Although the school has made progress since the last inspection in offering religious education as a discrete subject in humanities and expanding the Year 7 curriculum allocation, there is insufficient curricular provision for Years 8 and 9, Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. In this regard, the school is not complying with statutory requirements. The assessment of pupils' work at Key Stages 3 and 4 and the resources required to teach religious education are inadequate.
173. Religious education is managed well within the humanities department. Departmental documentation is thorough and detailed. The head of department is keen to establish religious education within the faculty, expand curricular provision and seek the necessary resources to teach the subject effectively. The department has a well-organised programme of curriculum enrichment which includes exhibitions, talks from religious groups, visits to local churches and places of worship.
174. The staffing of religious education has been enhanced by the appointment of a newly qualified specialist teacher who is being well supported by the department and is receiving a comprehensive and detailed induction programme.

DRAMA

175. Drama is a strength of the school. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, standards are above the national averages. Standards of attainment are consistently good and a high standard was achieved in the 1999 GCSE examination with 50 per cent of pupils achieving grades A*-A and 73 per cent achieving the higher grades A*-B. The results are a significant improvement on the previous years' results when results were in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining a grade in the range A*-G is consistently above the national average. When the very good examinations results are taken into consideration, the progress pupils are making is very good since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, do exceptionally well in drama compared to other subjects. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are being maintained in both key stages.
176. Pupils have a good understanding of drama conventions and make good use of them in their work. In re-enacting moments based on particular moments and time in history, they use a range of drama techniques such as 'thought tracking', mime and 'freeze frame' as shown in the Year 9 lessons involving pupils in drama based on events around the 1st. World War. Their speaking and listening skills are good and they understand that different situations call for

different ways of articulating views. They contribute willingly to oral work and listen carefully to instructions.

177. Pupils respond well to the set challenges and rehearse with vigour to produce accomplished drama. In both key stages they have a good awareness of the use of gesture, timing, space, movements and tone of voice when rehearsing and making presentations. The preparation of their work is good and spontaneous improvisation and good planning are positive features of developing their ideas. By Year 9, pupils demonstrate a good grounding in using improvisation skills. They are aware of the impact that expression can make to convey a particular atmosphere and skilfully incorporate a range of moods such as tension, anger and resistance into their work. Good evaluative skills are used to discuss and develop each other's presentation.
178. There is a high level of interest and motivation in all year groups and good behaviour and levels of concentration improve their learning. Pupils respond well to the set work and display an impressive amount of creative skills to develop imaginative drama pieces. They work constructively and sensibly in groups, negotiating and developing roles and at the same time maintaining a high level of independence without the constant supervision of their teacher. Such is the level of interest and involvement in their work that the older pupils in Year 11 will attempt to extend their lesson to talk about drama skills.
179. The teaching of drama is mainly very good. The clarity of introduction and clear instructions contribute to a high level of participation in all year groups. Very good subject knowledge and expertise are passed on to pupils and pupils are constantly challenged to achieve and think deeply about the drama skills they are using with the aim of enhancing their presentations. As a result, pupils make very good progress as high standards are promoted when the teacher is in role as a model, evaluator, observer and critic. A wide range of teaching resources is used to stimulate and promote a positive response. The standards of discipline are very high, and this raises the quality of learning as lessons are conducted in a positive and calm environment in which pupils accept and work on the stimuli and set challenges. The mutual respect between teacher and pupils is exemplary and contributes to good learning.
180. Curriculum planning is good and is linked to clear targets that pupils are required to achieve. The option system has now made it possible for more pupils to select drama as an option at Key Stage 4 within the recently instituted creative arts faculty. The subject provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, including performances, theatre visits, a drama club involving Year 6 pupils from the main feeder school and opportunities to take part in extra drama lessons outside formal lessons every weekend. Joint planning with the English department to cover common areas of work is not formalised. The department contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through themes which deal with a range of issues such as racial prejudice, war and order. The development plan has broad and appropriate headings that incorporate the needs of the creative arts faculty. However, the review lacks detail; success criteria are not specific and costs are not included. The subject is well led and managed and has bold and unequivocal aims that are linked to achievement and the belief that there is no failure in drama.