

INSPECTION REPORT

HETTON SCHOOL

HOUGHTON LE SPRING

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108862

Headteacher: Mr R Horn

Reporting inspector: Mr Ian Hills
2753

Dates of inspection: 13th – 17th March 2000

Inspection number: 185896

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: North Road
Hetton le Hole
Houghton le Spring
Tyne & Wear

Postcode: DH5 9JZ

Telephone number: 0191 5536756

Fax number: 0191 5536760

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: J Steel

Date of previous inspection: 9th October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr I Hills	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			School's results and pupils or students achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Kitty Anderson	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils and students?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Clare Coburn	Team inspector	Religious Education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Barry Simpson-Holley	Team Inspector	History	
Thelma Aspin	Team Inspector	Mathematics	
Steve Halsey	Team Inspector	Music	
Julia Morrison	Team Inspector	English	English as an additional language
Don McNiven	Team Inspector	Science	
Alun Davies	Team Inspector	Geography	
		Physical Education	
Harry Ridley	Team Inspector	Information Technology	
Pauline Zarraga	Team Inspector	Modern Foreign Language	
Derek Sleightholme	Team Inspector		Special Educational Needs

			Equal Opportunities
Ken Self	Team inspector	Design Technology	
Jo Nicol	Team Inspector	Art	

The inspection contractor was:

Gateshead LEA
 Dryden Professional Development Centre
 Evistones Road
 Lowfell
 Tyne & Wear
 NE9 5HT

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hetton School is about the average size for 11-16 comprehensive schools. It has 1005 boys and girls on roll and includes a special unit for pupils with speech or communication difficulties. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school has been improving over recent years and is now broadly in line with the national average. One hundred and seventy four pupils have special educational needs which is broadly in line with national average, although the number of pupils for whom the LEA has issued a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average. Fewer than 1.5 percent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 3 pupils have English as an additional language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals, 246, is above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good and effective school that is now attracting more pupils than it has places. It has strong and effective leadership from the governors and senior staff, who share a clear and proven commitment to improvement. It provides a generally good and often very good or excellent standard of teaching. There is a positive ethos in the school that is highly effective in promoting learning. Pupils display a very high commitment to their work and achieve standards that are high in relation to their prior attainment. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is very good strategic direction from the governors, headteacher and senior management, supported by good management at all levels.
- The behaviour of the pupils and their attitudes to study are very good, creating an atmosphere in the school that effectively supports learning.
- The quality of teaching is good and often very good or excellent, with teachers providing challenging activities for the pupils.
- Social, moral and cultural education is very good and the quality of relationships between all members of the school community is excellent.
- Pupils learn effectively from a wide variety of activities that are well designed to ensure that they can all make the best progress.
- The school has a highly effective and sustainable self improvement system based on three straightforward aims from which flow a very clear set of priorities for action, all of which have been effective in raising standards.
- The school achieves standards that are high in relation to similar schools and which are higher than might be expected from the pupils given their prior attainment, while standards in mathematics are especially high.
- The school provides very good value for money.

What could be improved

- The use of available performance data to enhance the target setting and monitoring process.
- The procedures by which parents are supplied with information about pupils' attainment and progress, and their involvement in the life of the school.
- The school needs to build on its good information technology programme to ensure the effective use of information technology across the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Hetton School has significantly raised the standards attained by its pupils since the last inspection in November 1995. There has been a particular improvement in the quality of teaching and learning that has contributed directly to improvement in examination performance. All the key issues identified have been effectively resolved. Those issues involved the raising of expectations for all pupils, improvement in attendance and punctuality, entry of more pupils to public examinations, improvement in long term planning and evaluation, compliance with statutory requirements for collective worship and the implementation of health and safety requirements. The effectiveness of the response made by the school is a clear indication of its commitment and ability to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE level examinations.

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

Over the last three years the school has consistently performed in line with the national average in the national tests for 14 year olds and in the GCSE examinations. The performance in both examinations is well above the average for similar schools. The trend in performance has been one of improvement and in the GCSE examination the trend of improvement is above the national average. The school's revised targets for the next year are challenging and, if achieved, will sustain the trend. The standard of work produced by the pupils is generally in line with the expectation for pupils of that age but higher than might be anticipated on the basis of their prior attainment. Standards of work in mathematics are particularly high.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have a very good attitude to their studies, giving careful attention to their teachers and working hard at the tasks they are given. This creates an atmosphere in lessons that supports learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is very good. Pupils are courteous and considerate, treating the building and those within it respectfully.
Personal development	Relationships are excellent and are a major strength of the

and relationships	school, promoting the very good standard of personal development.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality have improved significantly. They are now broadly in line with the national average and are improving further.

Pupils have a very good attitude to their studies. They listen attentively, concentrate well and are effectively motivated by the challenging tasks that teachers provide for them. This creates an atmosphere in lessons that supports effective learning. The very good behaviour, both in classrooms and around the school, is exemplified by the friendly way in which pupils treat each other and adults, showing courtesy and respect. Pupils enjoy school life and feel valued within the strong community that all within the school encourage. Personal development is effectively promoted, pupils gaining a sense of self worth that is fostered through the excellent relationships between all in the school. Attendance has improved significantly with pupils showing an enthusiasm for their studies and a willingness to play a full part in their own learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall 204	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 satisfactory or better in 99% of lessons and it is very good or excellent in 43% of lessons. There is high quality teaching across all the subjects of the curriculum, although in personal, social and health education the standard is lower, with some unsatisfactory teaching. In the very small number of lessons where some of the teaching is unsatisfactory, the pace of lessons is slow, the activities are undemanding and teachers do not ensure that pupils are working throughout the lesson. Teaching in English, mathematics and science at both key stages is of a high standard with particularly high standards in mathematics at Key Stage 4. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, generally set them challenging tasks and use a range of teaching techniques that retain their interest and enthusiasm. The needs of all pupils are well met.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. There is sufficient time allocated to all subjects to deliver the programmes of study.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for both in the special unit and within all the subjects of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional	The needs of the very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language are well met and they are well

language	supported in their studies across all the subjects of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision overall for pupils' moral and social development as exemplified by pupils' support for those less fortunate than themselves. Cultural development is very good with many examples of good practice. There is good provision for spiritual development. The personal development of pupils is very good and is exemplified by the opportunities presented by the School Council.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care the school provides for its pupils is good. There are very effective procedures in place to ensure pupils' health, safety and well-being although the use of performance data to assess pupils' progress is not consistent across the school.

Although the school seeks to work in partnership with parents it is only partially successful. The school is very successful in dealing with any issues raised by individual parents and is recognised as very approachable and helpful. However, it does not meet the needs of a significant proportion of parents in terms of providing information about their children's progress, nor does it sufficiently involve parents in the life of the school.

All statutory requirements in relation to the curriculum are fully met. The school has a very effective system for ensuring the care of its pupils, particularly through the House system that is valued by pupils. Tutors know their pupils very well and establish very good relationships with them thus ensuring that they have their confidence. However, the school does not, as yet, consistently use the performance data available to effectively assess pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is very good strategic direction from the headteacher and senior management, setting aims that are clearly designed to secure improvement. This policy is effectively supported by good management at all levels.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are fully involved with the life of the school, have a clear understanding of their statutory responsibilities, carry them out effectively and play a full role in setting the strategic direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has effectively evaluated its performance in teaching and learning plus its overall performance in public examinations. Full use is not made of the pupil performance data to evaluate performance across the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are very well used, matched to the school's aims and priorities. Careful consideration has been given to the use of all resources. The school has made good strategic use of its senior staff to improve performance.

The school has sufficient well qualified staff who are effectively deployed. The quality of the accommodation is generally good and it is fully adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. There are adequate and often good learning resources in all subjects. The

school has taken care to target the provision of additional resources to the priorities in the development plan. The school's improvement is clearly drawn from the adoption of three simple aims that focus on the raising of standards. This concept and its application is the key strength of the school's leadership and management. It has led to a very clear appreciation of the school's priorities, including a good programme for the monitoring of the quality of classroom provision. The principles of best value are recognised and the school has made a good start in addressing them as part of its development strategy, particularly in terms of challenge and comparison.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Their children make good progress • Good behaviour • Good teaching • Being able to approach the school with questions or a problem • The expectation that children will work hard • Help to make children mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information on the progress of their children • The closeness by which the school works with parents

The inspectors fully support parents' positive views, but also fully agree with the parents about the areas for improvement. In particular inspectors agree that parents could be better informed about the progress made by their children in that the frequency whereby such information is provided for parents could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils attain standards in the national tests that are, overall, in line with the national average. However, when these pupils entered the school their prior attainment was below the national average. In relation to similar schools the overall standard of attainment is well above average. Over the last three years the trend has been one of consistent performance, broadly in line with the national trend.

2. At the end of Key Stage 4 the standards attained by the pupils in the GCSE examinations are broadly in line with the national average. However, they are higher than might have been anticipated on the basis of those pupils' prior attainment on entry to the school. The school's performance is well above that of similar schools. Over the last three years the trend has been one of steady improvement although at a rate above the national trend. This trend covers not only the more able pupils gaining 5+ passes at grades A*- C, but the whole school population for the trend in terms of 5+ passes at grades A*- G is also upward, although still below the national average. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when entry to examinations was restricted. The performance of both boys and girls is close to the national average, although the girls perform a little better than the boys.

3. In English at the end of Key Stage 3 the overall standard of attainment is in line with the national average with the performance of girls slightly better than that of boys. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher grades is above the national average. The attainment in comparison to similar schools is well above the average. The performance over the last three years has been largely consistent. At the end of Key Stage 4 performance in the English language GCSE examination is slightly below the national average but above the average for similar schools. Performance in English language tends to be slightly lower than that in mathematics and science, which is contrary to the national trend. Performance in English literature is above the national average. Over the last three years performance has been consistent.

4. The standard of attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average with no appreciable difference between the performance of boys and girls. The percentage of pupils gaining higher grades is broadly in line with the national average. The standard of attainment is well above that of similar schools. The trend over the last three years has been one of consistent performance. In the GCSE examination at the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is well above the national average for all schools and a large proportion of the pupils gain high grades. This performance places the school in the top 5% of similar schools across the country. The trend of performance has been one of improvement.

5. Standards in science are broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 3 with very little difference between the performance of boys and girls. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher grades is also close to the national average. The standard of attainment is well above that of similar schools. Over the last three years the trend has been one of consistent performance. Performance in the GCSE examination at the end of Key Stage 4 is broadly in line with the national average but well above that of similar schools. The trend in results over the last three years has been upwards. The attainment of girls, although lower than that of boys, is broadly in line with the national average, while the performance of boys is above the national average.

6. The school has, over the last few years, set itself consistently challenging targets. The target for performance in the GCSE examination in 2000 was recently raised by the governors in the light of both the 1999 performance and an assessment of the current cohort of pupils. There is a clear commitment to raising the targets at both key stages significantly over the next few years.

7. The standards of work seen in all subjects across the curriculum confirm that, overall, pupils are reaching the expectations for that age. Moreover, pupils of all levels of prior attainment are achieving standards that are higher than might reasonably be expected. The school has high expectations of its pupils. It expects and insists that they work hard, and sets high standards in all areas of its work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are expected to achieve the highest standard possible and are given individual targets to assist them.

8. Standards in literacy are generally in line with the national expectation although when many of the pupils entered the school their attainment was lower. The school has a good strategy to promote standards of literacy and is successful in most areas, although there are still some weaknesses in spelling that the school is addressing. Standards in numeracy, while in line with the national expectation at Key Stage 3, are higher at Key Stage 4. The school has a good strategy to promote the development of numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs, display very good and sometimes exemplary attitudes to their work. This has a very positive impact on how pupils learn and the standards they achieve. They arrive at school on time and enter the school in an orderly manner. They are aware of the school routine and move to their registration groups calmly and with purpose. In lessons they listen with interest, answer questions and maintain concentration well. For example in a Year 11 Health and Social Care lesson when pupils discussed a range of ethical issues, they displayed excellent attitudes and were totally engaged in their work. They were courteous and respectful of each other and the resources used.

10. Pupils show a pride in the school and the majority report that they like to come to school. Most students enjoy their work and are willing to talk about it. An example of this was seen in a Year 10 Health and Social Care lesson when pupils were completing a diary of their diets and carrying out weekly fitness checks. Pupils described their tasks clearly and said that they found this topic interesting. In a Year 10 Technology lesson pupils clearly took pleasure in showing their coursework folders and explaining how the work was undertaken.

11. The overall standard of behaviour is very good. Behaviour in class is consistently good and often very good or excellent. In 99% of lessons pupils' attitudes are at least satisfactory, they are good in 31% and very good or excellent in a further 54%. Pupils are generally attentive to their teachers and maintain concentration very well. Very good behaviour was observed in a Year 10 Technology lesson where pupils were exceptionally attentive to the teacher's demonstrations and followed instructions well, remaining on task for the duration of the lesson and clearing up efficiently when asked.

12. Behaviour in and around the school is good. A number of fixed term exclusions have been made in the last year but this is well below the average for similar schools. No permanent exclusions have been made. Movement round the building is well supervised

and orderly. Pupils move between lessons purposefully and follow the school's rules which have been devised to facilitate effective pupil flow. They greet visitors in a friendly manner, hold doors open and offer to help. Break times are well supervised by members of staff and supervisory assistants. Mealtimes are well organised. Pupils enter the dining hall in year groups and queue at the counter in an orderly manner. They behave well while at tables and clear their own trays away. Although noise levels are fairly high, the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly. Students use this facility to socialise with their contemporaries and willingly talk to visitors.

13. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff provide very good role models. Pupils and staff treat each other with mutual respect. Where opportunities are provided, pupils work well together in pairs or groups, for example in a Year 10 lesson where pupils were devising a children's game to promote healthy living. In lessons pupils demonstrate a willingness to listen to others, such as in a Year 9 Spanish lesson where pupils were learning how to book tickets. This involved performance of role plays in front of the class by several pairs of pupils.

14. Pupils are encouraged to consider the values and beliefs of others through the religious education and art programmes. They have a confident knowledge of other religions, for example Judaism and Sikhism, and have studied aboriginal art. Pupils discuss and reflect on a range of issues such as the meaning of freedom, forgiveness, the Christian ministry, the causes of poverty and what it means to be human. They respect each person's opportunity to reflect and share feelings without embarrassment. The presence of two French nationals in the modern foreign languages department, plus partner schools in Spain and France ensure that pupils gain an insight into cultures in Europe.

15. Students take pride in their achievements which are rewarded through the credit system and are celebrated in the weekly Achievement ceremony. They take an active part in the day to day life and organisation of the school. Prefects are nominated by staff. Each year elects its own house captain and three representatives from each year group attend the School Council which meets monthly. The Council has been involved in many aspects of school development and change. It was instrumental in the creation of the garden of remembrance, in increasing staff presence in certain areas of the school in order to improve behaviour and in redecoration of the girls' toilets to name but a few. A head boy and head girl are chosen for the year and their responsibilities include representing the school at parents' evenings. All these duties are carried out with pride. Pupils volunteer to carry out other responsibilities that contribute positively to the school community such as working in the library and acting as sports team captains. Pupils are demonstrating an increasing capacity to plan and organise their own work and study. They come to school well equipped for lessons and, in departments such as mathematics and science, are encouraged to assess the areas in need of added revision and attend extra lessons. In the music department groups of pupils have founded their own bands. Pupils decide for themselves whether they need to attend the homework club. All these experiences provide considerable capacity for personal development.

16. Overall attendance is now good. It is above the national average and the trend is one of steady improvement. The last inspection found attendance to be unsatisfactory but there has been a significant improvement. However, attendance in Years 10 and 11 still falls below 90% in some weeks. The school is making every effort to improve these figures.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Across the whole school it is satisfactory or better in 99% of lessons and it is very good or excellent in 43% of lessons. At Key Stage 3 it is satisfactory or better in 98% of lessons while in 46% it is very good or excellent. At Key Stage 4 teaching is satisfactory or better in 99% of lessons while in 37% of lessons it is very good or excellent.

18. The school has made the quality of teaching a key priority. It has established an effective procedure for monitoring the quality of teaching that has been tested and refined over several years. This procedure, initially carried out by the headteacher, is now at the stage where it can be extended to involve many more managers within the school. The procedure is rigorous yet supportive and has had a major impact in raising standards.

19. There is high quality teaching across all the subjects of the curriculum. This is characterised by good planning where teachers use their knowledge and experience of the subject to develop activities that interest the pupils as well as enabling them to make gains in knowledge and understanding. Teachers use a wide range of activities, often within the same lesson, to maintain pupils' interest and attention, thus making it possible to raise the pace of lessons. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils both in terms of academic performance and in their behaviour. All these factors contribute to lessons that provide pupils with challenging experiences with which they are fully involved.

20. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, both of which are well taught. They match the work carefully to the needs of all their pupils, including those with special educational needs, thus ensuring that all pupils make good progress. Teaching in English, mathematics and science at both key stages is of a high standard with particularly high standards in mathematics at Key Stage 4. In English teachers make particularly good use of questioning techniques both to assess and extend pupils' understanding. In mathematics teachers place great emphasis on accuracy of presentation as an effective means of reducing errors. In science teachers are particularly effective in breaking complex ideas into small, manageable parts that pupils can readily understand.

21. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils. Through a skilfully blended mixture of firmness, listening skills, good planning and effective feedback to pupils about their progress, they have created an atmosphere in lessons where pupils want to learn. This, in turn, helps to promote the pupils' good attitude to their studies, which in turn allows teachers greater freedom to use more demanding and complex activities. There is thus a cycle whereby good teaching has a direct influence on the quality of learning that in turn allows teachers to improve the quality of their teaching. There is clear evidence that procedures are in place throughout the school to further develop this process.

22. In the small proportion of lessons where the standard of teaching, while still of a satisfactory standard, is not as good as the majority of the teaching in the school, the main weakness is lack of pace. Teachers are more cautious in allowing pupils to move on to new and more challenging activities and put too much emphasis on teacher directed activities. Nevertheless, in these lessons the quality of learning is satisfactory and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. The school's monitoring procedures need to ensure that these teachers are given the necessary assistance and encouragement to improve further. There was unsatisfactory teaching in only a very few lessons. In history the main weakness is lack of pace. In personal, social and health education the main weaknesses are poor preparation by teachers for whom this is not their main subject, undemanding

activities that did not engage the attention of the pupils and a low work rate by the pupils. The school should develop its monitoring procedure to eliminate these weaknesses.

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

23. Since the last inspection the school has developed its curriculum substantially at both key stages and provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. All the statutory requirements for the delivery of the national curriculum and religious education are fully met. There are good strategies for the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy. Vocational courses are now offered at Key Stage 4 and this good provision is being further developed. New courses are planned to extend the options for pupils. This provision is currently offered in partnership with the local further education college where good links have been established.

24. Pupils are banded at the beginning of Year 7 and those in the upper band are offered Spanish as an extra language. This provision continues throughout Key Stage 3 but causes problems for pupils who are subsequently moved into differing ability groups where the language may or may not be offered. There is sufficient time allocated to deliver the programmes of study in all subjects and the teaching timetable of 25 hours per week is in line with DfEE recommendations. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for both in the mainstream school and in the special unit. They have appropriate access to all areas of the curriculum and are taught either in the special unit or in ordinary classes as is appropriate for the individual pupil.

25. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities available both at lunchtime and after school. A number of community events are organised through school. Within the music department pupils have good opportunities to sing and play instruments. There are also very good opportunities to perform in musical productions and concerts. A wide range of sporting activities is available, together with clubs such as the chess club. Each subject department offers good facilities for pupils to develop and consolidate work covered in lessons while the homework club is highly valued by pupils. Altogether these activities represent a very good level of provision.

26. The personal, social and health education programme was criticised in the last inspection for inconsistent teaching and the need to develop staff expertise through training. Since the last inspection training has been provided for form tutors, on subjects that include child protection issues, social inclusion and careers guidance. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and a detailed framework with appropriate themes has been produced. These themes include relationships, economic awareness, health related issues including sex education and drugs related issues, careers and cultural developments. Each tutor, who is responsible for delivering the programme to their tutor group, is well supported with resource material. Good use is made of visitors from local colleges and business. This aspect needs to be developed alongside staff training in teaching and learning in order to improve further the curriculum delivery. There is clear progression evident in the programme structure. The school plans to further involve heads of house in monitoring the quality of provision.

27. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have monitored the effectiveness of the teaching and have given support when subject confidence is needed. In the great majority of lessons the quality of teaching is good and often very good. In lessons where the teaching is very good, well structured planning, a variety of tasks and very good illustrative examples, sustain pupils' attention and generate an enthusiasm for study. However, there is still a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This unsatisfactory teaching is linked to weak planning, undifferentiated tasks, inadequate intervention with pupils and lack of

subject confidence; while the lessons are insufficiently structured to enable learning to be effective and group work is not handled with confidence.

28. The school operates a vertical house system that enables staff to track both pupils' academic and personal development. Three houses operate, each with a head of house, deputy head of house and house tutors. Pupils are well known by their tutors who are very effective in supporting educational needs, including those pupils with special education needs. At the beginning of Year 7 pupils are placed in mixed ability tutor groups where they remain for five years. The house tutor is the first point of contact for pupils' personal development and is responsible for daily registration and for a weekly one hour personal, social and health education lesson, which generally makes an effective contribution to pupils' knowledge about themselves in relation to healthy and safe living. In addition the tutor completes part of the annual report for parents, which provides an opportunity to notify parents of the pupils' contribution to the life of the school, as well as targets for future development, based upon annual examination performance. From Year 7 pupils contribute to their own self assessment. Where there are concerns from parents or staff, very effective procedures are in place to resolve difficulties such as monitoring, homework and target reports. These reports cover both personal and academic development.

29. The school has developed its provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the last inspection and overall provides experiences of very good quality. The spiritual provision for pupils is good but is very effective in religious education where frequent opportunities are given to share opinions, express feelings, develop spiritual insights and to refine beliefs. For example Year 9 pupils explore the concept of what it means to be fully human through skilful teaching and through the use of appropriate music. Across the curriculum all departments have produced a careful analysis of their subject's contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with significant provision made by music, art, history and modern foreign languages.

30. In the last inspection the school did not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship. The school has responded by adopting a pattern of year, house and tutorial assemblies that meet statutory requirements. A brief outline of themes has been developed and tutors are supported with a range of resources. The responsibility for conducting house and year assemblies lies with senior staff. During worship pupils appreciate the opportunity to share insights into Christian and moral values, for example in a modern day interpretation of the Ten Commandments. Tutorial assemblies are effective in both content and the opportunity for short pupil reflection. Good links have been made with local churches that enrich pupils' spiritual development.

31. The provision for the moral development of pupils is very good and this is reflected in the very good moral development of the pupils. Classrooms contain a code of conduct that pupils respect and which is reinforced in tutorial periods. There is a very clear awareness of right and wrong, and a respect for the values and opinions of both staff and pupils. Teachers set a first class role model by developing the self esteem and value of the individual. Relationships are excellent.

32. The school has a long tradition of fundraising for a range of worthy causes, most recently the victims of the Mozambique flood. A Garden of Remembrance for past pupils is carefully cultivated and respected. During Year 10 Enterprise week pupils are involved in community projects which include stream cleaning and more generally GNVQ pupils prepare and host an annual senior citizens party. Moral development is supported across the curriculum, particularly in science, when issues such as drugs, alcohol and smoking are discussed. In GNVQ Health and Social Care pupils discuss issues relating to suicide and

abortion very effectively and in information technology pupils discuss the moral aspects of data protection issues.

33. The social development of pupils is very good and a significant strength of school life. Pupils are courteous, friendly and helpful to each other and to visitors. Teachers have invested much time in developing pupils' self esteem. The school operates a vertical house system with three heads of house, deputy heads of house and a team of tutors. Tutors remain with the groups for five years and therefore know their pupils well and have created a happy family community. Pupils have a strong sense of being valued and this is reinforced by the display of house photographs with credits for achievement and attendance. In lessons there are many opportunities given to participate in pair and group discussion. Pupils collaborate and co-operate very well and are sufficiently confident to organise their own work independently. There is a significant respect for teachers who, in discussion with pupils, are well liked and valued. The school operates a School Council with elected representatives. Recent and past work of the Council has included a survey of bullying and support the refurbishment of the dining hall. The Council was the main force in establishing the Garden of Remembrance. The newly modernised dining facilities are well respected by pupils who enjoy the opportunity to socialise with their friends in this informal and relaxed environment.

34. The cultural development of pupils is very good. Welcome and classroom signs are in French and Spanish in many areas of the school. An entrance hall display indicates details of exchange visits to Spain and France. It has recently been involved in the Comenius project to deepen its cultural links. A significant contribution is made by religious education to develop pupils' awareness of other values and beliefs and pupils have a confident recall of principal faith traditions. In art a significant contribution is made to cultural development through many topics that include Namibian lino prints, Aboriginal art and ceramic Abbia stones. In music a range of high quality musical ensembles is valued and supported by pupils, who also respect the opportunity to participate in drama productions and jazz concerts. In humanities there has been a recent visit to Prague, Berlin and Krakow as part of the World War 2 study unit. In English, a very strong contribution to cultural development is made by the opportunities given to pupils to receive visits from theatre companies, authors, poets, library competitions, World Book Day and in a sponsored readathon, with the funds raised going to children's charities.

35. The school has created good links with the community, business and industry through its presentations, concerts and sporting activities. These are well used to enhance the curriculum and promote the development of the pupils. Guest speakers, such as the local member of the European parliament, are increasingly used to deal with a range of issues within school. The school has created a very good relationship with its feeder schools and this ensures a very smooth transition from primary to secondary education. Regular reciprocal visits and meetings result in a two-way flow of information. The school is therefore clear about the academic progress and personal development of all new pupils. Year 6 pupils from feeder schools are given the opportunity to use the school's information technology facilities.

36. There is a very effective careers guidance system as part of the personal, social and health education programme. This includes good liaison with external organisations as well as familiarisation for the pupils on what is available. An industry week is organised for Year 10 pupils when the world of work is fully investigated and this is followed by workplace experiences during the following week. Placements are provided by local businesses through their links with the school. The advice and guidance between education phases is good, staff from the local further education colleges visit the school regularly to ensure that

pupils are well informed about educational opportunities. Links with external organisations such as the police and fire service are good and enhance pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The safety and welfare of the pupils is clearly a high priority for the school with good supervision provided for all activities. Every effort is made to create a secure environment where pupils can work in a friendly, safe and orderly community. The procedures for child protection together with health and safety are very good and fully meet legal requirements. All the health and safety issues raised in the last inspection have been resolved. There is now a very well developed health and safety culture in the school with regular safety checks, fire drills and inspections. Risk assessments have been carried out for all relevant activities and are very good. The school has very effective procedures to monitor and encourage attendance. Attendance figures are monitored weekly and the LEA policy has been well implemented alongside a computerised system that also deals with punctuality. The school has appointed a part time attendance officer and this has had a positive effect in improving attendance. The attendance officer monitors individual registers and has implemented a Rapid Response system whereby parents are contacted by telephone if a pattern of poor attendance is emerging. Through their very good knowledge of the pupils, staff are aware of the reasons for most of the poor attendances and are well placed to initiate appropriate action. Rewards are given for good attendance. This thorough procedure has resulted in a marked improvement since the last inspection when attendance was reported as unsatisfactory and pupils were often late to school. Attendance is now good and improving, while punctuality is no longer an issue.

38. Pupils' welfare and safety are underpinned by a very good and effective pastoral system in which tutors know each pupil well and the system for the transfer of information about pupils is excellent. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very well established and very effective. All pupils have a copy of the code of conduct and demonstrate, through discussion, that they understand the rules. Pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them both in class and around the school. This results in very good and sometimes excellent behaviour in lessons. Credits are given to reward those whose behaviour is good. These rewards are credited both to the individual pupil and to their 'house' with due recognition in assemblies. All pupils leave the school with the National record of Achievement which they can use as evidence of their personal development when approaching colleges and employers.

39. Effective systems with departmental, daily and weekly reports, including target sheets, are now in place to monitor any pupil whose behaviour falls below the standards expected. This is an improvement since the last inspection which found that systems for referral were ineffective. Heads of house have oversight of these reports and work with the pupils to set the targets. Parents are involved as necessary. Exclusion is used as the final deterrent. The school councillor, behaviour outreach worker and educational social worker provide valuable support for pupils when the need arises. Heads of house keep diaries of any incidents and other records enabling them to provide closer monitoring if required.

40. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very effective. The school has an anti-bullying policy and pupils know that bullying is not acceptable. Pupils know their teachers well and feel confident to approach them if they have any concerns. All incidents are recorded and referred to members of the pastoral team as necessary. Pupils feel that the procedures are very effective and that any instances of bullying will be dealt with very swiftly and effectively.

41. The arrangements for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are generally very well defined. Pupils' academic performance, prior to entry in Year 7, is initially collated by the Head of Special Needs in liaison with feeder primary schools. This information includes the results of Key Stage 2 SATs and teachers' knowledge of the child. On the basis of this information a decision is then made to place pupils in one of three ability bands and tutor groups. Movement across bands is flexible and is particularly well monitored at Key Stage 3 where a rigorous system is in place. The reviewing and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs is shared by the head of house and special educational needs co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has compiled the school's MAPS document that identifies any medical, behavioural, academic and social difficulties of pupils.

42. The deputy head teacher has oversight of pupils' academic development and has implemented MIDYIS and YELLIS testing. Whilst the process and procedures are in place, the school is not yet making maximum use of the data generated. At Key Stage 4 the school has appointed a counselling officer who has introduced a programme of individual pupil interviews. Particular attention is given to Year 10 and Year 11 mock examinations, when mentoring of under achieving pupils is put in place. A homework club operates every lunchtime to enrich academic performance. In addition, pupils with special educational needs also benefit from a lunchtime club run by the special needs department. Valued support is given by external agencies such as the education social worker and a good working relationship has been established.

43. In some subject areas very good use is made of all available data, for example within mathematics, the assessment arrangements are of high quality with a sophisticated system used to predict pupils' probable performance at the end of Key Stage 3 and in the GCSE examination. Target setting is used to support progress and is very effective. In English comprehensive systems are in place, but pupils at Key Stage 3 are not being assessed in national curriculum levels and this needs to be considered as a matter of urgency. In science all relevant data is well documented and analysed and the use of pupils' own self assessment is a very positive feature of the department. The use of assessments to inform future teaching and learning is not yet consistent across the school. However, good progress has been made thus far. Further dissemination of good practice is required to ensure that the use of all available information to inform the planning of future teaching and learning is fully utilised.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school is held in high regard by parents, many of whom live outside the catchment area. The response to the parents' questionnaire was good and generally very positive. The majority of parents feel that their children are expected to work hard and make good progress. They are very comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns. However, a significant minority expressed concerns about the information they receive about their child's progress and feel the school does not work closely enough with parents. They also expressed a concern about the range of extra-curricular activities available. Inspectors find that the quality of information given to parents is good, but as the school only reports to parents once per year, and many parents feel that they need more frequent information, the concerns of these parents are justified. However, the range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is very good and parents' concerns here were not confirmed.

45. The school strives to establish effective links with its parents. The induction programme for parents of prospective Year 7 pupils gives them the opportunity to visit the

school twice before their child's entry and again in the autumn following transfer. Through a range of documents parents are consulted about developments in the school. An example of this was during the draft stage of the Home/School agreement when parents' comments were sought and their contributions resulted in some modifications to the document. Parents are encouraged to contact the school with any concerns and become involved in their child's learning through the homework diary. The House and Tutorial system ensures that staff know their pupils and families well, involving parents whenever the need arises.

46. Parents have little direct involvement with the work in school. There is no Parent-Teacher association at present although parents' views are currently being sought about the possibility of forming such an organisation. Parents support the school's fund-raising events with enthusiasm, for example the Christmas Fayre and the sponsored charity events. Parents are occasionally used to support the curriculum, for example a Sikh parent has helped in the Religious Education programme. However, no parents provide regular voluntary support in school. Parents are willing to provide transport to evening events that take place out of school. The majority of parents have signed the Home/School agreement.

47. A range of good quality information is provided by the school through the Prospectus, Governors' report, termly newsletters and annual parents' evenings. Information to parents about their own child's progress is of good quality, informative, and sets targets for improvement. However, the school does not issue an interim report or hold a parents' evening mid way through the year. Curricular information is available through the displays on parents' evenings and course nights, but is not circulated to all parents except in Year 9 when pupils are choosing their GCSE options. Attendance at parents' meetings is satisfactory but the school does not follow up those who do not attend.

48. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's work at home through the homework diary and Home/School agreement. The homework diaries are regularly monitored by staff and are well used as a means of home-school communication.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. There is very good strategic direction from the headteacher and senior management. They have responded very positively to the weaknesses identified in the last inspection and have shown a capacity to achieve and sustain improvement. They have developed a very effective strategy for securing improvement that is built around three clear and simple aims. The strategy includes a good system for the monitoring of teaching and incorporates effective procedures designed to raise the standard of teaching and promote learning. It is being extended to include the work of subject departments and all other areas of school activity. Sensitive yet firm implementation of the strategy contributes to the excellent relationships within the school and ensures that all share the commitment to raising standards. This process is leading the school towards a very effective system whereby it can sustain improvement.

50. The school has carefully evaluated its overall performance and used the results effectively to target efforts towards improvement. In particular it has focused on improving the quality of teaching and ensuring that as many pupils as possible are entered for external examinations. In selecting its key targets for improvement, the school's senior management has demonstrated the resolve necessary to remain focused on those targets and to direct its resources towards them. There is a regular and critical review of progress towards the targets that results in an updated action plan.

51. The school has not, as yet, extended its use of performance data across all subjects although it is very well used in some areas. However, the school already has plans to extend its use of performance data in this way.

52. The governors have a clear understanding of their statutory responsibilities and carry them out effectively. They have given careful consideration to the way in which they make decisions, especially in relation to financial matters, and have evolved an effective system. They are able to make their decisions in the light of full information and are thus able to play a full role in setting the strategic direction of the school. Governors are fully involved with the life of the school and many gain first hand experience of what is happening in the school. They take an active role in promoting the school in the community as well as contributing directly to school activities, for example by introducing distinguished visitors to the school and arranging for them to enhance the pupils' education.

53. Governors give very careful attention to the school's performance both in terms of academic achievement and in all other matters such as attendance. They set targets for performance based on the best available data but do so well in advance. They review these targets regularly and revise them upwards if they consider them to be insufficiently challenging.

54. The school gives very careful consideration to the use of resources. All subject areas of the school are adequately, and in many cases, well resourced. However, the school has also been careful to allocate resources to the targets set out in its development plan, linking its spending to its educational priorities. A particular strength of the way in which the school has done this is the resolve to allocate substantial senior management resources to the monitoring strategy as a key tool in securing improvement. This has been done as a clear matter of policy to establish an effective procedure into which other staff with managerial responsibilities can now be incorporated. The implementation of this policy has been enhanced by the effective management at all levels within the school. The school takes care to ensure that all purchases represent value for money and financial management is good. The latest audit report commented favourably on the school's procedures and the minor issues raised have been efficiently dealt with. The school has begun to consider the principles of best value, particularly by comparing itself to other schools and considering issues of competition in relation to the services it receives as well as those it provides.

55. There is effective use of information and communications technology in many areas and the school is expanding its provision in this area. The use of this technology is well taught as a subject, but while there are good examples in other subject areas, for example in design technology, the use of such facilities across the school is an area for improvement.

56. The school is appropriately staffed by well qualified teachers who are efficiently deployed so that their experience is used to best effect. The school provides good support for newly qualified teachers. Equal attention is given to the support staff whose deployment is also carefully considered and reviewed in the light of changing circumstances. There is adequate accommodation of a good standard to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum and the school has made good use of all available resources in this respect. It has been effective in securing funding from a variety of sources and has used these funds judiciously. A good example is the newly re-furnished dining facility that is greatly appreciated by the pupils.

57. The school is achieving standards at Key Stages 3 and 4 that are in line with the national average, well above those of similar schools, and higher than might be anticipated on the basis of the pupils' prior attainment. Standards of behaviour are very good, attendance is good and improving, teaching is good and often very good while all resources are well used. These factors, considered in relation to a cost per pupil which is close to the average, indicate a very good school that is giving very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The school has responded well to the key issues raised in the last inspection. It has demonstrated a capacity to both improve and to sustain that improvement. The key issues where further improvement is needed are all areas where the school already has some plans. These plans need to be revised and refined to remedy the weaknesses identified.

- (1) The school needs to develop procedures to use the available pupil performance data to enhance the target setting and monitoring process, ensuring consistency in all subjects across the curriculum (Paragraphs 42, 43 and 51).
- (2) The procedures by which parents are supplied with information about pupils' attainment and progress need to be developed to ensure that parents are given information more frequently. The school should also consider how parents can be better informed and more closely consulted about changes to all aspects of life in the school (Paragraphs 44, 46 and 47).
- (3) The school needs to build on its good information technology programme to ensure that the effective use of information technology is built into all subjects across the curriculum and that its use is rigorously monitored (Paragraphs 55, 70, 81, 88, 99, 122 and 132).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	204
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	97

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5%	38%	38%	18%	1%	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1005
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	246

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	34
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	174

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	8.4
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.9
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	105	107	212

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	58	66	61
	Girls	80	63	58
	Total	138	129	119
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	65 (74)	61 (57)	56 (55)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (60)	39 (34)	22 (18)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	56	69	64
	Girls	73	65	64
	Total	129	134	128
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	61 (67)	63 (61)	60 (62)
	National	64 (61)	64 (64)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	9 (31)	39 (35)	22 (21)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	28 (30)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	103	87	190

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	39	88	100
	Girls	46	84	86
	Total	85	172	186
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	45 (37)	91 (87)	98 (98)
	National	47.8 (46.3)	88.4 (87.5)	93.9 (93.4)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	37 (36)
	National	38.0 (37.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	
Indian	9
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	4
White	991
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	22	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	62.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	327

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.7
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22.1
Key Stage 4	19.7

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
----------------	--------

	£
Total income	2,185,100
Total expenditure	2,153,550
Expenditure per pupil	2,209
Balance brought forward from previous year	-13,829
Balance carried forward to next year	17,721

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1005
Number of questionnaires returned	560

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	187	318	37	10	7
My child is making good progress in school.	225	298	22	3	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	171	302	39	13	30
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	154	306	72	14	11
The teaching is good.	185	316	25	4	26
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	153	240	125	30	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	250	258	25	11	12
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	338	203	9	3	7
The school works closely with parents.	139	249	116	24	28
The school is well led and managed.	196	278	31	8	42
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	196	290	47	6	14
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	166	250	66	10	65

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

ENGLISH

59. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is slightly above the national average, whilst at the end of Key Stage 4 it is slightly below. In the GCSE examination results in English literature are above national average, while at both key stages the performance of the school is well above that of similar schools. Trends over time show results at both key stages to be in line with the national average. The performance of the pupils in English is below that attained in the mathematics and science, which is contrary to the national picture. All pupils are now entered for GCSE or the Certificate of Achievement at the end of Key Stage 4. Similarly all pupils are entered for assessment at the end of Key Stage 3. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when entry was made on a more selective basis. Spelling is weak across both key stages, but strategies such as the extra curricular 'Café Spelling' club and the emphasis placed upon a common 'literacy wall' in each classroom indicate that the department is targeting the issue.

60. At Key Stage 3 the standards achieved in lessons are broadly in line with the expectation for pupils of that age, whilst at Key Stage 4 they are close to the national average. At both key stages the standards attained by the pupils are higher than would have been anticipated on the basis of their prior attainment, indicating that overall they make good progress, although progress is slightly better at Key Stage 3. Progress in lessons is generally good.

61. Overall, the quality of teaching in English is good. At Key Stage 3 almost half the teaching is very good while at Key Stage 4 almost three quarters of the teaching is good. Lessons are consistently well structured. Teachers plan with clear objectives that build effectively upon prior knowledge and lead to good progress being made by all pupils. In the best lessons, plenary sessions are used to return to objectives and to provide pupils with genuine opportunities to reflect upon their learning. Pupils are challenged and supported appropriately with a good range of resources and activities that are well matched to their interests and abilities. This results in lessons progressing at a good pace. Pupils remain focused and on task throughout, consolidating and extending their learning. Very skilful use of questioning challenges and supports weaker pupils, whilst extending the more able. An example of particularly effective teaching was in Year 9 where pupils across the ability range were skilfully led to explore concepts within 'Romeo and Juliet'. These lessons employed a range of appropriately differentiated activities to ensure good progress by all the pupils. All pupils study pre 20th century texts and Shakespeare successfully.

62. The quality of teaching for those pupils whose special educational needs require them to be taught by specialist staff is always good, often very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' individual education plans are addressed thoroughly and classroom support is effectively and sensitively deployed to ensure all pupils make progress in class. A significant input to quality resources in both the department and the library results in pupils being well supported by a good range of texts. These fully address all aspects of the national curriculum Key Stage 3 and 4 programmes of study. Effective collaboration between the English and special educational needs departments results in equality of access and opportunity across the ability range.

63. A broad range of learning opportunities is offered to all pupils. The Key Stage 3 and 4 programmes of study meet statutory requirements, although scant attention is paid to information technology within English lessons. Whilst schemes of work are still at an informal stage, effective collaboration at departmental level ensures that continuity and progression are effectively addressed. A good level of challenge exists for pupils in the upper and lower bands. This is less evident within the middle bands at Key Stage 3, where the range of activities is less broad.

64. Where teachers' expectations are high, pupils respond accordingly and make very good progress. For example, a lower band Year 11 group discussing the poetry of Simon Armitage, moved well beyond the literal in their consideration of the work. By contrast, work which was repetitive, or re-visited Key Stage 2 objectives at an inappropriately low level, resulted in consolidation of prior knowledge but did not move pupils forward in their understanding.

65. The behaviour of pupils in all English lessons, including those in the special educational needs department, is excellent. Good, often excellent, relationships are a particularly strong feature. There is consistently a warm and supportive atmosphere throughout the department, leading to an environment that is highly conducive to effective learning.

66. At Key Stage 4, the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is rigorous, consistent, and fully in line with examination criteria. Pupils have a very clear idea of what is expected, and know what to do to achieve specific grades. At Key Stage 3 however, assessment criteria do not accurately reflect national curriculum level descriptors, leading to some inconsistency and confusion. Whilst the department has set targets for the end of each key stage, the target for the end of Key Stage 3 has not been translated into focused curricular action, or individual pupil targets, and as such is not influencing planning as effectively as it could.

67. Very thorough individual education plans inform planning within the special educational needs department, leading to the effective targeting of focused additional support and subsequently good progress being made. Those pupils, whose individual work was pitched at an inappropriately low level, using dated primary level phonics material, made less progress. There is better progress where good quality resources are more accurately matched to pupils' interests and ability levels.

68. The department is well led. The head of department's clear vision and informal style result in a strong, shared sense of responsibility permeating the department. Informal monitoring, regular meetings and a paired teaching programme, combine to facilitate the effective sharing of good practice. Staff are well qualified and appropriately deployed. English classrooms are welcoming and bright. Display is colourful and predominantly celebrates finished work. Whilst all classrooms have a common 'literacy wall' of key words, the department is still at an early stage regarding the extent to which its classrooms are visually supportive of literacy development.

69. The department, together with drama, makes a significant contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Staff give unstintingly of their time to offer a range of extra curricular activities such as theatre visits, competitions and productions. Pupils value these activities, and take part enthusiastically.

70. The quality and range of resources has improved significantly since the last inspection. The library has been developed to include information technology and Internet

access, and a wide range of new books has been purchased. At 6:1 the pupil:book ratio is still low. However the resources are of a high quality and increasing the stock remains a high priority for the school. Many staff use the library effectively on an informal basis. However, its use is not systematically built into the planning of all departments, neither are research skills actively taught to all pupils. This results in fewer opportunities for pupils to effectively take responsibility for their own learning across the curriculum.

71. The department has initiated a very effective whole school literacy programme, which is impacting positively across the curriculum. Departments are displaying and referring consistently to key words, and some very effective work is taking place, for example within mathematics and science. The school is well placed to further develop this work, particularly in relation to the consideration of subject specific literacy skills and their development.

MATHEMATICS

72. The results of the 1999 national curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with the national average for all schools and well above average in comparison with similar schools. Standards have improved steadily since the previous inspection and they are now above average.

73. In 1999 GCSE results were well above the national average for all schools, both for pupils obtaining A*- C grades and A*- G grades. A large proportion of pupils attain high grades. The average grade achieved by pupils in mathematics in the school is significantly higher than those obtained in other subjects. Considerable improvement has been made since the previous inspection, both in the number of pupils entered for the examination, which is higher than average, and in examination results across the full range of attainment. There are no significant differences in the results for boys and girls. Standards are well above average by the end of Key Stage 4. For the pupils who took Key Stage 3 and GCSE examinations in 1999, their prior attainment was below average, indicating that they make very good progress in mathematics throughout the school.

74. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils in mainstream classes have a thorough grounding in number and algebra, shape, space, measures, and data handling. They demonstrate both skills and understanding. They know how to record and present information systematically and recognise pattern in number. Numeracy skills are above average. Pupils are taught mental strategies, and in most lessons their mental arithmetic skills are sufficient to support very good progress. Algebraic skills and understanding are particularly good. Pupils with special educational needs perform many one-stage operations, although do not always fully understand what they are doing.

75. By the end of Key Stage 4 almost all pupils reach higher standards than would normally be expected in comparison with their attainment on entry to the school, in all areas of mathematics. Those with high attainment use techniques such as the trapezoidal rule to calculate the area under a curve and understand many concepts associated with exceptional performance. Standards are well above average in number and algebra, shape, space, measures and data handling. The breadth of the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding enables them to break down problems and use several skills to answer a question. All work, including diagrams, constructions and graphs, is presented clearly and concisely. The most able pupils in Year 10 achieve exceptionally high standards.

76. The attitude to work and the behaviour of the pupils are very good and often excellent. Pupils settle quickly when they enter their classroom. They listen attentively,

and concentrate well, working hard throughout all lessons. Pupils in the special educational needs department sometimes lack concentration and have a short attention span. However, those with low attainment in mainstream classes work as hard as pupils with high attainment, and their behaviour is equally as good. This has a significant impact on the standards achieved. This was very evident in a Year 11 class for those with generally low attainment where pupils were coping with cumulative frequency graphs, a topic which is studied by pupils who are expected to get a Grade C GCSE or above. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 with all levels of attainment have confidence in their abilities in mathematics. Most pupils present their work neatly, and use correct mathematical notation. This good practice, which is developed from Year 7, pays dividends when pupils start to tackle more complex problems involving several skills or operations. Pupils are expected to use their initiative to select topics for revision when approaching examinations. All pupils are given the responsibility for identifying when they need help and for attending the additional sessions that are run after school to help them.

77. Numeracy skills are used well to support every subject. For example, pupils with lower attainment are able to analyse data presented in lists of births and deaths in London in 1665. In French, Year 11 pupils compare statistics related to teenage smokers in England and France. In Spanish pupils use mental skills in mock transactions such as buying train tickets. Data is presented in accurate graphical form in many subjects. For example, in geography, pupils' analyse information about different climates. In science pupils are able to present results of experiments in a suitable graphical form and identify trends where this is required. Measuring skills are sufficiently accurate to support progress in subjects such as design and technology, art, and physical education. Literacy skills are developed well in mathematics. Correct terminology is used consistently and teachers focus on interpretation of questions, developing pupils' comprehension skills. Pupils are expected to listen carefully in all lessons and make it clear when they do not understand the work.

78. The quality of teaching is very good at both key stages. In mainstream, teaching is never less than good and there is some excellent teaching in both key stages. The teaching of pupils within the department for special educational needs is satisfactory. In all lessons that are good or better, teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and produce well-structured lessons, leading pupils through all steps needed to develop the understanding of a concept. They exhibit patience when it is needed, but generally set a demanding pace ensuring that all pupils understand each stage. Tasks are well prepared, often written specifically for the particular needs of the class. They are based on marking or assessment in lessons and are increasingly more difficult. This ensures that all pupils are sufficiently challenged. This was clearly evident in one lesson where pupils were finding the 'n'th term of a sequence in which they progressed from simple linear relationships, to sequences of fractions with a linear and a quadratic element. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and have established good work routines that have a positive impact on the quantity of work covered in lessons. Pupils are taught how to present their work clearly and correctly and in such a way that they are less likely to make mistakes. For example in one lesson, where pupils needed to cross multiply to solve an algebraic equation, every stage was carefully emphasised and recorded to prevent errors when expanding brackets. Good question and answer sessions encourage pupils to modify their answers and get them right without destroying their confidence. Homework is given regularly to complement work covered, or reinforce previous work. It is used effectively to assess progress and plan further lessons, or support individuals in the voluntary classes after school or at lunchtime, to which all teachers contribute.

79. In classes for those with special educational needs, teachers know the pupils' individual problems well, and persevere with the development of basic skills. Pupils benefit from carefully chosen texts that take reading skills into account. They are given plenty of praise, and together with the use of a scheme of work at Key Stage 4 that acknowledges ongoing success through certificates, pupils are given the incentive to try hard, and are able to transfer to a GCSE course if they reach the required standard. Records of progress and attainment for pupils with special educational needs are very good. However, although most pupils have a broad general numeracy target on their individual education plans, these have not been expanded sufficiently to meet their individual needs, and pupils do identical work. Effective use is made of a support assistant who makes a valuable contribution to the progress pupils make, both mathematically and with personal and social skills. However, some pupils do not benefit from specialist mathematics teaching at any time throughout their school life.

80. A well-structured scheme of work sets clear learning objectives and a demanding pace, but gives experienced teachers the flexibility to choose their own materials. It supports good quality lesson planning, which has a positive impact on standards throughout the school. A good range of extra curricular opportunities provides additional stimulus for more able and talented pupils. Procedures for assessment, and the monitoring of attainment and progress, of individuals, classes and year groups are excellent. These are used very effectively to target groups of pupils to raise standards. All statutory requirements are met.

81. The leadership and management of the department are very good. Well-qualified teachers work effectively as a team, take on specific responsibilities, and contribute to the smooth running and development of the department. There is clear direction for departmental development and a high quality action plan is in place. Very effective monitoring of performance by the head of department is used to deploy staff to the best advantage of the pupils. Staff new to the school are well supported and given plenty of help to develop their skills. A separate department manages provision for the majority of pupils with special educational needs. A good range of resources is well organised and easily accessible. The department is committed to whole class teaching, a style that has proved very successful in this school, but currently restricts pupils' access to information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

82. The proportion of pupils attaining the standard expected for that age at Key Stage 3 over the last three years is broadly in line with the national average. The results for girls and boys are not significantly different. At the higher levels, results are improving and are now broadly in line with national averages. The overall performance is well above that of similar schools. At Key Stage 4 the trend in GCSE results over the last three years has been upwards. Performance is broadly in line with the national average but well above that of similar schools. The attainment of girls, although lower than that of boys, is broadly in line with the national average. The performance of boys is above the national average.

83. The standards achieved at Key Stage 3 and at Key Stage 4 are in line with the expectations for pupils of that age, but higher than might have been anticipated given their attainment on entry to the school. This indicates that pupils make good progress across both key stages. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls. However, some of the more able pupils are performing well above the expectation, while the standards achieved by less able pupils are, in many cases, close to the standard expected for pupils of that age. Lower ability pupils, and pupils with special educational

needs achieve very well in their science studies through continual coaxing by the teacher to get the best from them. The standard of work seen is much better than might be expected, especially in relation to their ability to answer questions and produce reports of their practical investigations.

84. Pupils develop knowledge and understanding in all three knowledge based attainment targets of the national curriculum. In life processes and living things at Key Stage 3, pupils know the various parts of the reproductive system and understand the function of the placenta during the development of a baby. At Key Stage 4 they understand the principle of predator/prey relationships and their effect in ecological balance. In materials and their properties at Key Stage 3, pupils are able to identify acids and alkalis using chemical indicators and understand the function of a catalyst when producing oxygen from hydrogen peroxide. At Key Stage 4 they can predict metal reactivity using information such as proton number and ionic radius. In physical processes at Key Stage 3, pupils understand the principles of magnetism and the conduction of heat and solids. At Key Stage 4 they understand the effect of moving a magnet in a coil of wire and know some of the advantages and disadvantages of radioactivity.

85. Experimental and investigative science is equally developed. At Key Stage 3 pupils develop increasing manipulative skills. For example, they can produce indicator solution from red cabbage using a mortar and pestle. At Key Stage 4, these skills are further developed and in investigations pupils address all the elements of this attainment target and present them in formats that show, in some cases, a high level of graphical skill. Pupils also use information technology well in the production of their final presentations.

86. The standards attained by pupils with special educational needs are generally satisfactory while at Key Stage 4, pupils working towards the Certificate of Achievement achieve higher standards.

87. In all lessons, key scientific vocabulary is emphasised, resulting in a good knowledge of appropriate vocabulary. Pupils show good listening skills and reading skills are enhanced in lessons where this is appropriate, especially for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils show an increasing ability to produce longer pieces of extended writing. This is most evident in the records of their investigations. Pupils' skills in number varies but some able pupils at key stages 3 and 4 are able to demonstrate high levels of arithmetical and, at Key Stage 4, algebraic skills. Graphical skills are good and some able pupils can demonstrate their data using complex line graphs. Pupils with special educational needs develop sound graphical skills in terms of bar charts and simple line graphs.

88. Overall, the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. At Key Stage 3, in two thirds of lessons the teaching is good or very good. At Key Stage 4 the teaching is good in three quarters of lessons, with excellent teaching in about a sixth of lessons. Lessons explore all aspects of the programmes of study and investigative science is well integrated. Strengths of the teaching include good planning with clear objectives that are shared with pupils, and the high expectations that teachers have of their pupils. Effective teaching methods, where work is broken into small manageable sections, aid pupil learning. Work is well matched to pupils' ability, allowing those with special educational needs to access all appropriate aspects of the curriculum. Information technology is not yet effectively used to support teaching and enhance learning.

89. Overall pupils' learning is good and never less than satisfactory in all lessons. Learning is good or very good at Key Stage 3 in nearly two thirds of lessons and at Key Stage 4 in three quarters of lessons. Learning is most effective when it is built on previous science work. The rate of increasing practical skills, scientific knowledge and

understanding is good, and pupils work hard throughout the lesson. Pupils concentrate well on their learning and show an awareness of what they need to do to improve. The learning outcomes, identified in planning, are usually achieved by the pupils. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make equally good gains in their scientific learning and are able to improve their practical skills through sensitive teaching and approaches that encourage them to achieve their best. More able and gifted pupils are also stretched to their full potential.

90. Attitudes and values shown by pupils are very good and personal development is good. At Key Stage 3 pupils show a good attitude to their scientific studies, while at Key Stage 4 the attitude is generally very good and in a significant proportion of lessons it is excellent. The behaviour of pupils in lessons is generally good and in a significant proportion of lessons it is very good or excellent. Pupils are generally eager and responsive to questioning. They work safely and are aware of dangers in these lessons. Good personal development is demonstrated by an ability to work together in groups and a willingness to contribute to discussions. Many pupils show a mature attitude to their work and are tolerant of others' views. Where the response is less good, pupils are, on occasion, over-boisterous and slow to respond to instructions.

91. The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements and all aspects of the national curriculum and the requirements of the examination boards are addressed. At Key Stage 4 there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the curriculum to ensure that all pupils follow a course that is appropriate to their aptitudes and abilities. Provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good. Effective grouping of pupils, including small groups for pupils who find difficulty with their work, aids this provision. At Key Stage 4 further very good provision is accessed in revision sessions that are delivered outside normal lessons and which address weaknesses that are self-identified by pupils.

92. Standards of pupils' work are excellently analysed by staff, weaknesses in learning are identified, and targets set for improvement. Subject specific targets for pupils with special educational needs are also set. Further continuous monitoring of pupils' performance ensures that progress towards these targets is very good. A mentoring scheme for pupils in Year 11 further ensures that their targets are appropriate and that they are met. The system whereby pupils assess their own work is very effective. This very good provision aids learning and, together with the excellent assessment scheme, is a factor in raising standards in science.

93. The science department is very well led, works very well as a team and has clear goals for improvement, which are in line with the school's overall objectives. The documentation and monitoring of many aspects of the department is good. Satisfactory resources, which are improving in accordance with a planned programme, are used well. Access to computer resources is still a problem but the situation is improving. The new part of the science block provides excellent accommodation that enhances the learning atmosphere for pupils. The storage of materials is well catered for by the increased number of technical staff and procedures to ensure safety are well managed in the department. All of the weaknesses mentioned in the last inspection report have been effectively addressed.

ART

94. Since the last inspection standards in art have improved significantly. At Key Stage 3 the overall standards are good. Where standards are very good, pupils are able to

recognise a genre in art, identifying common characteristics of shape, colour, content and style, as in Year 7, where pupils build on previous experience effectively, to discuss the symbolism present in aboriginal art and compare the style with that of modern British roads signs. By Year 9 pupils have learned about the proportions of a human face and are able to use this information in wire sculpture portraits, showing the influence of the work of Alexandra Calder, to 'draw' with wire to create a 3D sculpture portrait. By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils achieve the expectation for pupils of that age and a significant number are working beyond that level. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 shows a steady rise in standards over the last three years.

95. By the end of Key Stage 4 the standards attained are broadly in line with national expectations. Standards are good in relation to the pupils' prior attainment and the variability in performance in the GCSE examination results reflects the ability of pupils opting for art.

96. The rise in standards is directly attributable to the high quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 3 are both very good. Investigating and making techniques are well integrated with knowledge and understanding of the work of artists from a variety of periods and cultures. This enables pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions as well as the richness and diversity of other cultures. It is a significant strength that permeates the scheme of work. Lessons are well planned, which impacts positively on learning. In Year 7 work is clearly matched to pupils' ability where mystery artefacts from a range of countries are handled, discussed and used as a basis for a polystyrene press print design. In a Year 8 graphics project, past experience of 'sweet wrappers', using logos, lettering and colour, is used to inform a current project creating a squeezed toothpaste tube in clay. Pupils use the sculpture of Claes Oldenberg to influence their designs. Good use of recall and discussion of the work of Henry Moore, together with a good demonstration, allows pupils to create reclining paper sculpture figures, which helps pupils to consolidate the proportions of the figure through practical activities in different media in Year 9. This strategy of building on prior experience enhances the quality of learning.

97. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 4 is good. The well devised project on the environment links a range of learning experiences. These include field study sketches and photographs with drawings at the swimming pool together with more prints produced with an artist in residence, to designing a piece of mixed media work, drawing on work of artists such as Hockney. Through this approach to teaching, pupils understand the purpose and relevance of the design process and can discuss their ideas clearly. The Key Stage 4 course is currently a taught course. The appointments of specialist teachers in art and the improvements already evident in Key Stage 3 are leading to improved independent personal expression and imagination as pupils move into Key Stage 4. Teacher expectations are high and the common approach to lessons of recall, exposition, demonstration, questioning, individual support during practical activities and review, allow all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to access the art curriculum. Homework is integral to the course and is regularly marked. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with other pupils of the same age.

98. Since the last inspection accommodation has been refurbished to a high standard. Pupils benefit from an appropriate range of practical resources and good access to information. They consistently behave well. Attitudes to learning at Key Stage 3 are very good, pupils are well motivated, often absorbed in their work and supportive of others. At Key Stage 4 the good attitudes to learning are reflected in the respect shown for their own

work and the work of others. Pupils select media and techniques, take responsibility for their work and share resources well. Throughout the department good interpersonal relationships have been established which contributes to the excellent working atmosphere.

99. The department is well led and management is good. The action plan is an effective tool for improvement. The scheme of work is good and regular revision of topics ensures art education remains at a high standard. However, the department needs to consider the development of information technology to support art education, for example as part of the graphics project in Year 8. The curriculum on offer is enhanced by good assessment procedures. Pupils are actively involved in their own end of topic assessment and pupils at Key Stage 4 know their predicted grades and what they must do to improve them.

100. The quality of the curriculum, teaching, learning and standards have all risen since the last inspection and the department is well placed to continue to improve.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. By the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is at least in line with expectations for pupils of that age. There are however, a substantial number of pupils who are working at levels above the expectation. Pupils can use basic equipment such as tenon saws and coping saws accurately and safely. In a Year 8 class pupils consider the effects of forces acting on structure and were able to explain the differences between tension and compression with a high level of accuracy. In a Year 8 food lesson, pupils were able to distinguish between healthy and non healthy foods. They could categorise ingredients and speak with a good level of understanding of their properties. In a Year 9 textiles class, pupils were very knowledgeable about types of clothing worn by people from other countries and why the differences existed. Graphical work is also well developed across the whole of Key Stage 3. A Year 9 group confidently use a variety of techniques to display their designs. The recently introduced electronics module is of a very good quality and pupils' attainment is high. The GNVQ option of health and social care is a positive move to develop the curriculum offered and is of high quality.

102. Performance in the GCSE examination has improved considerably since the last inspection but is still below the national average for A*-C grades. However, it is above the national average for A*-G grades. In lessons at Key Stage 4 achievement is always at least in line with national expectation, it is good in half the lessons and very good in a further quarter. Pupils achieve good standards of practical work with their final examination projects. In a Year 11 graphics class, the standard of the presentation of the design folders was very high with pupils demonstrating a very good understanding of the design process.

103. The quality of teaching across both key stages is always at least satisfactory. At both key stages it is good in half the lessons, and very good in a further quarter. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well identified. Teachers have very good class control and share the objectives of the lessons with pupils. There is a good balance between whole class and individual work, the activities selected are appropriate and they enable pupils to gain and develop experience of designing and making, whilst paying due regard to evaluation. Teachers regularly set homework that is well planned to promote and support learning. Lessons move forward at a brisk pace and teachers' high expectations of pupils is a very good feature of the department.

104. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and these make a significant contribution to the high quality learning atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons and they work equally well whilst working in groups or independently. Standards of behaviour are high and pupils have a high regard for their fellow pupils, teachers and the environment.

105. The department benefits from strong leadership and management. The strengths of all staff are incorporated into the management of the department and all staff have a designated responsibility. Clear educational direction is provided through impressive policy documentation and schemes of work. Curriculum planning is good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Schemes of work, based on the national DATA materials, are detailed and comprehensive. They clearly identify how teachers address both continuity and progression for all pupils. Assessment procedures are well developed and the information gathered is used effectively to inform future planning and teaching. The department is well supported by two experienced technicians, who provide valuable support to the teachers.

106. The provision of resources is good. The recently completed substantial refurbishment of the department is impressive and the creation of the high quality learning environment is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and attainment. The computer facilities are also of high quality and are increasingly well used by staff and pupils. Further development of hardware and software to support the further development of computer aided design and manufacture now needs to be considered. There are adequate text books to support the curriculum both throughout the department and in the library. The stock of consumable materials is adequate, well managed and effectively used. The quality of display around the department is very good.

107. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection with regard to the environment, the quality of teaching, improving pupils' attainment and the quality of the curriculum offered.

GEOGRAPHY

108. The geography department has made considerable improvement and progress since the last inspection. Staff changes, together with alterations to the curriculum, have contributed to this improvement.

109. Overall attainment in geography is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. In lessons at Key Stage 3, attainment is variable, but overall it is broadly in line with national expectation, with a small number achieving above. At Key Stage 4 pupils are able to build upon achievements in Key Stage 3 and performance reflects the full range of pupils' abilities. Standards achieved in the GCSE examinations have improved every year since 1996. Examination results show that pupils achieve performance in line with, or above expectations. Pupils' attainment in the GCSE Travel and Tourism examination that is taught within the geography department is similar to that in geography. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and are well integrated into lessons with good support provided by teachers and support staff. They also develop literacy and numeracy skills in well planned lessons that meet their needs.

110. At Key Stage 3 lower ability pupils in Year 7 are able to link images and key words to identify land zones. More able pupils are challenged through role play and examining evidence to decide the best site for a new settlement. Pupils show a good understanding

of how people used to live in pre-historic times. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils demonstrate a high level of understanding and speaking skills within group discussion as part of a 'Coal Mining Enquiry'. Pupils are able to use local knowledge and family experiences to give their opinions. At Key Stage 4 pupils show a good understanding of the causes of flooding in Bangladesh and develop thinking skills, building up a concept map in response to the task. Pupils studying Travel and Tourism show good understanding whilst carrying out a case study exercise based in Bradford.

111. The quality of teaching at both key stages is always good and often very good. Lessons are well planned with effective introductions, shared outcomes and a review of previous learning. Geographical enquiries and role play have a positive impact on pupils' learning. On occasions when teaching is less effective, pupils are not stimulated or challenged and contribute less to the lesson. Teacher pupil relationships are always very good, and class organisation is very effective. Teachers use time and resources effectively, conducting lessons at a good pace. They skilfully use appropriate language and terminology together with probing questions to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers' planning includes the use of key words to support literacy. Plans also include numeracy, information technology and cross curricular links to aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Homework is set regularly to reinforce learning and opportunities for Year 11 pupils' revision for forthcoming examinations are well attended.

112. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 fully meets the requirements of the national curriculum. At Key Stage 4 pupils may follow a GCSE course in geography or travel & tourism, whilst lower attaining pupils follow a Certificate of Achievement course. The department operates a comprehensive fieldwork programme at both key stages, providing pupils with practical opportunities to extend and enrich their learning.

113. There is effective leadership in the department that is well supported by staff. The humanities and geography department have effective development plans, subject policies and schemes of work including assessment procedures. However, they do not, as yet, sufficiently monitor their own classroom work as a means to share good practice.

HISTORY

114. Attainment and progress are satisfactory at both key stages. By the age of 14 pupils generally show an understanding of the main features of the historical periods that they study. They understand that different types of historical evidence have different uses. Teacher assessment, informed by a variety of tests, shows that pupils make progress similar to that in other subjects. In the GCSE examination there has been a significant improvement in the higher grade results since the last inspection and the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades is very close the national average. The introduction of the Certificate of Achievement course is helping to ensure that more pupils obtain worthwhile results at Key Stage 4. However, the most able pupils at both key stages do not always achieve their potential.

115. Pupils are generally very well behaved and highly motivated. They sustain their concentration in lessons, contributing effectively to discussions and group work. They have a good understanding of the progress they are making in their studies although the marking of written work does not always have sufficient diagnostic comments from the teacher.

116. The quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory and often good or very good. Planning is thorough and the teachers know their pupils well. In the best lessons

very constructive working relationships give pupils the confidence and self esteem to offer their own ideas. These are clearly valued and explored in discussion. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, but learning activities are not sufficiently planned to meet the needs of the whole ability range at Key Stage 3. More able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to develop and extend their knowledge and understanding or take initiatives in their learning. Useful support for the development of literacy is provided but the use of information technology is very limited.

117. The subject is well led and managed. The arrangements for meetings, division of responsibilities and review of current practice are satisfactory thanks to the strong team ethos and informal systems of support. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching within the subject is very limited with few opportunities for teachers to observe or work alongside their colleagues. The accommodation and resources are well organised with good displays in each classroom and adjacent areas. The humanities department 'Contract Certificate' encourages pupils to come prepared for lessons and complete homework. Some additional support is provided for pupils entered for the GCSE examination. This takes place outside normal lessons. The use of fieldwork and some outside events gives pupils a greater insight into the subject. Pupils' personal, social, and moral development is supported through discussions of historical issues, but their spiritual, civic and cultural development is less well supported. There are few links with other subjects to enhance this provision.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

118. At the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of pupils is broadly in line with the expectation for that age. Results for the CLAIT (Computer Literacy and Information Technology) examination in 1999 show that all pupils were entered for the examination and all pupils achieved a profile, with 44% achieving a pass. All pupils at Key Stage 4 now follow a GCSE Course in information technology. Results in 1998 were above the national average, although the results in 1999 were below. In the vast majority of lessons pupils achieve standards which are in line with, or higher than might be expected on the basis of their prior attainment.

119. Across the school the quality of teaching is invariably satisfactory and generally good. It is very good or excellent in almost a third of lessons. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is always satisfactory and generally good. At Key Stage 4 teaching is generally good with very good or excellent teaching in almost half the lessons. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and demonstrate a good understanding of processes, software programs and skills. Lessons are very well structured to achieve a good balance between directed work, group work and pupils working on an individual basis. This assists pupils to gain a good understanding of their skills and knowledge and apply them to new tasks. Motivation and pace in lessons is good with pupils very attentive, responsive to questions and focused on their work. Management and control of classes is mainly good with teachers establishing good working relationships with pupils. Homework is set where appropriate and mainly takes the form of preparation for lessons or coursework assignments.

120. In all lessons at Key Stage 3 there is a good working atmosphere. Pupils support each other in lessons and have good relationships with staff. Pupils are confident in using hardware and software and are very capable of analysing requirements for specific tasks. Behaviour in all lessons is good with pupils courteous and respectful to each other and to teachers. At Key Stage 4 pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory or better. Pupils are well motivated and respond positively to the work they are given.

121. At Key Stage 3 the information technology course is broad and balanced. Pupils undertake assignments covering 'Communicating and handling information' as well as 'Controlling, measuring and modelling'. The school fully meets its statutory obligation to provide a programme of study in information technology for all pupils at Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately taught in smaller groups with learning support from specialist staff. They follow a similar course to all other pupils and have the opportunity to gain accreditation in the same way

122. There is more use of information technology outside specialist lessons, with evidence of good work being produced, particularly in design technology. However, the use of information technology in other subjects is still not extensive and there are no procedures to co-ordinate and monitor where, how, and to what effect it is being used in other subject areas.

123. The leadership and management of the department are good. The decision to offer an accredited course to all pupils at both key stages is an important strength. There is a good information technology development plan with clear objectives, timescales, budget costs and success criteria. The plan takes appropriate account of the national targets for information technology. The department has good procedures in place for assessing and recording pupils' levels of achievement in information technology, but needs to develop procedures to audit, develop and the use of information technology across the curriculum.

124. The standard of accommodation is good and the department is very well resourced with computers, a computer network and good facilities for printing, scanning and digital imaging. As well as specialist teaching staff the department also has an ICT Network Manager. All rooms are well furnished, providing a good working environment for classes. Professional quality software is available on all computers and meets the requirements of national curriculum programmes of study. The department makes good use of the resources available and these are managed very effectively.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

125. The modern foreign languages department has improved significantly since the last inspection in November 1995. At Key Stage 3 the standard in French and Spanish is in line with the national expectation in all lessons except in the designated classes for pupils with special educational needs. Approximately one third of pupils attain standards higher than the national expectation. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is high in relation to their prior attainment. At the end of Key Stage 3 the percentage of pupils gaining level four and above is in line with the national average.

126. At Key Stage 4 the standard of attainment in French and Spanish is in line with the national expectation, with approximately half the pupils attaining standards that are high. In the GCSE examination in French the percentage of pupils gaining an A*-G grade has been consistently above the national average over the last three years. The percentage of pupils gaining an A*-C grade is below the national average, but has risen steadily over the last three years when the full ability range has been entered. In the GCSE examination in Spanish the A*-C percentage pass rate has been consistently very high.

127. The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. All pupils are provided with a good range of curricular opportunities, including pupils with special educational needs. Teachers plan thoroughly and effectively in accordance with the department's detailed schemes of work, thus ensuring that pupils gain a balance of

knowledge, understanding and skills in the four attainment targets of listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when learning was criticised as being skewed towards listening and speaking. Lessons are carefully structured in order to provide a supportive framework within which pupils are able to reinforce prior learning, grow in confidence and competence, and make progress at an appropriate rate. Teachers make every effort to choose resources and activities that will engage the pupils' interest, sustain their motivation and provide a good degree of challenge. Teachers' high expectations of their pupils in terms of appropriate behaviour, staying on task and accuracy when speaking or writing French and Spanish, have a beneficial effect on the quality of learning.

128. At both Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils are well behaved and have predominantly positive attitudes to their language learning. They work together constructively in pair work and group work activities and their level of concentration is generally high. Good relationships with teachers are an important factor in the good progress made by pupils throughout the age and ability range.

129. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils display well established learning routines, come to lessons well equipped and are prepared to learn. They have acquired a wide range of vocabulary and structures relating to their family, hobbies, the weather, types of films and buying tickets. They express preferences and explain them in simple terms. They have a good understanding of gender, possessive pronouns, adjectives and time. They can understand and manipulate the negative form of the present tense. They are attentive listeners, able to elicit key information from a range of taped and spoken language in French and Spanish. They respond appropriately and confidently to questions put to them in French and Spanish, but opportunities for teachers and pupils to use the languages in real conversations are not maximised. Pupils read aloud with a good degree of accuracy and perform a variety of mixed skill tasks routinely and confidently. They write short dialogues and role-plays, adapting language they have used orally.

130. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils display well developed study skills. They pick up language patterns quickly and use their knowledge of language to establish meaning. They apply the vocabulary and structures they have learnt to different contexts and formulate simple arguments for and against topical issues, such as smoking. Pupils display a good understanding of how to enhance their writing skills by using synonyms, antonyms, adverbs and an appropriate range of tenses. Many more able pupils are confident and mature learners.

131. The high quality curriculum provided by the department meets all statutory requirements although there is insufficient and inconsistent use of information technology. The curriculum makes a substantial and important contribution to the development of the pupils' literacy, oracy and numeracy skills as well as to their social, moral and cultural development. The procedures for assessing pupils' work are effective. They are consistently applied and recorded by all the teachers. In addition to this, regular verbal feedback is given to pupils on how to improve their performance in the course of the lessons.

132. The department is well led and there is very effective teamwork. The mentoring strategies employed by the department have impacted very positively on the quality of teaching and learning. The department has a pro-active approach to in-service training that is matched to whole school priorities and individual teacher's needs. The resources for learning are very good, with the exception of information technology, and are used very effectively to deliver the programmes of study.

MUSIC

133. Attainment throughout the key stage and at the end of Year 9 has improved and is now broadly satisfactory. About half of the pupils are now on target to achieve or exceed national expectations. At Key Stage 4 groups taking the GCSE examination are very small, but their performance is above the national average.

134. At both key stages pupils show a high level of instrumental and musical performance skills. About 8% of pupils have instrumental lessons, which are subsidised by the school. This has a good impact on the standard of music making across the school and in particular supports the extensive range of extra-curricular activities and community-based events the department organises, for example, a very successful and energetic concert for parents and pupils, which effectively demonstrated the quality, range and breadth of music making. The school actively supports music making and additional resources are allocated to maintain the stock of band instruments. Pupils are encouraged to bring their instruments to lessons and this contributes significantly to the high standard of performance work. For those pupils who do not regularly play a musical instrument, performance skills remain weak. Year 7 pupils learn the recorder, but these skills are not developed further as they progress through the key stage because the focus of performance and composition work shifts to keyboards. In Years 8 and 9 the majority of pupils can play simple melodies on the electronic keyboard, but they are given too few opportunities to develop solo and ensemble skills using a wider range of instruments.

135. The application of musical knowledge and understanding ranges from satisfactory to very good across both key stages. Pupils can identify key technical features in different styles of music and use this knowledge to evaluate its effect and the composer's intention. They can critically appraise their own music and that of others in the class. Pupils can also explore and develop different musical ideas within a range of styles including Blues and film music. By Year 10, for example, pupils understand the key ideas in the music of Charles Ives and can use their instrumental skills to perform a class version of one of his more experimental pieces.

136. Whilst most pupils perform a wide range of music from written notation, the use of notation to record and refine compositions remains under-developed. Pupils can sequence different parts of a composition into an electronic keyboard, but they are given too few opportunities to refine their work or use information technology further to accurately notate compositions.

137. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons and in over half of lessons it is good or very good. Most teaching, including that given by visiting instrumental teachers, has a good impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers are skilful musicians and they use their expertise effectively in lessons and during extra-curricular activities to support and encourage pupils. Lesson planning has improved since the last inspection, and a good feature in many lessons is the effective use of differentiated material, particularly to support less able pupils who generally make good progress. Only in a minority of lessons is planning insufficiently clear to allow pupils to make good progress. At Key Stage 4 pupils benefit from a curriculum that is flexible enough to support their different abilities, but further development is needed to ensure that key skills in composing, information technology, listening and performing are more systematically developed.

138. Teachers employ a good range of teaching and learning styles and pupils respond very well in all lessons to a variety of activities, which sustain their interest and which build

well on previous work. A particularly good feature in many lessons is the skilful integration of performing, composing and listening activities. Pupils are encouraged to work at a brisk pace and to explore and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to a range of connected tasks. Pupils respond by working productively and enthusiastically. Consequently, progress in these lessons is good. The focus for learning is only unclear in a minority of lessons. Here the work set for pupils is too hard and they quickly become discouraged. Behaviour in all lessons, nevertheless, is very good.

139. Teachers make effective use of resources for music and pupils handle expensive instruments with care and respect. They share equipment and listen carefully to well-prepared taped extracts of music which teachers use effectively to illustrate musical ideas and to inspire pupils.

140. Pupils' work is regularly assessed using a wide range of assessment methods. The department has developed useful guidance to ensure assessment criteria are consistently applied. Current planning for assessment however, is too broad and needs further development at both key stages.

141. The department is enthusiastically led and very committed to providing an extensive range of musical experiences for all pupils. Recent staffing instability has now been resolved and standards of attainment are improving steadily. Although the department has benefited from recent monitoring by the headteacher, it does not rigorously evaluate itself against development priorities highlighted in its action plan. The accommodation and resources for music are very good, but insufficient use is made of the extra practise facilities to further develop pupils' creative and ensemble skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. The physical education department has made considerable improvement and progress since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in physical education in both key stages is in line with national expectations and at times higher. At the end of Key Stage 3, over three quarters of the pupils achieve the expectation for pupils of that age. This reflects an upward trend over the last three years. Attainment in the Key Stage 4 core curriculum is also in line with expectation and at times above. Results in the GCSE examination have improved over the last three years.

143. Boys and girls are taught separately but make equally good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory and sometimes good progress because they are interested in the activities and teaching is planned to allow a careful development of skills at an appropriate pace. They are well integrated and supported by staff.

144. The quality of teaching in both key stages is always good and often very good. All staff are good role models, have high expectations and have a good command of the activities taught. Teachers plan well with appropriate content, share learning outcomes and use demonstration, explanation, question and answer together with feedback, effectively. Staff organisation, control and discipline ensure that pupils work safely on task. Teachers use time and resources effectively and conduct lessons at good pace. Staff use appropriate language and terminology to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the activities covered in physical education lessons. Teachers plan effective contributions to literacy using key words and numeracy in terms of measurement together with cross curricular links to aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

145. Homework is appropriately set within GCSE theory lessons to reinforce learning. At Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils understand the need for a warm up and cool down following activity. During games lessons pupils are able to perform basic skills in football, hockey, tag rugby, netball and badminton and good progress is made through practice and repetition of skills. Year 7 pupils benefit from a basic skills course at the beginning of the autumn term. Pupils show a good understanding and knowledge of the tactics, rules and scoring within their games activities. In gymnastics, pupils can use apparatus safely and develop a short sequence of work. More able performers can execute astride vaults over the buck efficiently, whilst less able pupils successfully devise a safe sequence of movements within their own ability. In health related exercise and circuits, pupils can record their own pulse and understand the effects and benefits of exercise on the body organs.

146. At Key Stage 4 pupils are able to transfer skills and successfully build upon their previous learning of tactics in games situations. They are confident in their performance and display good sportsmanship and fair play. In health related exercise and aerobic lessons, pupils are well motivated and are learning to work independently whilst developing new routines. Whilst teachers are using self evaluation of their own lessons effectively, pupils self knowledge of their learning needs further development.

147. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are always good and often very good. Pupils work well individually and co-operate effectively in small group activities. Pupils are generally enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons. They share space and equipment well and work safely when using equipment. In a small number of lessons pupils' concentration lapsed. Pupils in many lessons display responsibility for their own learning. Teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships are positive.

148. There is good leadership that is well supported by enthusiastic teachers. There are regular meetings and staff have attended recent in-service training. Subject policy, scheme of work, assessment recording and reporting, subject development plan together with monitoring procedures are all in place. Effective health and safety procedures are in place but staff need to update their reference documentation in line with current practice.

149. There are adequate resources to teach the planned activities, however the department needs to increase the number of compasses available for the practical orienteering activity. The department would also benefit from the availability of more equipment to extend the use of information technology within the requirements of the new curriculum, linking it to the health related exercise, circuit training and aerobics. There is good visual display both within the changing rooms, corridor and school reception area, reflecting the curriculum initiatives and extra curricular opportunities together with links with sports' governing bodies.

150. The department makes good use of the school's indoor and outdoor facilities together with the local Leisure Centre and swimming pool. The outdoor cricket wicket and the athletics long jump run up are in need of maintenance and upgrading to ensure pupils can benefit from a safe environment and facilities in order to raise standards in performance. The local community make extensive use of the school's sporting facilities. Teachers make a valuable contribution to the school's extra curricular sporting programme including inter house competitions. All pupils have open access and the more able performers have the opportunity to represent the school at different levels.

151. The provision of extra-curricular activities, including residential experience for Year 11 in the Lake District that includes a range of outdoor and adventurous activities, makes a

significant contribution towards the pupils' personal, social, moral and physical development as well as raising standards throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

152. The department has built upon the strengths of the last inspection and continues to offer high quality provision for pupils. The quality of learning and teaching has shown a significant improvement from the already high standards noted in the last report.

153. Attainment at both key stages is generally above national expectation. Results in the GCSE examination are variable, ranging from well above to above national averages in the last three years. Pupil entries have steadily increased since the last inspection, although predominantly girls.

154. At Key Stage 3 pupils have a confident knowledge of religious artefacts relating to Judaism and Sikhism and have acquired a good technical vocabulary. They are able to make connections well and produce a discerning and mature response to a range of moral issues. Through the opportunities afforded to pupils to engage in extended research, they are able to offer a sophisticated awareness of the main features of Islamic life. At Key Stage 4 pupils are able to express viewpoints clearly and marshal information quickly. They are sufficiently confident to engage in library research including the use of the Internet and to give a visual presentation to other pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties have a good recall of the artefacts associated with Judaism and Islam and can make simple connections between, for example, the plagues of Egypt and the floods of Mozambique.

155. The quality of teaching is a significant strength of the department and is central to the highly effective learning that takes place. At Key Stage 3 teaching is good in a quarter of lessons, very good in two thirds and outstanding in a small percentage. At Key Stage 4 teaching is good in almost two thirds of lessons, very good in a few and outstanding in a small percentage. The proportion of very good or outstanding teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' specialist knowledge and understanding enables skilful exposition, very good use of questioning and an accurate assessment to be made of when to build on pupils' responses and learning.

156. In all lessons, very good planning, well conceived tasks, challenging content and high expectations enable pupils to learn very effectively. Teachers are very successful in sustaining pupils' attention through a range of tasks that involve pupils well in their learning. Very good organisation and well matched content is a feature of all lessons. Where teaching is outstanding, pupils are able to engage in gaining deeper spiritual insights such as in the use of guided imagery. Time and resources, including visits to the local church together with visitors from the church, are used very effectively to enrich curriculum provision. Careful intervention to individuals, particularly pupils of average ability, sustains attainment. Homework features significantly in all lessons and is used well to extend and consolidate learning.

157. The quality of learning is good or very good in equal proportions across both key stages. Pupils understand lesson objectives well and are frequently challenged to develop their thinking and awareness of religious belief and practice, for example, in understanding the deeper significance of baptism, confirmation, marriage and death. A particular strength of pupils' learning is the balance teachers engender between learning from, and learning about, religions. Skilful teacher exposition and stimulating content, for example, in relation to Islamic birth ceremonies and the Jewish Bar Mitzvah, sustains pupils' efforts and their capacity to produce high quality work. Pupils with special educational needs are well

catered for and make good progress, when tasks, content and resources are adapted to meet their needs.

158. Pupils' attitudes to learning are always good, very good or excellent in equal proportions at both key stages. The very good management of pupils by teachers leads to excellent relationships with both staff and pupils together with very good behaviour. At both key stages pupils are well motivated and interested in tasks, for example, in a group discussion relating to the concept of forgiveness. They have a good understanding of how they are to improve their work. Frequent opportunities are given to collaborate in pairs, or small groups and in doing so, excellent co-operation and respect for others is very apparent. Pupils are able to manage their learning successfully and are confident in expressing their view points.

159. The department makes a strong contribution to literacy. There are frequent opportunities to produce extended writing, compose poetry or to engage in research such as in the Islamic project in Year 9. A more limited contribution is made to numeracy but is evident in the composition of bar graphs in Year 8. Homework tasks are often word processed and pupils have some access to information technology within one classroom, and in the library.

160. The department makes a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very skilful teaching enables pupils to gain insights into religious questions of human conscience. Opportunities are frequently given to share opinions, form values and to make ethical choices. Teachers' management of pupils' learning enables them to show initiative and to be responsible for organising their study, so engendering social development.

161. The management of the department is excellent and is supported by highly competent specialist and non specialist staff. Together they make a very effective team. The department has responded well to the demands of a new Agreed Syllabus and is presently reviewing and implementing schemes of work. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching has commenced within the humanities facility but needs to sustain its momentum to enable good practice to be shared. Assessment practice is developing through identifying methods of assessment. However, there is now a need to link tasks to national levels of attainment, to standardise expectations and to monitor pupils' attainment through the regular sampling of work. The marking of pupils' work is conscientious and helpful in suggesting areas for improvement or omissions. The department has a very good range of resources that includes a broad range of good quality text books, videos and sufficient artefacts to meet the demands of the Agreed Syllabus.