

INSPECTION REPORT

Noel-Baker Community School
Derby

LEA area: Derby City

Inspection Number: 185982
Unique Reference Number: 112992

Head teacher: Mr G E Wynne

Reporting inspector: Mr R E Liley

Dates of inspection: 27 September – 1 October 1999

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B M Scrivener
Date of previous inspection:	6-10 November 1995

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A Anderson, Lay Inspector		Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Partnership with parents and the community
J K Arnold	Music	Teaching The curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
J Neely	Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
J Flisher	English	
R Heath	Mathematics	
J Clawley	Science	
D Beaumont	Design and technology Information technology	
T James	History Religious education	
R Haynes	Geography	
C Campbell	Modern foreign languages	
R K Mountford	Art	
R Whitaker	Physical education	
C Hackworth	Business studies Economics	
S Leyden	Extra support project	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory or better in the vast majority of lessons.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is improving at a greater rate than the national trend.
- The school provides a good environment for learning.
- The school is well led.
- The school has very effective and wide-ranging links with the community.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their work are good.
- Drama and business education are well taught and this results in high attainment.
- Careers education and guidance provides an excellent facility for researching career pathways.
- The Extra Support Project provides a secure foundation for learning for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good liaison arrangements exist with feeder primary schools.
- The school collection of performance data on pupils is good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is well below national standards.
- II. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching by middle managers is underdeveloped.
- III. Development planning needs to be more clearly linked to performance outcomes for pupils.
- IV. There is no effective policy in place to develop pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum.
- V. There are not enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to make decisions and take responsibility for their work.
- VI. Some teachers do not make sufficient use of assessments and performance data to inform planning and target setting, particularly in Key Stage 3.
- VII. Some teachers make insufficient use of challenging questions and some do not clearly identify what pupils are expected to learn to promote progress, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- VIII. The school does not provide a statutory daily act of collective worship.
- IX. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural education is unsatisfactory.
- X. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well. They will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made sound progress since the last inspection. The majority of the key issues for action in the previous inspection report have been addressed in full or are developing satisfactorily. Standards at GCSE are improving though work remains to be done in improving attainment in Key Stage 3. Strategies to improve attendance have been successful. Contact time for teaching is now in line with DfEE recommendations. Links between senior managers and subject areas have been strengthened. Some key issues from the last report, the implementation of an effective literacy policy and the provision of opportunities for spiritual and cultural development along with a daily act of collective worship remain as key issues in this report. The school has clear and appropriate targets and priorities and has the capacity to maintain and promote the necessary developments in order to continue to improve.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Grade	Key
Key Stage 3 Tests	E	E	<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>Average</i>	C
GCSE Examinations	E	C	<i>Below average</i>	D
A/AS – levels	n/a	n/a	<i>well below average</i> <i>very low</i>	E E*

Pupils' average attainment on entry to the school is well below national levels. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in all core subjects (English, mathematics and science) is well below national levels. In GCSE examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 the percentage of pupils gaining high grades (A*-C) is well below national levels. However, the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-G grades is in line with the national average and the percentage of pupils achieving one or more pass grades is above the national average. The school's results at GCSE are improving at a faster rate than the national trend over the past four years. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C high grade results in 1999 is the highest achieved, so far, by the school. The school's examination results are in line with those of schools in a similar socio-economic context. The strongest subjects at GCSE are English, drama and business education; art and music are the weakest subjects. The better progress and attainment in Key Stage 4 is because there is more good teaching in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9 and furthermore because systems for assessing pupils performance and informing planning are more focussed in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3.

The school entered pupils for a limited number of A/AS level examinations for the first time in 1999 and the results obtained were in line with school expectations.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Satisfactory	drama	art, music
Years 10-11	Satisfactory	drama, business education	music
Sixth form	Satisfactory	drama, business education	
English	Satisfactory		
Mathematics	Good		

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching has improved in both key stages since the last inspection. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 93% of lessons, in over half it is good and in one in five lessons it is very good or better. In 7% of lessons teaching is less than satisfactory. Despite the proportion of good and very good teaching the weaknesses, combined with pupils' poor literacy skills, prevent pupils from making good and very good progress overall.

Where teaching is less effective teachers do not make it clear to pupils what they are intended to know or be able to do at the end of the lesson.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good overall: pupils behave in an orderly and responsible manner. Movement between buildings on the site is good. However, fixed term exclusions are at a high level.
Attendance	Satisfactory: the school has worked hard to achieve attendance levels that are in line with national expectations.
Ethos*	Good: the climate for learning is good. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and relationships are good.
Leadership and management	Sound overall: the leadership provided by the head teacher, senior managers and governors is good. Management of year areas is effective. Management of subjects is generally satisfactory with some shortcomings in the area of monitoring and evaluation.
Curriculum	Satisfactory: statutory requirements are generally met in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The sixth form is expanding rapidly and provides a good range of appropriate courses. Religious education is not taught in the sixth form. Good extra-curricular opportunities extend the curriculum. A coherent literacy policy needs to be implemented.
Pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory: pupils make satisfactory progress and gain in confidence through supportive relationships.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Unsatisfactory overall: provision for social development is very good and that for moral development is good. However, provision for spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory with few opportunities planned for across all subjects in the curriculum.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory: staff are appropriately qualified and effectively deployed. Resources are adequate in quantity and quality. Accommodation is satisfactory. Major rebuilding work is scheduled for completion by the end of the academic year.
Value for money	Satisfactory: social disadvantage in the school's catchment area is relatively high. Expenditure per pupil is well above average.

Attainment on entry is well below average. There is a slight improvement at the end of Key Stage 3 and more improvement in attainment in Key Stage 4. Results are below national standards but in line with those for similar schools.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- XI. Their children like the school.
- XII. Pupils are enabled to achieve a good standard of work.
- XIII. Pupils are encouraged to get involved in more than daily lessons.
- XIV. The school keeps parents informed about pupils' progress.
- XV. The school is easy to approach with questions or problems.
- XVI. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.
- XVII. The schools' values and attitudes have a positive impact on pupils.

What some parents are not happy about

- XVIII. The amount and regularity of homework.
- XIX. Standards of behaviour.
- XX. The handling of complaints from

The judgements made by inspectors largely support parents' positive views. The school does provide a secure environment for learning and pupils do like the school. Links with the local community are very strong and parents are encouraged to support school activities. The positive values and attitudes promoted by the school have an impact on the good relationships and behaviour observed. Generally, parents' concerns about the amount and regularity of homework are not fully supported by the inspection team, although some unevenness between subjects does exist. During the inspection standards of behaviour were good and pupils indicated that incidents of poor behaviour and bullying were rare but dealt with immediately. Systems for handling complaints from parents are in place and routines are known by teachers.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

To raise pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in Key Stage 3, the governors, head teacher and staff should:

XXI. Improve teaching by:

- identifying clear learning objectives for lessons so that pupils know what they are expected to learn (paragraphs 15, 41, 106);
- improving the teaching of literacy skills particularly reading, speaking and writing (paragraphs 9, 11, 33, 41, 44, 80, 108);
- providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to be able to work independently and develop the skills of investigation and problem solving (paragraphs 39, 111, 124, 130, 140, 153, 154);
- having higher expectations of all pupils and increasing the levels of challenge, particularly for high attaining pupils, through a wider range of questioning techniques, in order to move pupils on (paragraphs 5, 33, 35, 39, 42, 45, 117, 127, 130).

● **Improve assessment practice by:**

- using pupils' assessment data more effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses to better inform teachers' lesson planning (paragraphs 7, 36, 44, 54, 55, 58, 131);
- using outcome data from examinations and tests to further develop target setting in subjects and for individual pupil targets (paragraphs 20, 58, 66, 83, 129, 160, 167).

· **Improve the quality of management by;**

- ensuring that targets in subject and school development plans are appropriately costed and linked to outcomes for pupils' learning (paragraphs 82, 89, 107);
- providing training for middle managers and teachers in effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and curriculum developments (paragraphs 81, 107, 125, 131, 137);
- using the school's self review process to share good practice across the curriculum (paragraphs 81, 83);

● **Improve curriculum provision by:**

- planning for the systematic provision of spiritual development and cultural development across the curriculum and by meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (paragraphs 61, 64, 65, 80, 84, 87);

- ensuring that RE is taught to all students in the post 16 curriculum (paragraphs 51, 61, 190);
- improving planning for the provision of ICT in all subjects to support pupils' learning (paragraphs 13, 14, 39, 51, 80, 98, 123, 131, 133, 144, 193);
- implementing a programme of developing literacy skills across the curriculum (paragraphs 9, 11, 51, 84, 108).

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These relate to:

- ensuring the punctual arrival of pupils to lessons (paragraphs 30, 43, 159);
- further reducing the number of exclusions (paragraphs 26, 29);
- using targets in Individual Education Plans (IEPs) consistently to inform planning (paragraphs 37, 52);
- the implementation of a teacher appraisal process (paragraphs 87, 90);

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 Noel-Baker Community School was an 11-16 Grant Maintained mixed comprehensive at the time of the last inspection in November 1995. Noel-Baker Community School is now a foundation school within Derby City Local Education Authority. It is an above average sized 11-18 mixed comprehensive with 1386 pupils on roll, 52% of whom are boys. Numbers of pupils have increased annually over the last four years and the school's reputation in the area is rising. The sixth form, instituted in 1997, is now entering its third year and has 110 students enrolled.

2 The school's intake is predominantly white and drawn from five main feeder schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is, at 30%, above the national average. Ethnic groups make up 5.7% of the school population and 19 pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. A very large proportion of pupils, over two thirds, does not live with both their natural mother and father. Twelve per cent of pupils, a figure that is above the national average, are on the register of special educational needs and 1.5% have statements of special educational need. Since March 1997 the school has operated a Centre to support pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties. Overall some two thirds of pupils on entry to the school are attaining well below average in both verbal and quantitative tests. Pupils' attainment in standardised tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is also well below national averages.

3 The area served by the school has not changed significantly since the last inspection. The school is situated in the Boulton ward on the south-eastern boundary of the city of Derby. Pupils travel from a wide area including from the city centre. Housing within the catchment is varied and includes council properties, three social priority housing estates and owner occupied residences. The social disadvantage in the school's catchment area is relatively high.

4 The mission statement of the school, exemplified in its logo, is 'excellence in all things'. The school has two principal aims: to provide an environment where pupils can develop their skills to the maximum and to strive to raise expectation and achievement every year. These aims are effectively pursued by the development priorities for the current year: improving performance in Key Stage 3, improving performance in Key Stage 4 especially at high grades and raising the levels of attendance overall. The school has agreed performance targets for the end of Key Stage 4 with the Local Education Authority (LEA) for 2000. The targets are 30% of pupils to achieve five or more passes with high grades, 95% of all pupils to gain one or more GCSE passes and pupils to obtain an average point score of 30.

- **Key indicators**
Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	129	134	263

- National Curriculum Test		English	Mathematics	Science
Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	32	49	48
	Girls	77	63	53
	Total	109	112	101
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	42(55)	42(49)	38(45)
	National	65(57)	60(60)	56(60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	10(17)	17(28)	10(12)
	National	35(23)	36(37)	27(29)
- Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	46	51	63
	Girls	78	68	75
	Total	124	119	138
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	49(56)	48(52)	55(64)
	National	62(60)	64(63)	62(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	21(17)	20(25)	19(24)
	National	31(28)	37(37)	31(29)

.....

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	107	96	203

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	29	95	105
	Girls	23	85	94
	Total	52	180	199
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	25.6(26.5)	88.7(87.6)	98(91)
	National	44.6(43.1)	89.8(88.4)	95.2(94.1)

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and percentage of

such pupils who achieved all those they studied:

	Number	% Success rate
School	0	n/a
National		n/a

Attainment in the Sixth Form³

The school entered students in Post 16 examinations, including A-level, for the first time in 1999. The small number of students entered achieved results in line with the school's own expectations though the average point score achieved was well below national averages.

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² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

³ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	8.8
	Absence	National comparative data	8.1
	Unauthorised	School	1.1
	Absence	National comparative data	1.2

-

- Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	111
	Permanent	8

- Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	19.5
	Satisfactory or better	93.4
	Less than satisfactory	6.6

- **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

- **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

- **Attainment and progress**

5 The attainment of pupils at Noel-Baker Community School is below the standard expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Standards being achieved in only the third working year of the sixth form are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the curriculum in both key stages and the sixth form. This is because teaching is satisfactory or better in the vast majority of lessons and pupils' response is usually good. Progress being made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Progress made by high attaining pupils is satisfactory, but could be improved by the use of more challenging questions and opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning across the curriculum.

6 The attainment of pupils on intake at the end of Key Stage 2 is well below national averages in all core subjects. Cognitive ability tests of pupils' verbal and number skills taken at the beginning of Year 7 show that nearly two thirds of pupils attain below average scores. Pupils' attainments in standard tests for the core subjects at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 were well below the national average. Results for the previous two years are similar. When compared to schools with similar intake attainment is well below average in English and below average in science. These results are broadly supported by the below average attainment observed in written work and lessons in English and science. Attainment in standard tests for mathematics is well below the national average and that achieved in similar schools. However, because the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 3 is good, attainment in lessons and written work is currently in line with national expectations. Improvements in attainment in all core subjects have been made since the last inspection.

1At the end of Key Stage 4, in GCSE examinations, pupils' attainments in 1998 were well below national averages when compared to all schools. However, since the last inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has improved at a rate that is greater than the national trend of improvement. The unconfirmed provisional results for 1999 indicate that this trend of improvement is continuing. Pupils' results are well below national expectations for passes at high grade A*-C but are in line with national averages for achieving five or more pass grades A*-G. When compared to schools with similar intakes pupils' performance at high grades is below average but above average for achieving five or more A*-G grades and well above average for achieving one or more A*-G grades. The difference between the attainment of boys and girls is less than that seen nationally with boys achieving nearer to their respective national average. The improvement in performance across Key Stage 4, compared to Key Stage 3, is because there is more good teaching in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9 and better use is made of performance and assessment data to support learning in Key Stage 4. The average point score achieved by pupils in GCSE courses shows a rising trend that is greater than the national trend. Attainment of pupils at all levels of the GCSE examinations have improved since the last inspection in 1995.

2The school entered pupils for post 16 examinations, including 'A' level, for the first time in 1999. The small number of pupils entered achieved results in line with the school's own expectations though the average point score achieved was well below national averages.

3In English, pupil's attainment is below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. The performance of pupils over the last three years at the end of Key Stage 3 is well below national averages and the standards achieved by similar schools. Pupils start with very low levels of literacy skills and the

satisfactory progress they make through Key Stage 3 is insufficient to raise standards to those expected nationally. The hard work done to improve reading and the development of listening skills does raise attainment slightly. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment in English is below the national average but improving and results in GCSE examinations are improving at a faster rate than the national trend. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Key Stage 4 because teachers are more focused on the literacy skills required by the GCSE syllabus. Attainment in English is broadly in line with national expectations at the end of the sixth form, students make good progress because teachers have high expectations and encourage students to take more responsibility for their learning.

10 Whilst high level A*-C grades achieved in English are below national averages, A*-G grades are in line with national expectations. Results for English Literature have fluctuated over the last three years, from well above the national average in 1997 to below in 1998. The attainments of boys and girls show less variation than that found nationally, particularly in Key Stage 4 when mixed gender group work is encouraged. The last inspection report stated that a substantial majority of pupils achieve the national expectation and this is above the standard currently being achieved.

11 Pupils enter the school with very low levels of literacy, which impede their progress and attainment across the curriculum. The skills of writing, reading and speaking need to be developed through a coherent approach to improving literacy. The school needs to implement a literacy policy with some urgency as a major factor in improving attainment in the school.

12 In mathematics, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below national averages. Their attainment in standard tests at the end of Key Stage 3 is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining high level grades in mathematics in GCSE examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 is well below national averages but the proportion achieving a pass grade is close to the national average. Pupils' performance in mathematics has improved more in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 since the last inspection. The first results in 'A' level examinations in 1998 were well below national expectations.

13 The progress made in mathematics by pupils in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory but only raises standards slightly because of the low skill level of pupils on entry. Pupils' performance in lessons is better than that achieved in standard tests at the end of Key Stage 3. Their attainment in Key Stage 3 is sound in shape and space, number and algebra, especially in the middle and upper sets, but less than sound in mathematical investigations. Good teaching, though often prescriptive together with pupils' positive responses raises levels of performance to near expected standards. The overall performance of pupils in Key Stage 4 is below national expectations because they are not given opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in new contexts and lack confidence in mathematical investigations. Boys and girls show similar relative attainments in mathematics in line with national results. Attainment in information and communications technology (ICT) in mathematics is limited due to insufficient use. Pupils have satisfactory numeracy skills and use them to good effect in science to construct graphs, in design and technology and business education to assist in handling data and in geography to support work with coordinates.

14 In science pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is below national averages. Standards test results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998 show attainment to be well below that in all schools nationally and below the attainment in schools with similar socio-economic characteristics. At GCSE the performance of pupils achieving high grades A*-C is well below national averages and just below for grades A*-G. Evidence from lessons during the inspection supports this pattern. Attainment in the sixth form is in line with national averages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both key stages and in the sixth form because teaching is sound and pupils make gains in the acquisition of scientific knowledge, in analysing data and

identifying essential variables in practical work. Often higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged because teachers do not make effective use of higher order questioning skills and do not offer opportunities for pupils to hypothesise and evaluate investigative procedures. Attainment in ICT in science is unsatisfactory because of the little use made of resources. Attainment in science and the rate of pupils' progress is similar to that in the last inspection report. Boys generally outperform girls in Key Stage 3 tests and in GCSE examinations.

15 In all other subjects in Key Stage 3 attainment is below national expectations, except for drama, design and technology and physical education (PE) where attainment is in line with national expectations. In these subjects pupils make good use of opportunities to work individually. Pupils are interested in the lessons and make good progress in information technology (IT), drama, modern foreign languages and PE because of effective teaching. They make sound progress in history, geography and religious education (RE). Progress is unsatisfactory in music and art because teaching does not always make it clear what pupils learn in lessons.

16 Performance at the end of Key Stage 4 is above national standards in drama and in line with national expectations in design and technology, information technology, PE and business studies, but below national expectations in geography, history, art, modern foreign languages, music and RE. Pupils make very good progress in drama and good progress in geography, PE, business studies and modern foreign languages. Satisfactory progress is being made in technology, information technology, history, art and RE. Progress in music is unsatisfactory.

17 In the sixth form attainment in all subjects at 'A' level and GNVQ is at least in line with course expectations. In PE, information technology and drama attainment is above expectations. Pupils are making good progress in information technology, geography, history and PE. In drama pupils' progress is excellent.

18 Generally, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in both key stages in mainstream classes and in the learning support centre. Progress is satisfactory or good in mainstream classes where there is an inclusive approach to the curriculum, where differentiated materials are available and where pupils receive a good level of individual support. In Key Stage 4 pupils' with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in geography, music and information technology. In geography this is because there is no additional support in lessons whilst in information technology the course does not meet the needs of these pupils. In music pupils' progress is limited due to the lack of suitable planning to help them build on their prior knowledge.

19 Reading age scores for pupils attending the learning support centre improve because pupils are well-motivated to learn due to the lively and well structured teaching. Rewards are used effectively to celebrate success and the learning support centre provides a pleasant supportive environment. In withdrawal sessions teachers have good relationships with pupils and this impacts positively on the attitudes and progress made by pupils. Pupils who are included in the Support Project receive very good personal support and guidance that motivates their learning and equips them well for main school activities.

20 Governors have agreed appropriate whole-school GCSE and GNVQ performance targets with the LEA in line with statutory requirements for 2000. The rate of improvement in attainment in Key Stage 4 means that the school is well placed to meet the targets set by the governors. However, there is little evidence that departments are using data effectively to set targets for particular cohorts of pupils. Some departments therefore are not fully aware of the contribution they have to make to achieve the whole-school target.

9 Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

21 Overall, pupils' response in lessons is consistently good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. The school has maintained and built on the positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships reported in the last inspection.

22 Pupils' attitudes in lessons are positive. They have good levels of concentration, remain on task and are willing to ask questions and listen to each others' ideas and suggestions. In drama many Key Stage 4 and sixth form pupils are keen to continue their work at lunch-time and after school. In business education attitudes are good because pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and have the desire to maintain and often improve their work. Most pupils are very enthusiastic about history, especially in Key Stage 3 where pupils find the curriculum interesting and attractive. In modern foreign languages in Key Stage 3, many pupils respond enthusiastically to a variety of activities because they realise that learning a new language can be enjoyable and fun. In RE attitudes are generally positive but are unsatisfactory in a minority of lessons where objectives are unclear. In information and communications technology pupils' attitudes overall are good but they are less good in some courses at Key Stage 4 which do not cater well for the full range of ability. In PE the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning, but some pupils are distracted when tasks are inappropriate or unchallenging.

23 Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. In English, pupils behave well in response to teachers' good classroom management. In mathematics teachers have good strategies for sustaining good behaviour of pupils. In science pupil's behaviour is good when they are given responsibility to design and execute investigations. Good routines established in business education and a good ethos in lessons result in good behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is always good in music and mostly very good. In history pupils expect to work and show positive responses to the teachers' direction. Pupils cooperate well in design and technology, whilst their behaviour is generally good in drama, PE and geography and satisfactory in art.

Pupils form constructive relationships and can work collaboratively when required. In lessons where teachers expect boys and girls to work together in English, this has a positive effect on relationships and on pupil's behaviour and attitudes, particularly those of boys. In business education pupils work well together. Much of their off-site work involves working with adults in a business context. This work, which is often very sensitive, is undertaken very sensibly. In history pupils work well in pairs and groups. Throughout the school relationships are good. Pupils listen carefully to each other and show respect for each others' views. In drama pupils learn early in Key Stage 3 to value each others contributions and ideas and they relate well to each other because group work is an integral part of almost all drama lessons. They are supportive of each other and can evaluate their own and others' work sensibly and constructively. In planning sessions in RE, pupils are respectful of each other and of the views and beliefs of other people. Pupils respect their teachers and the positive working relationships between them helps create a good environment for learning

25 Out of classrooms pupils are generally polite, friendly and well-mannered. During lunchtimes and break times pupils respond well to each other and to supervisory staff and behave in an orderly, responsible way, although there is some jostling on the crowded corridors at the change of lessons. The behaviour of pupils who move between buildings when lessons change is also good.

26 The school has sound procedures and routines in place for the exclusion of pupils. However,

the number of fixed term exclusions is high and has increased since the last inspection. Boys are excluded four times as often as girls. The use of the internal exclusion room to cater for disruptive pupils has a positive effect on the overall behaviour in classrooms. Referrals to this room are significantly higher for boys than for girls in all year groups, but markedly so in Year 11.

27 Pupils with special educational needs and pupils from minority groups are treated with respect within the school community and their presence and contributions are valued. Because the school has effective monitoring procedures in relation to bullying and racism, there is a prompt and effective response to incidents of harassment, bullying and hostile behaviour. The school gives support to both the perpetrator and the victim to prevent re-occurrences.

28 Pupils have a number of opportunities in which to take on responsibility and contribute to the life of the school. Members of the school council respond well to the opportunity for pupils to have their views heard. The sixth form council have used funds effectively to establish a working base and a refreshment facility. A number of sixth formers organise and support a paired reading scheme for younger pupils. Opportunities for personal development by assisting in the library and acting as assistant receptionists are undertaken willingly and performed well.

24 **Attendance**

Attendance levels at the school are satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. There is a relatively low incidence of unauthorised absence. Absence statistics are adversely affected by the relatively high level of mid-term pupil admissions, many of whom have known attendance problems. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and there has been continual improvement since the last inspection.

30 The school actively promotes good attendance and targets and supports individual pupils with attendance problems. Registers are completed at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions, and class registers are taken during most lessons to discourage internal truancy. Statutory requirements for recording and reporting absences are being fully met.

31 Punctuality at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions is satisfactory with most pupils arriving at school on time. However, the start to many lessons and other activities is often delayed due to late arrival of the whole class. This is in part caused by the fact that pupils and staff have to move between sites for their classes, but sometimes there is no purposeful approach to movement around the school. Where pupils perceive that their next lesson will be interesting and challenging, and that the teacher will take appropriate action against latecomers, punctuality is generally good. Where the opposite is true, punctuality is unsatisfactory and this has a significant impact upon pupils' progress.

29 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

29 **Teaching**

32 The quality of teaching is satisfactory but not yet good overall. It is satisfactory in the vast majority of lessons, good in just over half and very good in about one in every five lessons. This, coupled with the positive response that pupils make to their teachers, generally results in pupils making satisfactory progress. Almost no poor teaching occurs and only a very small amount is unsatisfactory.

This is a better picture than that described in the last inspection but is not yet good enough to close the gap between pupils' current levels of attainment and national levels. Despite the proportion of good and very good teaching, some major weaknesses occur which, when combined with pupils' poor literacy skills, prevent some pupils making good and very good progress.

33 In Key Stage 3, teaching is satisfactory. It is satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons and good or better in just over half. It is very good in one in every five lessons and is occasionally excellent. Teaching in this key stage is best in Year 7 and least satisfactory in Year 8. Nevertheless, although there is very little unsatisfactory or poor teaching overall there are some important weaknesses. These relate to teachers' expectations, their use of assessment, planning, and the promotion of pupils' literacy skills. These weaknesses adversely affect pupils' progress.

34 Teaching in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and better than in Key Stage 3 but there are similar weaknesses which affect pupils' progress. In both key stages there are few occasions when teaching is good enough to increase the rate of pupils' progress beyond satisfactory. In the sixth form, teaching is satisfactory. It is satisfactory or better in more than nine in every ten lessons and in one in five lessons teaching is very good. The small amount that is unsatisfactory occurs in Year 12 with no unsatisfactory teaching in Year 13.

35 Teaching has most impact on pupils' learning outcomes in drama and business education. In these two areas, teaching across all key stages inspires and motivates the pupils to achieve the highest possible standards. This is because teachers display exceptionally high expectations of what the pupils will achieve and will accept no less. They make excellent use of ongoing assessment, making it quite clear to pupils, what they have to do to improve the quality of their work and employ a wide range of stimulating and relevant activities and approaches which help to illuminate new ideas and concepts. It is significant that these approaches allow pupils to demonstrate their understanding through means other than simply writing.

36 Teaching is good in mathematics, ICT, design and technology, geography, history, modern foreign languages and RE and satisfactory in English, science, PE and art in Key Stage 4. Teaching is least effective and unsatisfactory, despite teachers having considerable subject expertise, in music across the school and art in Key Stage 3. This is because lesson plans concentrate on the completion of different tasks and pieces of work rather than on the step-by-step build up of skills, knowledge and understanding that is then used to improve the work that follows. In addition, in music, teachers have not got a clear view of the levels of attainment expected so their assessment of what pupils do is inaccurate and undemanding.

37 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is mainly satisfactory and often good. Where teaching is good in mainstream classes this is because there is effective team planning between learning support teachers and mainstream teachers and the learning programme is designed to promote the inclusion of low attaining pupils. In lessons where there is additional support, this has the effect of keeping pupils on task and supporting their progress. However, in too many subjects, teachers do not consistently use the targets identified in individual education plans to inform their planning.

38 Many examples of good practice are evident in teaching across all subjects and the school needs to identify, share and learn from these to improve the quality of teaching overall. Teachers' expertise in their subjects is good but could be used more directly to help pupils improve their work and increase their rate of progress. In science for example some teachers are good at explaining difficult ideas. In

modern foreign language lessons, teachers use French and German fluently so pupils are encouraged to speak more confidently and in drama, teachers have excellent knowledge both of examination texts but also use knowledge of other writing, productions, music and arts to enrich the pupils' experience.

39 Since the last inspection, the range of activities and approaches used has been extended, particularly in modern foreign languages, information technology and business studies but it is still an area that needs further attention. In business studies, simulation market research, role play and visits to businesses are all used effectively to enhance the classroom work involving pupils in whole-class, paired and individual work and allow teachers to give pupils encouragement and practical support. In RE, oral work is used positively, there is good use of video clips and visits to different places of worship are undertaken. All of these strategies have a positive effect on pupils' progress. However, in mathematics, teachers' questioning restricts pupils' responses and little enquiry or investigative work is planned. In science, there are too few opportunities for pupils to speculate, evaluate or investigate and too few activities specifically focused upon extending the thinking of the higher attainers. Across all subjects insufficient use is made of information and communications technology.

40 In order to improve pupils' progress and raise levels of attainment, staff must ensure that they have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils. Teachers have high expectations in drama, ICT, RE and business studies and this contributes to sound and better standards. However in other subjects teachers do not expect enough from pupils and this restricts their attainment. In English in Key Stage 3 teachers do not extend pupils' thinking through questioning, whilst in science, teachers' expectations of higher attaining pupils are often too low. This is sometimes because teachers are unsure of what can be expected from pupils.

41 As in the last inspection, all teachers plan lessons conscientiously in terms of the activities undertaken and the resources to be used. Where there are particular strengths in planning, the specific learning that is to take place is identified and so the purpose of the activities is made absolutely clear to the pupils and they know what they have to do to get better. Often, where the proposed skill development is not made clear, pupils do the tasks but without any idea of how to improve their work so progress is limited. In English, planning does not always ensure that teachers explain the differences between spoken and written language or help pupils consider the purpose of and audience for their writing. In lesson planning overall, insufficient account is taken of the level of pupils' literacy skills. In addition, teachers do not give sufficient attention to the needs of higher attaining pupils when planning their lessons.

42 Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, setting high expectations and exerting firm but calm control. This is a strength across all subjects. In many subjects, for example in geography and history, good use is made of praise and encouragement. In music, good behaviour results from the firm discipline in an environment where relationships between teacher and pupils are very good.

43 Time is used effectively in the majority of lessons, although many lessons start late because of movement between buildings at the start of lessons. In some cases, latecomers interrupt what could have been excellent starts to lessons. Nevertheless, teachers are increasingly using time targets to instill pace and challenge into their lessons so, for example, in history, time deadlines keep pupils on task. In food and childcare courses, carefully timed activities are well used to focus on new learning and in drama, pupils are expected to work at a fast pace whilst still being given the opportunity for thoughtful reflection. However, in workshop-based courses in music and art, the pace of lessons is not well planned. In many lessons insufficient time is given to review and evaluation of key points of learning. Generally resources are used well and teachers work hard to produce attractive and relevant source

material.

In several subjects, teachers do not make good use of assessment to modify future planning especially in Key Stage 3. In PE, art and music, for example, teachers concentrate on assessing the completion of the task instead of evaluating pupils' skills and competencies and then planning subsequent activities to help pupils to improve. Teachers marking mathematics, geography and modern foreign languages mostly praise effort and do not give pupils information about how they can improve nor do they identify targets for specific development in future lessons. Across the curriculum there is too little attention to the correction of grammatical errors in English in pupils' books or of reminding them of their errors in subsequent work.

45 Teachers generally make satisfactory use of homework, but more could be done to extend the work of higher attaining pupils. Good use is made of questionnaires to check consumer views in design and technology and in business studies particularly good use is made of a case study approach to help pupils work in a business context.

44 **The curriculum and assessment**

46 The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for all its pupils and has made some significant improvements since the last inspection. The curriculum time is now in line with the recommended time of 25 hours per week although the actual teaching time is still eroded by the constraints of movement between the different buildings on the campus.

47 The curriculum has appropriate breadth and balance for most pupils. In Key Stage 3 it is satisfactory overall with a particular strength in drama and developing strengths in history, RE and modern foreign languages where clear learning pathways exist through the key stages. There are weaknesses in English, music and information technology in Year 9 because planning is not fully coherent. The fifty-period, fortnightly timetable has facilitated the separate timetabling of humanities subjects so that history, geography and RE are now taught separately and given appropriate time and emphasis. This has enabled the school to provide a more flexible, relevant and broadly-based curriculum, which includes all the National Curriculum subjects, discrete drama lessons and a well structured individual development programme. Drama brings an exciting, high quality and relevant element to the overall provision in terms of developing pupils' interests and needs and helping them to work purposefully and collaboratively.

48 The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is good. Breadth is ensured through a core curriculum of English, mathematics, double science, a modern foreign language, a technology subject, IT, RE, PE and PSE. Good balance is provided through a wide choice from two option blocks. These include a range of arts subjects such as photography and theatre arts, community service and some vocational elements such as health and social care and information technology courses. Provision in English is satisfactory in this key stage but music remains a weakness. A good choice of business education courses provides up-to-date, well structured and relevant curriculum opportunities for pupils. The balance and relevance of the curriculum is less satisfactory for pupils who choose an IT course in addition to the core IT provision. Fewer pupils take up a second language than is usual nationally and unusually few pupils follow a course in history or geography due to the extent of the core curriculum.

49 As numbers of pupils increase, the sixth form curriculum is still expanding and a good range of subjects is provided with strengths in English, drama, information technology and business education. Mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, history, art, design and technology, PE, French, law,

business and media studies are also offered as are GNVQ courses at intermediate level for information technology, leisure and tourism, health and social care and business education. The school makes every effort to allow pupils to follow the subjects of their choice even when timetabling is difficult, which does mean that occasionally, some pupils pursue their studies in lunch times. The basic provision is enhanced by an excellent programme of additional studies that allows all pupils to have opportunities to take part in Young Enterprise, word-processing, community service, sports leadership and RE. However this does not meet the statutory requirement for RE in the sixth form.

50 For all years, Individual Development provides a relevant, well planned and well taught course that covers health and sex education, drugs awareness, work on self esteem and relationships, bullying, careers, work on race and prejudice, violence and crime, money management, personal management and safety. Careers' education is a strength and is well supported by the local careers' service. It is well resourced with a comprehensive careers' library and a very good range of information technology programs which provide an excellent facility for pupils to research career pathways. The school is currently trialling an electronic mail system that gives an access point for pupils and adults in the community.

51 The school has in place a good policy for numeracy, that builds upon current practice in Key Stage 2 and has been developed in mathematics. However, a major weakness across the school is that the school does not have a coherent policy and approach to the development of pupils' literacy skills. This means that pupil's poor literacy skills continue to hinder their progress in many subjects across the curriculum. This is a key issue for the school. The provision of information technology in Key Stage 3 relies on it being delivered across the curriculum in Year 9 because information technology is not delivered as a discrete subject in Year 9. As yet, this is not managed or delivered effectively. Neither do teachers plan how they will contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in all subjects. For most pupils, access to the curriculum is satisfactory. However, pupils in Year 9 do not receive their entitlement to information technology and the withdrawal of some pupils from mainstream lessons for appropriate reading support affects continuity and progression in some classes, notably in English.

52 The previous inspection report highlighted a need to ensure more coherent planning for pupils with special educational needs across the curriculum. This continues to need improvement. However, there is now a structure to enable better liaison between the learning support department and other departments. In lessons where pupils receive additional support their work is linked to their individual education plans but this does not happen consistently in other lessons.

53 The school provides many good activities to extend the curriculum and these are appreciated by parents and pupils. Although there are not yet active clubs in mathematics, these are planned and there is an improving range in science where the timetable was suspended for one year group so pupils could take part in a problem-solving competition. Despite considerable staff involvement in musical activities and a regular concert programme, there are only modest opportunities for pupils in music clubs and ensembles, although the music curriculum has been enriched by exciting projects undertaken with a regional orchestra. A good range of PE activities is organised and theatre visits, poetry readings, performance opportunities and book clubs are provided. The school curriculum is further enhanced by sessions led by local artists and sculptors. Blind people are frequently invited to participate in school activities.

54 Developing effective assessment practice is still a key issue for the school. As reported in the last inspection, a clear policy exists. It has recently been improved and updated but the uneven practice remains both within and across subjects and this prevents pupils from making as much progress as they otherwise might. Procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs and for the annual review for pupils with statements are sound.

55 There have been improvements to assessment systems and procedures in many subjects since the last inspection. All departments receive end of Key Stage 2 test scores, cognitive ability test (CAT) scores and other test scores. In mathematics and science the use of this data helps to monitor pupils' progress. Good systems have been developed in design and technology, PE and RE. However weaknesses remain. In a number of subjects, marking is not always regular or consistent and teachers do not make effective use of it to identify ways that pupils can improve their work. In English, there is no consistency and not all teachers adopt the common marking policy. In some subjects, although assessment systems are in place, they are not used systematically, for example in the moderation folder in design and technology or to provide data for target setting in history and RE. In music a basic misunderstanding of the nature of National Curriculum levels of attainment has led to inaccurate assessment of pupils' attainment. In modern foreign languages a limited range of test material provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to achieve high performance levels.

56 In some subjects, portfolios of work are being built up to illustrate different levels of attainment but this is not yet common practice. In music, for example, very little work is collected or recorded so pupils do not have access to high quality pieces on which to model their work. Teachers have access to folders containing information about pupils with special educational needs but the extent to which this is used effectively varies considerably.

57 There are however, some real areas of strength in assessment practice which need to be spread across the whole school. In drama, for example, because assessment is embedded into the whole of the department's work, pupils are helped to understand how they can improve and consequently are motivated to achieve high standards. Self-assessment is an important feature and pupils record their achievements and targets in personal planners. In business education, formal and informal procedures are well used. Teachers keep clear records, give regular feedback and have good displays demonstrating high achievement. Pupils know their individual strengths and weaknesses and individual target setting is well established. In information technology, good assessment has been built into the schemes of work and it is effectively used. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

58 Teachers do not make use of assessment information to influence future curriculum planning. In most subjects, teachers make ongoing assessment of work in progress and help pupils move on to the next stage of work or step in the task. However, only rarely do teachers use assessment and pupil self-assessment productively, to identify individual targets for improving the quality of work produced or for refining techniques or skills. Neither is it yet customary for teachers to make changes to their medium or longer-term plans in response to the information gained from assessments to set individual targets for pupils.

59 Reports for parents have been improved since the last inspection and the format has the potential to provide accurate and helpful information to parents about their child's performance.

44

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

60 The school's contribution to pupils' social development is very good and provision for moral development is good. Planning for these aspects of pupils' development is considerable and the prevailing ethos of the school is one based on mutual respect and a strong commitment to caring for others, founded on strong moral principles. All staff lead by example and set good role models for the pupils. Provision for spiritual and cultural development however is unsatisfactory. In these two aspects there has been no significant improvement since the last inspection.

61 Provision for spiritual development is not planned in any coherent way and is often not planned

at all. The present system of assemblies and tutor periods does not offer all pupils the opportunity to participate in a daily act of collective worship and the legal requirement to do so is not met. The school recognises this, but has not yet put policies and procedures in place to meet this requirement. There is some spiritual content in assemblies which offers pupils the opportunity to think about and reflect on their own lives and contemporary issues but this is not consistent. There are no planned assembly themes apart from celebrating the major Christian festivals, for example, Christmas and Easter. In religious education however, there is an emphasis on how people believe and what they believe in, so that pupils are being given a strong grounding in what constitutes spirituality. Unfortunately, this is not followed through and built on in the other curriculum areas. Religious education is not included in the Post 16 curriculum.

62 Pupils have a good understanding of what is right and wrong and parents feel that the school's moral attitudes and values have a positive effect on their children. The school has a positive discipline policy based on consideration, fairness and respect for others. Pupils are expected to be well behaved, courteous, co-operative and have respect for each other. Counselling support in the Education Support Base is focused on helping pupils examine their own behaviour and consequences for others. There is good provision throughout the school for pupils to explore and discuss the moral and ethical aspects of their work, for example moral issues are raised and considered in relation to a number of questions in history, geography and business education lessons. Drama lessons are designed to offer opportunities to extend pupils' understanding by exploring moral dilemmas. In all subjects, there are consistent expectations of good behaviour and pupils are encouraged to have respect for their teachers, each other and the environment.

63 Provision for social development is very good. Staff establish good personal relationships with pupils and build up their confidence. Mutual respect is evident in many classrooms. Through paired and group activities pupils are encouraged to work well together collaboratively and there is strong emphasis on the development of interpersonal and group skills. Pupils consistently demonstrate concern for those less fortunate than themselves, for example, by raising funds for local homeless people and organising and running an annual Christmas party for local elderly people.

64 Pupils' cultural development does not have a high profile in the school. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures, communities, values and beliefs in religious education. In drama every opportunity is taken to enrich pupils' cultural awareness, whilst there is sound planning and promotion of cultural awareness in music. Visits are made by local artists, sculptors and poets to extend pupils' cultural understanding. However, in other curriculum areas many opportunities to extend cultural awareness are missed. This is particularly so in English, science and mathematics. There is a strong bias towards western European rather than world-wide contributions to culture.

65 Overall the provision for moral and social development is good and has a positive impact on the pupils. It helps them to develop into well-rounded individuals although they are not fully prepared for life in a modern culturally diverse society.

44

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

66 The school has good support and monitoring systems in place to reinforce its focus upon raising achievement and to ensure that pupils attend regularly and behave well. Subject departments have systems to monitor pupils' academic progress and tutors and heads of year have an overview of the academic progress of individuals. However, at present not all pupils have specific, clearly understood targets for improvement to help them raise their levels of attainment. Pupils' planners are used well to

communicate with parents, to record targets and ongoing work and are regularly checked by tutors.

67 The school has good links with primary schools in the area and preparation for pupils' transition from primary school to secondary school is good. Pupils meet their tutor groups and their tutors while still at primary school. Tutors stay with their tutor groups as they move through the school and consequently know individuals and their parents well. This enables them to carry out their role in relation to the personal guidance of pupils effectively.

68 Each class has a planned programme of personal and social education, health education and careers education and guidance which is delivered as a discrete lesson. This good programme covers a wide range of skills and knowledge necessary to develop the individual for an effective role in society. There are good procedures for dealing with bullying and incidents of a racist nature. Bullying of all kinds is taken seriously by staff and dealt with promptly. Incidents of harassment and bullying are recorded and monitored and action to prevent bullying is a feature of the tutorial programme.

69 Good relationships between teachers and pupils are supported by the presence of the management team and other staff on duty at breaks, lunch times and at other times throughout the school day and this gives a strong message that good behaviour is expected. The school has a supportive caring ethos which is actively promoted by non-teaching staff as well as teaching staff.

1 Procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are clear and well understood. The monitoring of pupils with behaviour difficulties is well managed through the pastoral system but some pupils with more challenging behaviour would benefit from a wider range of support strategies to prevent behaviour leading to exclusions. The number of fixed term exclusions has risen considerably since the last inspection. The school is currently working with the education psychological service to develop strategies to result in a more inclusive approach to working with pupils with behaviour difficulties. The school has introduced a greater emphasis on praise and reward with a structure for rewarding effort and achievement throughout the school. Examples include awarding merit stamps, certificates and prizes, sending praise cards home and awards ceremonies for pupils to receive certificates, prizes and sports awards. The introduction of the rewards system is impacting positively on the culture of the school and since it was introduced the percentage of fixed term exclusions has fallen by 5%.

71 Since the last inspection the school has put effective procedures in place to improve attendance and requirements for recording and reporting attendance are met. High priority has been given to reaching the 90% attendance target that has now been met as a result of the consistent efforts of all staff. Pupils are rewarded for 100% attendance and pupils with an attendance rate of below 60% are placed on the register of special educational needs. This has the effect of enabling all staff to quickly identify pupils with a record of poor attendance. The education welfare officer works in the school one day a week and supports pupils with persistent attendance problems. There is an attendance project which targets poor attenders.

72 The health and safety policy is sound and the school handbook contains clear procedures about health and safety matters with guidance on a wide range of issues. There are trained first aiders, fire procedures and appropriate arrangements for trips and visits. Child protection procedures are in place and there is a designated child protection officer. Explanations of the main categories of child abuse and procedures to be followed are clearly communicated, understood and implemented by all staff.

70

70 **Partnership with parents and the community**

73 Relationships between the school, parents and the local community are very good. The school welcomes parental interest and actively encourages parents to be involved. The majority of parents are keen to support their own child's learning and attendance at parents' evenings is good. There is an active and well supported parent teacher association (PTA) which organises social events, and raises funds for the school. The PTA also organises social events for members of the local community. The majority of parents report that they feel welcome in the school and are entirely confident that suggestions or complaints they may have are listened to and acted upon in an appropriate manner. Parents express a high level of satisfaction with the school.

74 Communication between the school and home about pupils' work is very good. There is a comprehensive and informative school prospectus, regular newsletters, including GCSE results and sports newsletters, calendars of events and letters home about specific topics. Annual progress reports to parents are detailed and informative although they do not always indicate what level of progress is being made. Also reports do not consistently point out what pupils can and cannot do, strengths and weaknesses and set targets for improvement which can be monitored on a regular basis by pupils and staff. The school offers appropriate opportunities to attend consultative evenings where parents can talk to class teachers and form tutors, and discuss their child's work and progress. The governing body holds an annual meeting with parents and publishes an annual report for parents. However, the latest report omits the required information on Key Stage 3 assessment results and school leavers' destinations. A majority of parents feel that they are kept well informed and have a clear understanding of what is being taught.

75 The school makes good use of the local and wider community to support pupils' work. There is a good range of social and educational trips, both residential and non-residential, and a varied range of appropriate visitors to the school. All pupils are offered the opportunity to take part in a one or two week work experience placement and the school maintains a large and useful data base of local employers. A number of local businesses and civic organisations have connections with the school through a variety of activities related to business education, personal and social education and in some career specific areas of the curriculum.

76 The provision for community service in the sixth form provides very good opportunities for pupils to be involved with local primary schools and working with the elderly. These links support pupils' personal and social development and make a positive contribution to educational standards achieved. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others who may be less fortunate than themselves and raise considerable funds for local and national charities. In addition they are given the opportunity to be actively involved with these organisations. School teams and individual pupils are well represented in competitions and tournaments. Adult community education is run within the school premises and benefits from the co-operation and assistance of members of the teaching staff and use of the school's facilities, for example, the provision of computers for information technology classes.

77 The school deservedly enjoys a very good reputation for its prominent position in the local community and is very much a part of the community which it serves. Links with the parents and community is a strength of the school and considerably enrich the quality of education provided for pupils.

70 **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

70 **Leadership and management**

78 The head teacher continues to provide good and firm leadership. The senior managers work

well together and provide a sense of purpose that supports the caring ethos of the school and gives a clear educational direction for improving achievement. This strategic view is complemented and strengthened by the well-informed and experienced governing body. Clear and appropriate management roles exist for the senior management team, which include links with governors' committees, year teams and curriculum areas. Meetings of the management team are well run and decisions are made after full debate. Since the last inspection governors and senior managers have continued to improve the quality of educational provision and the reputation of the school. Initiatives undertaken include the formation of new structures that support better communication across the curriculum, the introduction of a sixth form and successful planning bids for substantial improvements in accommodation.

79 Generally middle managers work satisfactorily within the leadership provided by the head teacher, governors and senior managers. All heads of year provide effective guidance for tutor teams and create a positive climate for learning in their year cohort. However, the quality of subject leadership varies from very good to unsatisfactory. In effectively managed departments, sustained and coherent improvements have been made but in less effectively managed departments, there is a fragmented approach to curriculum planning and inconsistent implementation of school policies.

80 The school's implementation of its aims, values and policies is satisfactory. The school charter provides clear guidelines within which the school operates. The governing body accepts the provisions in the charter as enshrining the nature and purpose of the school. Foremost in the charter is the declaration that education will be fully comprehensive with equality of opportunity for all regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs and ability. This declaration is fully reflected in the work of the school. Two principal aims, concerned with the provision of a secure learning environment and the raising of expectations and achievements are used to establish the development priorities for the school. These aims are constantly re-inforced and maintained by all staff including support staff in lessons and during lunch time. Rules to ensure the effective running of the school are included in the school brochure and given to all parents and pupils. The school keeps parents well informed and the vast majority feel that the values and attitudes promoted within the school have a positive impact on their children. However, the prime aim of the school, to achieve excellence in all aspects of education, thereby enabling each pupil to obtain the best educational, social, ethical and spiritual provision, is not fully achieved because provision for spiritual development does not yet meet requirements. The school has a full range of required policies in place but the implementation of a literacy policy and the use of ICT across the curriculum are unsatisfactory.

81 The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and curriculum planning is unsatisfactory overall, because it is not sufficiently integrated into all departmental practice. All meetings of the relevant year and subject departments are attended by the linked senior manager. Through this structure, discussions on curriculum developments are challenged and supported. In response to the previous inspection reviews of teaching and departmental organisation are taking place. This monitoring and evaluation process includes the linked senior manager and the head of the relevant subject. The process is thorough in that it includes lesson observations, a review of pupils' work and an analysis of department documentation. However, the overall effectiveness and rigour of this review process is lessened by the lack of consistent criteria for quality control. Furthermore, the review process is not supported by regular departmental monitoring and evaluation activities by subject leaders that would contribute to the maintenance of teaching quality and assist in raising standards. In order to support fully the school's aims and expectations senior managers need to develop and incorporate the monitoring and evaluation role of middle managers into the curriculum and year teams.

82 Development planning is satisfactory overall but there are shortcomings in providing information on training and financial implications. The school development plan sensibly lists five appropriate priorities for the 1999-2000 academic year and a list of actions it intends to take over the next three years to meet its two principal aims. It is a clear template for the curriculum and year team plans which take account of the current development priorities. The plan has a clear framework,

identifying tasks for each priority and the staff who will lead the work. Appropriate performance indicators are shown but timelines are imprecise and do not indicate when work is to start and finish. The plan shows evaluation of its outcomes will be carried out in February 2000, but does not indicate how this will take place.

83 The school has made sound progress since the last inspection in November 1995 and has made a satisfactory response to its key issues. Among the nine key issues for action in the previous inspection report, seven have been addressed in full or are developing satisfactorily. Standards at GCSE have shown an overall trend of improvement and are now at highest ever levels for the school though work remains to be done in improving attainment at Key Stage 3. Apart from the need to further develop information technology in some subjects, compliance with National Curriculum requirements is in place. Strategies to improve attendance have been successful and currently attendance is at nationally expected levels. Teaching time has been increased and links between the senior managers and subject areas have been strengthened and a system of curriculum reviews put in place. However, aspects of the review process need more rigor to be fully effective. Health and safety hazards in science and physical education have been addressed whilst those in technology are included in a rebuilding programme in train this term. The school has in place the necessary assessment information but procedures to plan for pupils' future learning require a more coherent approach across all subjects to aid the setting of targets which pupils and departments can achieve.

84 There are key issues from the last inspection where much work remains to be done. The development and implementation of an effective literacy policy across the curriculum is of particular concern given the limited literacy skills of many pupils. In addition requirements for a daily act of collective worship are still not met nor is the necessary provision made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. These therefore remain key issues for the school.

85 A more coherent approach to management resulting from the new structure of curriculum and year team links has begun to contribute to the school's capacity to raise standards. The school is also beginning to make effective use of the national test data and standardised cognitive ability tests (CAT) information from Key Stage 2 and Year 7. The development of these systems is bringing a more coherent approach to focusing on the raising of attainment and is a good foundation to secure an improvement of standards.

1The school has a positive ethos founded on good working relationships and respect for the individual. It is committed to raising attainment and staff show a determination to implement the development priorities for the school. This positive ethos is supportive of equal opportunities and these principles are integral to the aims of the school. However, the previous inspection report said that there was little evidence of equal opportunities being a priority for development. The school has an equal opportunities statement but does not have a detailed policy document. There is no overt mention of equal opportunities in the development plan, but some areas identified for development, such as work with poor attendees, contribute to improvements in this area. The school community works well together and attitudes at all levels are good. There are no arrangements to systematically monitor and evaluate the performance of boys and girls and their involvement in the full range of activities of the school. However, the school plans to make a new appointment to further develop work on equal opportunities.

87 The governing body does not fulfil a number of its statutory duties. Opportunities for spiritual development and a daily act of collective worship are not in place. The annual report to parents does not include all the necessary information required. The teacher appraisal system is not in place. Information technology is not fully integrated into the planned curriculum for Year 9.

88 The teaching staff of the school are appropriately qualified and effectively deployed and are well supported by technicians and ancillary staff. The reprographics department gives particularly good support, producing high quality resources and access to copying facilities. With the large numbers of new staff who have joined the school in the last few years, there is a good balance of experience and staff morale is good.

89 The recently appointed staff bring in a wealth of new ideas, energy and enthusiasm which have inspired existing staff to share and improve their own skills. However, without a more focused emphasis on investigating the way teaching and assessment can promote the development of skills and knowledge, particularly in the higher attaining pupils, teaching will not be good enough to improve standards. The school has been struggling to manage its current level of funding and the impact of the cuts has been to severely reduce the amount spent on professional development. The school is aware that it will need to be more discriminating in its choice of professional development, prioritising more astutely and using the school systems more rigorously to support only that which will have most impact on learning. Currently, although there is a sensible central check on funding for professional development, which is allocated on an ongoing basis against priorities in the school and departmental development plans, there is no overall training plan.

90 The school provides very good induction for its new staff. Individual mentors are identified and regular meetings with senior staff help new teachers get to grips with classroom problems and issues about teaching processes. These procedures are appreciated by new staff. Recent departmental reviews have opened out the discussion about teaching but these now need to be more searching and self critical and need to focus more directly on specific aspects of teaching such as challenge, expectations and questioning to extend learning. Appraisal is not currently being formally undertaken.

91 Overall the school's accommodation is satisfactory and varies from very good in some areas, such as, the modern foreign languages department, to adequate, particularly in the design and technology department. There are sufficient teaching areas within the school to allow the full curriculum to be taught satisfactorily, but in some departments classrooms tend to be small for the number of pupils in classes and are cramped.

92 There are good facilities for physical education, both indoor and outdoor, but the changing rooms are in need of refurbishment. There is adequate storage space for current resources and pupils' work. The school is on a split site and the distance between departments and classrooms can cause delays to some lessons and affects pupils progress on occasions which has a negative impact on pupils' learning. There is full access to all ground floor curriculum areas for pupils with physical disabilities, and good disabled toilet provision but there is currently no lift access to the upper floor accommodation. The school buildings are clean and well maintained but some areas are in a poor state of decoration and repair. Much effort has been made to brighten and enliven the learning environment. There are attractive displays, both informative and celebrating pupils' achievements throughout the school. The Learning Support Centre provides a suitable and pleasant environment for teaching and this has a positive effect on pupils learning.

93 Much improvement work has been carried out on the buildings since the last inspection and the school has drawn up detailed plans for major building and refurbishment work. The accommodation has been rationalised against curriculum needs. Major rebuilding and reallocation work is scheduled to begin soon and be completed before the end of the current academic year.

1 Generally the level of resourcing is adequate but not generous and resources are of satisfactory quality.

In humanities for example, there are sufficient texts and materials for the courses in Years 7 and 8 because history, geography and RE are taught in rotation so books and artefacts for any one subject are not needed by more than one class at any one time. In modern foreign languages, although there are sufficient texts for use in the classroom, there are not enough for each pupil to take one home for homework and so opportunities for extending pupils' learning at home are lost. In English, although worksheets are plentiful, the quality of printed materials is often not as good as that which the pupils can produce themselves using information technology and this does not motivate nor set a good example. Departments have a budget allocation for special educational needs and this is used effectively.

95 In information technology, spending on computers is greater than that spent nationally but the school still has to make use of old machines and there is a shortage of software for new machines. In business education resources are adequate and of good quality. In some subjects, the quality and range of resources are unsatisfactory. In science, apparatus is of poor quality and there is a shortage of information and communications technology equipment, particularly that which can provide pupils access to higher levels of attainment such as data measuring hardware. In design and technology resources are inadequate but are nevertheless deployed well. In music although there are sufficient keyboards for every pupil to work individually, the quality and range of other acoustic instruments is poor.

96 The school has invested a considerable amount of funding improving the library resources centre since the last inspection. It is now all on one site and systems and strategies have been set up for its more efficient support of the curriculum. It is well managed and provides a welcoming accommodation for pupils to access books and information and communications technology. Borrowing levels are increasing, book loss has been reduced and a range of computer technology installed. Much of the stock remains old and uninviting but the staff are reluctant to remove it from the shelves until new stock is acquired. There is a particular lack of good information books for readers with poor reading skills. Much still remains to be done to increase levels of stock to support the curriculum and establish more systematic links between department and library planning.

94

94 **The efficiency of the school**

97 The school's management of its resources is sound and the governors, through effective budget setting, have moved the school from the deficit at the time of the last inspection into a secure financial position. Clear financial roles and responsibilities exist for governors, the head teacher, the business manager and cost centre managers. As indicated in the last inspection report governors play an active and effective role in financial planning through monthly meetings of their finance committee. At these meetings governors monitor the actual expenditure against that which is planned and question the business manager and head teacher when clarification is required. Arrangements are in place for appropriate funding of all teaching and support areas of the school.

98 Expenditure on teaching staff is relatively low and costs for administration and education support staff are in the median range for similar schools. The pupil-teacher ratio of 18.1:1 is above national averages and the teaching contact ratio of 74% is in the lower quartile for similar schools. This deployment of staff is effective because it provides staffing to give additional support alongside the taught curriculum. The use of learning resources in the school is generally satisfactory although the teaching of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. A few departments link with the library staff and use the library well but overall it could be better used by many subjects to extend work on research and to promote pupils' literacy skills. Accommodation is allocated and used appropriately though the governors have planned further building work, to start immediately after the inspection, which will enhance provision for drama, mathematics and science.

99 Financial control is good because procedures are in place that allow for regular scrutiny of accounts. The experience of governors in moving between state maintained and grant maintained sectors has been influential in sharpening the financial skills needed in budget setting, budget monitoring and contract tendering. All recommendations in the latest auditor's report, May 1999, have been implemented. However, costings for the priorities in the development plan need to be completed.

100 School administration is good because systems are effective and support teaching staff in their work in an unobtrusive way. Administrative systems and processes are clearly defined in the staff handbook along with appropriate role responsibilities. The school calendar is given to all parents, pupils and staff at the beginning of the academic year. Day-to-day administration is effective because routines are established and followed by staff and pupils. Reprographic systems are good and effectively support pupils' learning through the provision of good quality materials.

101 The school has an above average allocation of free meals and the attainment of pupils at intake is well below that expected nationally. After three years, at the end of Key Stage 3, slight improvement has been made but pupils' attainment remains well below average when compared with all schools and with similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment has improved and whilst still well below nationally expected standards, is in line with similar schools and overall pupils make sound progress. Given the above average expenditure per pupil the school provides satisfactory value for money.

94 **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

94 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

94 **English**

102 The 1998 and 1999 National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are well below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. Although these results are above the levels achieved at the time of the previous inspection they have been falling for the last three years. Levels of attainment in GCSE examinations as indicated by the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in English are still below national standards. However, the trend over the last four years is rising at a faster rate than the national trend and the unconfirmed 1999 results show an improvement on those achieved in 1998. The proportion gaining A*-G grades is in line with national expectations and almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve a grade in English. Attainment at the end of the sixth form, as reflected by the school's first A Level results in 1999, is close to the national average. On inspection evidence pupils' attainment is low in comparison with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3, still low but improving by the end of Key Stage 4 and broadly in line with national expectations at the end of the sixth form

103 Attainment in all aspects of the subject, apart from pupils' listening skills, is low. Most pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 can talk with reasonable confidence about themselves or familiar things, but very few can articulate clearly ideas or opinions, or use exploratory talk effectively to aid their learning. Their listening skills are good. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and remember what has been said to them. The department has worked hard to improve pupils' reading through the reading webs scheme, paired reading and the ten minute session for quiet reading at the beginning of many Key Stage 3 lessons and this has encouraged pupils to enjoy their reading. Most can read straightforward texts with understanding, but they find it difficult to read for inference or deduction or to search for and select appropriate information. Pupils writing skills are weak. As with speaking, they are more confident when writing about themselves but when they are asked to write about literature or to explore complex ideas or use analysis they find it very difficult to express themselves clearly. This is partly because they do not talk enough about their ideas before writing them down.

104 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. In Key Stage 3, pupils acquire knowledge and understanding about language and literature at a reasonable rate but do not develop their skills of reading, writing and speaking at the same rate because the English curriculum does not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn, practise and consolidate these skills. In lessons where teachers do teach these skills, such as the lesson where the teacher used her assessment of a speaking activity related to the study of "Jane Eyre" to show pupils how to improve the appropriateness of the language they used, then progress is much better. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4 because teachers concentrate in a more focused way on the specific forms of reading and writing that the GCSE syllabus requires. Sixth form students make good progress because teachers have high expectations and require students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. This good practice needs to be developed earlier.

105 Pupils display generally positive attitudes to English. They behave well, are willing to involve themselves in activities and want to succeed, particularly in Key Stage 4, and relate well to their teachers and to each other. They contribute to small group discussions but are less confident in whole class situations. In those classrooms where teachers expect boys and girls to sit next to each other this has a generally positive effect on behaviour, relationships and attainment.

106 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. Good

features of lessons include the management of pupils' behaviour and teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject. Teachers are also skilled at identifying the learning objectives for lessons, but they rarely share these with pupils and the activities they plan do not always enable these objectives to be met. They use praise well to encourage pupils but need to balance this by showing pupils where there are weaknesses in their work and helping them to improve. At present marking is not always completed promptly and pupils are not given enough feedback on their work. Attainment could be further improved if teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, ensure that lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and extend the range of teaching strategies by more use of information and communications technology. Teachers extend pupils learning through links with the Derby Telegraph, through regular language sessions led by local poets and by encouraging involvement in the National Young Writers competitions.

107 Since the previous inspection the downward trend in GCSE results has been reversed and clear assessment procedures to track pupils' progress have been designed. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was seen and this is an improvement on what was observed at the last inspection. Other issues, including the development of common schemes of work for Key Stage 3, are yet to be addressed but there is now a committed and competent team of teachers who, together with firmer leadership and management, have the capacity to take the department forward. The introduction of systematic monitoring and evaluation of practice is needed to enable teachers to share and extend the areas of good practice in this subject.

108 Pupils enter the school with very low levels of literacy, which impede their attainment across the curriculum. The school recognise this and is developing strategies to improve these key skills. However, there remains considerable variation across departments and in most subjects pupils are not systematically taught the specific styles of reading or writing that are required. The school has yet to implement a coherent policy that will teach pupils how to use books and texts as sources of information and how to use a range of types of speaking in a variety of circumstances both formal and informal.

109 Drama is taught as a separate subject within the expressive arts faculty to all pupils in Key Stage 3. Drama and theatre arts are offered as GCSE subjects and drama as an A Level course in the sixth form. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations even though they start in Year 7 from a very low base. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils are attaining standards that are above average, and this is reflected in the results that they gain in their GCSE examinations. By the end of the sixth form students attain standards that are very high in comparison with those that are achieved nationally. The first candidates were entered for A Level drama in 1999 and 80% achieved Grades A and B compared with a national figure of 38%.

110 Pupils in Key Stage 3 make very good progress because they enjoy their lessons and are increasingly enabled to take an active part in developing and improving their own work. In Year 7 they rapidly acquire knowledge of the conventions of drama. They develop the ability to create and sustain character and to select appropriate ways of presenting the drama. By the end of Year 9, pupils demonstrate an understanding of key elements of theatre and are beginning to develop their performance skills. They collaborate well to create and present some absorbing pieces of drama. During Years 10 and 11, pupils make very good progress. By the end of the key stage pupils have acquired excellent knowledge of a wide range of dramatic conventions and understand the processes involved in presenting ideas and themes in dramatic form. They work together to shape these materials into appropriate and highly effective pieces of theatre.

111 Pupils display very positive attitudes in drama lessons. They arrive promptly, set out the studio ready for lessons, absorb themselves readily in activities and often continue their work during break, lunchtime and after school. They behave well and collaborate sensibly in groups. Pupils learn early in Key Stage 3 to value each other's contributions and ideas. They relate well to their teachers and to other

pupils, support each other and can evaluate their own and others' work sensitively and constructively. Pupils enjoy the responsibility they are offered to formulate ideas, to plan their work and to select appropriate ways of presenting the drama.

112 The quality of teaching is excellent. Teachers inspire their pupils through their own enthusiasm and commitment. They have high expectations, plan schemes of work and individual lessons so that pupils can recognise the progress they make. They ensure that pupils meet with success in situations that become increasingly challenging. Lessons have good pace and pupils are at times expected to work at an incredibly rapid rate, devising tableaux and freeze frames in seconds, but they are also given opportunities for thoughtful reflection. Even when plenty of time is given for devising a piece of theatre such is their commitment that they use the time fruitfully and do not waste it. Teachers make very good use of resources such as atmospheric lighting, paintings, photographs, music and poetry to make lessons varied and effective and to offer an imaginative and enriching experience to their pupils. This enrichment continues outside the normal school day when pupils are offered opportunities to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities which include public performances, often of work that they have devised themselves, and theatre visits both locally and further afield.

113 Through committed and enthusiastic leadership and teamwork teachers have created an ethos where pupils are not afraid to experiment and take risks and through this they ensure that drama makes a substantial contribution to pupils' personal, creative and cultural development.

94

Mathematics

114 Pupils' attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with national averages. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is below national expectations because many pupils do not have the confidence to apply their learning to mathematical problems in a range of new contexts, and in examinations. Attainment in the sixth form is in line with national expectations. Results in the 1997 and 1998 national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were well below the national averages and those achieved in similar schools. In these tests girls very slightly outperformed boys relative to national averages. Key Stage 3 results for 1999 are better than previous years but still below national averages. Pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 has improved since the last inspection.

115 In Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher grades A* to C in the 1998 GCSE examinations was well below average. Very few pupils achieved the highest grades. The proportion of pupils who achieved a pass grade, however, was close to the national average. The attainment of boys' and girls' was relatively similar to that achieved nationally. Since the last inspection, results have improved steadily and the GCSE results for 1999 maintain the improvement. The trend of improvement is greater than the national trend. Examination results at A-level in 1998 were well below average. This was the first year that the school entered candidates for this examination and a significant proportion did not achieve an A-level grade.

116 Pupils' general standards of numeracy are broadly adequate to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils can use their number skills and knowledge of drawing graphs to support their work in science and data handling techniques are used appropriately in design and technology, business education and geography. Pupils are able to use their knowledge of coordinates and scale to enhance their work in geography. However, pupils do not make good use of calculators because they tend to use them far too often for trivial calculations.

117 Pupils in Year 7 make a secure start by working through a carefully structured scheme of work and their overall progress throughout Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. On occasions, however, pupils' progress in mixed ability classes in Year 7 is not as good as it should be because too much time is spent on repetitive practice of skills that have already been mastered by most members of the class. For

example, in one lesson in Year 7 lower attaining pupils benefited from a large amount of practice in plotting and reading the coordinates of points on grids but the high attaining pupils lacked suitable challenge and extension opportunities. Classes are setted in mathematics from half-term in October.

118 The majority of pupils in Years 8 and 9 have learned effective methods of calculation and can solve everyday problems using their knowledge of measurements in metric units and digital time notation. High attainers, in particular, manipulate algebraic expressions and solve appropriate equations with suitable accuracy. Their progress in geometry and in handling data is equally sound, and sometimes it is good. For example, a class of high attainers in Year 8 extended their earlier work on averages to cumulative frequency graphs. They responded very well to the quick pace of the lesson and to the challenging questions from their teacher and made rapid progress. As a result, their attainment was above that usually expected of pupils of this age. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, respond well to the good individual support given by their teachers and support assistants and make sound progress in numeracy. In Year 9 a group of lower attaining pupils were able to use the various conventions and notations for reading and recording time of day in the context of television programmes. However, many pupils in Key Stage 3 lack a quick and ready recall of number facts and rely far too heavily on calculators to do calculations that could be done mentally.

119 In Key Stage 4 pupils' progress through Year 10 is generally systematic and on occasions they are required to work with more independence. In one class, skilful teaching enabled pupils to draw on previous knowledge and solve problems. In these lessons pupils gained in confidence and make good progress. However, generally pupils' confidence to solve problems and apply their knowledge of number to new situations is unsatisfactory. Few pupils have the skills to investigate a mathematical problem and reach a conclusion expressed algebraically. Too many pupils generally achieve a low standard in the prescribed skills and knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and data handling. Although many pupils practise these skills with accuracy and make sound progress during lessons they do not have the necessary confidence and independence to tackle problems in new contexts. Consequently, their attainment in GCSE examinations is below that which they demonstrate during lessons.

120 Whilst pupils' attainment overall is below average at the end of Key Stage 4 pupils in the top set achieve the standards expected for 16 year olds. High attaining pupils make good progress in, for example, work on rates of change and making accurate interpretations of graphs, low attaining pupils make sound progress when the teaching is good and when practical work is used as a method of learning. Pupils with special educational needs achieve a sound level of competence in many aspects of numeracy. For example pupils can extract information and work out details of holiday flights with supplements and accurately calculate costs.

121 The progress made by A-level students is sound, and a few achieve high standards. Students generally learn to work with more independence although they are not pushed to think for themselves sufficiently often. They tackle their work with enthusiasm and achieve good standards in the techniques of solving equations containing circular functions.

122 Pupils respond well to mathematics and many demonstrate positive attitudes to the subject. They are willing to answer questions, to work at least at a moderate pace and to generally do their best. A minority ask questions to further their understanding and occasionally rise to challenges set by their teacher, but more could be done to encourage these responses. Most pupils present their work neatly but not always logically. Behaviour is generally good and most pupils try hard and are willing workers. However, a minority resist good attempts to teach them and are blatantly disruptive and this has the effect of slowing their progress. Most pupils form constructive relationships with their peers and their teachers, enjoy humour and participate positively in lessons.

123 The overall quality of the teaching of mathematics is good. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and in one in four lessons teaching is very good. Teachers' good subject knowledge is frequently reflected in the high quality of questions and discussion which builds current work on that done earlier. Lessons are generally planned with clear objectives and include a suitable range of activities well matched to National Curriculum requirements. Teachers' expectations of how pupils will learn are sometimes limited, particularly for those pupils in the middle sets. Methods of teaching include many clear demonstrations and explanations of mathematical skills and techniques but too often teachers do not invite pupils to actively participate in discussions. Skills and routines are often practised more than is necessary. Teachers effectively manage pupils' behaviour and the pace of lessons is satisfactory. On a few occasions only information technology is used effectively to enhance learning particularly in developing aspects of numeracy in Year 7.

124 Teachers make sensible use of practical work to help pupils' understanding of new ideas, especially in geometry, handling data and probability. However, too few opportunities are offered for investigations or challenging situations that require pupils to think for themselves. Teaching strategies restrict opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in working things out for themselves and many pupils become over-dependent upon the teacher. This contributes to their lack of success in examinations.

125 Pupils are assessed formally at appropriate stages in the year. Teachers make good on going assessments of pupils' understanding during lessons and most misunderstandings are cleared up promptly by discussion. Homework is set regularly and is generally appropriate. Marking is done regularly. It frequently adds encouraging comments but it fails to distinguish between pupils' attainment and their effort or progress. This confusion, together with inconsistencies between teachers, are clearly reflected in pupils' end of year reports. The sound marking and assessment policy needs following consistently by all mathematics teachers. The shortcomings identified in marking and assessment in the previous inspection still remain. The subject is led energetically by a relatively new head of department who has the skills to manage the necessary improvements. Opportunities to share and evaluate good practice through a systematic joint observation and monitoring process would further support the identified improvements.

94 Science

126 Over the last few years results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 have been well below the national average. In 1998 the performance of pupils was well below national averages for all schools and below average in relation to similar schools with boys outperforming girls. Performance in national tests has slightly improved since the last inspection. Standards of attainment in class work at the end of Year 9 are below national expectations. At the end of Year 11 attainment is also below national expectations. Teachers are beginning to make more effective use of data to identify and target attainment of individual pupils. In 1998 the percentage of A*-C grades obtained in GCSE double-award science was well below national averages. The percentage of pupils obtaining A*-G grades was just below national averages with boys outperforming girls. There has been a slight improvement in GCSE examination performance this year and since the last inspection. In the sixth form, overall pass rates in the first A-level examinations taken in physics, chemistry and biology varied considerably between subjects. The pass rate in chemistry was very low in comparison with biology and physics. Current attainment in the sixth form is in line with national expectations.

127 Overall pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below national expectations but their progress is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring factual knowledge such as the basic properties of different rock types and the function of simple electrical components. Pupils' technical vocabulary does not improve as much as it should. Often higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged and they make less progress than they might in

understanding key ideas such as rates of change and applying their knowledge across a range of contexts. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in handling practical apparatus safely and identifying factors to test and control in experiments. Pupils' use of their scientific knowledge to develop testable hypotheses and to evaluate the quality of their experiments remains significantly under-developed. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in interpreting data presented in graphs and tables. More able pupils make insufficient progress in using their mathematical skills to produce hypotheses and evaluate results using techniques such as lines of best-fit and inverse proportion. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Sixth form students make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas and experimental procedures.

128 Pupils respond enthusiastically to experimental work because they are motivated by opportunities to take responsibility for the design and execution of investigations. They work well together in small groups when carrying out research tasks. They are willing to ask questions of each other and teachers and their concentration levels are usually high except in lessons where tasks lack sufficient challenge. Behaviour is good with pupils relating well to each other and teachers.

129 The quality of teaching is satisfactory across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well to consolidate pupils' understanding of scientific facts. Lessons have clear structures, and experimental work takes proper account of health and safety requirements. Management of pupils' behaviour is very good with quiet, firm control and good use of praise. The best teaching is characterised by enthusiasm, high expectations, and good pace. A wide range of teaching strategies is used and in a lesson where teaching was very good, pupils were asked to role-play the behaviour of molecules in a chemical reaction. In many lessons expectations of higher attaining pupils are too low as a result of teachers' planning taking insufficient account of pupils' prior learning.

130 Teachers often use questions skilfully to reinforce factual knowledge. However, too few questions are asked that challenge pupils to apply their knowledge in different contexts and explain their ideas at length. Insufficient use is made of teaching strategies that support the development of higher level investigative skills and this limits pupils' progress. Spoken feedback to pupils often emphasises praise and encouragement and in the best lessons gives clear advice on how to improve performance. However, the quality of marking is unsatisfactory and teachers do not give enough attention to correcting pupils' misconceptions and errors in their use of technical vocabulary and do not provide pupils with a commentary on strengths, weaknesses and ways to improve. Homework tasks are appropriately linked to lesson content with some good coursework assignments in Years 10 to 13.

131 The work of the department is benefiting from new leadership informed by a clear vision and determination to improve. Some well thought out improvements have already taken place in curriculum planning and recording procedures in Years 10 to 13. However, insufficient emphasis has been placed on the use of assessment information in Years 7 to 11 in developing schemes of work and teaching approaches that ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged. The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department is unsatisfactory. However, teachers are beginning to share practice and review work in year team. The quality of most of the laboratory accommodation remains poor but improvements are included in the current building programme. Improvements have been made to the range and quality of textbook provision in Years 7 to 9 but the quality and range of available materials and equipment remains unsatisfactory. The use of information and communications technology to support pupils' learning remains unsatisfactory because pupils do not have enough access to appropriate equipment.

132 At the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment is below that expected nationally for their ages. From a low base on entry to Year 7, pupils mostly make unsatisfactory progress in art and this is not fast enough to enable them to reach national expectations. Attainment in Key Stage 3 has improved since the last inspection but is not consistent across the department. In 1998 at Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils gaining (A*-C) grades in GCSE examinations was well below the national average and across all grades (A*-G) it was broadly in line. Since the previous inspection results have fluctuated as have the numbers being entered for the examination. In 1998 almost two thirds of the entry were boys and although results were below national figures in the higher grades boys performed better than the girls, which is counter to national expectations. In 1999 the profile of the higher grades shows an improvement on previous years' results. Overall attainment since the previous inspection remains broadly the same in Key Stage 4. In the sixth form with a very small number of students, attainment and progress is satisfactory.

133 Pupils' attainment is strongest in investigating and making but not uniform across the department. Pupils' progress is best when there is a clear framework and they develop their ideas from studies based on first hand experience to the finished piece. For example in Year 8, where there is some good use of drawing based on observation and development of this into print, usually in the form of mono-prints. There is some sound development of 3-dimensional work in Key Stage 3 and 4 in clay and papier mache, the latter in Year 10 being used to good effect in producing containers and sculptural forms. A small group of pupils in Key Stage 4 use paint, pastels and print with vigour and sensitivity to express themselves and produce good work. However, there is a lack of consistency across the department which hinders pupils' attainment and progress because basic skills and good practice are not being identified and taught progressively and systematically. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is less well developed across all key stages. Although most lessons make reference to artists, the reason or relevance of this is not fully understood by most pupils. Basic technical vocabulary is under developed and many pupils in Key Stage 3 have little understanding of simple colour theory, or the characteristics of different grades of pencil and their use. Use of sketchbooks is a growing strength across all key stages, with some particularly good examples in Year 11. The use of information and communications technology is under developed in the department.

134 Pupils' attitudes to work are generally positive and their response in lessons overall is satisfactory and sometimes good. This is evident when the task is clear, pupils listen carefully to the teacher, the pace of the lesson is brisk and classroom organisation enables easy access to equipment and materials in an orderly way. Relationships are satisfactory and most pupils show respect for each other, their own and others work and materials and equipment.

135 The quality of teaching is variable across the department and overall unsatisfactory. Teachers' knowledge is mostly satisfactory. However, in some instances teachers do not identify clear lesson objectives, communicate them effectively and structure planning and delivery systematically. Occasionally the unsatisfactory use of time and resources reduces the effectiveness of the lesson. Teachers' expectations are broadly sound and there is good in class support for pupils with special educational needs. Differentiation is mainly by outcome and teacher intervention and is mostly effective. Homework is set regularly in Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form it is used to research the units of work.

136 The curriculum for art in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and has breadth and balance. The range of courses in Key Stage 4 is sound and all pupils have many opportunities to make use of the art department facilities outside the normal timetable. Good use has been made of visiting artists to enrich the curriculum. Assessment procedures are appropriate and statutory requirements are met. Further steps now need to be undertaken to ensure progression and continuity in basic skills and techniques in

Key Stage 3 and to develop the role of information and communications technology in the art curriculum.

137 Leadership of the department is sound and provides an appropriate direction for the subject. There is a positive ethos in the art area. The points raised in the previous inspection have been addressed either fully or in part and satisfactory progress has been made. There is now a need to develop monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department, reconsider the organisation of basic equipment and materials in order to underpin the curriculum and revise the department development plan to place greater emphasis on pupils' achievement.

94

94 Business Studies

138 Business education has been introduced since the previous inspection and is offered at GCSE and A and AS level with GNVQ business at intermediate level. Attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. GCSE results in 1997 and 1998 and provisional results for 1999 indicate that the percentage of pupils gaining (A*-C) and (A*-G) are in line with national averages. The national improvement in (A*-C) over the same period has been maintained by the school. Although pupils in Key Stage 4 achieve a satisfactory standard their attainment is strongest in terms of investigation and evaluation and weaker in the acquisition and application of knowledge. The A and AS level and GNVQ courses are at an early stage of implementation. Provisional A and AS level results in 1999 and the current external assessment of completed modules in Year 13 indicate that at this point in the course, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. A and AS level pupils attain appropriate standards across the programme and they are particularly good at developing research skills. GNVQ results in 1998 and 1999, although for a small number of pupils, show an improving completion rate with the majority of pupils in 1999 achieving distinction and merit grades.

139 Pupils' progress in business education, including pupils with special educational needs, is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. At GCSE, pupils' prior attainment is below average, particularly in reading and writing skills, but over the two years of the course, most pupils make good progress enabling them to achieve national expectations. The majority of pupils acquire knowledge, critical understanding and the ability to apply business concepts to solve problems through using and evaluating information. In Year 11, for example, pupils study market segmentation and market research methods and go on to design and implement a market survey using a questionnaire to solve a marketing problem. GNVQ pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of business together with core skills such as information and communications technology. The majority of A and AS level pupils are continuously learning about business within familiar and unfamiliar situations and applying their knowledge and understanding to analyse business problems. In Year 13, for example, pupils undertake a research assignment and investigate such areas as the factors contributing to the loss of production in an engineering company to finding reasons for variations in turnover on a market stall. All pupils make good progress using information technology skills as an aid to learning in business education.

140 Pupils have a good attitude to their business education lessons; they are involved in and enjoy their work. Pupils sustain concentration, work well together and increase in confidence as they gain feedback about their work. They are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and have the desire to maintain and often improve their grades. They respond very well when given the opportunity to take responsibility, for example, in Year 10, bringing the business section of a newspaper to a lesson and using the telephone to find the head office address of a company.

141 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and plan thoroughly, teaching programmes within a unit or modular framework. They have very high expectations of pupils, exemplified by displays illustrating A* work for GCSE and GNVQ induction which gives clear guidance about distinction and merit grades. Time is well used during lessons to ensure a good pace of work is sustained. There is a well-structured scheme of work for each course and objectives are given at the beginning of lessons to ensure pupils know what is to be learnt. Teachers employ a good variety of teaching methods and resources. These range from whole class teaching, the use of a simulation such as a product survey, to illustrate business practice and the application of marketing theory, to individual and paired activities, often involving the effective use of a computer to aid learning. Teachers know their classes well and the assessment of pupils' progress during lessons is used well to decide on the next steps. For example, a review of progress of the A level research assignment led to additional guidance about presentation and the preparation by pupils of a revised timetable for the completion of their work. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported with additional learning resource materials and well-focused individual or group teaching during lessons. Homework is well chosen to enable learning to be applied to business practice, this is particularly effective in the sixth form.

142 The curriculum for business education is good, making appropriate provision for breadth, balance and relevance. Knowledge and understanding is acquired within units and modules and the effective problem solving approach enables learning to be consolidated as well as developing research skills of analysis and evaluation. The strong leadership of the business education department sets high expectations for pupils and teachers and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. Development planning is satisfactory, but has yet to incorporate pupil targets for improvement for year groups and accurate resource requirements. Teachers effectively monitor and evaluate their work through regular reviews, but there is no systematic observation of teaching. The learning environment is satisfactory, there are good displays of pupils' work, but lessons are undertaken in two buildings which involves teachers' and pupils' in considerable movement between lessons. The provision of a computer network this year is already having a positive impact on pupils' progress.

94

Design and Technology

143 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is in line with that expected nationally for their ages. By the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils gaining (A*-C) and (A*-G) grades over all the courses offered by the department, has improved steadily and is broadly in line with national averages and in excess of the overall school performance. Pupils' attainment is low when they enter Year 7 but they make sound progress across the subject's different material areas over both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Pupils make consistently good progress in food and textiles lessons, and examination of work indicates that this is sustained over time. Clear improvements have been made in work with food since the last inspection and good progress in textiles had been maintained. In resistant materials, electronics and graphics progress is not made consistently. In some of these lessons good progress is made, for example, in identifying design innovations which make electric plugs easier for the disabled to handle or wire up. However, there is not enough planned progression within the work across these aspects of technology. The structured nature of GCSE coursework helps teachers to focus pupils' work on the assessment criteria which must be met to reach grade C.

144 Attainment is higher in the practical aspects of the subject than in designing, except for textiles where design work is good. Graphic skills are formally taught in discrete units of work, but there is no continuity or progression into design work for other projects. The range of graphic techniques taught is very narrow. Consequently, drawing and design skills continue to be weak in Key Stage 3 and little progress has been made in this area since the last inspection. There is some good practice in the use of information technology for presentation in Year 11 but the planned use of information technology is not

currently incorporated enough into the subject. Staff are beginning to use assessment information plus their existing knowledge to set pupils' individual targets for GCSE grades. Although at an early stage of development, this is a positive move forward and will have greater impact if introduced at the beginning of Year 10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 3 because of the effective intervention and support provided by teachers. In Key Stage 4 pupils' progress is satisfactory overall with the better progress being made in the food technology and childcare courses.

145 Pupils have generally good attitudes to design and technology in all courses in Key Stage 3, and in food, textiles and child care in Key Stage 4. Attitudes are much more variable, especially amongst boys in the workshop based courses at Key Stage 4. Some boys are not sufficiently engaged in their projects and show little interest in moving their design work forward with sufficient speed. Where pupils' interest has been captured, for example in an electronics lesson on the measurement of various values in a circuit, then very good attitudes led to good progress.

146 The quality of teaching is good overall. In Key Stages 3 and 4, most of the teaching is good with a good proportion of very good lessons but with one unsatisfactory lesson in each key stage. A higher proportion of satisfactory or better teaching is found in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subject material, but there is considerable variation in the quality of planning, organisational strategies and use of time and resources between teachers of the different material areas. In food, textiles and child care courses teachers plan detailed learning objectives, vary the methods they use and have clear time-scales for pupils to work to. In workshop based courses, teachers plan far too generally and focus on what is needed to complete the project, rather than the intended learning outcomes for the pupils.

147 The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, providing equality of access and opportunity for all pupils including those with special educational needs. However, weaknesses identified in the previous report are still present. In Key Stage 3, the curriculum has breadth and balance, but is planned as a series of modules which have no clear links in the development of skills and knowledge according to the sequence, or to the time of year that they are taught. Consequently pupils are not expected to build on earlier learning or apply new skills or understanding. Some modules also lack relevance to the impact of technology on pupils' life today. An important weakness is the limited opportunity presented for pupils' to use information technology as a design tool and as a vehicle for bringing a more professional approach to projects, such as creating well-presented labels on packaging.

148 The department has devised a new and appropriate system for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. It is being used as a basis for grading work and report writing by individual teachers. The system provides a common pattern for reporting but does not sufficiently support moderating work between teachers in order to arrive at commonly understood attainment levels.

149 The leadership and management of the department is unsatisfactory. The development plan lacks detail, measurable performance criteria and reference to the real development needs of the department. There is no action plan and current spending plans are based on historical spending patterns, rather than current development needs. Many of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report remain. Good progress has been made on addressing health and safety issues and these are now satisfactory except for the provision of dust extraction. This is to be part of a planned development programme scheduled for next year.

94 **Geography**

150 By the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils' attainment in geography is below national

expectations. The 1998 high grade GCSE performance shows a considerable improvement on 1997 on the previous inspection, being above national expectations. However this result is from a significantly reduced number of entrants. Students' attainment in the sixth form is in line with national averages though current A-level groups are relatively small. In lessons the quality of written work has improved since the last inspection with the literacy coordinator supporting the development of a common departmental approach, reflecting planning for the development of key skills. Pupils also make progress with numeracy skills in geography, particularly through using graphical techniques and doing mapwork. There has also been a significant increase in the number of pupils gaining information and communications technology experience in a geographical context.

151 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, because teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, a good relationship with pupils and also provide a clear structure to lessons to enable individuals to progress through tasks. Pupils' knowledge about places and development of evidence collection are sound. However, in Key Stage 3 pupils' investigational skills, together with their ability to analyse and evaluate evidence and effectively communicate conclusions are less well developed. Pupils are often too reliant on the teacher and need more opportunities to work independently because they lack confidence in applying their skills in new areas. The recent introduction of more opportunities to develop these skills alongside local fieldwork and the use of information technology to support learning in Key Stage 4 improves the rate of progress. Because of limited in-class support, appropriately planned activities and identified subject specific targets, the rate of progress for pupils with special educational needs is less than could be expected in both key stages.

152 Pupils' response to lessons is good, showing an interest and enjoyment in the work. Where they are given opportunities to take more responsibility for their learning and think about geographical ideas pupils show very positive attitudes. This was particularly evident where local issues were the focus in the work on the Derby Southern Bypass and Ascot Drive Industrial Estate. Although enquiry-based topics are being introduced at Key Stage 3 opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for the identification and selection of evidence from a range of resource based materials needs to be created. This would particularly benefit higher attaining pupils.

153 Teaching in geography is good overall and of more consistent quality than during the previous inspection particularly in Key Stage 3. Lessons have clear learning objectives, that are shared with pupils and teachers set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Teachers work hard to maintain pupils' interest and improve their performance and they support individuals when they fail to understand. However, some lessons are too tightly controlled with an over-reliance on the teacher to guide pupils through resources and with limited discussion and opportunity for pupils to raise geographical questions. Consequently this limits pupils' skill development in problem solving and investigational work.

154 National Curriculum requirements for geography are met in full with schemes of work continually reviewed and new modules introduced to identify knowledge, understanding, skills to be assessed. The leadership of the department provides a clear educational direction and its progress is positively supported by the experience, energy and commitment of staff. The development plan contains appropriate targets to raise pupils' achievement, to review the Key Stage 3 curriculum and to develop greater consistency. Assessment was an issue raised in the previous inspection and some progress in this area has been made. Strategies for monitoring the curriculum include an assessment profile for pupils with samples of work at different levels, common unit assessments, moderation and direct pupil involvement. However, not all of the procedures are fully operational and do not yet systematically guide curriculum planning. The head of department should also extend the curriculum review process, based on evidence collection in the classroom, to engage all staff as part of his monitoring role. Generally resources and accommodation are used well with an increasing emphasis on resource booklets as well as texts although the limited use made of the library means that pupils are not given enough

opportunities to research their work.

History

155 Attainment in history by the end of Key Stage 3 is below national expectations. This is confirmed by analysis of pupils' written work and classroom observations. In four of the five key elements of history; chronology, range and depths, interpretation and enquiry, many pupils are performing at or above national expectations but they show significant weaknesses in the critical area of written communications. This pattern of attainment is repeated throughout Key Stage 3 and so constitutes a serious challenge for the future. By contrast low attaining pupils do well in history because of the accessible nature of the curriculum provided.

156 GCSE results at higher grades have been consistently well below national averages and, whilst the overall pass rate in 1998 was close to the national average, the pass rate in 1999 was significantly below. These results have been obtained in the context of low participation rates which are well below national averages. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 has, therefore, been below national expectations but the evidence of written work and skill development in the present Years 10 and 11 is that attainment levels are now improving although this continues to be in the context of low participation rates. Attainment by the end of Year 13 is in line with national expectations. The present Year 13 write clearly, debate sensibly and exhibit good enquiry skills. Unfortunately there is no Year 12 group, a by-product of the low participation rate in the previous GCSE cohort.

157 Pupils' progress in history in both key stages and the sixth form is always sound and frequently good. The department has responded to the last inspection report by developing its range of teaching and learning methodologies, in particular by pursuing positive questioning and historical enquiry. Many pupils show that they can apply deductive skills to new situations and this is contributing to an improving rate of progress.

158 Pupils' attitudes to history are always positive and the degree of enthusiasm at Key Stage 3 is a strength which will influence their attainment and progress in Key Stage 4 in the future. In Key Stage 3 pupils find the curriculum both interesting and attractive and they appreciate the active nature of the work.

159 The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is good. It is a strength because it is well planned, has clear learning objectives and challenges pupils' imaginations. Teaching in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is satisfactory and a key issue for the department is to replicate the quality of challenge given in Key Stage 3 to the teaching for older pupils. Teachers' knowledge is always sound and their expectations are always clear and consistently applied across all teaching groups. Artefacts and other materials are used with good effect but information and communications technology is underused. The pace of lessons is usually vigorous and pupils are challenged to develop their historical skills, although some time is lost by late starts to lessons arising from the split-site nature of the school.

160 The curriculum is developing effectively because clear progression of learning starts in Key Stage 3 and takes pupils through to GCSE and A-level in a coherent fashion. A systematic programme for assessment and the collation of results is now in place but teachers do not make full use of assessment data to inform curriculum planning. Factors to secure further improvement are in the use of subject specific target setting both in reporting and in the regular marking of work.

Information technology

161 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment in information technology is below that expected nationally for their ages. Pupils' attainment is low when they enter Year 7 but they make rapid progress by the end of Year 8 through the two year taught IT course. This course is planned to cover the National Curriculum requirements by the end of Year 8. In Year 9 the school's plan is to use the pupils growing IT skills and knowledge across the curriculum. This plan is not securely supported through planning for all subjects to include information technology as an important learning strategy and consequently the overall attainment reached at the end of Key Stage 3 is not yet reaching the expected levels.

162 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment overall is at the nationally expected standard. The school includes information technology as a part of the core curriculum in Years 10 and 11. In addition many pupils also take a full GCSE course in IT, a GNVQ intermediate course in IT or GNVQ business studies which has a high IT content. This wide range of opportunities allows higher attaining pupils to make rapid progress in communicating and handling information and in the use of spread sheets. Lower attaining pupils do not make such rapid progress in the core IT lessons because the material is pitched at too high a level. Attainment in the recently established sixth form courses is in line with students' abilities.

163 In both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils have lower attainment in the strands of control, measurement and modelling using pattern. These aspects of IT are covered within the core curriculum, but they are not extended and developed though practice in subjects such as science, design and technology, art and mathematics.

164 Pupils have good attitudes to information technology because they are interested and motivated by the subject and want to succeed. They settle to the work and behave well in rooms which are sometimes too crowded for the number of pupils involved. Most pupils respond well to the challenge presented by topics which they can see have relevance to the world in which they live, for example, a project to design leaflets for a local shop which stresses the advantages of shopping locally and the services offered.

165 The quality of teaching is good overall in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. A high proportion of very good lessons are taught by specialists who have very good subject knowledge and understanding. They also have high expectations of themselves and of the pupils. The course materials are planned with very clear learning objectives and tight timescales, giving pace and impetus to lessons. Projects are graded carefully to cater for lower and higher attaining pupils. Most lessons follow a similar but effective pattern of clear teaching followed by practical project work undertaken individually or in pairs. This works well and enables the teacher to support pupils with special educational needs effectively. The main weakness in teaching is in planning suitable work for the very wide range of ability in the core IT groups in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in the new sixth form GNVQ and Advanced level courses is good.

166 The curriculum for information technology is well planned and has good breadth and relevance. Currently it is not as well balanced as it should be because there is insufficient emphasis on control, measurement and modelling using pattern, in either the core IT course or across the other subjects. There is clear progression in course planning and very clear interpretation of the characteristics required to distinguish between each level within the various strands of the IT National Curriculum. The curriculum provides equality of access and is planned to cater for pupils with a special educational need. Statutory requirements are generally met but there are weaknesses in provision for Year 9 that need to be strengthened. Some of the cross-curricular weaknesses are a result of a lack of equipment, particularly software, rather than specialist staff since many teachers have a good level of IT skills. This remains an issue from the last inspection.

167 The department has devised appropriate systems and procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment opportunities are carefully built into the schemes of work and used by teachers to inform their planning. There is a clear marking policy which staff use well and this has contributed to improved attainment. Pupils' work that has been carefully marked, moderated and graded, is displayed within the department. This provides pupils with very good exemplar material through which they can assess their own attainment level and see what is required to attain the next higher level. National Curriculum assessments are thorough and accurate, but reports to parents need to give clearer guidance on specific steps required to improve attainment still further. These developments are a major step forward from the previous inspection.

168 The subject is effectively led and managed. It is a large and growing department which offers a wide range of courses. There is very good documentation and a comprehensive development plan for the department. The development plan lacks specific targets for attainment and there is a lack of emphasis on curriculum development especially as this relates to information technology across the other subjects of the curriculum. Very good progress has been made on the provision of hardware, systems, new specialist staffing and course planning. The impact of these developments has led to a significant improvement in standards and the indications are that this will be sustained.

Modern Foreign Languages

169 Pupils' attainment in French by the end of Key Stage 3 is below national expectations. The attainment of pupils who study German as a second modern foreign language is broadly in line with national expectations.

170 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment in French is below national expectations as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. In the 1998 GCSE examination the results of both boys and girls were well below the national average, but in 1999 there was a significant improvement for both boys and girls. Attainment in German is broadly in line with national expectations. In the 1999 GCSE examination the 12 candidates, all girls, attained results which were above the national average.

171 In Key Stage 3 pupils have sound skills in understanding the spoken language because they hear the foreign language spoken frequently by their teachers and by native speakers on cassette recordings. Most pupils can use vocabulary and phrases they have learnt for basic communication but many lack the confidence and knowledge to speak at any length from memory. Pupils' reading is limited to short extracts from course books from which they are able to extract basic information. Most pupils can copy and combine familiar words and phrases accurately and neatly. Pupils continue to develop their listening skills in Key Stage 4 and can understand short extracts recorded by native speakers. They can take part in short exchanges on basic topics with intelligible pronunciation. Standards of pronunciation are generally better in German than in French. Many pupils show understanding of text from a variety of contexts relevant to their GCSE course and many are able to produce pieces of redrafted writing of various lengths on a range of topics. Girls generally obtain higher standards than boys in both French and German in Key Stage 3 and 4.

172 Overall, high, average and low attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs make sound and often good progress. This is because they show interest in learning a foreign language and they respond positively to the support and encouragement they receive from their teachers. In Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of vocabulary, structures and cultural background. Progress in developing language skills is more marked in listening and speaking because pupils hear the foreign language spoken frequently in lessons. Progress is less marked in reading and writing. In Key Stage 4 they continue to develop their language skills and the higher

attaining pupils develop confidence in speaking from memory and producing accurate pieces of written work of good length.

173 Most pupils show interest in their work and display positive attitudes to learning a foreign language. In Key Stage 3 many pupils respond willingly, often enthusiastically, in a variety of activities. In Key Stage 4 pupils display responsible, mature attitudes to their GCSE and Certificate of Achievement Courses. Most pupils are well behaved, cooperative and courteous and maintain good levels of concentration, attentiveness and perseverance. Relationships are good and promote a sound environment for learning in the classroom.

174 Teaching in modern foreign languages is good in most lessons and never less than satisfactory in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Some very good teaching also takes place. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the languages they teach. A strength of many lessons is the consistency and confidence with which teachers use the foreign language in the management of the lesson. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils and set challenging tasks. There is, however, a need to improve the quality of pupils' pronunciation and teachers need to expect more from pupils, especially for higher attainers. Most lessons are well planned and well prepared and have clear objectives. Since the last inspection there has been greater emphasis on creating opportunities for pupils to communicate in the foreign language. In some lessons, however, insufficient time is devoted to intensive oral practice. Good practice took place in one lesson where, after rehearsal, pupils volunteered to speak a dialogue from memory for assessment for merit awards. Teachers manage their pupils well and make good use of time and resources. Teachers clearly spend a lot of time devising and producing attractive and relevant source materials.

175 The curriculum for modern foreign languages has good breadth, balance and relevance. All pupils can study French throughout the school. Higher attaining pupils can take German as a second modern foreign language in Year 8 and as a GCSE option in Key Stage 4. Lower attaining pupils can do a Certificate of Achievement course in French or Spanish. Assessment of pupils' attainment takes place on a regular basis. With the introduction of new course books in Key Stage 3, the department needs to develop effective systems for teacher assessment against the levels of the National Curriculum.

176 The department is managed and administered efficiently and effectively by an experienced well qualified linguist who provides strong leadership and educational direction for a hard working team. Positive steps have been taken to translate the previous report into a programme of action especially in respect of improving examination performance. The staff of eight qualified linguists are well matched to the curriculum although there is very little classroom support for pupils with special educational needs. The provision of learning resources is adequate but access to information technology resources is very limited. The provision of accommodation is good and there is some attractive display in classrooms and in the corridor which creates a cheerful environment for learning European languages.

Music

177 Pupils' attainment in music by the end of Key Stage 3 is below national expectations. This suggests that standards are lower than those reported in the last inspection when they were described as in line with national expectation. However, examination results for the then Year 9 pupils, who took GCSE in 1997, indicate that their attainment was below average and not dissimilar to standards of pupils currently. Attainment is similarly below average in Key Stage 4 and much the same as it was at the time of the last inspection. In 1997, 21 pupils took GCSE and all gained pass grades but the proportion gaining high grades was lower than that nationally. No pupils were entered in 1998 and only thirteen in 1999 so no judgement can be made on trends although again the proportion of high grade passes was very low.

178 Standards of performing and composing are below expected levels in both key stages. Singing skills are weak in Key Stage 3 as they were in the last inspection. Pupils join in only when given strong encouragement but do not readily sing confidently or with accurate pitch. In Key Stage 4, however, the Year 10 girls have good singing voices and can sing songs in a popular idiom. They learn by ear and are beginning to pay attention to phrasing and dynamics. Other aspects of performing are underdeveloped. In Key Stage 3 pupils are able to perform simple rhythms accurately when echo clapping but are not always able to maintain a steady beat. Most pupils play the keyboard, working from a fingering number system that enables them to play simple and eventually quite complex melodies but they are not easily able to read staff notation if the numbers are removed. The almost exclusive use of keyboards limits the attainment of pupils who have instrumental lessons because they are not able to practise and improve existing skills. In both key stages pupils' compositions tend to lack a clearly defined structure or convincing melody although this is better in Key Stage 4. However, pupils rely on the teacher for their ideas and are not used to manipulating sounds or refining or extending their melodies because they do not have a bank of skills or a repertoire of ideas on which to draw. In both key stages, pupils listen willingly but need their attention drawn to key points and features. Many pupils remember musical terminology and use it when questioned but not out of habit or unprompted. They have some knowledge of musical styles and genres for example Year 8 pupils could recognise Scottish folk music and Spanish Flamenco.

179 Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards music. They are keen to participate and show high levels of determination and concentration. Despite this, their progress is unsatisfactory in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The short-term acquisition of skills on the keyboard appears to be satisfactory but pupils do not gain the required knowledge and understanding of the concepts and information to help them apply their skills and make improvements to their work. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress because although teachers are sensitive to their needs and give them additional support, there is no planning for different approaches to make learning easier. Sometimes teachers do help pupils make progress by pointing out connections between what they have learned.

180 Overall, the quality of teaching in music is unsatisfactory but is not without its strengths. In many lessons teaching is at least satisfactory and in nearly half it is good. Teachers use their musical skills well to demonstrate ideas and to inspire the pupils. All the teachers engender a positive ethos for music through the good relationships they build with the pupils. However there are too many lessons in which important weaknesses outweigh the strengths and this prevents satisfactory progress being made. Lessons planning is not sufficiently clear about what it is that pupils will know, understand and do better at the end of the lesson than they could at the start. Teaching concentrates on getting pupils to complete tasks, for example to compose or play a piece rather than develop and improve their skills, so progress is slow. Because the focus for the learning is unclear, assessment is not helping pupils to understand how they can improve their work and probing questions are not used sufficiently to check out and reinforce the what they have learned. Teachers do not have a clear picture of what high and average attainment looks like so pupils, particularly the high attainers are not achieving standards of which they are capable.

181 Curriculum provision is unsatisfactory. Although it includes a wide range of music from different countries and cultures, the narrow use of keyboards limits the opportunities for pupils to work on acoustic instruments, in pairs or small groups. There is insufficient use of information and communications technology planned into the scheme of work and few opportunities for pupils to explore, experiment, try out new ideas and take responsibility for their own learning. Detailed planning does not identify how pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are to be developed progressively through the key stages nor is any assessment made or used to modify planning.

182 The leadership of the department is unsatisfactory. It has been concerned with the management of resources and organisation of concerts and instrumental lessons rather than establishing a strategic

vision and direction for music in the school. Development planning is weak. In so far as the curriculum now has a defined element for listening and appraising, the department has responded to the last inspection report. However, schemes of work still lack detailed progression and there remain inconsistencies between the way staff work which adversely affects pupils' progress. Assessment remains an issue and the pupils still need to become more involved in their own assessment. Insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection but now staffing is more secure the department is in a good position to move forward.

Physical Education

183 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. This is because most pupils respond well and they are able to plan their work both individually and in pairs. There is still a need to develop pupils' opportunities to evaluate their own and others' performance. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations though the proportion of pupils gaining higher grades in the 1998 GCSE examinations was well below national averages. Results for 1999 indicate a significant trend of improvement. Attainment in the sixth form is above national expectations for the A-level course. The progress pupils make in their learning across both Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form is good because of their commitment and when good teaching makes it clear what pupils are to learn and achieve in each lesson.

184 Overall, pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour are good. The majority of pupils show interest in their work, listen well to the teacher and demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject. In many lessons pupils work well together.

185 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and frequently good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and organisational strategies which enables them to manage pupils well. Lesson planning is sound though some teachers are not always clear about the knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils are expected to learn across a unit of work or an individual lesson. This means that some teaching is focused on task completion, rather than on ensuring that pupils are making gains in their learning.

186 There is a satisfactory balance and range of activities across both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Time allocation for physical education across both key stages is in line with that which is found in similar schools. Schemes of work are clear and provide appropriate guidance for activities to be used. Some progress has been made since the last inspection, with planning in order to meet the needs of pupils with special needs. Assessment procedures are generally sound. There is now a need for the department to develop assessment so that it is used to inform curriculum planning and to increase the range of teaching and learning styles used by staff. Reporting to parents is based on information collected for each individual pupil. However, reports do not fully state pupils' strengths, weaknesses and progress.

187 The specialist physical education teachers, with the support of many other members of staff, deliver a good range of extra-curricular activities across the school. The general aim of the department is to involve as many pupils as possible with teams, for inter-school and in-school competitions. A significant number of pupils benefit from this involvement and participate in County teams across a wide range of sports. A number of pupils have represented the County in national competitions and some have represented their country. The department positively encourages links within the community with local teams, sports clubs and with its involvement in the sports leadership course.

188 Progress has been made since the last inspection with the leadership and management of the subject which is now good. Good relationships between staff and pupils contribute to a positive

approach to learning. The department is keen to acknowledge pupils' positive contributions and rewards them for ability and effort. An appropriate range of policies is in place although some aspects have yet to be implemented consistently across the department. Development planning is in place but more work needs to be done to prioritise those developments that will enhance pupils' attainment and progress.

Religious Education

189 Attainment in Religious Education by the end of Key Stage 3 is similar to that recorded in the last inspection and is below national expectations. This is confirmed equally by written work and classroom observations. In both the main aspects of the Agreed Syllabus, human experience and religious perspective, most pupils have a sound understanding at an oral level. This means that pupils can generally discuss belief, symbolism and life-styles in a very coherent fashion. However, pupils' attainment in written communication is unsatisfactory. Although a small number of pupils can write extended prose of good quality, this is not consistent in Key Stage 3. Low attaining pupils perform well because they are well supported in lessons.

190 In Key Stage 4 the full GCSE course has only just commenced but written and classroom evidence indicates that pupils are achieving in line with national expectations. Four pupils achieved high grades in the GCSE short course in Religious Education in 1999 with the support of additional lunch-time provision. The statutory RE course in Key Stage 4 now has the GCSE short course as its target and pupils' overall attainment is below national expectations. As in Key Stage 3 pupils' oral work demonstrates a good insight of the course material but this is not reflected in their writing. Nonetheless some pupils are performing at a level commensurate with an overall pass grade in the short course. Attainment at the end of the sixth form is unsatisfactory because the school does not comply with the statutory requirement to provide a Religious Education curriculum.

191 Progress in Key Stage 3 is generally satisfactory. Pupils make good progress when they are excited by their work but in a minority of lessons their progress is poor because teachers do not maintain the pupils' interest. In Key Stage 4 pupils' progress is generally satisfactory and occasionally good, especially in the GCSE group where their motivation is high.

192 Pupils' attitudes in Key Stage 3 are mostly good but a minority of pupils are not sufficiently involved in their work and consequently their responses are unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 4 pupils generally respond well, show maturity and a respectful attitude. Pupils cooperate well, particularly when they understand the purpose and context of the lesson.

193 The teaching of religious education is satisfactory and frequently good. The better teaching occurs in Key Stage 4. However, subject knowledge and understanding varies between staff. Where the teachers' knowledge of religious experience and belief is less secure, pupils' progress and attainment is limited. Lesson objectives are generally clear and reinforced as lessons proceed. The pace of lessons is usually good but some lessons begin late because of the movement across the site required by timetabling arrangements. Teachers encourage all pupils to be fully involved and this contributes to the sound rates of progress, particularly for low attaining pupils. Teachers make insufficient use of ICT to support learning.

194 The design of the RE curriculum is a strength and provides a structured progression within the subject from Year 7 to Year 11. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection. The time for RE in Key Stage 4 has increased since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Pupils have a good grounding in various elements of the six principal world religions and links between religious belief and everyday life are regularly explained. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values are well promoted within RE and visits to places of worship are a helpful and regular characteristic of the RE

programme. Staff are beginning to use data in their lesson planning but the use of assessments to inform curriculum planning is not fully developed nor is the setting of achievement targets for individual pupils. Leadership within the department is good and provides clear educational vision for the subject.

The Extra Support Project

195 The Extra Support Project makes a valuable and effective contribution to the school's provision for pupils with complex individual needs. The project was introduced into the school in March 1997 with DfEE funding as part of the school's attempts to reduce the high level of pupil exclusions. Over the two years the project has developed an innovative model of intervention which is proving effective in helping vulnerable pupils who exhibit emotional and behavioural difficulties and who are at risk of exclusion. Project staff work with pupils, predominantly in Key Stage 3, who are at stage 2 or 3 of the Code of Practice, and who present recurring problems in the classroom. The project staff provide support for 30-35 pupils throughout the school year in response to individual needs.

196 The attainment of the majority of pupils receiving additional support through the project is below expectations for their age. For most pupils their attainment is adversely affected by difficulties in their personal lives, poorly developed social skills and lack of confidence in themselves as learners. Despite this, some pupils do attain standards in line with expectations, particularly in subjects where there are opportunities for practical work, such as design technology, information technology and science. During the time they receive support from project staff almost all the pupils make steady progress in their learning. Access to individually tailored programmes of work in literacy and numeracy in the unit classroom helps pupils improve their basic skills and this contributes to their progress in other subjects in the curriculum. The pupils also make progress because of the high level of individual support they receive through regular intensive counselling sessions with project staff, and through additional help in mainstream lessons. Over the period they receive additional help the pupils' attitude to learning becomes more positive. Most learn to concentrate better, to persevere in the face of difficulty or frustration, and to recognise their achievements.

197 For most pupils, involvement in the project results in significant improvement in behaviour. Through careful exploration of the causes and consequences of incidents at home and in school pupils become more aware of the impact of their own behaviour, begin to acknowledge mutual rights and responsibilities, and learn to accept responsibility for their actions. The majority respond well to the regular opportunity for discussion with project staff when they can examine their past behaviour, consider alternative strategies and set targets for the future. The attendance of all but a few is good, though punctuality to lessons is a problem for some.

198 The project is staffed by a full-time head of unit, a part-time teacher and a learning support assistant. Project staff are experienced and skilled in working with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Their work with pupils is carefully planned, and discussions with pupils carefully and sensitively managed. Detailed records ensure that progress and developments are monitored and evaluated. Relationships with the pupils are excellent. As a result pupils are willing to review their behaviour and their learning more honestly, and to set realistic targets for improvement. Communication within the school is good and mainstream teachers receive appropriate information about the needs of pupils supported by the project. As a result, teaching in mainstream lessons is satisfactory overall, with most teachers being aware of the pupils' individual needs and taking care to encourage and support the pupils when necessary. In lessons where additional support is provided by the learning support assistant, pupils make good progress because they are helped to keep on task, and there is a quick and discrete response to any potential difficulty.

199 All the pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils receive support through being withdrawn from mainstream classes for work in the Unit for between one and five periods a week, and

some may have in-class support. When planning the timetable for the withdrawal counselling and support sessions, care is taken to avoid disrupting the continuity of learning in other subjects. The well-balanced, individually tailored programmes, provide an appropriate balance of specialist support alongside mainstream class work. This effectively contributes to the improvement in pupils' learning and behaviour. The pupils' progress is continuously monitored through a weekly review of their individual education plans. Most targets are clear and well-focused, and are designed to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes so that their access to learning in the classroom is increased.

200 The project staff establish very good relationships with parents and other agencies. The key worker approach ensures that each pupil's circumstances are well known and closely monitored. Parents are closely involved at all stages, from the time of admission to the point of full re-integration. Communication with parents is very good. Fortnightly reviews and regular contact by letter and telephone help maintain a consistent approach to the management and support of the pupils. The project makes effective use of external agencies. The regular meetings with the educational psychologist provide a useful forum for reviewing pupils' progress and for support and supervision for project staff.

201 The project is well managed and its work is valued by staff in the school. It is fully supported by the head teacher, senior managers and by governors. There is a clear philosophy which underpins the design of the work and which is reflected in day to day practice. The forthcoming relocation of the accommodation will facilitate closer liaison with the work of the learning support Department and enable resources to be more readily shared. Whilst it is difficult to establish a direct link between the reduction in the overall rate of exclusions and the introduction of the project, it is clear that the work of the staff makes a significant contribution to the progress and well-being of the pupils who receive the additional support, and to the overall ethos of the school. The school is aware of the need to capitalise on the experience gained from the work of the project, and to extend the use it makes of the skills and experience of project staff.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

202 The inspection was conducted by a team of 15 inspectors who spent the equivalent of 57 days in the school. During this time 226 lessons were observed in full or in part. Apart from the head teacher all full-time and part-time teaching staff were observed teaching at least once and many on several occasions. Twenty-four registration sessions and seven assemblies were observed across all years 7-13 and a wide range of extra-curricular activities was observed. A total of 47 interviews were held with senior and middle managers of teaching and associated staff. A formal meeting was held with representatives of the governing body and many informal discussions were held with teachers during the course of the inspection. Observations were made of nine meetings including year teams, senior management team and the finance committee of the governing body.

203 Inspectors scrutinised the work of a small balanced sample of pupils from each year group and the sixth form and looked carefully at pupils' work. Planned discussions with a group of pupil representatives from each year group were held and further informal discussions with many more pupils took place during the course of the inspection.

204 A wide range of documentation, provided by the school, was analysed by the team of inspectors before and during the inspection. The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 18 parents before the inspection and recorded their views. The inspection team considered 128 responses from parents/carers to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school. A number of written comments from parents/carers were also considered.

94 **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1386	21	166	398

94 **Teachers and classes**

94 **Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	76.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	18.12

94 **Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)**

Total number of education support staff:	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	314.7
Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	74%
Average teaching group size:	KS3 25
	KS4 25

Financial year:	1998-1999
	£
Total Income	3637538
Total Expenditure	3655767
Expenditure per pupil	2838.33
Balance brought forward from previous year	189055
Balance carried forward to next year	170826

Number of questionnaires sent out: 1386
 Number of questionnaires returned: 128

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	13	73	8	5	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	30	59	6	4	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	21	58	15	5	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	17	67	10	5	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	37	53	4	6	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	32	59	5	4	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27	63	8	2	
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	17	61	10	10	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	21	61	11	6	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	16	62	13	8	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	35	56	5	2	2