

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL

Drayton, Portsmouth, Hants

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 116461

Headteacher: Mrs. L. Evans

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Sylvia Kopecek
4260

Dates of inspection: 3 April – 6 April 2000

Inspection number: 186022

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Central Road Drayton Portsmouth Hants
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. D. Good
Date of previous inspection:	25 September 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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			What should the school do to improve further?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Tony West	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
David Williams	Team inspector	Music	The school's results and pupils' achievements
Roger Waddingham	Team inspector	Science	How well are pupils taught?
Nigel Bloodworth	Team inspector	Religious Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Brin Martin	Team inspector	Physical Education	
Peggy Harris	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs	
		Equal Opportunities	
Adrian Jackson	Team inspector	English	
		Drama	
Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Jeff Lord	Team inspector	Geography	
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Anne Feltham	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
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Nick Roberts	Team inspector	Information Technology	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Springfield School is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 - 16. The school, which is over-subscribed, is larger than the national average and larger than at the time of the last inspection. There are 1160 pupils on roll, most of whom are from white European backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language (one per cent) is low. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (ten per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. About fifteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. This proportion is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements (one per cent) is below the national average. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry is slightly below the national average. There are fewer higher-attaining pupils than average and more lower-attaining pupils than average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school where pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. There is a positive climate for learning and the quality of teaching is good. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils achieve particularly well in drama, art, music, statistics and information technology in Key Stage 4 and in English, mathematics, science and information technology in Key Stage 3. Pupils did not achieve as well as they should in the GCSE course in electronic products. This subject will no longer be offered as a GCSE subject. Pupils who take responsibility within the school do so conscientiously and with care and consideration for others. The school is very well led and managed with a clear focus on raising standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 towards the national tests for fourteen-year-olds.
- Standards are high in English, mathematics, science, information technology and physical education in Key Stage 3, and in information technology, drama, art, statistics and music in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in practical aspects of subjects, including science, art, design and technology, drama, music and physical education.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management.
- The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its responsibilities overall and applies the principles of best value well.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.

What could be improved

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should as independent learners or in the analytical, investigative and reflective aspects of many subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1995. Since that time the very good leadership and management by the headteacher has provided the school with clear direction for all its work. The school has improved its aims and values, which are explicit and appropriate. The school has responded effectively to five of the six key issues that were identified, though the school does not have a daily act of collective worship. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. Standards achieved in GCSE examinations have improved since the last inspection although the trend is slightly below that found nationally. Standards

in the tests for fourteen-year-olds are high and have improved since the last inspection. Standards have risen in information technology in both key stages and results were above the national average for fourteen-year olds. Good monitoring procedures have been put in place and there is now a good focus on raising attainment at departmental level. The school has a clear commitment to improvement and has good capacity to continue this in the future.

STANDARDS

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

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

In 1999, results in the National Curriculum tests for fourteen-year-olds were well above the national average in English and above the national average in mathematics and science. Pupils made good progress in relation to their results in the National Curriculum tests when they were eleven. Results during the last four years have been above the national average in English and close to the national average in mathematics and science. Results in the GCSE examinations in 1999 were in line with the national average for all schools and with the average for schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their results in the National Curriculum tests when they were fourteen. Results have improved since the last inspection, although the trend has been slightly below that found nationally. Results in music and drama were well above the national average and those in information technology were above the national average. While results in design and technology overall were similar to national averages, in electronic products they were well below the national average. Results were well below the national average in geography and below the national average in business studies, English Literature, French, physical education, religious education and sociology. In other subjects results were similar to national averages. Overall, pupils achieved results broadly as expected in relation to their attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. During the inspection standards were in line with national expectations in the subjects where GCSE results had been below average, except in geography and electronic products where standards remain below expectations. Many pupils achieve particularly well in practical aspects of subjects, including science, art, design and technology, drama, music and physical education. In most cases, however, their achievements as independent learners and in the analytical, investigative and reflective aspects of their work are not as high as they should be. The school has high aspirations for its pupils and achieved its targets for GCSE in 1999. The targets set for GCSE results in 2000 and 2001 were not, at first, sufficiently challenging. Since the publication of these targets, the school has used recently published national data to re-evaluate them. It has now set appropriately challenging targets. These are more directly related to pupils' prior attainment in National Curriculum tests and an indicator of improved standards in Key Stage 4.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to the school and work well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in lessons and outside classrooms. In assemblies and in many lessons behaviour is very good.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships between pupils. Pupils take responsibility conscientiously and respond very well to the good

	opportunities provided for their personal development.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is well below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and represents a substantial improvement from the standards found at the time of the last inspection. It is very good in drama and good in English, mathematics, information technology, art, music, physical education and religious education. In science, design and technology, history and geography teaching is satisfactory overall. 95 per cent of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, 60 per cent was good or better, 24 per cent was very good or better and 5 per cent was less than satisfactory.

There are significantly more strengths than weaknesses in the teaching. Strengths include teachers' very good subject knowledge, very effective management of pupils and the effective setting of clear objectives for lessons. Teaching helps pupils to learn effectively although sometimes pupils are not sufficiently involved in their own learning and there is not enough emphasis on their thinking and analytical skills. Teachers do not always clarify how they will modify activities to suit pupils of different abilities. As a result, although most pupils acquire good knowledge, not all make as much progress as they should in some lessons. Teachers provide good feedback to pupils to encourage them but do not always identify to pupils clearly enough how to improve their work. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. The vast majority of pupils take a strong interest in their work, concentrate well and consistently work hard.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a curriculum that meets statutory requirements. It is broad and balanced with a good range of subjects available in Key Stage 4.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. They make sound progress in their work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with English as an additional language. They make sound progress.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for personal development is good. The provision for moral and social development is very good and that for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a caring environment where pupils are valued as individuals. Whole school assessment information is used well to monitor performance. Tutorial time is not always used well to support pupils' personal development or academic progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has established a good working partnership with parents, who are well informed about their children's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. The senior management team work well as a team and give good direction and support to the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well, though the statutory requirements for special educational needs are not fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good systems for monitoring and evaluating its performance and the quality of teaching and learning.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has sufficient staffing and resources. Accommodation overall is satisfactory, with good features and some weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are directed well to support whole school priorities. When making decisions the school applies the principles of best value well, though parents are not always formally consulted.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good vision, leadership and management provided by the headteacher. • The overall good behaviour of pupils and the quality of relationships in the school. • The school's expectations that pupils work hard. • The progress made by pupils in their work. • The standards achieved by pupils. • The good quality of teaching. • The good level of support provided for pupils. • The information provided through regular newsletters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more consistent approach to the setting and marking of homework. • A more positive response to enquiries at reception. • More information about pupil progress.

Inspection findings confirm that the school is very well led and managed. It provides a good quality education and expects pupils to work hard in order to make good progress as a result of the good teaching provided, though in some lessons pupils are not sufficiently challenged to take an active part in their own learning. Almost all pupils behave well and form good relationships with adults and other pupils and are happy at school. Most pupils achieve standards commensurate with their prior attainment. The team's findings are that the school's links with parents are good and there are good systems in place for parents to approach the school to discuss problems. However, a few parents have experienced a cold response when contacting the school reception by telephone. The school provides detailed annual reports that give parents clear information about how their children get on in school

although reports do not always identify what pupils need to do to improve their work. In most cases the right amount of homework is set. Marking of homework and coursework is inconsistent.

OTHER INFORMATION

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils achieve well in the National Curriculum tests for fourteen-year-olds. Results in 1999 were well above the national average in English and above the national average in mathematics and science. In comparison with pupils in schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, results were well above the average in English, above the average in science and similar to the average in mathematics. Pupils made good progress in relation to their results in the National Curriculum tests when they were eleven. Results for girls and boys in the tests were above the national averages in all three subjects. Girls achieved particularly well in English. Boys achieved better than girls in mathematics and science. Overall, results during the last four years have been above the national average in English and close to the national average in mathematics and science. Standards have improved during this time. Assessments by teachers at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 indicate high attainment in art, information technology and physical education. In other subjects pupils were assessed as achieving broadly in line with national expectations. Inspection findings confirm these judgements other than in art where teacher assessments had been over-generous. In religious education pupils achieve in line with the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus.
2. Results in the GCSE examinations in 1999 were in line with the national average for all schools and the average for similar schools. Overall, pupils made satisfactory progress in relation to their results in the National Curriculum tests when they were fourteen. Results have improved since the last inspection, although the trend has been slightly below that found nationally. Results achieved by boys were above the national average and girls' results were close to the national average. Results in music and drama were well above the national average and those in information technology were above the national average. Results in English, mathematics, science, art, German and history were similar to national averages. While results in design and technology overall were similar to national averages, attainment in the electronic products course was well below the national average. Results in geography were also well below the national average. Results in business studies, English Literature, French, physical education, religious education and sociology were below national averages. In most subjects there were no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.
3. The school has high aspirations for its pupils. It identifies subjects where improvements are needed, for example, by comparing its results with those of other schools. It also uses information about the prior attainment of its pupils to measure progress made in different subjects, particularly English, mathematics and science. The school achieved its targets for GCSE in 1999. The statutory targets for GCSE in 2000 and 2001 were not sufficiently challenging in relation to pupils' prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. Since the publication of these targets, the school has used recently published national data to re-evaluate them. It has now set appropriately challenging targets that are more directly related to pupils' prior attainment in National Curriculum tests. These revised targets are a better indicator of the higher standards that were observed during the inspection in Key Stage 4.
4. Pupils achieve well during their time at the school and about 80 per cent of pupils continue their studies after leaving the school. On entry in Year 7 there are fewer higher-attaining pupils than average and, in most year groups, there are more lower-attaining pupils than average. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 3 and, by the end of the key stage, attain standards above national expectations in English, mathematics, science, information technology and physical education. In music pupils achieve particularly well in composing and performing with many pupils attaining high standards. In all other subjects standards are in line with national expectations.

5. In Key Stage 4, pupils make satisfactory progress overall and achieve broadly as expected in relation to their attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. They achieve especially well in art, drama, statistics, information technology and music. Although standards in geography in the GCSE groups are well below national expectations, pupils achieve in line with their prior attainment except for the most talented and gifted pupils. Many pupils achieve particularly well in practical aspects of subjects, including science, art, design and technology, drama, music and physical education. In most cases, however, their achievements in analytical, investigative and reflective aspects in many subjects, are not as high as they should be. Pupils' ability to write or speak precisely, fluently and at length is a relative weakness.
6. Gifted and talented pupils achieve particularly well throughout the school in art, drama, French, German, information technology, music, and physical education. In geography their achievement is unsatisfactory overall and in mathematics very few pupils achieve the very highest grade in the GCSE examination. The relatively small number of pupils from non-European backgrounds and those with English as an additional language also achieve particularly well in both key stages in English, drama, French, German and science and in information technology in Key Stage 4.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects. They make good progress in drama, religious education, design and technology, information technology, art and physical education. They also make good progress in mathematics and history in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 3 a small minority of pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in French. In 1999 all pupils on the register of special educational needs achieved at least five passes in their GCSE examinations. Pupils who have been reintegrated from special schools make good progress and achieve well at GCSE. A small minority of pupils with statements of special educational needs make such good progress in relation to their prior attainment that the statement of special educational needs is no longer necessary.
8. Since the last inspection, results in GCSE examinations in English have ranged from well below to above the national average. Similarly in English Literature, results have ranged from well below to in line with the national average. Boys' results are now in line with the national average in both English and English Literature. However, they achieve less well in English Literature than in their other subjects. Girls' results in English and English Literature are below the national averages. At the end of Key Stage 3 results were well above the national average in 1999 and over the last four years results have been above the national average. Standards attained in English as observed during the inspection are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3, taking account of speaking and listening which is not part of the national tests. Boys make less progress than girls in Key Stage 3. Most pupils are confident writers of narrative and write well in response to their reading. However, the quality of their work is limited by a lack of knowledge of how to structure their writing effectively. This is especially true of average and lower-attaining pupils. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress in the analysis of extended texts and poetry. Lower-attaining pupils respond to their reading with strong personal views. In general, pupils make good use of the opportunities provided to sustain their independent reading. Pupils of all abilities listen attentively to teachers and each other and talk confidently and fluently. Opportunities to use talk to explore ideas for themselves and to share and collaborate with others in discussion are too limited.
9. Standards attained in literacy by the end of both key stages are satisfactory and pupils, including those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall. Most subjects make satisfactory contributions to pupils' achievements in literacy but there is inconsistency within and between departments in the strategies used to help pupils with their literacy. There are examples in sociology and religious education where pupils use writing frames well to make comparisons or to plan enquiries and in information technology where pupils focus clearly on the purpose and audience for their writing. Overall, pupils make satisfactory use of subject-specific key words and other techniques to help them in their writing.

10. Standards in mathematics have risen since the last inspection. Results have been above the national average in the national tests for fourteen-year-olds. Pupils use and apply mathematics well and acquire satisfactory numerical skills. Work in algebra and data handling is good and pupils have sound understanding of shape, space and measure. Results in GCSE examinations during the last three years have been below the national average but have been rising in line with the national trend. Standards attained by the end of Key Stage 4 are now broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils have good understanding of shape and space and their attainment in data handling is good. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make satisfactory progress during the key stage. Pupils work well in open-ended tasks although they are less secure in developing and testing their own hypotheses. Lower-attaining pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress in the development of their basic skills. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress overall.
11. Pupils achieve at least satisfactory skills in numeracy by the end of Key Stage 3. Lower-attaining pupils, for example, use number in a variety of real-life contexts, for example in developing skills with percentages by calculating price reductions in sales of goods. Pupils use calculators well at appropriate times, without relying on them for straightforward calculations. Higher-attaining pupils make good use of number in comparing decimals, fractions and percentages. In geography effective use is made of graphs to record data. In English, during work on *The Canterbury Tales*, pupils calculate how far they have travelled after the telling of a tale. In information technology, pupils in Year 9 create profit and loss spreadsheets. In Key Stage 4 pupils achieve good standards of basic numeracy and apply their knowledge well. Pupils in business studies calculate currency conversions and rates of exchange within the context of a travel agency. In personal and social education, the use of number was reinforced through the use of games to calculate tax deductions from salaries. In geography pupils use numerical analysis to examine local and world-wide data.
12. In science results in the national tests for fourteen-year-olds in 1999 were above the national average and by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Their work on life processes and living things is good. Their progress in physical processes is sound overall, but they make insufficient progress in some Year 7 topics. Pupils attainment in Key Stage 4 currently is in line with the national expectation and pupils' achieve in line with their prior attainment. Pupils' standards in investigational work have improved well since the last inspection. Pupils need further opportunities to develop their predicting and explaining of results, with younger pupils needing guidance from structured questioning.
13. By the end of Key Stage 4 the standard of pupils' skills and knowledge in discrete information technology lessons is high, with their best work being done in communications, data handling and modelling. They lack substantial experience of using computer-based control and measuring devices in science and technology and in almost all curriculum areas to undertake retrieval of material from sources such as CD-ROMs and the Internet.
14. GCSE results in business studies in 1999 were below the national average and pupils achieved lower standards than in their other subjects. Results over the last three years have been below the national trend. By the end of Key Stage 4 the standard of pupils' knowledge and understanding of business and economic activity is in line with national expectations but overall standards remain below national expectations. Pupils are unable to develop extended arguments and gather evidence in response to tasks that require discursive answers. Pupils in the early stage of their course are developing a more secure understanding of how to record, revise and present their knowledge within a formal context such as a timed task.
15. In design and technology standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations although pupils' overall subject knowledge and designing skills are weaker than their making skills. In Key Stage 4 standards are in line with national expectations and the quality of finished products, except electronic products, is good. Practical work is almost always of a higher standard than

design work. Research, design ideas and final presentations of work are below national expectations.

16. In geography standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are well below national expectations and below those of most subjects in the school. Pupils' achievements overall, however, are satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment and results in other subjects. Most pupils achieve satisfactory standards in their coursework with some exceptional individual performances demonstrating a high level of personal commitment. However, higher-attaining pupils do not sufficiently extend their thinking and level of explanation.
17. In history standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils have good knowledge of the periods they study and research effectively to gain information. However, their understanding of historians' interpretations is underdeveloped by the end of the key stage. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils overall achieve very well in their coursework and sourcework but their application of knowledge and understanding in responding to content-based questions in their examination work is insufficiently focussed and precise.
18. In French and German standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils have well-developed listening skills but their speaking skills, despite some good examples, generally remain under-developed. Reading and writing skills are sound, although pupils do not extend these aspects sufficiently. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national expectation in both languages, with particularly high standards amongst higher-attaining pupils. Standards have improved in French as a direct result of the improved quality of teaching. In Key Stage 4, however, pupils do not consistently write at sufficient length.
19. Standards in art by the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. In Key Stage 4 standards have risen since the last inspection and are now above the national expectation. Pupils' skills in developing ideas are good and outcomes in GCSE photography and sculpture are good. The standard of investigation work, especially in sketchbooks, is below national expectations. Information technology in Key Stage 3 and art historical sources across the school are not used sufficiently regularly to enable pupils to develop satisfactory skills of research and comparison.
20. Standards in music by the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. Pupils achieve especially well in composing and performing. Higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 and most pupils in the GCSE classes work at levels that exceed national expectations. Standards in listening and appraising, however, do not meet expectations overall. While many pupils accurately identify instruments and simple musical features, most have a limited technical vocabulary and do not discuss and analyse music sufficiently skilfully.
21. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment in drama is above average for their age and they make good progress. Pupils perform well and make good progress in developing practical skills and in learning how to evaluate performance. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are well above national expectations. Pupils achieve high standards, perform confidently and make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve national expectations both in the practical and written elements of the course. Their written work gives detailed explanations and evaluations of their own and others' work.
22. In physical education standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are above national expectations and in games are a particular strength. In gymnastics standards achieved by boys are in line with national expectations while those achieved by girls are of a much higher standard and above national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment in the core provision for all pupils is in line with national expectations. Standards attained by pupils studying physical education as a GCSE subject are in line with the national expectation although their knowledge and understanding of aspects of theory are weak.

23. In religious education standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with those expected in the local Agreed Syllabus. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in both exploring and responding to human experience and investigating religious tradition. Although standards of attainment in the GCSE course are below national expectations, pupils achieve broadly in line with their prior attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

24. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and approach their work positively. They sustain their attention and interest well. Behaviour is very good in assemblies and good in most lessons and at other times of the school day. Levels of exclusion are below the national average and the school has the lowest rate of exclusions in the local education area. Fewer pupils are excluded from the school than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' attendance is above the national average and the level of unauthorised absence is well below the national average. There are good relationships between pupils and they collaborate well when required. Pupils and parents confirm that occurrences of bullying are rare and that any reported are dealt with effectively. Pupils work in a pleasant atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour. There are very good relationships with teachers and other adults.
25. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is good in withdrawal lessons. They are motivated, listen well to teachers and each other and try hard to apply strategies to develop basic skills. They have positive relationships with learning support teachers and assistants. They help each other with comprehension tasks and, for example, enjoy reading aloud from play scripts. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties communicate well and value the support provided. They are involved in setting their own targets for improved behaviour in lessons.
26. Pupils show a good level of respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. They listen well to each other's contributions, for example, in school council meetings. They respect the school environment very well and respond well to each other when moving around the school site. Pupils take responsibility well when they are given the opportunity, for example, as prefects and as representatives of the school council. They play an active part in the range of clubs and activities provided for them and have good capacity for showing initiative. Pupils work well together in lessons when opportunities for group work are provided. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to raise money for charities and to help other people. For example, they organise a Christmas party for local senior citizens and work with pupils in a local special school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

27. The quality of teaching is good overall and this results in good quality learning by pupils of all ages and capabilities. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of the lessons seen and it was good or better in well over half of them. In 24 per cent of lessons it was very good or better. This represents a substantial improvement from the quality of teaching found at the time of the last inspection and demonstrates the effectiveness of the measures the school has put in place to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning.
28. Teaching is very good in drama. It is good in English, mathematics, art, information technology, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education. It is satisfactory in science, geography and history. There were no subjects where teaching was found to be less than satisfactory overall. Teaching was equally strong in both key stages overall but with particular strengths in the teaching of drama, information technology and music in Key Stage 4 and in information technology and physical education in Key Stage 3. In modern foreign languages examples of strong teaching were seen in both key stages.

29. Strengths in teaching include teachers' very good subject knowledge, their planning and setting of clear lesson objectives and their very effective management of pupils in the classroom. These aspects have a positive impact on pupils' learning so that pupils have a clear idea of what they are trying to find out, maintain their concentration and work at a good pace.
30. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to stimulate pupils' interest in learning. Their knowledge and enjoyment of literature texts in English, for example, helps them to foster pupils' own appreciation of texts well. In drama, very good knowledge of strategies for involving pupils in discussion and practical work encourages pupils to think for themselves. Teachers use their own language skills very effectively in modern foreign language lessons to provide a good role model for pupils. This effectively helps pupils to develop their own skills and understanding. In science and design and technology teachers use their knowledge of real life examples and applications to interest and motivate pupils.
31. Many lessons are well planned with clear objectives and activities to match the capabilities of the pupils. Teachers help pupils make good progress in these lessons by explaining the aims of the lesson carefully at the outset and ensuring that the objectives are appropriately challenging. For example, in an art lesson, pupils develop their skills in the application of colour well as a result of the teacher's detailed preparation and explanation of the effects of colour blending to achieve three-dimensional modelling in painting. In a few lessons, however, objectives are not matched precisely enough to pupils' differing needs, particularly where there is a wide range of abilities in a class. For example, there was not enough challenge for more able pupils in some mathematics, single science, geography and religious education lessons.
32. Teachers employ a good range of teaching methods with their classes, for example in modern foreign languages where role-play, group work and discussion are used well to interest and motivate pupils. Many subject lessons begin with well-paced question and answer sessions to revise previous learning and finish with a clear summary of the new ideas covered. Where these strategies are employed by teachers pupils are involved very well and this supports them to give presentations of their findings. In geography, for example, questioning is used well to develop pupils' knowledge of terminology and processes. In most subjects, however, there is insufficient use of more extended questioning designed to test pupils' skills of analysis and explanation.
33. Practical resources are used well to illustrate points being made. Three-dimensional materials in art are used effectively to motivate pupils to explore ideas. Examples of the type of clothing referred to in a poem in English helped pupils to understand the cultural context of the poem. Strategies to involve pupils and help them take responsibility for their own learning are used well in drama. In physical education pupils are given the responsibility to lead parts of the lesson and they rise well to the challenge. Tasks that encourage pupils to work independently, such as project work, fieldwork and investigations are effective in geography, science and information technology, although pupils' capabilities in this area are not used and challenged often enough in these and other subjects.
34. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. They use an effective range of strategies to motivate pupils and maintain their interest in lessons. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils in lessons and the behaviour of pupils is good. This creates a good working atmosphere and results in pupils working at a brisk pace. There are good examples of the use of information technology by individual pupils to support homework, project work and GCSE coursework in a range of subjects. Overall, however, pupils do not make sufficient use of information technology to support their learning in a variety of subjects including science, mathematics, history, geography, music and design and technology.
35. While teachers' assessments often provide clear indications of how well pupils have achieved, they do not consistently show them what they need to do to improve further. Pupils receive good detail in the written feedback they receive in mathematics and they benefit from the clear, spoken advice given in class in music and modern foreign languages. In several subjects, however, best practices

of individual staff are not shared and used widely. In science, art, design and technology, writing in English, mathematics homework and modern foreign languages pupils are not sufficiently involved in their own assessments and need further guidance on their individual main areas for improvement.

36. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. Pupils make appropriate progress in structuring their written work through the guidance they receive, for example in English, design and technology and information technology. They are helped to recognise and spell key words in several subjects, including mathematics and religious education. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed well in science, where they use calculators with confidence and record numerical results accurately. Opportunities for number work are offered in a good range of subjects including English where pupils are asked to calculate the time taken to tell a series of stories and in photography where they calculate the time needed to produce a print.
37. Teachers provide sound support for pupils with English as an additional language and enable them to make appropriate progress across the curriculum. Teaching in withdrawal sessions is satisfactory. Management of pupils is good and there are positive relationships between teachers and pupils. As a result, pupils concentrate well and apply themselves to the literacy tasks. Individual education plans are not well used as working documents and lessons objectives are not sufficiently linked to the individual targets. The majority of individual education plans include broad targets related to reading and writing skills and pupils are unaware of the progress they are making. Targets in the Year 7 individual education plans are more specific and include appropriate actions for parents and pupils. Teachers of pupils with special educational needs do not use specialist assessments of reading and spelling to inform lesson planning or individual target setting. Pupils are unaware of the most appropriate reading strategy to use when encountering unknown words and are unable to apply appropriate techniques to help them in their learning of literacy and numeracy skills.
38. Most teachers establish clear expectations with pupils about the setting of homework. It is set regularly and generally lasts the allocated amount of time. The tasks used have a sound degree of variety with, for example, research projects in history, consolidation exercises in mathematics and the application of ideas in information technology. Pupils make sound progress in their recall and knowledge through homework tasks, but more able pupils in particular are not challenged enough to extend their understanding.
39. Pupils show a good level of interest, concentration and productivity in lessons and generally they work at a good pace. A particular strength of the majority of pupils' learning is the good effort they make in lessons. Weaknesses in pupils' learning are in thinking creatively for themselves and their appreciation of how to identify and work on their weaker areas of knowledge and understanding.

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

The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided for pupils

40. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for the subjects of the National Curriculum and the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The curriculum is broad and balanced with appropriate time allocations for subjects. The curriculum is well planned and includes good provision for the small numbers of pupils from non-European backgrounds and those with English as an additional language. It meets the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils and provides equality of opportunity.
41. Opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress are good. In Key Stage 3 the curriculum is enhanced by the provision of drama. In Key Stage 4 pupils study a good range of subjects including information technology, statistics, drama and business studies at GCSE as well as personal and

social education. These subjects enrich and broaden pupils' choices and experiences. In 1999 most pupils were able to take their first choice of option subjects.

42. The school has satisfactory strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. In literacy there is satisfactory use of subject-specific key words and other methods to help pupils with their writing in English, sociology, religious education and information technology. Other subjects make a satisfactory contribution though there is inconsistency within and between departments. Basic numeracy skills are taught through a range of subjects, for example in geography effective use is made of graphs to record data; in English, during work on the Canterbury Tales, pupils calculate how far they have travelled after telling a tale. In other subjects including art and information technology effective use is made of numeracy strategies to enhance pupils' learning.
43. The provision set out in statements of special educational need is implemented well across the curriculum and the learning support assistants help pupils with reading, interpreting instructions and completion of writing tasks. However, specialist curriculum provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties is not provided. Most pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum but a small minority of pupils in Key Stage 3 follow a reduced curriculum in modern foreign languages. The use of individual education planning is still at a very early stage of implementation across the curriculum. Subject teachers use the information provided in the special educational needs register to inform them about the needs of individual pupils. The individual education plans, however, do not help them to plan for adaptation and modifications of the curriculum.
44. In both key stages, there is a wide-ranging programme of personal and social education. It covers topics in sex, health, drug and careers education. The quality of the work is good but there is too little time allocated in Key Stage 3 as reported at the time of the last inspection. However, the school plans to redress this imbalance from September 2000. In Key Stage 4 the personal and social education programme prepares pupils adequately for life. Modules on aspects including health, sex, drug and vocational education are enhanced well through the use of lively and stimulating resources.
45. The school is well supported by effective links with the Careers Service. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of different career paths from Year 9 onwards. The careers events and lessons in Years 10 and 11 make a valuable contribution to preparing pupils for the world of work and further education. Pupils also benefit from a well-organised work experience programme that is organised by an outside provider and is well supported by local businesses. Pupils' learning is enhanced well through contact with a good range of visitors. Speakers representing different religions make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils in Key Stage 3 take part in an enterprise day, when they respond well to the needs of pupils in a special school. The school has established good links with local industry and commerce and companies support the school's careers education, provide opportunities for industrial visits, support the school's mentoring scheme and provide a programme of simulated job interviews.
46. There are good systems in place for liaison with primary schools and outside institutions. The school has a strong liaison with the local family of primary schools as well as a local special school. There are regular visits to feeder schools especially prior to pupil transfer. Parents and pupils confirm that the arrangements for the transition of pupils are very well organised. The arrangements include a project, which pupils begin in their last term at primary school, complete during the summer holiday and bring with them into Year 7. Colleges receiving pupils speak highly of the links with the school, the good preparation of the future students and the realistic level of their expectations. There is good enrichment of the curriculum through extra-curricular activities. In addition to a good range of extra-curricular activities in the arts and physical education, pupils also appreciate further activities provided. These include well-attended scrabble and environmental clubs, revision classes in Key Stage 4 and a homework club. Pupils also benefit from a wide range

of experiences beyond school including visits to museums, galleries and theatres, residential visits and foreign exchange visits.

How well the school cultivates pupils' personal development

47. The school makes good overall arrangements to cultivate pupils' personal development. The arrangements to promote pupils' moral and social development are very good and arrangements to promote spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory. The school's aims clearly set out principles and values that emphasise the importance of these aspects of pupils' development. A useful audit of provision across the school has taken place, providing a clear picture of the strengths and areas for development.
48. Spiritual development is promoted well in religious education, where there are very good opportunities for pupils to explore and develop spiritual insights. Work across the curriculum, for example in English, geography, art and music, allows pupils other opportunities to explore spiritual issues. The quality of assemblies observed during the week was good. Assemblies make a good contribution to spiritual development and to the statutory requirement for collective worship although the school does not fully comply with these as reported at the time of the previous inspection. The class-based 'thought for the day', which takes place once a week, provides a good opportunity to further develop spiritual insights but its effectiveness is inconsistent across the school. The range of themes devised for assemblies are linked well to the 'thought for the day'. Good use is made of visiting speakers in assemblies to broaden pupils' experience. Pupils are effectively encouraged to reflect on a range of experiences and sometimes to question and search for meaning in their lives.
49. The school has consistently high expectations of the moral standards it sets both in lessons and in the general life of the school. Teachers often provide very good opportunities for pupils to consider and debate moral issues. In particular moral values and principles are developed very well through the personal, social and health programmes that provide pupils both the opportunity to develop their understanding of moral principles and to question their own view point. Adults in the school set very good examples and pupils are treated in ways that enable them to develop as rounded people.
50. As part of its provision for social development, the school provides very good opportunities for pupils to discuss issues of rights and responsibilities. In both key stages there is a planned programme of personal, social and health education that provides a very good basis for the work that is well developed over the rest of the curriculum and through the life of the school. The very good quality of relationships in the school contributes strongly to pupils' social development. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to take responsibility and to use their initiative. The school's prefect system, for example, offers very good opportunities for a great number of pupils to take on extra responsibilities and, in Year 10, pupils are provided with the opportunity to support Year 7 classes. The School Council is an effective forum which pupils use to express their views and is especially valued by those pupils who take a leading role. Opportunities for group work in the curriculum and those in extra-curricular activities, including English, science, art, music, drama and physical education, offer a good basis for social development. Pupils' involvement in charity work, community service and work experience enhances provision for their social development. The school has a strong commitment to raising funds for different charities and has good links with a local special school and the local community.
51. Opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of their own culture are good and there are satisfactory opportunities for them to study other cultures. Visits to galleries, museums, concerts and theatres support pupils' social and cultural development well. Through these opportunities, pupils are developing an understanding of the culture represented in the local and wider British community. Opportunities to explore cultural diversity are satisfactory and similar to

those reported at the time of the last inspection. These are offered best in English, geography, music, art and religious education lessons, where cultures originating outside Europe are well represented. Work in other areas of the curriculum focuses mainly on the European tradition.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. The school provides a safe and secure environment where all pupils are valued as individuals and are encouraged to show tolerance and concern for others. This is similar to the findings reported at the time of the previous inspection. A member of the senior management team has responsibility for child protection issues and ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities. The school has adopted the arrangements and policies of the local child protection committee. The school's personal and social education programme ensures that pupils are given good opportunities in Key Stage 4 to become more knowledgeable about themselves, their health and safe living. The school has good policies and arrangements in place for ensuring the health and safety of its staff and pupils.
53. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour and pupils with significant behaviour difficulties are well supported by senior pastoral staff. There are very good systems in place to monitor and regulate any inappropriate behaviour. The school has very effective measures to prevent bullying and harassment of individual pupils. In the few incidents that occur pupils are provided with counselling to come to terms with their actions and the impact on others. Most parents and those pupils interviewed felt that bullying was not an issue in the school. There are no groups of pupils who are unfairly treated or disadvantaged.
54. Whole school assessment information is used well to monitor the performance of different groups of pupils, including good use of cognitive ability tests to identify pupils who are underachieving. Detailed analysis is undertaken of performance in the national tests for fourteen-year-olds and GCSE examinations. The information gathered is used to measure improvement in pupils' attainment and to identify subjects that should be improved. Teachers use assessment data to organise the different teaching groups but there is insufficient use of end-of-key-stage assessment information to inform curriculum planning. In history and geography there is a lack of standardisation at the end of Key Stage 3. Design and technology, art and science assessments lack detail and do not include guidance on how pupils might improve further. End of Key Stage 3 assessments in art are over-generous. Individual education plans are not used effectively to measure progress because they do not include specific targets and do not build on the school assessment system. Record keeping and the analysis of assessment data within departments is satisfactory overall.
55. The school's arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development and academic progress are good. Form tutors undertake individual reviews and heads of year monitor the personal and social development of identified pupils. However, in some subjects the monitoring of pupils' academic progress is insufficiently rigorous as in science, for example, where test data is not collected and analysed sufficiently frequently. In art and physical education the use of data to analyse performance and create action for improvement at GCSE lacks rigour. In a number of subjects including English and mathematics, there is good use of data accompanied by good progress on target setting and strategies for improvement. The school has effective systems for reviewing its progress towards its targets.
56. There are very good systems in place to monitor pupil attendance and punctuality which have resulted in year-on-year improvements in attendance levels. Pupils who maintain one hundred per cent attendance each term are rewarded with certificates. The use of tutorial time is inconsistent in quality. Although there are examples of good practice, the time is not consistently well used to support pupils' personal development or academic progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school and its work. They report that the school is well led and that standards have improved in the last three years. Parents appreciate that the school has worked hard to improve its environment and that pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved. The majority of parents say that the school has established close links with them, although a significant minority report that it is difficult to approach the school with problems. The school has taken action to improve the quality of response to parents at reception and recognises that further improvements are required when parents make contact with reception staff by telephone. Parents of pupils in Year 8 would appreciate additional information about their children's progress. They say that the interval between the annual reports and the next opportunity to discuss progress with staff is too long.
58. The inspection team agrees with the majority of parents' views that behaviour in the school is good and there are no significant issues with pupil bullying. The great majority of pupils behave well and form good relationships with adults and other pupils.
59. The school provides annual reports for parents with information about what their children are able to achieve in school and set targets. Pupils also contribute to their own reports with written commentaries. However, there is inconsistency in the precision of reports. They do not always identify what it is that pupils need to do to improve their work and make further progress in the subjects they study. National Records of Achievement are of a good standard. Parents receive good quality information about the school. Each half term they are sent a very informative newspaper, which keeps them up-to-date about the life and work of the school, and celebrates pupils' achievements and successes. Regular contact can be maintained through pupils' organisers, where parents are able to comment or raise issues. Consultation evenings are arranged and parents are kept well informed about opportunities for their children's further education through excellent links with local colleges. A good formal programme of information evenings is held for parents on subject choices, careers, and an evening on study skills, facilities and discipline.
60. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are of high quality. Some parents express concerns that the amount of time spent on homework is sometimes excessive, though inspection findings confirm that overall the right amount of homework is set. Homework is set consistently, though there are instances when work has not been promptly marked. The inspection team agrees that the school provides good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities in the general life of the school.
61. Although there is no parent teacher association, parents offer good support to the school through social events and fund-raising activities. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are appropriately involved in reviews of their progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. Since her appointment three years ago a very clear vision and direction for the future of the school has been firmly established. There is a firm focus on promoting high standards, improving the quality of teaching and learning and maintaining high standards of behaviour. The headteacher, governing body and senior management team provide positive support and professional challenge to staff. Staff with key management roles, including members of the senior management team and heads of year, also work effectively to achieve the school's priorities. This creates a common sense of purpose, real commitment to high achievement and gives good direction to the work of the school. The school has responded fully and well to the key issue from the previous inspection to 'review and reaffirm the school's aims and values involving all pupils, staff and governors'. The school's aims and values are explicit and appropriate and are evident in all its work. In addition the school is now well placed to realise its aims. Arrangements for line-management with the headteacher and members of the senior management team being linked with departments are effective. The senior

staff make good use of their regular formal and informal contacts with heads of departments to review progress towards targets for performance, to monitor progress in improving the quality of teaching and to provide support for development.

63. The governing body carries out its statutory responsibilities very effectively overall. The Chair of Governors knows the school well and acts effectively as a critical friend. There is an appropriate and efficiently organised range of governors' committees. Governors have good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support the school in remedying weaknesses. They are well briefed about the process of target setting. They are also well informed and involved in the life of the school through, for example, their links with heads of departments and the appointment of new staff to the school. Governors are actively involved in monitoring the impact of targets set by heads of departments. Members of the governing body regularly attend school functions and provide support especially for the special needs department. The Chair of Governors plays an active part in the setting of annual targets for the headteacher and deputy headteachers.
64. The head teacher and special educational needs governor are actively involved in monitoring the provision for pupils with special educational needs. They have a very good strategic overview of the work of the curriculum support department and the implementation of the whole school policy. Members of the senior management team provide a good level of practical support during the audit of special educational needs. The governors' annual report provides an accurate account for parents of the arrangements that the school makes and the outcomes for pupils. In a minority of cases involving provision for pupils with special needs, the requirements set out in the statement are not fully implemented by the school. Learning support assistants are experienced and well-qualified and have recently been involved in information technology training. However, there is insufficient training to enable learning support teachers to advise subject staff on the strategies needed for pupils with very specific special educational needs.
65. A thorough and effective strategy for monitoring the quality of teaching has been implemented. This identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. The positive impact of monitoring and the action which followed is clearly evident in the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. The clear focus on the quality of planning through the provision of schemes of work and lesson plans is a key feature of this improvement. Overall there is a strong commitment at every level to improving pupils' standards of achievement through improving teaching. There is still work to be done to ensure that regular classroom observation is taking place in every department and that schemes of work are sufficiently in-depth and challenging for pupils of all abilities in each key stage. However, the task of 'strengthening the role of middle managers in monitoring the quality of the planned and delivered curriculum', a key issue at the time of the last inspection, has largely been addressed both through monitoring at whole school level and through the revision of responsibilities and the appointment of new staff.
66. The school's comprehensive monitoring of test and examination results identifies strengths and weaknesses in different subjects and enables the school to develop strategies to improve performance. However, the statutory targets for GCSE for 2000 and 2001 were not sufficiently challenging. Since their publication, the school has reviewed its targets in the light of subsequently published national data and has now set appropriately challenging targets.
67. The school has significantly improved the quality of its planning. The five-year school strategic plan is well-structured and identifies appropriate priorities and 'intents' based on the key focus of improving standards. The school improvement plan for the current year has clear targets, tasks, timescale and resources including staff, success criteria and financial implications. The priorities are clearly reflected in departmental development plans. Departmental development planning is good overall and very good in mathematics and information technology where clear measurable targets are set annually and regularly monitored. In a few cases there are weaknesses where plans are not sufficiently well focused on raising standards. In music, for example, targets are not always

sufficiently precise. In design and technology there is a lack of coherence in planning for developments across the subject as a whole.

68. There are sufficient experienced and well-qualified teachers to cover the full range of subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is a good number of learning support assistants who effectively support pupils with statements. Administrative and other clerical staff are also well-qualified and contribute mostly positively to the work of the school.
69. Induction procedures for student teachers, newly qualified teachers and other staff are comprehensive and well managed and there is an appropriate balance between departmental and school professional development opportunities. Although statutory requirements are not met for teacher appraisal, all staff have the opportunity to be appraised annually. Existing systems for monitoring practices linked to professional development activities enable the school to meet the demands presented by the new performance management requirements.
70. The school has made significant progress in recent years in improving the fabric and decor of the buildings and improving its external environment. The headteacher and governing body have been strongly instrumental in creating significant changes which have had a positive impact upon the climate and ethos of the school. The entrance and reception area has been completely re-designed and is more welcoming for pupils, staff and visitors. The construction of drama and art studios has given these subjects greatly enhanced areas for learning. The learning resource centre and information technology facilities since the last inspection have provided pupils with areas for learning which are more appropriate to their needs. Recent spending on information technology has significantly improved provision for pupils. Accommodation in most subjects is good and pupils learn in surroundings that are well resourced and maintained. Accommodation for music is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient small rooms for pupils to work in without being adversely affected by the sound created by the music making of other pupils. The library and science rooms are not accessible to pupils with physical disabilities, though there are no pupils with disabilities at present. However, the governors report annually on their plans to improve the access for all pupils to the full curriculum. There is a very good level of resource for information technology in the curriculum support department. Four new personal computers are available and there is new funding that is set aside for an integrated learning system. However the computers are not well used by the pupils because the teaching staff do not plan for their use during withdrawal lessons.
71. The school manages its finances well in most aspects. Routine financial matters are efficiently and promptly dealt with and secure and effective systems are in place. All recommendations of the most recent financial audit have been fully dealt with. Strategic financial planning is very good. Spending is targeted very well to support the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. For example, additional funding was targeted in mathematics to improve setting arrangements and funding for foreign language assistants was increased to provide enhanced opportunities for pupils to speak in French or German with native speakers. The school makes good use of grants such as that for the summer Literacy School. However, the use of the additional funding to support pupils at Level 3 in English has not been efficiently and effectively planned. Some of the funding allocated to support pupils with special educational needs has not been deployed in line with statutory requirements.
72. The school's application of the principles of best value is good. Staffing costs are compared with national averages and the school has commissioned independent surveys of comparative costs. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum in Key Stage 4 identified the need to provide information technology lessons for all pupils. This appropriate provision will begin in September 2000. The school has appropriate systems for competitive tendering and evaluates costs and value for money carefully and critically. While parental views are responded to effectively, consultation with parents on major spending decisions or curriculum changes are informal and the school has no formal process of consulting with parents before decisions are taken.

73. New technologies are used effectively for a range of activities including data-handling and analysis of pupils' attainment. A curriculum network is used to update information on individual pupils. The information is not, however, easy to access. For example, it cannot be used by departments to update information on pupils. The register of special educational needs is maintained on computer but is not shared electronically. As a result, annual statements of special educational needs are reviewed in paper format. Departmental schemes of work are not collated and available centrally in an electronic format.
74. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is slightly below the national average. During their time in the school they achieve well in most subjects and, by the time they leave, attainment is in line with national averages. The quality of teaching is good and expenditure per pupil is close to the national average. This is an effective school that gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to raise standards of achievement further, the school should:

Improve pupils' skills of investigation, analysis, independent learning and reflection through: (refer to paragraphs 5,10,12,14,16,17,19,20,22,31,32,33,35,38,39,54,55,59,65,81,82,85,86,89,90,91,93,94, 97-99,101-104,110,112-114,116-119,123,124,128,129,133,134,144)

- providing more consistent planned opportunities that require pupils to think for themselves and to evaluate their own and others' work;
- planning and focusing tasks that involve the systematic analysis and synthesis of information and develop skills of self-evaluation;
- setting precise learning objectives which are matched closely to the needs of pupils of different abilities so as to challenge them appropriately and ensure that all pupils achieve to their full potential;
- providing more precise feedback to pupils about what they need to do to improve their work;
- using assessment information to guide planning.

In addition to the key issues identified in the above, paragraphs 5-9,13,18,34,37,42,43,56,60,64, 67,69,70-73,77-79,104,119,121,126,127,134,134.contain less significant weaknesses. The governing body should consider these for inclusion in the action plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

165

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

55

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	22	35	35	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1160	n/a
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	113	n/a

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9	n/a

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	172	n/a
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English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	1999	102	125	227

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	60	71	67
	Girls	110	86	76
	Total	170	157	143
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	75	69	63
	National	63	62	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	37	42	26
	National	28	38	23

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	51	68	77
	Girls	108	99	90
	Total	159	167	167

Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	71	74	74
	National	64	64	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32	44	30
	National	31	37	28

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	96	119	215

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	40	93	94
	Girls	54	112	116
	Total	94	205	210
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	44	95	98
	National	46.3	90.7	95.7

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	38.1

per pupil	National	37.8
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	7
Chinese	4
White	1156
Any other minority ethnic group	7

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	19	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	68
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	321

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.2
Key Stage 4	22.0

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1160
Number of questionnaires returned	250

Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	54	8	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	47	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	62	14	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	55	17	4	1

Financial year	1998 - 1999
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	£
Total income	2626040
Total expenditure	2577148
Expenditure per pupil	2222
Balance brought forward from previous year	83832
Balance carried forward to next year	132724

The teaching is good.	26	67	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	53	20	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	45	6	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	34	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	50	21	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	44	47	2	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	57	7	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	46	11	1	6

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

ENGLISH

76. GCSE results in 1999 in English were in line with the national average for all pupils. Pupils made satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment in the national tests for fourteen-year olds. Results for boys were similar to the national average for boys and those for girls were below the national average for girls. Results over the last four years have been broadly in line with the national average. Pupils achieve high standards in comparison with their other subjects. GCSE results in English Literature were below the national average for all pupils. They were broadly in line with that for boys and well below for girls. Results over the last four years have been below the national average but the trend is upward. In GCSE English Literature boys achieve lower standards in comparison with their other subjects. In the national tests for fourteen-year-olds in 1999 results were well above the national average for all pupils including those reaching the higher levels. Overall standards have risen since the last inspection.
77. Standards are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3 in the work seen, taking account of speaking and listening which is not part of the national tests. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment although girls make better progress than boys. Pupils are most confident in the writing of narrative and in response to their set reading. They are less skilled at

writing in non-narrative styles and when using a range of poetic techniques. Pupils read a good range of books and respond well to their reading: an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities respond well to the reading of Shakespeare's plays and a good range of other literary texts. The higher-achieving pupils write vivid detective stories. All pupils have good basic fluency as readers and writers, although much of the writing of those in middle and lower sets, particularly boys, is not technically well-constructed. Pupils listen attentively to the teacher and each other and, when given the opportunity, discuss ideas thoughtfully but not at length.

78. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. Higher-attaining pupils write successfully in a range of forms including detailed analyses of media and literary texts, such as *Oliver Twist* and Hardy short stories. Some texts studied, especially modern drama, and the tasks set, are not always sufficiently demanding for these pupils. Lower-attaining pupils write imaginative responses to literature well, showing strong personal engagement in writing letters to an actor and obituaries of characters. Spelling remains a weakness for these pupils. The writing levels achieved by many pupils in middle and lower groups are limited by weaknesses in constructing sentences: for example, in the linking and development of ideas within and between sentences and paragraphs and in the use of more formal styles to express their views. Pupils listen attentively and, when given sufficient opportunity, use talk well to develop their understanding.
79. Other subjects make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' achievements in literacy but the practice is not widespread or consistent within departments. In sociology and religious education pupils use writing frames well to make comparisons and plan an enquiry. In information technology pupils focus clearly on the purpose and audience for writing. They are helped to understand and spell subject-specific key words satisfactorily in many subjects.
80. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject, which is used particularly well when working with set literature texts. Teachers' enjoyment, understanding and enthusiasm for literature provide good models for pupils and this leads to lively lessons. Pupils in Year 7 reconstruct the pilgrimage to Canterbury round the playing fields, telling their own tales as part of a study of Chaucer. In handling clothing directly referred to in a poem about Pakistan, pupils in Year 11 are better able to understand and appreciate what the poet is saying. In many lessons pupils are too passive and do not have sufficient opportunities to use group discussion to develop their own views at length and respond to their own and other pupils' questions. This point was made in the last inspection report.
81. The assessment of pupils' work is thorough, almost entirely positive and supportive and shows pupils what they have achieved. In creating their own criteria for judging the effectiveness of their stories, Year 7 pupils helpfully learn what makes a good story. As mentioned in the previous inspection report, pupils still over-rely on teachers correcting their errors. Assessment of writing does not clearly identify what pupils need to do to improve and does not focus sufficiently on structural features of effective writing. The use of draft books helps pupils to develop their writing. Teachers do not in the main formally review the draft, which means that they are not intervening at an important stage in the writing process. Teachers have high expectations of higher-attaining pupils, which enables them to make particularly good progress. However, expectations for some pupils in middle and lower groups are not sufficiently high and they make less progress than might be expected. These groups have a greater proportion of boys in them. The management of pupils is very good and contributes to the creation of a climate for learning where time is used well. Pupils behave very well, concentrate for whole lessons and take a strong interest in the tasks they are given.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory with good features. There is a strong commitment in the department to improvement through monitoring and the use of data, which has helped pupils to understand their target grades. The scheme of work provides good opportunities for pupils to cover the National Curriculum programmes of study broadly. It is not well matched to the range of needs

of different groups of pupils and does not give sufficient guidance about specific aspects of language, which support the effective use of writing in particular. The department is very active in supporting and extending learning opportunities for all pupils through a wide range of activities. There is a very well attended scrabble club, pupils take part successfully in public-speaking competitions, they go on regular theatre visits and take part in writing competitions and reading events.

MATHEMATICS

83. GCSE results in 1999 were broadly in line with the national average. There has been a steady improvement in standards over the last four years. In the national tests for fourteen-year-olds in 1999 results were above the national average and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make good progress. The 1999 GCSE statistics results achieved by higher-attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 were of a very high standard.
84. Standards are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils' work is mostly of a high standard. They develop appropriate strategies for solving problems and conducting investigations through planned exercises. Pupils use and apply mathematics, extend a concept and articulate their thinking through set tasks. Pupils in Year 7, for example, produce work on pond boarders, display the information logically and interpret findings according to an initial hypothesis. Pupils' literacy skills are enhanced when required to explain an investigation though there are insufficient regular opportunities to consolidate these. Pupils' numerical skills are satisfactory by the end of the key stage. In Year 7 lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress when they consolidate and refine their understanding of basic numerical skills through a variety of planned activities. In Year 8, lower-attaining pupils use their knowledge of number well when investigating the order of operation and sequence of numbers. In Year 9 pupils' knowledge of number is firmly established and used when, for example, graphing algebraic functions. Knowledge of algebra is good. Higher-attainers use algebra to formulate expressions from simple data and to solve equations. They apply all the appropriate skills for checking results. Pupils demonstrate key mathematical routines using the correct terminology. They have a sound understanding of shape, space and measure and produce neat and accurate diagrams. Pupils, for example, make appropriate use of transformation geometry including the reflection and rotation of regular polygons. They understand the different representative values when handling data and apply a variety of statistical methods, which provides good reinforcement of the use of number.
85. Standards attained by the end of Key Stage 4 are broadly in line with national expectations. This improvement in standards is largely attributable to the good quality of teaching and the good level of engagement of many pupils in their coursework. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make good progress during the key stage. They work well with the open-ended task requirements for the GCSE examination. Extended work and higher order skills, in day-to-day lessons, are less secure, particularly for the higher-attainers. There is good continuity and progression of work over the two key stages and pupils extend their knowledge of algebra to include simultaneous and quadratic equations. Higher-attaining pupils use standard form and the rules of indices and make good use of the transformation of formulae when dealing with algebraic fractions, Pythagoras' Theorem and trigonometry. Lower-attaining pupils make use of positive and negative numbers, solving equations and constructing graphs. Pupils have a good understanding of shape and space and calculate the area and volume of simple and compound figures using the correct terms. Attainment in data handling is good. Lower-attaining pupils develop satisfactory skills for reading and interpreting data in a variety of straightforward formats. They make appropriate calculations where necessary. They understand the theory of probability and determine the outcome of simple events. Higher-attaining pupils produce and interpret cumulative frequency graphs and distinguish and calculate the probability of dependent and independent events.

86. The quality of teaching is good. In more than half the lessons observed, teaching was good or better. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject and are competent at teaching basic skills. They effectively engage pupils in discussion to make them think and explain and help them to consolidate existing skills, knowledge and understanding. Lesson objectives are clearly communicated. Teachers have high expectations of standards and behaviour. Pupils' good attitudes and response to mathematics help them to make good progress. In the best lessons planning meets the needs of different groups of pupils, time is used effectively, many activities are sequenced well and pupils make good progress. In a minority of lessons progress is less secure because teaching strategies and resources do not match pupils' ability and levels of concentration. In Year 8, for example, when pupils solve simple linear equations after being introduced to flow charts, there is insufficient reinforcement. In some lessons teaching is not consistently challenging. In these lessons opportunities are missed to capitalise on newly taught skills to enable pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, to establish and test hypotheses and to pose questions. Work is not always well-matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities, particularly the gifted and talented. Insufficient use is made of information technology to support teaching and learning and planned opportunities are not provided for all pupils to use information technology. Homework is set regularly, but marking lacks consistent advice for improvement where error and misunderstanding occur.
87. The department is well led and managed with clear guidance and support provided. Teaching and learning are well-monitored and regularly evaluated. There is a wealth of good resources available but a shortage of overhead projectors to support teaching. The department has addressed the key issues raised in the last inspection report and continues to make good progress.

SCIENCE

88. GCSE results were broadly in line with the national average in 1999, but above in 1998. Results over the last four years have been broadly in line with the national trend, although fewer pupils attained the highest grades. In the national tests for fourteen-year-olds in 1999, results were above the national average, showing an improvement in standards since the time of the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and standards in Key Stage 4 are in line with pupils' previous attainments.
89. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national expectation. Pupils make good progress overall, after a slow start in Year 7, where the level of the work is not matched well enough to the pupils' needs and abilities. This course is now being reorganised to address the problem, however. Pupils show good achievement in work on life processes and living things. They draw accurate diagrams of plant structures and human organ systems. Higher-attaining pupils give good descriptions of the functions of specialised cells and explain the process of vaccination well. In work on materials, pupils of all abilities make good progress in using the idea of particles to explain melting and density. Many pupils show good achievement in using symbols to describe chemical reactions, although not all teachers correct pupils' errors in such work. Pupils' progress in work on physical processes is sound overall, but they make insufficient progress in Year 7 on forces and electricity, where work does not build sufficiently on that covered in primary schools. In Years 8 and 9 pupils show good achievement in describing sound waves and the refraction of light.
90. Pupils' achievements in Key Stage 4 are in line with the national expectation. In work on life processes pupils correctly identify the factors affecting photosynthesis in plants and heat loss in animals. Higher-attaining pupils build well on their previous work in describing the human organ systems involved in breathing and nutrition, but do not use their understanding of particles enough to explain their ideas. In work on chemical change, lower-attaining pupils make good progress in measuring the strengths of acids. Higher-attaining pupils show good understanding of the formation of compounds. Middle-attaining pupils in particular make more limited progress in higher level topics requiring calculations or explanations. Pupils do not consolidate their knowledge through

detailed questioning. Pupils of all abilities draw sufficiently accurate diagrams to describe their findings, for example in work on magnetic fields, electric circuits and energy transfer. The achievement of higher-attaining pupils in the single science course is limited by the lack of challenge or pace in some lessons.

91. Pupils' standards in investigational work have improved well since the last inspection. Pupils respond well to the good range of opportunities to plan and carry out fair tests that they are given. Key Stage 3 pupils record their results carefully and many draw line graphs well, choosing appropriate scales. Pupils' opportunities to develop their predicting and explaining of results are too limited and younger pupils in particular lack guidance from structured questioning. In Key Stage 4, pupils make sound progress in their coursework investigations, with higher-attaining pupils using research appropriately to plan their work. Pupils' skills of evaluation and pattern seeking are too limited.
92. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with good features. Pupils' learning is good because of the effective teaching and the very good attitudes they have to science. They show high levels of interest in their work, present their written work well and are keen to discuss their ideas. Pupils develop their basic numeracy skills well through a good range of calculation tasks, but teachers do not provide a clear enough focus on vocabulary and spelling. Teachers structure their lessons well with a clear introduction and a summary session at the end. They make good use of practical activities and manage resources well so that all pupils take an active part in the work. Most teachers plan clear and appropriate aims for lessons and set high expectations for pupils' achievement. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 9 made good progress in revising their chemistry knowledge by moving between a series of well-focused short experiments and discussing their findings at the end of the lesson. In some cases the specific lesson objectives are not precise enough to give a clear focus to the class discussion, pupils are not clear of the main learning points and tasks are not well matched to pupils' previous learning, particularly with the younger pupils. Homework tasks are generally set regularly, but with some classes they rely too heavily on short written responses or unguided revision. In Key Stage 4 teachers maintain good relationships with pupils and motivate them well. In teachers' assessments of written work comments were sometimes too infrequent or lacking in detail and pupils were not clear about what they needed to do to improve.
93. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with good features. The head of department offers good leadership in the setting of challenging targets for pupil performance and encouraging a high-quality learning environment where the use of display is excellent. The monitoring of pupil progress is not sufficiently rigorous and test data is not collected and analysed sufficiently frequently. While there is a sound model for schemes of work in the department, the development of the curriculum has been slow until recently. Planning does not ensure that work is matched well to different ability groups or that information technology resources are used more widely. The management of the department is satisfactory overall with good communications and very effective support for its day-to-day running from the experienced technician team. Merits to encourage pupils are well used throughout the department and are successful in giving pupils a positive sense of achievement.

ART

94. GCSE results in 1999 were above the national average. The trend in results during the last four years has been above the national trend although results dipped in 1998 to just below the national average. Overall standards have risen since the last inspection. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 were well above the national expectation in 1999, though these were over-generous.
95. Standards of attainment are in line with the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 3. A few higher-attaining pupils achieve above the national expectation. Those pupils with special

educational needs make good progress in their practical work. Overall, boys achieve less well than girls, because they are not sufficiently motivated by sketchbook work. Pupils make good use of their knowledge of Surrealism to inform their small-scale sculptures. Pupils in Year 8 develop their painting skills well through colour blending investigations in their sketchbooks and abstract paintings. Overall, pupils' skills in painting and drawing investigations in sketchbooks are unsatisfactory because they do not make sufficient use of direct observation and do not experiment in sketchbooks to develop their skills. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the work of artists they study and occasionally, as in a Year 8 lesson, their knowledge of particular painters such as Kandinsky is good. In this lesson they show good knowledge of Kandinsky's work and use appropriate terminology such as 'composition', 'tone' and 'abstract' in a lively whole class discussion. However, most pupils do not sufficiently extend their knowledge to cover a range of periods, artists and designers and their skills of information seeking, comparison and analysis are not well developed. The lower-attaining pupils and those pupils with special educational needs make good progress especially with sculpture.

96. In Key Stage 4 standards of attainment are above national expectations. Pupils' skills in developing their own ideas in both art and photography are good. They make satisfactory use of art historical sources and consider subject matter, lighting and composition well. Pupils are competent in using a wide range of media. The most adventurous work makes good use of pupils' own interests such as dance. The human form is used well as a source of information for sculpture. Pupils choose appropriate media for individual tasks and know the properties of these materials. Overall pupils make good use of both digital and conventional cameras to explore and manipulate imagery. Boys are especially motivated by the use of information technology to enhance their coursework. Most pupils develop their ideas and themes to a satisfactory conclusion though a minority are not sufficiently challenged to explore and consolidate investigations in their sketchbooks.
97. The quality of teaching is good. In Key Stage 4 it is strongest where teachers make effective use of their good subject knowledge and ensure that pupils are taught specific skills. It is best in Key Stage 3 where pupils are challenged to use their knowledge and understanding independently. Pupils' learning and achievement is especially enhanced when teachers use demonstration and effective questioning. Teachers' good use of a range of materials and methods is especially effective in motivating pupils, especially boys, for example through the use of three-dimensional materials and photography. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and behaviour management is a strength. This helps pupils to sustain their concentration and develops a sense of responsibility. There is regular setting of homework, which contributes soundly to what is learned in lessons. Teaching does not always ensure that pupils have a secure command of basic skills in art especially in investigation work. Feedback to pupils in lessons is always encouraging but does not always clearly indicate to pupils what they should do to make further progress and remedy the weaknesses in their work. Art historical sources are used well in lessons though not consistently.
98. The subject leader was recently appointed to this post and provides many good approaches to improving the breadth of the curriculum. Overall there is satisfactory leadership and management. A number of improvements have been made during the past year including the systematic use of sketchbooks for all pupils and schemes of work for Key Stage 3. Schemes of work for Key Stage 4 are insufficiently detailed. There is a satisfactory level of monitoring of teaching, which has led to the identification of issues for improvement and action required. However, in both key stages strategies for raising standards are not fully linked to weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching, for example the teaching of investigation work in sketchbooks and the systematic use of art historical sources in lessons.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. GCSE results in 1999 were broadly in line with the national average and similar to other subjects taken by the same pupils. Results over the past five years have steadily improved and show a marked improvement since the last inspection when they were well below national averages. In most aspects of design and technology pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Results in electronic products in the GCSE examination in 1999, however, were well below the national average.
100. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils' making skills are stronger than their subject knowledge and designing skills. For example, pupils in Year 9 make a battery-powered car, which they assemble from a commercial kit to a satisfactory standard. However, their design capabilities are constrained by the limitations of this task. Year 8 pupils making a moisture sensor concentrate well on making the circuit but do not consider its use and the design implications sufficiently to create a successful product. However, many pupils produced very good design ideas for a fridge magnet and for a telephone jotter, though these are poorly presented. Pupils demonstrate good practical skills, for example when using ready-made pastry to make different food products and when cutting out a toy in sheet material. Most pupils make satisfactory progress but higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the tasks set. For example, pupils in Year 7 spent too long studying the heat differences in a conventional oven for limited gains in knowledge. Middle and lower-attaining pupils achieve satisfactory standards in practical work. Across the key stage pupils designing, sketching and presentation skills are overall underdeveloped. Homework is not sufficiently used to support classwork.
101. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are in line with national expectations. In Year 11 the quality of finished products is good. In electronic products standards are well below national expectations. In textiles technology pupils make a range of very well-constructed garments for a variety of occasions. In graphic products pupils produce very good modelling for building and garden designs. In resistant materials pupils produce satisfactory standards though the range of materials used is limited almost exclusively to wood. Photographs of food products and pupils' food technology portfolios show that standards are satisfactory though practical coursework is of a higher standard than design work. Research, design ideas and final presentations are weaknesses. In Year 10 pupils designing a luxury sandwich used information technology to download information and present their analysis and findings. Though undemanding, the task helped pupils to research and evaluate their outcomes. Pupils' practical and designing skills are very weak in electronics.
102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have sound subject knowledge. Lesson planning and the management of pupils are good. In the best lessons a range of teaching strategies is used well to motivate and encourage pupils. In a minority of lessons the pace of work is slow and insufficiently challenging, for example when investigating oven temperatures in Year 7 or the properties of fabrics in Year 9. In these lessons pupils make limited progress and learning is unsatisfactory. On occasions pupils are given unnecessary paper exercises. Some pupils in a Year 8 class making an 'active animal' needed more support, diagrams and models to help them understand the concept of movement and loci. In the majority of lessons teachers support and guide pupils well but often they provide insufficient challenge and opportunity for pupils to develop independent learning skills. In almost all lessons pupils work with interest and considerable enthusiasm. Relationships are good with teachers and between pupils. Behaviour is good in almost all lessons. Pupils respect their environment and equipment and work with care and attention to health and safety requirements. Teachers rarely used assessment during lessons to show pupils what they needed to do to make further progress.
103. The department is soundly led. However, there is a lack of coherence across the department as a whole and each of the three areas operates relatively independently. Though there has been improvement in the level of collaboration recently, lesson planning and assessment procedures lack consistency across the department. The department operates a rotational timetable in Key

Stage 3 and teachers do not always have a clear understanding of what has preceded the unit of work they are teaching. This has an adverse effect on continuity and progression. Departmental policies and schemes of work are comprehensive and informative. Information technology is rarely used in the department to support pupils' learning or to enhance the presentation of design ideas and solutions. Accommodation for design and technology is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient workshop spaces and inadequate facilities for graphics, electronics and textiles. Food technology rooms and one textile room have recently been refurbished. These provide bright, well-equipped teaching environments.

DRAMA

104. GCSE results in 1999 were well above the national average. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection when they were also high. In the GCSE examination, pupils achieve higher standards than in their other subjects.
105. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is above average for their age and they make good progress. Pupils perform well, for example in presenting improvised scenes and using mime with conviction. They create differences in character through their use of gestures, facial expressions and posture. They make good progress in learning the discipline of drama, for example the importance of stillness and concentration, and in learning how to evaluate performance. During Key Stage 3 pupils develop a good understanding of working in role and use group and improvisation well to create characters and explore issues. For example, Year 7 pupils create characters effectively from *The Oregon Trail* by focusing on gesture in groups and combining well in a whole class to respond to appropriate music. Pupils in Year 9 use mime with conviction before using talk to interpret their characters. The youngest pupils have a limited experience of drama techniques and the evaluation of performance, which makes their progress slower than expected.
106. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are well above national expectations. Pupils achieve high standards and make very good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs that achieve national expectations both in practical and written elements of the course.
107. In Key Stage 4 pupils perform confidently and very well. They show great skill in crafting scenes, creating character through movement, use of voice and interaction with others and making very effective contact with their audience. They sustain their characters well, mixing the tender and comic in ways that are both enjoyable and very moving. Pupils show interest and great commitment in their work. They show respect for each other's work and carefully watch and evaluate the performances of their colleagues. Their written work gives detailed explanations and evaluations of their own and others' work. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject and respect for their teachers and the facilities. They work freely and creatively within the clear structures provided and have a good sense of their strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve, as well as a keen desire to do as well as possible.
108. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. Lessons are clear about the specific drama skills that will be taught through well-paced sequences of varied activities. The very best teaching secures concentration and involvement from the start of the lesson and sustains it throughout. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and very high expectations of pupils. Teachers skilfully identify pupils' needs, build on their strengths and ensure progress. They give pupils feedback, which makes clear exactly how they can improve, and provide a range of structures to ensure that they do.
109. There is very good, thoughtful leadership of the department and a strong commitment to improvement and maintaining high standards. Precise monitoring has allowed key areas of comparative weakness such as pupils' written evaluation of their work to be identified and dealt with. The scheme of work provides a useful structure of units, which give good coverage of the

subject. However, in the early years of Key Stage 3 these units are not precise enough about how pupils will develop and extend the basic skills of drama that are insecure for many. The department provides a very good range of additional opportunities for all pupils to extend their experience of drama both as observers and performers.

GEOGRAPHY

110. GCSE results in 1999 were well below the national average. Results over the last four years have been below the national figures and standards have remained the same since the last inspection. Standards in geography are below those of most subjects in the school but pupils' achievements overall are satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment and results in other subjects.
111. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall and standards have improved in some aspects of the subject. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the places they study, including their own area, and good knowledge of physical processes such as rivers and waterfalls. They use geographical terms confidently in their discussions and have good understanding of issues such as the environment and recognise that people have different viewpoints. Able and talented pupils underachieve, for example, in not developing more complex explanations of arguments for and against the Green Revolution. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall in their knowledge, understanding and recording of geography, for example in discussing long and short term aid to Bangladesh. Pupils make good links between features of places and make good comparisons between places in their work on Tourism. Skills in developing their own classroom enquiries, however, are not sufficiently developed.
112. Standards are below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 4 for the current cohort of pupils, but their achievements are satisfactory overall in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils have good knowledge of geographical terminology and satisfactory knowledge of case studies required for examinations. They achieve satisfactorily overall in their coursework with some exceptional individual performances demonstrating a high level of personal commitment. They describe well the urban pattern of Portsmouth and how it relates to general models of urban development. Lower and middle-attaining pupils have a good understanding of shopping hierarchies and patterns and can apply these to their own area. However, higher-attaining pupils do not sufficiently extend their thinking and level of explanation. A small minority of lower-attaining boys underachieve because they do not complete their work to deadlines or sustain focus and commitment in their lessons.
113. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching ranges from very good to a small proportion that is unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well, along with effective questioning, to ensure that pupils have good knowledge of geographical terms, places and processes. Teaching of lower and middle-attaining pupils is very effective where there is a careful match of work to pupils' needs, good pace and good monitoring and involvement of pupils, for example in studying spheres of influence. It is unsatisfactory where there is insufficient monitoring of pupils' work, pace is too slow and short-term targets are not set for pupils. Teaching of high-attaining pupils is unsatisfactory where pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to discuss, develop and explain their ideas orally and where expectations of their achievement are too low. Good use of enquiry in fieldwork is not matched by equivalent opportunities for pupils to develop their own enquiries in the classroom.
114. The head of department has a clear vision for geography, which is allied to all teachers' enthusiasm for geography and their commitment to improvement, including visits to other schools to compare practice. The department's monitoring strategies are good and good evaluation is made of assessment data to identify aspects to improve. However, there has been insufficient specific development of teaching within the department to ensure that high standards are shared

and that high-attaining pupils are challenged. Leadership and management are consequently satisfactory overall. Information technology is used well by individual pupils but it is not systematically planned for in schemes of work. Satisfactory progress has been made on the issues raised in the previous inspection report.

HISTORY

115. GCSE results in 1999 were broadly in line with the national average. Results in the previous two years have varied from below to in line with the national average. In GCSE examinations pupils achieve standards in line with their other subjects.
116. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3, where pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall and standards have improved in some aspects of the subject. Pupils have good knowledge of the periods they study. They write careful descriptions of aspects such as the suffragettes or the problems of life for the poor. High-attaining pupils write good extended accounts of slavery and the Titanic. Pupils enjoy their research and the presentation of their results. They use a sound range of resources effectively to gain information and use sources well to discuss the interpretation, for example, of the gunpowder plot. However, their understanding of historians' interpretations is underdeveloped. Pupils understand that contemporary people had positive and negative perspectives on historical events such as Nazi Germany and that there were reasons for these perspectives. High-attaining pupils, however, are not sufficiently challenged to develop the sophistication of their thinking on these perspectives and in understanding change and causation.
117. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 4 and pupils' achievements are satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils have good knowledge of the major periods they study, such as America in the twentieth century. They draw links between features of American history in discussing the Great Depression and reflect well on the sources of the period such as stills and the film of John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. They have a good awareness of the importance of knowing the provenance of the source, its utility and reliability. Pupils understand the main personalities and events in the Cuban crisis and place them well within the wider context of superpower rivalry with low-attaining pupils achieving particularly well. Pupils overall achieve very well in their coursework and sourcework but their notes and their application of knowledge and understanding to the content-based questions in their examination are less focused and precise.
118. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with many good and occasionally very good features. Good subject knowledge allows good examples to be given and connections to be drawn in lessons using, for example, films about Nazi Germany or photographs of the Great Depression. Teachers are very effective in questioning pupils to develop their understanding and to assess their knowledge. The methods used, combined with good management and relationships, enable pupils to sustain their interest and reach a good level of discussion with their teachers. However, the strategies used to develop discussions with some pupils in the class need to be extended to include more pupils. Teachers are effective at setting specific learning objectives to support sourcework but less effective in setting objectives within change and causation and in meeting the demands of GCSE questions in Paper 1. Teaching of low-attaining pupils is very good. This is characterised by very good pace, match of work to pupils' aptitudes, good relationships and challenge.
119. There is good leadership of the department. This is supported well by the effective link with the senior management team. Teachers have a clear commitment to improvement and a good interest in their own subject and its wider contribution to the school curriculum. There is good monitoring of the department, which leads to the identification of areas for improvement for teaching and planning. Information technology is not systematically identified and developed in schemes of work. Though schemes of work are being developed to include more specific learning objectives

they do not currently include sufficient in-depth work and challenge, including sufficient interpretation, especially for the high-attainers in Key Stage 3. Overall, good progress has been made on the issues raised in the previous inspection report.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

120. GCSE results in 1999 were above the national average. In the GCSE examinations pupils achieve higher standards than in their other subjects. In the teacher assessments for fourteen-year-olds in 1999 results were above the national average and above for those reaching the higher levels. Overall standards have risen since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in the subject.
121. By the end of Key Stage 3 the standard of pupils' skills and knowledge in discrete information technology lessons is above national expectations and all pupils, including higher-attainers and those with special educational needs, make good progress. In information technology lessons pupils use word processing, drawing and graphing programs, and PowerPoint presentation software competently to organise and communicate straightforward information. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in developing their understanding of other subjects are too limited. They use home computers to produce occasional pieces of word-processed and graphics work. In mathematics they model calculations of area and volume for packaging boxes, and in design and technology they tabulate the relationship between the weight and allowable load of different types of bridges. They use spreadsheets effectively in information technology lessons to present data graphically, model break-even scenarios and profit and loss accounts and transform their results into clear business reports. Pupils store and retrieve information successfully from databases, asking appropriate questions. They extract information from CD-ROMs and the Internet, but they infrequently comment upon images they have printed or imported into their own work. Pupils lack the skills to formally structure their interrogation of the National Grid for Learning and to compare the most effective methods of searching. Pupils build an effective system for monitoring and controlling temperature with the use of computer-based devices. There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply this knowledge in the context of, for example, their technology and science lessons which would enable them to relate this learning to the world around them.
122. By the end of Key Stage 4 all pupils achieve good standards in information technology. In communicating and interpreting information, handling data and representing it numerically and graphically, pupils achieve high standards. Standards in the application of computer-based resources are satisfactory in only a minority of other subjects. Pupils taking the information technology course are competent in using computers for communicating and handling information at a professional level. They combine text and graphics to produce effective reports on how retail businesses apply information technology to data gathering through questionnaires, and to data analysis through graphs and tables. They employ word processing, desktop publishing and graphics software to gain experience of creating corporate identities, and to develop electronic presentations for employee training. They understand the potential of the Internet for electronic commerce and they have started to work with email for personal communication. They also develop a model payroll system well, which incorporates the appropriate elements of a commercial application. In business studies pupils are developing competence in using computers for analysing information, and for presenting their ideas in the form of surveys, reports, tables, charts and diagrams. They know how to use a spreadsheet to model business decisions and to calculate accurate profit and loss accounts. Work in other subjects is too limited. In mathematics, some pupils compile an attractive, accurate guide to the use of a graph plotting program, and in science and design technology a minority of pupils use word processing and spreadsheets on home computers to present their coursework. However, there is too little formal planning for computer-related activities, or agreement on how resources such as the Internet will be exploited

systematically to improve pupils' research and thinking skills. Pupils do not have sufficient encouragement or opportunity to use library-based resources, the set of laptops available for general use, or specialised measuring devices for monitoring experiments.

123. The quality of teaching in information technology lessons is good. Teachers' effective use of their subject knowledge ensures that pupils undertake computer-based tasks that are appropriate and offer good opportunities for progress. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the technical competence of teaching and support staff, and by planning which identifies practical and written activities, which stimulate and challenge pupils. Teachers use a flexible range of methods to engage and monitor their classes, for example by demonstrating software-based techniques and requiring pupils to intervene when they see mistakes which need correcting. Teachers show good intervention in lessons to identify pupils who need support. The assessment of pupils' work is accurate, and regular feedback in lessons enables pupils to adjust their learning approaches in order to improve what they can do. Homework is well used by teachers to help pupils extend their understanding of the ways in which information technology is used in the modern world. Teachers do not encourage pupils enough to take responsibility for the management and quality of their own work. In addition, in some lessons objectives are not clear enough to ensure that pupils reflect formally on their progress in relation to the targets set for that lesson. Though some teachers book the set of laptop computers in other subjects and use them well, this good practice is not widespread.
124. Leadership and management across the information technology team are good. There is clear direction for the team's work and high standards are successfully promoted. Monitoring and evaluation of performance has led to improved results. Long-term targets are appropriately set within the context of the school's needs and wider developments including national initiatives. Significant issues from the last inspection report have been addressed. The school has sound plans for improving the whole school management of information technology further by developing clearer expectations of the contribution that all subjects will make. The impact of this on learning has not yet been fully consolidated. Development in a number of areas has been too limited. These include the use of the library, the school intranet, the use of resources such as laptop computers and palmtop measuring devices, and existing research on the contribution which information technology can make to the development of higher order information-seeking and thinking skills.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French and German

125. GCSE examination results in German in 1999 were in line with the national average and results in French were below. Trends in recent years show improvement, with the exception of 1998. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils' achievement is sound in relation to their prior attainment. In GCSE girls' achievement in French is positive in relation to other subjects, whereas that of boys is negative. In GCSE German, boys' results are positive in relation to other subjects, whereas girls' results are neutral.
126. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectation in both French and German. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in modern foreign languages, and those with English as an additional language make good progress. High-attaining pupils make particularly good progress. Pupils' listening skills are well developed and they show good response to their teacher's use of the target language for classroom instructions and to taped listening tasks. They also respond well to contact with the school's foreign language assistants and gain in confidence orally. Most pupils' speaking skills are underdeveloped, as reported at the time of the last inspection, though well-prepared and confident oral work is evident in some lessons. In a Year 8 group, for example, pupils simulated café scenes, improvising well in order to resolve problems emerging during the course of the activity. Reading

skills are sound, although opportunities to read beyond basic textbook passages are limited. Some pupils have access in lesson time to library resources, including CD-ROMs, but pupils do not systematically undertake such work. Pupils' writing is sound overall and some pupils use information technology well to produce extended texts that are both accurate and well-presented. Graphical representation of the results of surveys is well managed by pupils and these activities provide an authentic context for their language work.

127. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national expectation in both languages, with particularly high standards amongst higher-attaining pupils. Current Year 10 and 11 French groups are well placed to achieve higher results at GCSE than those of recent years. All pupils show at least sound progress. Their oral skills are confident in paired and group activities, with a minority also prepared to take risks in front of the class. Their understanding of grammatical structures is variable and their teachers have rightly identified this as an area for future emphasis. Many pupils produce extended writing of good quality, often using word-processing packages to present their work. However, the quality of writing is variable across teaching groups. Boys and girls, high-attaining and lower-attaining pupils, produce interesting and imaginative work.
128. Most pupils have positive attitudes to modern foreign languages and enjoy their work in class. They participate with enthusiasm in all aspects of lessons though the quality of homework is inconsistent. Pupils in some teaching groups develop effective learning skills and use reference materials well, but not all classes show this growing independence.
129. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some examples of very good teaching. Subject knowledge is strong and teachers conduct lessons predominantly in the foreign language. Learning objectives are mostly very clear and teachers share and evaluate these with pupils. The majority of teachers create a positive climate in lessons. This supports pupils to take risks, enables them to work confidently and to learn from each other. Feedback in lessons is positive and encouraging, and there are also examples of very helpful written comments to support pupils' learning. One Year 9 pupil was told, for example: "Well done - now try and make your 'refusals' longer - perhaps linking with 'parce que' ". This good practice provides a model which has, however, not yet been adopted effectively across the teaching team. In Year 9, good teaching was observed when pupils were required to work to strict deadlines as they moved around a carousel of activities, practising different skills on the same topic. In Year 10, pupils worked well in mixed-gender groups to prepare scenes for filming. In Year 11 pupils shared opinions about the success and breakdown of family relationships in French. These examples demonstrate the impact of good teaching on pupils' learning and attainment. In most lessons teachers now have high expectations of middle and lower-attaining pupils, a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection, when expectations were reported as low.
130. Leadership and management of French and German are good. Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable changes in staffing in modern languages. A recently appointed head of department is having a strong impact upon the work of the team and consolidating existing strengths across both languages. There is a clear focus upon strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning for pupils of all abilities. The team's priorities rightly include the further development of speaking skills in Key Stage 3 and the harnessing of information technology to raise both motivation and attainment in pupils. There is evidence of substantial improvement since the last inspection. This forward-looking team has the clear capacity for further improvement.

MUSIC

131. In the GCSE examination in 1999 the number of entries was small. All candidates gained high grades and achieved very high standards in relation to their other subjects. Results above the

national average have been achieved consistently over the last three years and high standards have been maintained in Key Stage 4 since the last inspection.

132. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards of attainment meet national expectations and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Standards in Key Stage 3 have risen since the last inspection, especially in composing and performing where many higher-attaining pupils work at levels that exceed the national expectations. They compose and perform confidently and with good technical control. In the best cases performances are sensitive and expressive and compositions are imaginative and well-structured. Pupils in Year 9, for example, gave convincing performances of jazz-influenced pieces that they had composed. Average-attaining pupils perform rhythmically and with satisfactory technical control. They use simple musical conventions and compositional techniques well although their music often lacks sufficient expressive contrast. Lower-attaining pupils perform and compose in a satisfactory way, although they are less skilled in listening to others and adapting their playing to fit with others. Standards achieved in listening and appraising are less consistent and many pupils do not meet national expectations. Many accurately identify instruments and simple musical features but do not discuss and analyse music sufficiently skilfully. When composing or performing, the limitations of the accommodation restricts the extent to which pupils may listen critically to their music making and adversely affects their ability to develop sufficient expressive contrast in their music.
133. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are above national expectations and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Higher-attaining pupils achieve especially well in composing and performing, where their music making is expressive and technically secure. They perform fluently and expressively and their compositions are very imaginative and evocative. While some pupils are more limited in the technical aspects of their performing and composing, their work is of a satisfactory standard. As in Key Stage 3, standards in listening are lower than in composing and performing. Many pupils correctly identify simple musical features and styles but most have a limited technical vocabulary and knowledge of different styles and genres.
134. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils work creatively, acquire good skills and develop effective musical ideas because teaching appropriately focuses on actively engaging pupils in music-making. Clear objectives focus on developing pupils' abilities as musicians. In most cases objectives are well matched to pupils of differing prior attainment, although in a small minority of lessons higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently explicitly to ensure that all make as much progress as they are capable of. In most cases very clear explanations are given to pupils about what they are expected to achieve. As a result, pupils work well during lessons and make good progress in developing their composing or performing skills despite the limitations of the accommodation. Group work is carefully set up to allow pupils to work productively. As a result, pupils concentrate well and discuss ideas sensibly in order to improve their work. In a small minority of lessons practical tasks are not explained sufficiently clearly to ensure that all pupils are fully engaged in their music making throughout the lesson. While good opportunities are provided for pupils to comment on their own and others' compositions or performances, insufficient planned and structured opportunities are provided to allow pupils to develop their listening and appraising skills.
135. The management of the department, including the monitoring, evaluating and improving of performance, is satisfactory. Within the department a formal approach to classroom monitoring that focuses observations more explicitly on identified aspects of teaching has not been developed. The department has made good progress in responding to the recommendations of the last inspection other than in improving pupils' standards in listening and appraising. This weakness is identified in the development plan. The plan would benefit from the setting of more precise targets or tasks to clarify precisely what is required. Accommodation for music is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient small rooms for pupils to work in without being adversely affected by the sound created by the music making of other pupils. Resources are generally adequate but the provision of computers is unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. GCSE results in 1999 were below the national average and results in recent years have been below the national trend. Overall GCSE results have declined since those reported at the time of the last inspection; however, in 1999 this lower-attaining cohort of pupils achieved higher standards than in their other subjects. Overall attainment is similar in both key stages to the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.
137. The attainment of most pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 is above national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In games, where attainment is above expectations, pupils have secure individual skills of passing and control in the major team games. Higher-attaining pupils apply tactics well in conditioned games. For example, in a football lesson, higher-attaining boys used tactics of overlap and overload to outwit opponents. Standards achieved by boys in gymnastics are in line with national expectations while those achieved by girls are of a much higher standard and above national expectations. Girls perform a wide range of actions with clarity and control, and plan and perform complex sequences of good quality. Higher-attaining girls perform to a very high standard.
138. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is in line with national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress. However, in core physical education, pupils' attainment is above expectations in swimming and higher-attaining pupils sustain effective and efficient strokes during distance swimming. In examination classes, pupils' knowledge and understanding of aspects of theory are in line with expectations, but rarely higher. Their knowledge of injuries and components of fitness are appropriate though superficial, and pupils are not confident in using this knowledge in a sporting context. A minority of higher-attaining pupils are able to speculate clearly about the effects of anaerobic exercise on performance.
139. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is well used to support pupils' knowledge and understanding. Planning is comprehensive, and a clear focus in the majority of lessons on challenging learning objectives succeeds in helping pupils understand what it was they should learn. Teachers help pupils to improve through effective, targeted questions, which allows them to think for themselves. In the best cases learning objectives are well matched to the needs of particular groups of pupils and used as a reference throughout the lesson. Teachers' expectations of pupils' responses and attainment are good and are clearly communicated to pupils. For example, in a gymnastics lesson skilful teaching challenged pupils to achieve very high standards by identifying and communicating what they were doing well and how they could improve further. Teachers' management of pupils is also good. They combine their detailed knowledge of pupils with an effective range of strategies to ensure that pupils learn at a productive pace. In a GCSE lesson, the teacher effectively delegated a high degree of responsibility to a group of pupils to lead the session for their peers. However, there are a few occasions when pupils respond positively to opportunities provided for collaborative work.
140. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has a clear vision for the development of the subject with a focus on raising standards. The department forms a committed team and has made good progress in addressing the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. There is a very positive and consistent ethos within the department that effectively supports pupils' learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. GCSE results for the group of nine pupils in 1999 were below the national average. The recent trend in results has been similar. Pupils' achievement is similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection.
142. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards are in line with those expected in the local Agreed Syllabus. This is broadly the same as in the previous inspection report. Standards achieved are in line with pupils' prior attainment and they make appropriate progress in their studies. Pupils achieve a satisfactory standard in both exploring and responding to human experience and investigating religious tradition. For example, pupils in a Year 9 class know about the visions and traditions of the North American Indians. This helps them to understand aspects of human experience. In a Year 7 class pupils achieve a sound knowledge of Judaism that provides them with a sound foundation of skills, which enables them to relate this study to other faiths.
143. Standards of attainment in Key Stage 4 in the GCSE course are broadly in line with pupils' ability. In Year 11 it is lower overall because one of the two groups comprises lower-attaining pupils. Pupils who do not follow a GCSE course follow a course leading to school accreditation. In this work pupils' standards are in line with the local Agreed Syllabus. The standards they attain are higher than reported in the last inspection. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress, achieve well and attain standards above expectations. Lower-attaining pupils achieve appropriate standards for their ability and make satisfactory progress.
144. The overall quality of teaching is good. All lessons were at least satisfactory with over half the lessons good or better. Teaching is supported by a very good scheme of work and effective joint planning. Specialist teachers provide most of the teaching and their subject knowledge and expertise are strengths. Lessons have precise objectives that are clearly communicated to pupils and this enables them to understand the requirements of the lesson. Lessons start well, proceed at a good pace and provide a good level of challenge for most pupils with the exception of the highest-attaining pupils. A narrow range of teaching styles was used well to match the topics taught though the scheme of work shows a wider range of methods used over time. Pupils' learning is supported well by the use of key words displayed in classrooms.
145. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good and in some cases they are very good. They respond well to the content of the lessons and show respect for the religious traditions they study. Pupils are interested in what they are learning; they concentrate well and work hard to acquire new knowledge and better understanding. The very good quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is a strong feature of the lessons and pupils behave very well as a result. Pupils work successfully in small groups and co-operate effectively in their learning. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' learning about faiths other than Christianity helps them explore the culture from which the religion comes.
146. Religious education is well led and managed and good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Schemes of work are regularly reviewed and updated and the outcomes of the monitoring of teaching are used well to improve the quality of classroom practice.