

# INSPECTION REPORT

**NEW MILLS SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM  
CENTRE**

New Mills

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112936

Headteacher: Mr J Elms

Reporting inspector: Mr Philip Budgell  
4055

Dates of inspection: 28 February – 2 March 2000

Inspection number: 186444

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Lane New Mills High Peak Derbyshire
Postcode:	SK22 4NR
Telephone number:	01663 743284
Fax number:	01663 745134
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	David Cooper
Date of previous inspection:	25/09/1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Philip Budgell	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievement
			How well are pupils or students taught?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Geza Hanniker	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
Clifford Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students? Sixth Form
Ronald Bulman	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	Efficiency
Paul Hartwright	Team inspector	Design and technology Information technology	
Ken Hounslow	Team inspector	Science	
Eileen Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art	Equal opportunities

Laurence Moscrop	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?  Personal development
Elizabeth Raitt	Team inspector	English	
Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
Patricia Walker	Team inspector	History	
Susan Wilkinson	Team inspector	Music	
		Special educational needs	
William Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Limited  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7 - 11</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12 - 17</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>17 - 20</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>20 - 23</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>23 - 24</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>24 - 25</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>25 - 28</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>29 - 32</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>33 - 53</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

New Mills School and Sixth Form Centre is a non-selective school in Derbyshire local education authority. All the maintained schools in the LEA are non-selective, but New Mills is situated in the northwest of the LEA and is close to selective schools in other LEAs that take a significant minority of the more able pupils from the designated feeder primary schools. There are 919 boys and girls on roll, which is just below the national average for comprehensive schools with sixth forms. The proportion of pupils choosing to go to the school from the designated primary schools is increasing and the pupil population is stable with only incidental movement of pupils. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (7 percent) is well below the national average. Less than two percent of the pupils come from ethnic minority communities; there are only three pupils for whom English is an additional language and only one is at the early stages of learning English. There are 155 pupils with special educational needs, marginally below the national average, and 33 have statements. Pupils' attainment on entry is in line with national averages.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

New Mills School and Sixth Form Centre is an improving school. Taking all the core subjects together, the performance of the pupils in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 has, over the last four years, been well above the national average. The proportions of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\*-C and at grades A\*-G were, over the last three years, close to the national averages. The average A/AS level points score of candidates entered for two or more GCE A levels or AS equivalent was, over the last three years, close to the national average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 98 percent of lessons and it is very good or excellent in 15 percent of lessons. The overall quality of teaching makes a positive contribution to the attainments of the pupils and students.

During the two years he has been in post the head teacher has brought about considerable change. A wide-ranging review of many of the school's activities has been undertaken. The previous mission statement has been replaced with a clear and more appropriate list of aims. The school is making good progress towards these aims although the head teacher realises, correctly, that there is a considerable way to go before they are met. The school's income per pupil is very low and it provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The quality of the provision in the Sixth Form is very good.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and makes a major contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are good and as they get older they express an appreciation of the opportunities available for them through the school.
- The teaching of numeracy by the mathematics department is good.
- There is high participation in a good range of extra-curricular activities in music and sports and a good range of visits out of school.
- Personal and social education across the school and careers education are good.
- Equality of access and opportunity and provision for pupils' moral and social education are good.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good.
- The school applies the principles of best value well.

### What could be improved

- The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Attainment could be improved by the use of assessment data to monitor the performance of pupils, departments and the school, and the ongoing use of assessment data in Key Stage 3.
- Teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- The use of the tutorial period and the length of the teaching week.
- The provision for control and measuring in information technology and information technology across the curriculum.
- The range of opportunities for using materials and communicating by design in design and technology in Key Stage 3.
- The curriculum time for music in Key Stage 3.
- The time for religious education in Key Stage 4, the provision of religious education in the Sixth Form and the provision for pupils' spiritual education.

*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 by OFSTED in November 1995. Since that time the governors and senior management team have had to respond to a succession of budget cuts. It is only since the appointment of the new headteacher that the school has been able to address many of the key issues in the last OFSTED report. The school now has a clear and appropriate set of aims and an updated portfolio of school policies. There has been a major investment in information and control technology. The bursar has ensured that departments apply the principles of best value in administering their finances and some departments are becoming more adept at evaluating outcomes to date as well as setting and costing clearly defined targets for the future. A programme of activities has been developed for the morning tutor-time but it is not always effectively implemented. Although departments have developed their assessment processes these are not always coherent and the school does not use assessment data systematically. The school still does not provide a daily act of collective worship, the time for religious education is still insufficient to ensure that the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus can be met and there is no religious education in the Sixth Form. Overall, sound improvement has been made since the last inspection.

### STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

\*Although New Mills is a non-selective school in a non-selective LEA, it is close to schools in neighbouring LEAs that are selective and a significant minority of the more able pupils from the designated primary schools transfer to these selective schools. Consequently, it is inappropriate to compare the school's results with other non-selective schools with more than 5 percent and up to 9 percent of pupils eligible for free school meals because they may not be similar schools.

Taking all core subjects together, the performance of the pupils in the National Curriculum tests in 1999 was above the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\*-C in 1999 was above the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining 5 or more



GCSE passes at grades A\*-G in 1999 was close to the national average. In 1999, there were significant differences in the pupils' attainments in the subjects at GCSE. The results in mathematics, geography and science were above the average for the school and in information technology, drama, business studies and German they were below that average. The average A/AS level points score of candidates entered for two or more GCE A levels or AS equivalent in 1999 was close to the national average. The school has set targets for improvement that it should easily achieve.

Attainment in lessons is in line with national expectations and the GCSE and GCE A level course requirements and there are no significant differences between key stages and subjects. Pupils' achievements are sound across the school. They are slightly better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 and they are good in the Sixth Form.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. Discussions with pupils confirm that they like school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour is satisfactory but the teachers have to work hard to maintain good order in some classrooms. Outside the classroom a minority of pupils easily lose self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are satisfactory. The majority of pupils are helpful though not always uniformly courteous to visitors. Although the pupils' relationships with their peers and with adults are mostly good, they are not consistently so and are uneasy at times.
Attendance	Attendance is above the average for similar schools and unauthorised absence is in line with the national average

As pupils get older they express their appreciation of the opportunities available for them through the school. They also value the school's increasing commitment to take into account their views. Some pupils are immature for their age and interrupt lessons unnecessarily. Occasionally pupils' learning and attainments in lessons are restricted by the behaviour of a few pupils. Although the pupils do not consider bullying a problem, during the inspection some pupils were too boisterous in the corridors when moving between classes. The Sixth Formers have important roles in the school. They run a 'drop-in room' for pupils who need counselling, run a homework club and supervise the 'common room' at lunchtime. The newly introduced paired-reading scheme is proving successful and the older pupils take the responsibility seriously, encourage their 'buddy' and keep good records of their achievements.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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 teaching is satisfactory or better in 98 percent of lessons, and it is very good or better in 15 percent of lessons. In the very small number of lessons in which the teaching is unsatisfactory it is usually a result of the poor behaviour of the pupils. Overall the teaching is good, but it is better in Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, their planning, their teaching methods and the use of time and resources are good. The quality and use of

ongoing assessment is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3. Teaching is consistently good or better in art and music in both key stages and in the Sixth Form. It is satisfactory or good in English, mathematics and science in Key Stages 3 and 4; overall it is slightly better in Key Stage 4. The teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory and the teaching of numeracy skills is good.

Pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding, their intellectual, physical and creative effort and their productivity and pace of work are good. Pupils in Key Stage 3 however, are not sufficiently aware of their own learning. Pupils with special education needs make good progress in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall the curriculum offers breadth and balance in all key stages but fails to meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	In English and mathematics, teachers use a suitably differentiated curriculum to support pupils with special educational needs. In other subjects teachers do not add subject specific targets to pupils individual education plans and there is insufficient use of these plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to reflect and to consider spiritual matters do not occur consistently. Provision for moral and social education is good. The codes of conduct clearly set out how others should be treated and how pupils should behave around the school. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and there are opportunities for the pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall the quality of care is satisfactory. Health and safety are well managed. Measures to promote attendance are satisfactory. Systems for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. The school is at a very early stage in using assessment data to guide curriculum planning and raise pupils' attainments.

In Key Stage 3, the curriculum in design and technology does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is insufficient time for music in Key stage 3. Religious education is not taught in the Sixth Form and the time allocated in Key Stage 4 so low that the objectives outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus cannot be met. Statutory requirements for Collective Worship are still not being met. Tutor time is not always effectively used.

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and good provision for personal and social education careers education. Equality of access and opportunity is good. Pupils are expected to behave well, respect others and have a clear sense of right and wrong. The staff set good examples. The school takes a firm stand against bullying and harassment and provides good personal support and guidance for its pupils.

The school has a range of assessment data but is at a very early stage in using the data to assess the pupils' progress across key stages and to set targets for individual pupils and departments. The school is working hard to involve parents in the life of the school and its working relationships with parents are satisfactory and developing.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and	The new headteacher has already brought about considerable change.

management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and the senior management team are clear about the direction the school should take and the headteacher realises that there is a considerable way to go before the school's aims are met.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school has an enthusiastic and interested governing body. They provide consistent support for the headteacher and keep the school's finances under control. Currently they are reviewing how they can take a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has undertaken a wide-ranging review of its activities and after an extensive consultation process a new portfolio of policies has been introduced. Departmental reviews have been established to set targets and priorities.
The strategic use of resources	The school's income per pupil is very low. The school budgets systematically for all its expenditure and has developed effective methods for calculating and meeting the cost of its development. Through the careful and imaginative planning of extremely limited resources the headteacher and the governors have been able to sustain a programme of buildings maintenance.

The new headteacher has brought about considerable change. The school now has a clear and appropriate list of aims and a portfolio of updated policies. Responsibilities within the senior management team have been reallocated and regular review meetings have been established with heads of department. The most recent financial audit approves the effectiveness of the school's financial strategies. The school makes good use of the principles of best value in planning and administering its finances. Systems for financial administration and control are sensible and unobtrusive. The school is at an early stage in the use of data to set targets and monitor its performance. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress at school.</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The behaviour at the school.</li> <li>• The closeness with which the school works with parents.</li> </ul>

Inspectors found that the school does expect pupils to work hard and give of their best and that pupils make good progress in lessons. The inspectors found the school open and welcoming and discussions with pupils confirmed that they like the school. The behaviour of a minority of the pupils is unsatisfactory and teachers have to work hard in some lessons to maintain order. Working relationships with parents are satisfactory, but the quality of information on the pupils' attainment and progress is not consistently good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. In 1999, in the National Curriculum tests conducted at the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of the pupils, taking all the core subjects together, was above the national average. In the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), the proportion of pupils obtaining 5 or more passes at grades A\*-C was above the national average. In the General Certificate of Education (GCE), the average A/AS level point score of candidates entered for two or more GCE A levels or AS equivalent was in line with the national average.
2. Tests conducted by the school on pupils in Year 7 indicate that the average ability of pupils entering the school is in line with the national average. Although New Mills is a non-selective school in a non-selective LEA, it is close to schools in neighbouring LEAs that are selective and a significant minority of the more able pupils from the designated primary schools transfer to these selective schools. Consequently, it is inappropriate to compare the school's results with other non-selective schools with more than 5 percent and up to 9 percent of pupils eligible for free school meals because they may not be similar schools.
3. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests conducted at the end of Key Stage 3, the percentages of pupils reaching level 5 or above and level 6 or above in English were close to the national average. In mathematics the percentages of pupils reaching level 5 or above and level 6 or above were above the national average. The percentages of pupils reaching level 5 or above and level 6 or above in science were above the national average.
4. In the GCSE examinations in 1999, the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C in five or more subjects (50 percent) was above the national average (46 percent). Based on averages over the last three years, the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C in five subjects was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-G in five or more subjects in 1999 (93 percent) was close to the national average (91 percent). Based on averages over the last three years, the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-G in five subjects was close to the national average. The average total points score per pupil in 1999 (37.3) was close to the national average (37.8). The average total points score per boy (37.8) was above the national average (35.3) but that per girl (36.5) was below the national average (40.3). Based on the last three years, the pupils' results (35.8) were close to the national average (36.7). Based on the last six years, the trend in the school's average total GCSE points score per pupil was below the national trend.
5. In 1999, there was a variation in the pupils' performance in different subjects. When national differences between subjects and the pupils taking particular subjects are taken into account, pupils were more successful in mathematics, geography and science and less successful in information technology, drama, business studies and German.
6. In the GCE A level examinations in 1999, the average points score of pupils entered for two or more GCS A levels or AS equivalents (17.9) was in line with the national average (17.9). Based on the average for the last three years, the average points score of pupils entered for two or more GCS A levels or AS equivalents (18.3) was above the national average (17.6).
7. The prior attainment data that the school has on pupils who took the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 does not allow for a detailed analysis of pupils' progress across the key stage. In lessons, pupils' learning is very rarely less than satisfactory and it is good in over half the lessons.
8. The school has not compared, at individual pupil level, the GCGE results in 1999 with the National Curriculum results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1997, and consequently has no analysis of progress made in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science across Key Stage 4. Analysis of this data at an individual level indicates that progress across the key stage was greatest in mathematics and lowest in English. In lessons, pupils' learning is very rarely less than satisfactory and it is good in over half the lessons.

9. Students with special educational needs are making good progress in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in other subjects as they move through the school.
10. The overall attainment of pupils in English at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. There is some very engaging writing by pupils of all levels of attainment showing lively imagination, an ear for dialogue, ingenious openings and a range of styles. Progress across the key stage is sound. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainments are in line with the national average and progress is sound. The best writing at Key Stage 4 is very assured with language used for effect. Many pupils of all levels of attainment are adventurous with vocabulary. In A level English literature all students have passed in the last two years but results at the higher grades have been variable. In the English language examination the results have been better and the coursework has been praised by the examination board. Students on both A level courses are challenged to be active learners and make good progress. The highest attaining students on the English literature course write analytically with assured use of quotation and reference to the text. Students on the English language course make very good progress in analysing language and in using it for a range of purposes.
11. Levels of attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 3 are above national expectations. Shape and space is well developed. Good progress is made in data handling skills; many pupils have a good understanding of probability and are able to draw a range of graphs confidently. At the end of Key Stage 4, the standards of work seen in lessons are above those expected by the age of sixteen and the GCSE results in 1999 were well above the national average. Pupils show a good understanding of transformations and are able to enlarge shapes accurately. Problem solving skills are good with most pupils able to identify patterns and rules, use formulae and predict, and test, results. Standards in the Sixth Form are in line with course expectations. Students develop the techniques of calculus well and show a good understanding of the principles of circular motion and forces in rigid bodies.
12. Attainment in science in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 has been well above the national average for the last three years and pupils make good progress. Their laboratory skills at the end of Key Stage 3 and their understanding of the principles of fair testing are in line with national expectations. By the end of the key stage pupils learn well; whether revising food chains or the classification of animals or learning about how to calculate the efficiency of machines. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainments are above the national average. The highest attaining pupils in Year 11 have a good understanding of mass number and atomic number. They are able to apply the knowledge they have gained well when balancing equations in chemistry and make good progress when learning about the role of dominant and recessive genes in the inheritance of characteristics. Pass rates in the A level examinations are above the national average but numbers are too small for meaningful comparison. Students in Year 12 make good progress when investigating the reactions of halide ions with silver nitrate and learn well when applying Kirchoff's laws to electric circuit problems.
13. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainments in art are above the expectations. Pupils work confidently, with good tone and texture and an interesting use of colour including blending of pastels. They know how to do a design brief and know the properties and techniques associated with work in clay. GCSE results are in line with the national average. Coursework studies on the artist and architect Gaudi are delightful and biscuit-fired, experimental model pottery based on natural form is of a high standard. There has been a one hundred percent pass rate in A level art over the past three years and standards of work in the present A level groups are good. They know how to research a theme and do so in the required breadth and depth. They can develop ideas into three dimensions in creative and individual ways.
14. In 1999, the pupils' attainments in design and technology at the end of Key Stage 3, as assessed by their teachers, are above the national expectations. Attainment in lessons is close to the national expectations. Pupils develop their design and practical skills in both food technology and resistant materials. The GCSE results in 1999 were above the national average in both food technology and resistant materials. In Year 11, the pupils show good development of skills when using softwood to make storage systems. Pupils studying food technology are able to calculate energy values and costs with confidence and accuracy.

15. In geography, pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. They are competent in a range of map and geographical skills; gain knowledge of technical terms about coasts, river valleys and volcanoes and show skills in identifying features on maps and photographs. The GCSE results in 1999 were above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils can explain the reasons for the pattern of urban development in the Manchester area and higher attaining pupils' analyses of the causes and consequences of river pollution in the Goyt valley are above national expectations. The A level results in 1999 were in line with the national average. Many students in the Sixth Form have a good understanding of the management issues of developments in the World's tropical rain forests, with higher attaining students confidently giving oral accounts of group work findings.
16. Attainment in history at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, based in assessments by the teachers, was below the national expectation. Nearly all pupils develop their ability to use historical source material by selecting the information they require and some pupils begin to evaluate and compare sources of evidence. Despite satisfactory progress and some gains during Key Stage 3, attainment still does not reach the national expectation by the end of the key stage. The results in the GCSE examinations in 1999 for the small number of pupils who took the course were above the national average. The majority of pupils investigating the massacre of a group of native Americans Indians were able to decide which sources would be likely to be the most reliable and could justify their decision. They make good progress in Key Stage 4. Attainment at A level is below that found nationally but it is in line with students' prior attainments at GCSE.
17. Pupils' attainments in information technology at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were just above national expectations. Current attainment in lessons is above national expectations. Pupils are confident users of information technology and can create imaginative communications that are often well presented and produced in colour. In 1999, the GCSE information technology results were below the national average and were very low when compared with the GCSE results for other subjects in the school. Current attainment in lessons is in line with the expectations of the GCSE course. Pupils are able to arrange a page with appropriate spacing, headings, indents, titles, numbering of paragraphs and enhance text with colour. The results in A level computer studies in 1999 were below the national average. In lessons students achieve high standards and develop high skills; they are competent in developing databases and in programming.
18. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, pupils attained levels in modern foreign languages that were just above the national expectations. Most pupils can follow lessons delivered wholly or partially in the foreign language. Higher attaining pupils can use different tenses; express their opinions simply and can read and write short personal statements and dialogues. In the GCSE examinations in 1999 the results in German, the first language, were well below the national average but the results of the small number for French were well above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils can write in various styles including letters and tourist brochures. Lower attaining pupils acquire the simple language needed for working abroad, such as telephone calls and booking accommodation. The number of students studying A level languages is too small to make national comparisons meaningful. In lessons students are able to talk and write discursively on issues such as the media, health and post-war politics; they develop their arguments in essays and lively discussions.
19. The time available to teach music in Key Stage 3 is low and by the end of the key stage attainment is below national expectations. In Year 7, pupils make good progress and the quality of their learning is always good. The regular development of musical skills is limited further by the structure of the timetable and pupils in Years 8 and 9 have to re-establish and re-learn practical skills. Across the key stage progress is satisfactory. The GCSE results in 1999 were well above the national average. Pupils develop confidence in performing and work well in partnership with each other in ensemble work on a range of instruments that includes voice, electronic guitars and drum kit, woodwind and brass. The number of students studying A level music is too small to make national comparisons meaningful. Students compose and perform and develop an understanding of the structures of music through studying a Mahler symphony.

20. The attainment of the pupils in physical education at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 was in line with national expectations. By the end of the key stage pupils are able to perform a good range of balances and movements using small and large apparatus in gymnastics. In dance, pupils are able to take responsibility for developing a story line, choreographing it and then performing it with fluency, imagination and control. In the GCSE examinations in 1999, the results were above the national average. Pupils have a good understanding of tactics and strategies and are able to apply the skills they have practised in a full game situation. Pupils in the examination groups become confident in the use of technical language and coursework folders are well presented and detailed. Both students who took A level sports studies in 1999 gained good grades. In lessons, students produce work that is carefully researched and analysed; making good cross-references to other aspects of the course.
21. In religious education, the standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with the standards outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils clearly understand how religion can have an effect on human experience and they can see how religion is worked out in worship, belonging and belief and behaviour. The time allocated to religious education in Key Stage 4 does not allow the objectives in the Locally Agreed Syllabus to be met. By the end of the key stage, pupils do not have a developed knowledge and understanding of contemporary religious behaviour and ultimate questions.
22. Planned opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and their speaking and listening in other subjects of the curriculum are limited so overall standards of literacy are only average. The school has this year started a drive to improve literacy across the school. At present there is evidence of departments promoting the use of key words in their subjects. The best practice is in art where pupils do various speaking, reading and writing tasks and in geography where pupils write for a range of purposes including letters, play scripts, and narratives expressing the feelings of someone affected by a volcanic eruption. In modern foreign languages and music pupils learn to listen acutely.
23. The satisfactory levels of numeracy demonstrated in mathematics lessons are reflected in other subjects. Pupils in geography can use co-ordinates confidently in map reading; show a good understanding of number when required to do calculations and can use accurately a range of graphs to display data. In design and technology (food) pupils are able to calculate costs and weigh ingredients accurately. In science numeracy skills are generally in line with expectations though in the Sixth Form students demonstrate a wide range of numerical skills. In art pupils show a satisfactory understanding of enlargements and perspective.
24. Cross-curricular information technology is poorly developed except in English where frequent visits to the information technology facility extend the range of communication skills. Other departments make occasional use of information technology, including interactive CD ROMs. There are few opportunities for departments to book the information technology rooms with whole classes because the rooms are well used by the timetabled classes. The use of home computers allows some students to develop their own work.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

25. The pupils' attitudes to the school and the attendance are good. Their behaviour, personal development and the relationships are satisfactory.
26. The parents of the pupils think their children like the school. Discussions with pupils confirm they do. As they get older they express an appreciation of the opportunities available for them through the school. They also value the school's increasing commitment to take into account their views and modify its practices accordingly. This takes place both by consulting individuals, for example the head boy and girl or groups of pupils such the Sixth Formers, and through more formally consultation with the students' council and its supporting year councils and sub-committees. Most pupils move about the school purposefully and to their lesson where they contribute well at appropriate times. They take advantage of the many extra-curricular activities offered in and out of school, for example of sport clubs, concerts, theatre visits and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

27. Although the pupils' behaviour is mostly good when they are closely supervised, the teachers have to work hard to maintain good order in some classrooms. The teachers often have to remind the pupils to keep to the allocated task or to pay attention. Some pupils are immature for their age and interrupt lessons unnecessarily. Occasionally the scope of the lessons is restricted by the inappropriate behaviour and manner of a few pupils. Outside the classroom a minority of pupils easily loses self-discipline. During the inspection some pupils were too boisterous in the corridors when moving between classes.
28. Pupils do not consider bullying a problem, few admit to have experienced it themselves but they know it exists. Anecdotally, some recall threatening behaviour of a few older pupils towards younger ones. In most instances staff deal rapidly and effectively with such cases though occasionally the action taken is not completely satisfactory to the sufferer. The incidences of exclusions are comparable to similar schools and they are mostly for abusive behaviour towards staff or pupils.
29. The pupils participate well in team games, they support and help to improve each other well. They co-operate well in pairs and work well in randomly formed groups. Attention to task improves towards the end of Key Stage 4 and becomes good in the Sixth Form. Despite frequent reminders from their teachers, the listening skills of the younger pupils are often not good, particularly when they should be paying attention to what their peers are saying. In older year groups, some of the lower attaining pupils shout out if they think they know the answers rather than wait for the teachers to invite them. They do, however, improve as they get older.
30. The sixth formers have important roles in the school. Many assist in classes as part of their Personal Achievement Service Scheme (PASS). Some visit older people to help or offer company. Year 12 theatre studies students took their own production to primary schools and performed to Year 5 and 6 pupils transmitting important messages about peer pressure, dangers of smoking and bullying. The sixth formers run the "drop-in room" for pupils who need counselling, run the homework club for Year 7 pupils, and supervise the "common room" during lunchtime. The student counsellors and their work are recognised and well known to most pupils although the scheme has only been introduced 18 months ago.
31. The majority of pupils are helpful though not uniformly courteous to visitors. Although they usually answer adults' questions well, often they do not do so with their peers. Their relationships with their peers and with adults, though mostly good, are not consistently so and they are uneasy at times. However, the newly introduced paired-reading, where Year 10 and Year 8 pupils read together to improve the younger pupil's reading, is proving successful. The older pupils take the responsibility seriously, encourage for further effort and keep good records of the achievement of their "buddy". It also helps the younger pupils to be friends with the older ones making them feel more comfortable in the school.
32. Opportunities for reasoned debate, expression of beliefs and opinions are few as the tutor time is not well utilised. When role-playing in drama, pupils are able to act their image of a happy or a malfunctioning family sensibly and sensitively. Pupils initiate, organise and contribute to charities well.
33. In the last reporting year, the attendance rate at the school was above the national average for similar schools. Unauthorised attendance was similar to the national average. Attendance rate declines as the pupils get older but the school does not analyse the data for this or any other comparison. Some form tutors do not complete the daily "total attendance " in their register. The school works closely with the education welfare officer and co-operates well with the education welfare services. Pupils usually arrive punctually at the school and at lessons, though latecomers are not always asked to provide an explanation for their lateness.
34. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the life of the school and are encouraged to join clubs and activities. There is respect between pupils of all abilities in lessons and activities around the school. The breakfast club for pupils in Year 8, where they can practise paired-reading with other pupils, is particularly beneficial. Education care officers and special needs teachers know the pupils to whom they are assigned well and there are good relationships between them. However, where pupils are without statements of educational need, they are not always supported sufficiently in the classrooms and sometimes this affects their behaviour and attitude to the subject being studied.



## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

35. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 98 percent of lessons and it is very good or excellent in 15 percent of lessons. When teaching is less than satisfactory it is usually a result of the poor behaviour of some of the pupils. Teaching is better in Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form than it is in Key Stage 3. The overall quality of teaching makes a positive contribution to the attainments of the pupils and students.
36. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. In English, the teachers have a very good knowledge of the set books and the examination requirements. The teachers of mathematics have good subject knowledge with teachers in the Sixth form having very good subject knowledge. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding in science, and art is taught by teachers who have good subject knowledge and expertise. The geography teachers have good subject knowledge and history teachers use their good knowledge to illustrate their explanations with a wealth of illustrations and anecdotes. The teacher's knowledge and experience of information technology has ensured that appropriate topics are included in the scheme of work.
37. In English and mathematics, teachers are using a suitably differentiated curriculum to support pupils with special educational needs, so that the work they do matches their abilities. This is because the schemes of work are sufficiently detailed for all pupils. In art and music, teaching allows pupils to attain as well as they are able, often at their own level of expertise, so that throughout the school they make the same progress as others in their classes. In other subjects of the curriculum, most teachers do not yet add subject specific targets to pupils' individual education plans so that the work they set in Key Stage 3 is often too difficult, or the worksheets or text books being used are too complicated for pupils and they lose concentration. In some lessons this causes behaviour to deteriorate.
38. Overall, teachers' planning is good. In English, the teachers plan a range of tasks within each unit of work and a variety of challenging but achievable tasks within each lesson. Lesson planning is good in mathematics; good links are made with the content of the lesson to that of earlier lessons and those planned for the future. Lessons are carefully planned in science and there are well-planned schemes of work in art. In resistant materials, the planned projects do not allow sufficient scope for imaginative design work and demand a limited range of skills when making. The schemes of work in geography are detailed and provide clear guidance to teachers and ensure consistency across the subject. In history, the scheme of work sets out clearly what should be taught but there is a need for additional advice and information to assist teachers in their lesson planning. Lessons are well planned in information technology and in modern foreign languages lessons are planned to include a range of short tasks but sometimes place too much emphasis on listening and writing. Planning in physical education is well structured with a choice of tasks that promote a high level of interest and effort. Although all lessons in religious education are well prepared and the objectives are clear, at times the objectives need to be clearer to the pupils.
39. Teachers' expectations are high overall, but they are higher in Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form than they are in Key Stage 3. Expectations of pupils and students in science are generally sound. In art, teachers are committed to helping their pupils achieve the highest possible standards. Teachers' expectations in food technology are sound and basic skills and useful techniques are thoroughly addressed. The tasks set in information technology are appropriately challenging and pupils have no difficulty in maintaining concentration and staying on task. High expectations of what pupils can achieve in music are a feature of good teaching and promote a demanding pace of learning. In physical education, there is an expectation that pupils will work hard. Although the expectations are generally sound in religious education, more intellectual rigour would enable more learning to be done in the limited time available.
40. The effectiveness of the teaching methods is good. The best lessons in English are stimulating and pupils are made to think by probing questions and an interesting variety of activities. Good use is made of practical activities to help with understanding in mathematics and lessons in science use a range of teaching methods. In art, good teaching is characterised

by very good demonstrations and illustrations of techniques and teachers show pupils how to research and present work and how to handle and use materials correctly. In several geography lessons, the absence of strategies to support individual learning needs reduces the progress made by higher attaining pupils. The good teaching in history is characterised by clear explanations and the use of tasks and activities that engage the interest of pupils. However, the range of methods and tasks used does not always meet the needs of pupils of all levels of prior attainment. In modern foreign languages, some lessons are heavily reliant on textbooks and worksheets. Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies in music that enables pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through performing. In religious education, the teachers use a wide and imaginative range of strategies to put across the subject.

41. Overall, the management of pupils is good. It is better in Key Stage 4 than it is in Key Stage 3 and it is very good in the Sixth Form. The English teachers create good working relationships in the classroom and in mathematics the teachers usually manage the pupils well and give good support to individual pupils during lessons. In science, the teachers set high standards of discipline and in art the teachers have good class-management skills and discipline is achieved with apparent ease. The pupils are well managed in all design and technology lessons. The positive learning ethos and good student teacher relations in the Sixth Form are central to the very good progress made in geography. In information technology, the pupils are well managed and relationships are good between pupils and teachers. The management and organisation of the pupils is a strength of the music department and teachers have good control of their classes. Teachers show care and concern for the pupils in physical education while encouraging the best in fair play, co-operation and competitive experiences. In religious education, control in the classroom at times needs to be firmer and strategies need to be put in place to deal with pupils who do not finish the work indicated in lesson plans.
42. The use of time, support staff and resources is good. In English, lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace and finish on time. Support from educational care officers contributes to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers make good use of resources such as video clips to spark discussion and information and communication technology so that pupils can make their work attractive. Lessons in mathematics are usually conducted at a good pace but the limited access to computers is restricting the opportunities to use them to support learning. In geography, lower attaining pupils make good progress when learning materials, designed to meet their needs, enable them to successfully complete the task set. Excellent teaching in geography integrates a range of resources and sets challenges for pupils to develop ideas and powers of reasoning. There are occasions in history when the teachers talk to the class for extended periods of time and exceed the concentration span of the pupils. However, teachers are using a wider range of resources, for example video clips, to improve the pupils' concentration and understanding. The information technology technician provides valuable support for pupils; especially in Year 7. A faster pace would enable more learning to take place in the limited time available for religious education.
43. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is satisfactory overall, but is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3. In English, marking at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form encourages and helps the pupils; it is less helpful in Key Stage 3. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainments and progress on a day-to-day basis in mathematics are satisfactory. There is still some inconsistency in the quality of marking among the science teachers and coursework investigations should be marked immediately and reported to pupils so that they know exactly what they have to do to improve in the next investigation. Pupils' work is marked for effort and attainment in design and technology but pupils are not aware of the National Curriculum levels they have achieved. The marking policy in geography is consistently followed by teachers and work is supportively assessed, but there is too much 'tick' marking that does not provide information on strengths and weaknesses and how pupils can improve. The quality of marking in history is inconsistent; some work is marked with little more than a 'tick' or a very brief comment, while other marking indicates National Curriculum levels achieved and what should be done to improve. Marking is regular and thorough in modern foreign languages, although teachers refer insufficiently to National Curriculum levels and the ways in which pupils can progress through them.
44. The use of homework is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and it is good in the Sixth Form. Regular homework encourages pupils to take pains with their work in English. Homework is

used effectively to consolidate and extend learning in mathematics. In science, the use of homework to support pupils' learning is satisfactory. Homework forms an important part of design and technology when coursework needs to be completed; at other times it is set when appropriate. In information technology, homework could be set on a more regular basis during Key Stage 3 so that pupils have further opportunity to increase their learning. Although homework is regularly used to prepare and extend lessons in modern foreign languages, the tasks do not always challenge the highest attaining pupils.

45. The quality of the pupils' learning is satisfactory or better in 97 percent of lessons and it is good and sometimes very good or excellent in 59 percent of lessons. When learning is less than satisfactory it is usually a result of the poor behaviour of some of the pupils.
46. The pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in the Sixth Form. Pupils speak with increasing fluency, especially in prepared oral work and in one-to-one conversations. Students in the Sixth Form find the English language fascinating and amass appropriate technical terms for describing it. In mathematics, pupils are acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding well. Pupils develop basic skills in using wood and plastic in design and technology and basic skills and techniques in food technology. In geography, most pupils develop a range of map and graphical skills, gain knowledge of technical terms and show skills in identifying features on maps and photographs. Pupils develop the skill of making concise and informative notes and increase their skills in the evaluation of source material in history. In information technology, pupils develop the ability to use spreadsheets and enter formulae for calculations. Pupils' listening skills are developing in music so that they are able to identify different styles of music. Good levels of skill development are evident in physical education in a wide range of activities and pupils have a good understanding of tactics and strategies.
47. The pupils' intellectual, physical and creative effort is good. In English, pupils are made to think with probing questions in stimulating lessons. Most pupils concentrate well throughout the lessons in mathematics. Some pupils in Year 8 show a lack of motivation in design and technology. In history, pupils respond to teaching that engages their interest with commitment and good levels of concentration. Pupils are highly motivated in physical education and demonstrate an ability to motivate themselves. When the pupils' response is good in religious education they apply themselves purposefully to the tasks in hand.
48. Pupils' interest, concentration and independence and their knowledge of their own learning are satisfactory overall, but less secure in Key Stage 3 and better in the Sixth Form. Students taking the A level English courses are challenged to be active learners and make good progress. Pupils work productively during mathematics lessons and show interest in what they are doing. In science, pupils show interest in their work, behave well and have every opportunity to learn. They work well together when carrying out experiments and act responsibly when moving around the laboratory to collect equipment. In Key Stage 4, pupils' projects indicate an ability to concentrate and persevere and their coursework indicates a desire to succeed. Sixth Form students in geography have a mature attitude to their studies and sustain concentration for long periods of time. Those who give oral presentations speak clearly and in detail. Although in history pupils respond to good teaching with good levels of concentration, when the work is too difficult or, very occasionally, too easy they lose motivation. Pupils in information technology have no difficulty in concentrating on the intellectual challenge presented by the work. Many pupils apply themselves rigorously to reading tasks in modern foreign languages but a minority fails to respond to opportunities for independent learning. In physical education pupils sustain concentration and demonstrate an ability to challenge themselves
49. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to make good progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4 all pupils entered attain an A\*-G grade in English and most attained an A\*-G grade in mathematics. In Key Stage 4 in all the subjects for which they are entered, most pupils attain a grade A\*-G in their GCSE examinations. Some pupils are also successful in the Certificate of Achievement in English. However, given the correct level of work as they move through the school, there is good potential for these pupils to attain much higher grades in the future. Where support staff are assigned to lessons, teachers generally make satisfactory use of them, although very few are thoroughly briefed and prepared in advance by teachers for the work they will be expected to assist pupils with.

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

50. The curriculum offers breadth and balance in all key stages, with additional provision made in Key Stage 4 to meet more closely the identified needs of pupils.
51. Overall the curriculum offered in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. However, lessons in design and technology in Key Stage 3 do not meet the full range of requirements of the subject specified in the National Curriculum. In Year 7 information technology is taught in lessons specifically devoted to the development of a range of skills, but in Years 8 and 9 provision is made through other subjects of the curriculum, which vary considerably in the contribution they make. Good provision for modern foreign languages is made with all pupils having the opportunity to study both French and German in Years 8 and 9. The time allocation for most subjects is in line with that found nationally, although the time allowed for music is low and does not allow for continuity of teaching throughout the three years.
52. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory, although insufficient time is devoted to religious education to allow the requirements specified in the Locally Agreed Syllabus to be met. The system by which pupils select the optional subjects they wish to study to GCSE level is very flexible and a good range of combinations of subjects is possible. A significant majority of pupils choose to follow a GCSE course in information technology. However for the minority who do not, provision for teaching this subject is made in an unstructured way through other subjects of the curriculum. For a small number of pupils for whom it is seen as inappropriate to study for the full range of GCSE subjects there is an alternative curriculum in the place of science and modern foreign languages. Currently this alternative curriculum does not include provision for the acquisition of any vocational qualifications.
53. All pupils in all key stages follow a well-planned and integrated programme of personal and social education, which includes sex and drugs education in each year. There is also a clearly planned series of topics that are of particular relevance to individual year groups, for example first aid for Year 11. In all years, except Year 9, personal and social education is taught in lessons specifically dedicated to this subject.
54. There is good provision for careers education, which runs throughout all Key Stages. In Year 7 and 8 topics that have a particular relevance to career choices form part of the programme for personal and social education and in Year 9 the programme relating to choice of subjects in Key Stage 4 is delivered in form periods. In Key Stage 4 there is a careers education programme that forms a regular part of a cycle with religious education and personal and social education. All pupils have an interview with a specialist careers adviser in Years 10 and 11 and all pupils carry out work experience. In Year 9 there is an "industry day" during which pupils work with local employers on a series of problem solving exercises.
55. The time devoted to tutor periods is not always used in a structured or productive manner and does not always offer pupils a worthwhile learning experience. Because this time cannot be counted as time during which teaching takes place, the school offers less teaching time than the recommended national minimum in Key Stages 3 and 4.
56. The curriculum offered in the Sixth Form is generally satisfactory in meeting the needs of pupils at this stage of their education, although statutory requirements for teaching religious education are not met. There is a range of 22 A level subjects available, including some vocational subjects, although no GNVQ courses are offered. In addition, pupils can re-sit GCSE English and mathematics. All students follow a common course in personal and social education and a course in general studies, although this does not currently lead to an A level examination. The provision for careers education is good and includes an Understanding Industry course and emphasis in Year 13 on decision-making and application and interview techniques. All Sixth Form students are expected to devote time to the PASS scheme that involves them offering help on a voluntary basis in the local community.

57. There is a good range of extra curricular opportunities, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, sporting and musical activities and also those which relate directly to the enhancement of work done in class, for example the paired reading project which operates before school on four morning a week and involves sixth formers offering support to younger pupils experiencing difficulty with reading. There is a good range of visits out of school, including visits abroad to the German twin town and an annual skiing trip. Participation rates in the extra-curricular programme are good.
58. The school has good links with the local community that enable work experience to be offered each year to a large number of pupils in an area where such opportunities are rather restricted. The PASS scheme raises the awareness of Sixth Form students to needs within their own community.
59. Planned opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and their speaking and listening in other subjects of the curriculum are limited. The school has this year started a drive to improve literacy across the school. At present some departments promote the use of key words in their subjects. The best practice is in art where pupils do various speaking, reading and writing tasks and in geography where pupils write for a range of purposes including letters, play scripts, and narratives expressing the feelings of someone affected by a volcanic eruption. In modern foreign languages and music pupils learn to listen acutely.
60. The satisfactory levels of numeracy developed in mathematics lessons are reinforced in other subjects. Pupils in geography need to use co-ordinates confidently in map reading and are required to do calculations and to use accurately a range of graphs to display data. In design and technology (food) pupils need to calculate costs and weigh ingredients accurately. In science, sound numerical skills are needed, particularly in the Sixth Form where students need to demonstrate a wide range of numerical skills. In art pupils have to demonstrate a sound understanding of enlargements and perspective.
61. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They have equal access to all subjects and are mainly taught alongside their peers. Pupils are currently withdrawn from the same subject lessons as the rest of their classes, where they are helped to extend their understanding of English and mathematics. Pupils, particularly those with behavioural difficulties, are helped to understand the meaning of right and wrong and are counselled into beginning to understand how their behaviour affects others in their classes. There are good links with local primary schools before pupils enter the school in Year 7. Visitors from outside agencies support students as far as funding allows.
62. Since the last report, when developing ways of involving all staff in the procedures for special educational needs was part of a key issue, there has been little improvement. Difficulties with communication remain in all areas of the curriculum, particularly between the special needs department and other teachers. All staff know the identity of pupils in their classes who have special educational needs, but most subject teachers are not clear about how to use the documentation sometimes given to them by the special needs department. This means that when pupils are working in different subjects, additional targets are not often added to their individual education plans to help them to make more progress in learning or behaviour in those subjects. Documentation is often confusing for staff. For instance, the main concern listed for the pupil on the special needs register does not always match the main concern currently shown on the pupil's individual education plan, so that teachers are often unclear about how to target work for these pupils. There has been insufficient use and development of individual education plans across the curriculum.
63. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall with some aspects being stronger than others. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. There are some opportunities for pupils to reflect and be quiet and to consider spiritual matters, for example in one or two assemblies, but this does not occur on a consistent basis. Some departments involve activities and work that have a spiritual element to them; for example in English where pupils can explore senses and feelings and have empathy with various characters found in several texts. In Art too, pupils have opportunities to be creative and be involved in work that includes composition and reflection. Some reflection is also included in the religious education programme but its very limited availability in Key Stage 4 and the lack of provision in the Sixth Form means that this benefit is very limited. Overall the

opportunities for pupils to have knowledge and insight into a range of values and beliefs and to reflect on their own beliefs and experiences are very limited. Provision for the spiritual development of the pupils needs to be organised in a more systematic and organised way so that all departments and sections of school life are aware of how they might make an input to this provision. There has been no progress on this since the last OFSTED inspection. The statutory requirements of Collective Worship are still not being met.

64. Provision for moral development is good. The pupils are expected to behave well, respect others and have a clear sense of right and wrong. The staff themselves set good examples and the general ethos of the school creates positive expectations for the pupils. There are several codes of conduct and these are very visibly displayed around the school. They clearly set out how others should be treated and how they themselves should act in and around the school. The personal and social education programme has significant units of work on honesty, bullying, rules, consequences, crimes and punishment and other topics such as racism, sexism and gambling. Assembly themes often touch on moral issues creating in the pupils an awareness of the necessity of acting in a fair and proper manner. Individual departments have a significant input on the moral level. Religious Education examines several ethical and social issues as does science in its study of the consequences of genetic engineering. Physical Education has an emphasis on fair play and playing by the rules and in history the pupils look at topics such as moral issues involved in the politics of China.
65. Provision for social development is good. Lots of extra-curricular activities in and around the school amply provide the pupils with plenty opportunities for them to develop positive relationships. These include clubs such as badminton, football, the breakfast club and lots of musical activities. The pupils can take responsibility by way of the school council, pupil counselling and the other activities that involve participation in the school community. These include charity work such as the Oxfam shop, visiting and arranging events for the elderly, and lots of contacts with local primary schools. The personal and social education programme helps the pupils to understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship as well as developing an understanding about hygiene, money, prejudice and how to get to know each other. Some assembly topics also cover social issues and these include sympathy, empathy, bullying and vandalism. Individual departments also make a positive contribution to the provision for social development as most have an emphasis on pair-work and collaborative work as well as on individual work. In geography, residential field trips, work on the environment and the study of the social effects of immigration have a very significant input to the pupils' social development.
66. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. There are plenty of opportunities for the pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions. The music department has a variety of clubs that includes a swing band, junior band, choir and key board club. There is a good display of poetry around the school and some departments have visits to local places of significance. For example, there are trips to Styal, Castleton, Leeds and Whitby in history and geography and in science there are biology field trips. There are also theatre visits and visits to concerts such as at the Bridgewater Hall. Opportunities for pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures are less evident. Nonetheless there are trips to Italy, Austria and exchanges with schools in France and Germany. Some pupils are preparing to go to Kenya with World Challenge to set up additional water tanks there. There are multi-cultural topics in Art where pupils participate in both European and African work and in religious education the pupils study the beliefs and culture of several world religions. An acknowledgement and celebration of the multi-cultural nature of Great Britain itself however is not very marked and this is an area for development within the school.
67. The planned change from working as a split site school to working on a single site, has made it possible to plan a thorough revision of the curriculum for September 2000. This will offer opportunities to redress the deficiencies that have been noted during the course of the inspection.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

68. The quality of care is satisfactory overall. The line of responsibility for child protection is clearly identified. There are adequate instructions and guidance in the school's child protection policy and staff handbook of what the teachers' duties are. The school relies on the experience of its staff to implement these and to recognise the symptoms of abuse but there has not been a recent refresher for all.
69. Health and safety are well managed. A thorough inspection by the LEA safety advisor has identified a number of procedural shortcomings earlier this year. The school is responding to the recommendations. Risk assessment is regularly done and all staff are involved in the process. Health and safety received due consideration in all the lessons seen, even when pupils were reluctant to comply at times.
70. Measures to promote attendance are satisfactory. The day-to-day monitoring of attendance is good but the school does not analyse the attendance patterns of pupils; of those with special educational needs, for example. The school has introduced alternative curriculum opportunities for a few of its older pupils that improve their attendance but there are no initiatives for the younger habitual absentees.
71. The school has good systems of promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The behaviour management was reviewed early this academic year after extensive consultation with all staff and a new policy has been drawn up. The students' council and the New Mills School Association have also had opportunities to contribute to the simplified code of conduct. These clearly identify the classroom expectations, the rewards and the sanctions. They are prominently displayed in all classrooms and easily understood by all. The implementation is proceeding well but its success is not yet evident. The majority of the teachers have good teaching skills which encourage and make a significant impact on good behaviour and at the same time teach pupils social skills as seen in some Year 8 and 9 drama lessons.
72. The school takes a firm stand against bullying and harassment. The bullying policy clearly states that the school community "must not accept it or ignore it" and "all must work hard to prevent and reduce its frequency." The school employs the services of specialists, for example the behaviour support service, when special problems of this nature arise. The volunteer student counsellors from the Sixth Form and the students' council also play an important role in helping those who suffer from harassment and also those whose behaviour is undesirable.
73. Pupils and their parents are fully involved in discussing and setting the targets for improvements outlined in their individual education plans. The progress pupils make towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans is not monitored regularly, and this is unsatisfactory. Notes about the progress made or difficulties encountered by individual pupils are entered into the daily diaries of the educational care officers, but the systems for monitoring these are not consistent or sufficiently detailed.
74. The school is at a very early stage in using assessment data that it has to set targets for improvement and to monitor the performance of pupils, departments and the whole school. Currently the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning and the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory. The school does not sufficiently analyse the relationship between Key Stage 3 test results and Key Stage 2 test results; GCSE results and Key Stage 3 test results, A level results and GCSE results and all public test and examination results and the Cognitive Ability Test results at an individual pupil level.
75. The use of assessment data by departments is also at a very early stage. In English, the department does not analyse their data on pupils' attainment in order to determine whether pupils are making as much progress as they could. Although the arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics on a day-to-day basis are satisfactory, the systems to track pupils' progress as they move through the school are not well developed. The science department does not make enough use of target setting approaches, which would bring about an improvement in results particularly at Key Stage 4. Except for Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations, little analysis of the design and technology results takes place. Monitoring of pupils' subject performance needs to be developed to provide information for each class and each year group. There are procedures in place in history to assess attainment

and progress but these are not used consistently and not all pupils are equally aware of how well they are doing. Insufficient use is made of the information available to measure progress, identify under-achievement as early as possible and to predict potential attainment. Targets for assessment in music, which would enable the teachers to measure the progress all pupils make are not yet developed. In physical education, comprehensive records of pupils' are kept and they are used to inform curriculum planning and monitor performance.

76. The school provides good personal support and guidance provisions for its pupils. The school's pastoral teams have a well-established track record. The year tutors meet every week with their head of year to discuss and find solutions to a range of problems which can be social, attendance, academic progress or the lack of it, strategies of rewards, encouragement or sanctions. However, the daily classroom tutor sessions are generally not used effectively by the teachers. Senior members and other staff also regularly attend the students' council meetings where issues of concern are debated. The council evaluates the impact of issues on the whole school population and considers the pupils' suggestions and approach to such issues as smoking and drug taking.
77. Except in English and mathematics, where there are detailed schemes of work that are suitable for the needs of all pupils, sufficient different tasks that match the abilities of pupils have not been developed. Targets for behaviour on individual education plans are often not planned in sufficiently small steps or changed often enough to encourage pupils to improve. In addition, the way in which educational care officers are deployed has a bearing on how well pupils apply themselves to the work set. For example, some classes containing large numbers of pupils who are on the special educational needs register may not have additional support in the classroom, whereas in another classroom at the same time there may be as many as three extra support staff deployed.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

78. The parents have a good opinion of the school overall but a significant minority is not satisfied with behaviour in the school, the amount of homework their children are expected to do and how closely the school works with parents. These general views match the inspectors finding with the exception of the school's working relationship with parents.
79. Behaviour is mostly good when pupils are closely supervised but the teachers have to work hard to maintain good order in some classrooms. The teachers often have to remind the pupils to keep to the allocated task or to pay attention. Some pupils are immature for their age and interrupt lessons unnecessarily. Occasionally the scope of the lessons was restricted by the inappropriate behaviour and manner of a few pupils. Outside the classroom a minority of pupils easily loses self-discipline. During the inspection some pupils were too boisterous in the corridors when moving between classes.
80. Homework is not always sufficiently structured or completed satisfactorily. The pupils' Diary is often not used well yet this should be an important channel of communication between the home and the school. Some very good examples were seen where constructive dialogues were developing between the parents and the teachers, for example about the attitude of the pupil, or the rules about make-up, but there were also some poor examples where nothing has been entered for days or signed for weeks. The condition of some Diaries is poor.
81. The school does try hard to involve the parents more in the life of the school and is making sound progress. It recognises the parents' involvement can be improved and the school development plan includes firm commitments to realise this. Some initiatives are already in place, for example the school has identified a significant number of pupils in Year 11 whose GCSE grade expectations are borderline C/D. With some extra effort by the pupils, help by the teachers and the parents these pupils could achieve the better grade. The parents of these pupils are invited to school to make them aware of the situation, to discuss how they can participate and help their children. They respond very well.
82. The school's working relationship with the parents is satisfactory and developing. The parents receive good quality information about the school in form of the Prospectus, the Governors



Annual Report to Parents, the monthly Newsletter and notices about activities, clubs and educational visits. Senior members of staff do not just inform parents promptly about their children's misdemeanours, they also inform the parents of their children's hard work and achievements. However, the quality of the information on the pupils' attainment and progress is not consistently good. Although the Interim Report provides some insight, these are qualitative by nature and not quantitative. The year-end reports in some subjects are generic, for example in mathematics and history, and do not convey what the pupils know, understand and can do. Nor do they make it clear how the parents can help their children in their schoolwork and personal development if they need it. Parents attend the information evenings well, such as open evenings and options evenings.

83. The parents' involvement with the work of the school is satisfactory. They support their children's sporting events, educational visits and school exchanges. The re-introduction of the New Mills School Association is succeeding by the hard work of a few dedicated people. Few parents volunteer to serve on the committee but they support the organised social events well, such as dances and quiz nights. The significant amounts of funds raised are spent to widen the variety of educational facilities. The parents do not involve themselves very much with meetings such as the governors' annual meeting or the pre-inspection meeting. No parent helps in the school regularly. The school invites adults to teach pupils their own speciality to widen the horizon of the pupils, for example the school nurse teaches specific topics in sex education and artists demonstrate their flair. Although there is as yet no regular channel through which the school consults the parents about major spending, the curriculum or changes, it responds to parents' concerns, for example about class sizes and the school day.
84. Parents are always informed about students with special educational needs and are invited to discussions and reviews about their children's attainment and progress. Some parents choose not to attend these meetings. The pastoral staff work in partnership with the special needs department and often contact parents about the behaviour of students with special educational needs.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

85. The school has seen major changes in the senior management since the time of the last OFSTED inspection. The present head teacher was appointed in January 1998. In the year prior to taking up his post the school had reduced the number of deputy head teachers from two to one, and as the one remaining deputy head teacher was absent through ill health, he took up post with a much depleted senior management team. In September 1999 two new deputy head teachers were appointed and the head teacher, his two deputies plus three senior teachers make up the present senior management group.
86. During the two years he has been in post the head teacher has brought about considerable change. A wide-ranging review of many of the school's activities has been undertaken. This has involved extensive consultation with governors and staff with the result that a most impressive portfolio of updated school policies has been produced.
87. The school's previous mission statement has been replaced with a clear and more appropriate list of aims in which the school emphasises the need to develop the intellectual potential of each pupil, produce a range of opportunities, to contribute to physical, personal and emotional growth and to give pupils a sense of social responsibility. The school is making good progress towards these aims although the head teacher realises, correctly, that there is a considerable way to go before they are met.
88. The head teacher has already provided a new impetus to the school. His recognition that others on the staff can make a valuable contribution to the school's progress and his encouragement for them to do so is a strength of his leadership. For many staff this is a departure from the system to which they have been used and some staff are taking some time to accustom themselves to the new demands which are being made of them.
89. The head teacher and his senior management team are clear about the direction the school should take and, in spite of having to contend with major budgetary, staffing and premises

problems, they have already initiated a number of appropriate changes. There has been a reallocation of responsibilities within the senior management team that has improved its effectiveness. Line management arrangements have been made clearer and in November 1999 regularly review meetings were established with heads of departments. During these meetings departmental targets and priorities are discussed and progress towards them evaluated. These review meetings, which are still at an early stage of development, contribute strongly to the consultative style of management favoured by the head teacher and help to reinforce the shared commitment to raising standards in all aspects of the school's work.

90. The faculty structure the head teacher inherited has been replaced by a head of department organisation. The leadership and management of subjects is generally good although the shortcomings in the special needs department reported at the time of the last OFSTED inspection still remain. Most departments have produced development plans but some are at an early stage in their thinking about development planning. While some heads of departments are able to manage their areas well, some are in need of help and support. The senior management should consider appropriate training for middle managers in these respects. As part of this development there is a need for all staff to have individual job descriptions that make clear what is required of them and to whom they are answerable.
91. The school is fortunate in having an enthusiastic and interested governing body. They provide consistent support for the head teacher and keep the school's finances under control. Although they are able and committed, they need to review how they can take more part in the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. They have no close links with individual subjects. Because the school is not meeting National Curriculum requirements in certain subjects governors do not meet all their statutory responsibilities.
92. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the senior managers. The daily organisation of the school and internal communications are highly efficient. School procedures are clearly set out in the staff handbook and briefing meetings ensure that routines are clear and shared by staff and pupils. The range of meetings at various levels is organised appropriately and serves as a useful vehicle for communications and decision making. The administrative staff give high quality professional support.
93. There is a nominated governor and coordinator, and the school publishes information on the school's policy for special educational needs. However, records of the progress each pupil has made have not been consistently kept and collated in sufficient detail as required by the Code of Practice, especially for those pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The current individual education plans do not contain sufficient information to inform teachers about pupils' abilities, especially for those pupils with statements of educational need. A development plan has recently been drawn up for special educational needs which contains suitable ideas for effecting good practice and which will start to move the department forward.
94. The school budgets systematically for all of its expenditure and has, in recent years developed effective methods of calculating and meeting the cost of its development. The most recent financial audit approves the effectiveness of the school's financial strategies. Through the careful and imaginative planning of extremely limited financial resources, and in consultation with teachers and the local authority, the headteacher and governing body have been able to sustain a programme of buildings maintenance. They have further improved the curricular opportunities available to pupils through extending the computer network and some restocking of the library. Despite the progress made by the headteacher and his team, certain intractable problems remain. Most significant is the split site, which creates pressure on teachers' time and energy and reduces their ability to plan formally for development or monitor their own effectiveness.
95. The systems for financial administration and control are sensible and unobtrusive, so teachers can get on with their work. They are efficiently handled by the school bursar and regularly monitored by the governors' finance committee. Details of the allocations to departments and their expenditure are available to all concerned. Particular valued features of the school's curriculum, such as the quality of provision for the Sixth Form, are financed from appropriate funds, although a calculated investment has to be made to sustain some small groups. The snack-bar is cost effective, efficiently managed and provides a secure and convivial environment for the students. A similarly bold investment has been made to provide support

for special educational needs. While this has added to the positive ethos of the school and the quality of many pupils' learning, this good provision needs to be more efficiently co-ordinated to fully realise its potential.

96. Recent developments have occurred in the use of new technologies including electronic mail, research using CD-ROM and Internet applications. The involvement of departments is inconsistent, however. Teachers need further training in this important area, and further direction from the senior management.
97. The school makes good use of the best value principle in planning and administering its finances. The bursar is insistent that all departments follow the same line as the senior management. Comparative data are used to ensure that good value for money is being obtained in relation to other schools in the authority. Appropriate tendering arrangements and safeguards are always put in place where major spending is concerned, for example when new computers and a laser printer were purchased. The commitment of staff to achieving good outcomes on a tight budget, the wide range of extra-curricular activities they provide, and the retention of Sixth Form students in the face of stiff local competition provide a considerable challenge.
98. The senior management team has recently devised and adopted sufficient ways of analysing performance and outcomes statistically, and of relating these to the deployment of resources. In consequence, the quality and focus of much of its future planning is improving, although an increasing number of issues such as the improvement of technology facilities still demand attention. Several departments are becoming more adept at evaluating outcomes to date as well as setting and costing clearly defined targets for the future.
99. Virtually all subjects are taught entirely by qualified subject specialists, about a quarter of whom are new to the school and have added fresh ideas to complement or replace established practice. The heavy weighting at senior level is deliberately maintained to administer present and proposed changes. There are adequate numbers of support staff. An effective programme of induction operates, to support newly qualified teachers and other newcomers to the staff. The school is an effective provider of teacher training, and has well considered priorities for its own staff development programme. These include pastoral care, and preparations for an alternative curriculum, with the inclusion of more vocational and technological elements. Professional appraisal has been reintroduced as an entitlement, and a more reflective approach to teaching and learning is becoming more widespread due to a programme of monitoring and evaluation
100. Much of the school's accommodation is old, in need of refurbishment and requires that some departments battle against its linear and fragmented layout in order to achieve a sense of identity. Most achieve satisfactory delivery of the curriculum despite this, although in the worst instances, such as geography, mathematics and technology the accommodation is cramped or inadequate. Art, drama and music enjoy satisfactory facilities and the school has a compact and pleasant Sixth Form centre. Physical education is well catered for and has good indoor accommodation including access to the sports hall of the local leisure centre.
101. Most subjects have barely adequate and largely unexceptional stocks of books and materials. There is a widespread lack of computers for whole class access or individual departmental use, which prevents students from gaining their full entitlement. The library is an attractive and well-organised facility that doubles as a Sixth Form study centre. This however restricts the access of pupils from other key stages during lesson time. Financial constraints are once more evident in the very limited stocks of books and other resources it can offer.
102. Although there is some withdrawal of pupils for extra English and mathematics, the current school policy is to teach pupils with special educational needs within mainstream lessons as far as it is possible. Educational care officers are not effectively deployed in classes to support pupils who have similar needs, so that not all pupils have appropriate support where it is available. Although some training has taken place for both educational care officers and other teachers in the school, most do not yet have the depth of understanding required to teach and support pupils on the special needs register. There is a room dedicated to special needs teaching, but the environment is not stimulating and supportive with appropriate displays to support learning. Currently there is a lack of sufficient up-to-date resources for pupils and a

lack of sufficient resources which use information and communications technology to assist pupils in their work, particularly for literacy and numeracy.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

103. In order to improve the quality of education and the standards of achievement at New Mills School and Sixth Form Centre the governors and the senior management team should:
- improve the quality of the management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and ensure the use and development of individual education plans across the curriculum (62, 73, 93);
  - develop the use of assessment data to set targets and monitor the performance of pupils, departments and the school (74, 75);
  - develop the ongoing use of assessment data in Key Stage 3 (43);
  - improve the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum (114, 129);
  - improve the use of the tutorial period to ensure that the length of the teaching week is in line with national recommendations (55, 76);
  - ensure that control and measuring are included in the information and communication technology curriculum and improve the provision of ICT across the curriculum (51, 181);
  - improve the range of opportunities for communicating by design and using materials in design and technology in Key Stage 3 (51, 152);
  - increase the curriculum time for music in Key Stage 3 (51, 191);
  - ensure that the time available for religious education in Key Stage 4 is sufficient to meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and make provision for religious education in the Sixth Form (52, 209);
  - improve the provision for pupils' spiritual education (63).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	175
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.7	13.1	48.0	35.4	1.7	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	768	151
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	66	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	31	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	155	2

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

Authorised absence	percent
School data	6.2
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	percent
School data	1.5
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	83	60	143

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	46	58	52
	Girls	47	46	44
	Total	93	104	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	65 (78)	73 (64)	67 (69)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (50)	45 (46)	31 (41)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	51	60	51
	Girls	47	45	38
	Total	98	105	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (71)	73 (68)	62 (70)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (41)	44 (46)	30 (40)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	81	59	140

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	41	78	80
	Girls	29	52	55
	Total	70	130	135
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	50 (46)	93 (92)	96 (97)
	National	46 (44)	91 (87)	96 (95)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	37.3 (35.6)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

## Attainment at the end of the Sixth Form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	31	33	64

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	20.1	15.8	17.9 (19.4)	0	2	1 (4.9)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.5)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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

## Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	5
Indian	
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	2
White	902
Any other minority ethnic group	4

## Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	33	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	51.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

### Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77%
---	-----

### Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.6
Key Stage 4	22.1

## Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	1843135
Total expenditure	1830383
Expenditure per pupil	2159
Balance brought forward from previous year	-18183
Balance carried forward to next year	-5431

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	919
Number of questionnaires returned	75

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	55	12	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	48	4	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	49	23	3	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	65	15	7	0
The teaching is good.	16	64	9	0	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	48	13	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	44	5	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	48	8	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	17	51	23	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	24	52	5	3	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	51	8	5	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	60	11	1	4



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

### **ENGLISH**

104. When pupils enter the school their verbal ability is in line with the national average but slightly below their ability in mathematics. Taking the last four years together, the performance of pupils in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 was above the national average. However, although the percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels was above the national average in 1999, the percentage achieving level 5 and above dropped to being in line with the national average. The average National Curriculum points gained in 1999 were below the national average. Results in English were below those in mathematics and science. Girls do better than boys but the boys' results were in line with boys' results nationally in 1999.
105. In English, the percentage of pupils gaining grades A\* - C at GCSE was broadly in line with the national average in 1999, below it in 1998 and above it in 1997. Although the results fluctuate at these higher grades, almost all pupils achieve an A\*-G grade and in the past two years up to 17 lower attaining pupils have also taken the Certificate of Achievement and gained either distinctions or merits. Girls did better than boys though in 1999 the gap was narrow. Results in English literature, which is taken by all but about 20 pupils, have also fluctuated: the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\* - C was broadly in line with the national average in 1999, a little below it in 1998, and well above it in 1997 when fewer pupils were entered for the examination. The boys did nearly as well as the girls in 1999. Although the results in English were in line with pupils' average results, they were below the results in mathematics and science.
106. In A level English literature all the students have passed in the last two years. Results at grades A and B are variable: they were above the national average in 1997, well above it in 1998 and below in 1999. An A level course in English language has been running for two years and the results have been better than those in English literature. All the students have passed and the percentage of grades A and B has been well above the national average. The coursework in English language, a substantial amount gaining full marks, has been highly praised by the examination board.
107. The standards of work seen at Key Stage 3 are average overall. Most pupils speak clearly but they do not readily elaborate on their ideas and therefore are just average for their age. The reading web and stimulating book week events promote varied personal reading but few pupils are choosing exacting books. Pupils of all levels of attainment are enjoying Shakespeare; their insight into plot and character is average for this stage of their study. The standard of writing is above average at Key Stage 3. There is some very engaging writing by pupils of all levels of attainment showing lively imagination, an ear for dialogue, ingenious openings and a range of styles. They use information and communication technology to present their work attractively. Writing on contemporary issues in Year 9 does not include enough detail to be convincing.
108. At Key Stage 4 pupils speak with increased fluency, especially in prepared oral work and in one-to-one conversations, which are above average. Higher and middle attaining pupils and some lower attaining pupils show insight into setting and character in their set texts, they can explain the meaning of puzzling phrases and they use some examples and quotations to illustrate their points. Their reading is above average. Higher attaining pupils make progress in delving into the effects of language and in using technical terms for describing these. The best writing at Key Stage 4 is very assured with language used for effect, though some is rather wordy. Many pupils of all levels of attainment are adventurous with vocabulary.
109. At both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the tasks are sensitively devised to suit their stage of learning. The support from education care officers further contributes to these pupils' progress. Some pupils in Year 7 have special English lessons to help them with literacy in their first term and they make good progress; others are somewhat resistant to the help given and make less progress.

110. In the Sixth Form students on both A level courses are challenged to be active learners and they make good progress overall. English literature students understand and enjoy their set texts. The highest attaining students write analytically with assured use of quotation and reference to the text. Students on the English language course make very good progress in analysing language and in using it for a range of purposes. They find language fascinating and amass appropriate technical terms for describing it. On both courses there are some articulate students who are sometimes prepared to challenge each other. Others gain confidence through the well-structured teaching.
111. Pupils behave well in lessons, willingly engage in the activities, work sensibly in pairs and groups and they usually listen attentively to the teacher and to each other's points of view and interests.
112. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory; half of it is good and a quarter is very good. It is best in Year 11 and the Sixth Form. Teachers have very good knowledge of the set books and the examination requirements. They plan a range of tasks within each unit of work and a variety of challenging but achievable tasks within each lesson. They create good working relationships within the classroom. Lessons usually proceed at a brisk but reasonable pace neatly finishing in time. Teachers make good use of resources such as clips of videos to spark discussion, and information and communication technology so that pupils can make their work attractive. There is a variety of work on display, such as news reports on the fights in "Romeo and Juliet", celebrating the achievements of pupils of all levels of attainment. Regular homework encourages pupils to take pains with their work. The best lessons are stimulating, making pupils think with probing questions and an interesting variety of activities, well linked to previous and succeeding lessons, and widening pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Occasionally pupils are slow to get started on a task because the teacher has asked them to do something unnecessarily laborious such as writing an imagined dialogue rather than working it out spontaneously with a partner. Sometimes the pace slackens too much in the last part of the lesson. Marking at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form encourages and helps the students. Marking is less helpful at Key Stage 3.
113. This cooperative department is very well qualified and experienced and has made a number of improvements since the previous OFSTED inspection, including raising the standards at A level and introducing the English language course at A level. There is good liaison with the primary schools. The schemes of work have been updated and include support material for the units, including more use of information and communication technology and examples of tasks to suit pupils of different levels of attainment. The department should next concentrate on achieving more consistently good results at Key Stage 3 and GCSE, and monitoring teaching and learning so as to share good ideas and methods. They need to develop the use of level and grade criteria at all key stages, especially at Key Stage 3, so that pupils, parents and teachers know how well the pupils are doing and what they can do to improve. Also they should analyse their data on pupils' attainment so as to determine whether pupils are making as much progress as they can. In timetabling classes at Key Stage 3 the school should try to avoid splitting classes between two teachers as split classes are making less progress than others at this age.

### **Speaking, listening, reading and writing across the curriculum**

114. Planned opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and their speaking and listening in other subjects of the curriculum are limited and overall standards of literacy are only average. The school has this year started a drive to improve literacy across the school and this has several enthusiastic followers. Some departments are promoting the use of key words in their subjects. The best practice is in art where pupils do various speaking, reading and writing tasks and in geography where pupils write for a range of purposes including letters, play scripts, and narratives expressing the feelings of someone affected by a volcanic eruption. In modern foreign languages and music pupils learn to listen acutely.

### **DRAMA**

115. The percentage of pupils achieving an A\*-C grade in drama in 1999 was well below the national average, in 1998 it was below and in 1997 it was above the national average. In 1999, the results in drama were below the results in the majority of subjects in the school. The prior attainments of the pupils taking drama in Key Stage 4 varies from year to year. However, all pupils entered gain a pass at GCSE and this represents significant progress by those pupils in each year group who have special educational needs. The results in A level theatre studies have risen from below the national average for grades A and B in 1997, to above the national average in 1998, and to well above it in 1999 when two-thirds of the students achieved higher grades.
116. The standards of achievement in drama at the end of Key Stage 3 are, in most respects, above the standards usually found at this age. Pupils readily involve themselves in the activities, work successfully in groups and engage in lively dialogue. Most are able to focus on their roles and they learn to refine their performances through their opportunities to evaluate their own and other pupils' work. Because they have no timetabled drama in Year 7 and only half a year in each of Years 8 and 9, their knowledge of drama conventions is only average for their age. At Key Stage 4, the current pupils' work is well above average: they are imaginative in devising situations and characters for their performances on issues such as the effects of guilt and repercussions after an accident in the family. Pupils focus well on their roles and create and release tension using effective facial expression and varied volume and pitch in their speech. The best written work is based on detailed and evaluative notes from the pupils' own drama notebooks. Writing by low attaining pupils is coherent but tends to just narrate the processes of creating performances without sufficiently analysing them. Pupils with special educational needs at both key stages make good progress in collaborating with others and in gaining confidence. Students in the Sixth Form respond well to an intellectually and practically demanding course and their current attainments are above the expectations for this course. Their performances show effective use of speech, of movement, including stylised sequences, and of different levels of staging. Their facial expression is good though not always sustained in rehearsal. They write sensitively about productions they have seen, they are thoughtful about contemporary issues and they link theory with practice. Some writing, however, is short of precise references. Pupils learn to use sound, lighting and the video camera throughout the school. Extended performances at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form sometimes use over-frequent scene changes.
117. The teachers cooperate well and the majority of teaching is very good. The strengths are the teachers' knowledge of the subject and the requirements of the examination syllabuses. Their high expectations were evident in a Year 8 class's first drama lesson when they examined attitudes, discipline and relationships within the family. Very good planning enables pupils to warm up, gain confidence, generate ideas and refine their performances. Generally the purposeful and friendly ethos encourages pupils to be productive and thus enjoy drama. Teachers calm pupils who are nervous and keep an eye on health and safety. There are occasional weaknesses in the teaching when teachers do not give clear enough instructions and when they hesitate to adopt a different strategy if the lesson does not proceed as they had intended. A few pupils are not prepared to work with other pupils but generally they mix well.
118. Popular school productions such as 'Bugsy Malone', Year 12 workshops and performances for primary schools and Year 7 pupils, theatre visits, drama clubs, links with history and English, and the arts enrichment week for Year 9 pupils enlarge pupils' experience of drama. Since the last OFSTED inspection the A level results have improved and there is more drama at Key Stage 3. Nevertheless, there is still insufficient drama in Key Stage 3 to adequately develop pupils' oral and expressive skills and positive social attitudes.

## **MATHEMATICS**

119. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of pupils achieving levels 5 and 6 was above the national average. The average points score was above the national average. Results were similar to those in science but better than those in English. Over the four years, average levels have been well above national averages. The performance of girls was similar to that of boys.

120. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C was well above the national average for all schools. These results represent a significant improvement on 1998 results and sound progress when pupils' prior attainments are taken into account. Results have remained above average for the last three years. The proportion gaining A\*-G was above the national average. Girls and boys achieved similar results. Pupils performed well in the mathematics when compared with other subjects. In the 1999 GCE A Level examinations results were in line with national averages.
121. In the work seen standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are above those expected at the age of 14. Number skills are satisfactory. In Year 9 higher attaining pupils are able to write numbers in standard form though lower attaining pupils are still having difficulty with the concepts of fractions. Algebraic skills are satisfactory with many pupils able to solve equations confidently. Shape and space is developed well. Pupils in Year 7 were seen using protractors accurately to draw and measure angles though some lower attaining pupils in Year 9 still had difficulty with understanding directions. Good progress is made with data handling skills; many pupils have a good understanding of probability and are able to draw a range of graphs confidently. Problem solving skills are developed well and by the end of Year 9 pupils are able to identify patterns and establish rules.
122. At the end of Key Stage 4 standards in the work seen are above those expected at the age of 16. Number skills and algebraic skills are satisfactory; average attaining pupils in Year 11 have a good understanding of place value in decimal numbers and are able to solve a range of equations. Most pupils use calculators confidently and accurately. Data handling skills are good; higher attaining pupils are able to use cumulative frequencies and lower attaining pupils able to draw scatter diagrams and identify appropriate correlation. The concepts of shape and space continue to be developed well with pupils showing a good understanding of transformations and are able to enlarge shapes accurately. Problem solving skills are good with most pupils able to identify patterns and rules, use formulae and predict, and test, results. Higher attaining pupils can extend investigations well.
123. Standards in the Sixth Form are at least in line with course expectations. Students were seen developing the techniques of calculus well and, in Year 13, they showed a good understanding of the principles of circular motion and forces on rigid bodies.
124. The overall quality of teaching is good. Good progress at Key Stage 3, improving GCSE results at Key Stage 4 and good standards in the Sixth Form are a result of this good teaching. All teachers have good subject knowledge with teachers in the Sixth Form having very good subject knowledge. They are able to explain concepts clearly, which helps pupils with their understanding. Lesson planning is good; good links are made between the content of lessons and that of earlier lessons and those planned for the future. Where education care officers are provided they are used well and contribute effectively to the good progress of pupils with special educational need. Although good use is made of practical activities to help with understanding, the limited access to computers is restricting the opportunities to use them to support learning. Good attention is given to improving mental processes. Teachers usually manage pupils well and give good support to individual pupils during lessons. Lessons are usually conducted at a good pace ensuring good learning for different groups of pupils. Questioning of pupils is generally good though sometimes teachers tell pupils facts rather than getting them to think about the concepts. Good use is made of different levels of tasks and resources to develop pupils' skills, knowledge, and understanding with appropriate challenge usually provided for pupils in class work. Homework is used effectively to consolidate and extend learning. Where teaching is weakest, the pace of lessons is slow, teachers do not review what has been learned in lessons and insufficient practice is given with the skills being developed. Though homework is marked well, the quality of the marking of class work lacks consistency across the subject, with many books lacking in comments for pupils about what they need to do to improve.
125. Learning is good at both key stages and in the Sixth Form. At Key Stage 3, average levels of attainment on entry are improved significantly to become above national averages during the key stage. All pupils, including those with special educational need, make good progress. Progress at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory; above average levels of attainment at Key Stage 3 are maintained at the end of Key Stage 4 with most pupils achieving grades in line with their prior

attainment. Pupils are acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding well. They work productively during lessons and show interest in what they are doing. There is no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational need make good progress; this is reflected in GCSE results where few pupils do not gain at least grade G. Progress of students in the Sixth Form is good.

126. Attitudes to learning are generally good. Although most pupils concentrate well, the long length of lessons sometimes results in some pupils not spending all of their time on their tasks. Listening skills are usually good; pupils usually listen attentively when teachers are talking. Pupils usually behave well in lessons, mainly as a result of firm control by teachers. Most pupils take a pride in their work and draw tables, diagrams and charts neatly. Attitudes to learning are especially good in the Sixth Form.
127. Overall, the leadership and management of the department is sound but a number of issues remains to be addressed. There is a clear commitment to raising standards. The budget is well managed and the available staff are well deployed across the subject, including in the Sixth Form. There is a good delegation of responsibility. The available accommodation, though of poor quality, is well used. The subject's handbook does not provide adequate information for teachers, especially newly qualified and supply teachers, on the policies of the subject. The new schemes of work, in Key Stage 3, do not yet provide sufficient detail to ensure a consistent approach to teaching. Though the arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress on a day-to-day basis are satisfactory the systems in place to track pupils' progress as they move through the school are not well developed. Reports do not adequately inform parents of what pupils can and can't do or what they need to do to improve. The lack of a policy for numeracy across the curriculum is resulting in some inconsistent use of basic skills in other subjects.
128. Improvements since the last OFSTED inspection are sound, but the scheme of work still needs developing in Key Stage 3 and pupils' progress is not well mapped as they move through the school. Standards have improved with GCSE results now consistently above national averages. Most pupils now achieve the levels that they are expected to achieve. The quality of teaching is now mainly good, including the Sixth Form, with teachers using appropriate methods to cope with different levels of attainment.
129. The satisfactory levels of numeracy demonstrated in lessons are reflected in other subjects. Pupils in geography can use co-ordinates confidently in map reading, show a good understanding of number when required to do calculations and can use accurately a range of graphs to display data. In design and technology (food), pupils are able to calculate costs and weigh ingredients accurately. In science, numeracy skills are generally in line with expectations though in the Sixth Form, students demonstrate a wide range of numerical skills. In art pupils show a satisfactory understanding of enlargements and perspective.

## **SCIENCE**

130. Attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 over the last three years has been well above the national average. In 1999 the percentage of pupils obtaining level 5 and above was 67 percent (55 percent nationally), and at level 6 and above 31 percent (23 percent nationally). Over the last three years the average points score has shown a downward trend. Results in science were similar to those in mathematics but better than those in English in 1999, which has been the case for the last four years. Over the last four years the performance of both boys and girls was well above the national average. Attainment at GCSE in double award science is now above the national average. In 1999, the percentage of pupils obtaining A\*-C grades was 54 percent (48 percent nationally), whilst average point score was 4.6(4.3 nationally). Average point scores have risen steadily over the last three years. However the well above average results at Key Stage 3 are not maintained at GCSE and results could be higher. Students in the Sixth Form who study the three separate sciences achieve results that are above the national average, but numbers are too small for meaningful comparison.
131. The highest attaining pupils in Year 9 have good knowledge and understanding of the inter-relationship between predator and prey in food chains. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9 can

only suggest very basic ways of distinguishing between animals. Pupils' laboratory skills at the end of Key Stage 3 are satisfactory with an expected understanding of the principles of fair testing. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 have a good understanding of mass number and atomic number. Importantly, they are able to apply well their knowledge gained when balancing equations in chemistry to the balancing of nuclear equations. Factual recall of recent work on the extraction of iron in the Blast Furnace was unsatisfactory for the middle/lower attaining pupils in Year 11. At Key Stage 4 in their investigations pupils are able to make simple predictions but find giving a scientific explanation for these predictions quite difficult. In the Sixth Form, students show above expected knowledge and understanding of their chosen A Level science. For example chemistry students in Year 13 are able to predict well that when two isotopes exist that two molecular ions will show on the mass spectrum. Physics students in Year 13 have good numerical skills, which enable them to do heat transfer calculations well. However, some students have weak numerical skills, which inhibits their attainment.

132. When pupils enter the school their attainments in science are in line with the national average, but they make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 3 their achievements are well above the national average. Year 8 pupils make good progress when investigating the gas given out during breathing. Pupils in Year 7 learn satisfactorily about healthy diets. Progress at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 9, irrespective of prior attainment, learn well whether revising food chains or classification of animals, or learning about how to calculate the efficiency of machines. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 make good progress when learning about the role of dominant and recessive genes in the inheritance of characteristics. Middle and lower attaining pupils in Year 11 make satisfactory progress when learning about the extraction of aluminium. Similarly attaining pupils in Year 10 make good progress when investigating chemical reaction rates. Students in Year 12 make good progress when investigating the reactions of halide ions with silver nitrate. In Year 13, students learn well when interpreting mass spectrometry data, while others in Year 12 apply Kirchoff's laws to electric circuit problems well. Pupils with special educational needs make as good progress as other lower attaining pupils when they receive support. Subject specific targets are not written for pupils with special educational needs and it not possible to fully monitor their progress.
133. Pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are mostly good and never less than satisfactory. They show interest in their work. Behaviour is mostly satisfactory or better so that most pupils have every opportunity to learn. Pupils generally work well together when carrying out experiments. They usually work safely but do not always follow instructions to wear safety glasses. When moving around the laboratory to collect materials, and equipment pupils act responsibly except on a few occasions. During whole class discussions pupils answer their teachers' questions in a courteous manner and to the best of their ability. However, some pupils spoil worthwhile contributions by calling out thus showing little respect for others. Take up rates to study the sciences at A Level are satisfactory with biology particularly well supported.
134. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is either satisfactory or good. There are few problems with the teaching and there is no significant difference between the key stages in the quality of teaching. Teachers set high standards for discipline, which are mostly achieved. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding. Expectations of pupils and students are generally appropriate. Lessons are carefully planned, often using a range of resources and methods. Teachers do not provide work suitable for differently attaining pupils in the same teaching group. There is still some inconsistency among the teachers with regard to the quality of marking. Generally scientific supportive comments are not used sufficiently. Whilst it is important to encourage pupils it is not good to practice to over praise pupils graph drawing skills when axes are not labelled. The quality of reports to parents is satisfactory at Key Stage 4. However at both Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form teachers do not report specific strengths and weaknesses. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is satisfactory.
135. Schemes of work plan effectively for continuity and progression in both key stages. The way the department organises the modular course is one of the reasons for the underachievement at Key Stage 4. Pupils do not get the full advantage from the present arrangements because there is too long an interval before they take their first module test. Also pupils are only entered for the Foundation Level and consequently they are restricted to Grade C as their highest achievable grade.

136. Assessment procedures help to form similar attaining teaching groups from Year 9 onwards. Assessment procedures are effective as shown by the accuracy between Teacher Assessments and results in National Tests at Key Stage 3. The department does not make enough use of target setting approaches, which will also bring about an improvement in results particularly at Key Stage 4. It is important that the department makes better use of the regular information provided from module test results in order to provide pupils with clear targets. In addition, all coursework investigations should be marked immediately and reported to pupils so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve in the next investigation.
137. The management of the department is sound but there are some significant improvements to be made if standards are to rise. The department is well supported by an efficient, well-qualified technician team. Accommodation is satisfactory but some laboratories and the preparation room are in need of refurbishment. Science resources are satisfactory but there are serious shortages with regard to information and communication technology. The money made available annually is sufficient for a school of this size but will never address the shortages. Since the last OFSTED inspection the provision of textbooks has improved. The areas for improvement include target setting; collaborative planning with the special educational needs department; more consistent marking which is sufficiently informative; provision for information and communication technology, monitoring and finding out about best practice from other science departments.

## **ART**

138. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' standards are above the national expectation. Pupils are taught drawing, painting and colouring skills formally, including perspective. This formal teaching results in confident work, with good tone and texture, and an interesting use of colour including blending in pastels. Graphics is taught formally and pupils gain a good knowledge of design. All pupils in Years 8 and 9 are taught pottery for half of each year. They produce well-designed slab pots and coiled figures that are finished and glazed to a high quality. They also know how to do a design brief and know the properties and techniques associated with work in clay. Overall, the breadth of work offered in Key Stage 3 contributes to the high standards. Pupils with special educational needs get appropriate, individual attention in all lessons and achieve well. Most of these pupils have at least average ability in art and are interested in and enjoy the subject.
139. In the GCSE examinations the percentage of pupils achieving A\*-C grades and A\*-G grades have been in line with the national average over the past three years. Pupils have been offered three options in the past: drawing and painting, three-dimensional studies (pottery) and general art. The majority of pupils have taken the drawing and painting option in 1998 and 1999 and results have been well above the national average with 82 percent and 87 percent achieving the higher A\* to C grades. The department now offers graphics as an art option. When pupils get the lower grades in GCSE art these are very often their best grades.
140. The present pupils' GCSE coursework show a high standard of drawing and painting skills. Coursework studies on the artist and architect Gaudi in Year 10 are delightful. Pupils study a good range of artists' work and are successful in using these studies to help them to be creative, bold and imaginative in their own work. In Year 10 pottery, all biscuit fired, experimental modelling based on natural form is of a high standard. All pupils doing the three dimensional studies (pottery) course have a good knowledge of the properties of clay and of the firing and glazing process. In Year 11 pupils are half way through the preparation for their final controlled test and their work suggests that there is potential to achieve grades above the national average. In both years all pupils know how to research a topic and complete a design brief.
141. There has been one hundred percent pass rate in A Level art over the past three years. Standards of work in the present A Level groups are good. All students have the imagination, skills and understanding to reach a secure pass grade and some are on course to achieve the top A or B grades.

142. All students know how to research a theme and do so in the required breadth and depth. They can develop ideas into three dimensions in creative and individual ways. They have good drawing and painting skills with good use of colour, tone and texture. There is a good range of individual styles and a good range of approaches into three dimensions, including work in wire, wax and a range of fabrics. Teachers have close links with local colleges of art and support and encourage their students when they wish to continue their studies to degree level. A Level students are encouraged to help younger pupils in Key Stage 3. There is an impressive response. This practice, while helping younger pupils, also brings benefits to the A Level students who have opportunities to study the development of themes and a range of responses that can stimulate their own ideas.
143. Teaching is never less than good and in one-fifth of lessons it is very good. Art is taught by specialist teachers who have good knowledge and expertise in the subject. They have good class-management skills and discipline is achieved with apparent ease. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and introduce topics and ideas that interest the pupils. This good teaching is characterised by very good demonstrations and illustrations of the techniques of composition, drawing and colouring. The teachers show pupils how to research and present work and how to handle and use materials correctly. These illustrations are instrumental in helping pupils to achieve good standards of work. There are some excellent features in almost all lessons, particularly in teacher demonstrations.
144. The strengths of the department include the well-planned schemes of work, the good quality of teaching and the quiet, calm, purposeful atmosphere in all lessons. Teachers are committed to helping their pupils to achieve the highest possible standards and to this end they make their own books available to A Level students and GCSE pupils for research. They also make provision for pupils to take the most appropriate GCSE courses.
145. The only weakness reported in the last OFSTED inspection was the restriction in time for art for those pupils taking a second foreign language - they had only half the average time devoted to art. This situation is now rectified. All the good aspects reported in the last OFSTED inspection are maintained.
146. Although a great amount of good work is exhibited in the art rooms, art does not have a high profile throughout the school. If secure areas for display can be provided there is potential to use some of the wide range of interesting and dramatic artwork to enhance the school environment. The department has sent work to local exhibitions and invites parents, governors and other interested people to an exhibition of examination work each year.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

147. In 1999, the pupils' attainments in design and technology in Key Stage 3, as assessed by the teachers, were above the national average. During Key Stage 3 attainment in lessons is near the national average. Pupils develop their design and practical skills in both food technology and resistant materials. However, the range of materials used is poor. Food and wood are used regularly and pupils learn to bend and shape plastic, but metal and textiles are rarely used in the department.
148. The GCSE results in 1999 were above the national average with girls gaining much better results than boys. The subjects available for pupils have changed over the last three years with food technology being the only subject that has been consistently taken. The food technology results have risen from below average to above average over the last three years with boys and girls doing equally well. The GCSE resistant materials results have also risen from below average to above average over the last two years with girls gaining much better results than boys. The results are better than those reported at the time of the last OFSTED inspection. This is due to an improvement in the resistant materials examination results. The results are good when compared with other subjects in the school. Although in a few lessons in Key Stage 4 attainment is above expectations, overall attainment in lessons is near the national average. For example, Year 11 pupils were achieving well in resistant materials when making their final projects. The storage systems being made showed good development of skills when using softwood. Many pupils are producing their best work when making items but



a few do not complete the tasks thoroughly and reduce overall results. Pupils with special needs are given appropriate assistance by the teacher at the design stage and later when constructing their coursework item so that they produce the best possible result. There are few pupils with English as a second language but one seen during a lesson was given similar appropriate assistance. In Key Stage 4, where the teachers have higher expectations, talented pupils are encouraged to extend each section of their coursework so that achievement is maximised.

149. Pupils show great interest in food technology and clearly enjoy the subject. They work best when engaged in practical tasks but recognise the usefulness of gaining knowledge about the nutritional values of foods. They are able to calculate energy values and costs with confidence and accuracy. Pupils work moderately well when designing products in resistant materials although some Year 8 boys showed a lack of motivation. Resistant materials projects being made by Key Stage 4 pupils are sometimes ambitious and indicate an ability to concentrate and persevere. Most of the coursework seen indicates a desire to succeed.
150. At the time of this inspection, the full time teachers of food technology and resistant materials were absent due to long-term illness. However, the classes were appropriately staffed by temporary teachers who continued the work of the department. All teaching in Key Stage 3 is sound or better and in some food technology lessons it is very good. In Key Stage 4 lessons the teaching is always sound or better with some good teaching in food technology lessons. In resistant materials, basic skills in using wood and plastic are taught. However the planned projects do not allow sufficient scope for imaginative design work and provide a limited range of skills when making. Teachers' expectations are appropriate in food technology where basic skills and useful techniques are thoroughly addressed. The pupils are well managed in all lessons and particularly enjoy the practical work in both subjects. Pupils' work is marked for effort and attainment but pupils are not aware of the National Curriculum level achieved. Homework forms an important part of the subjects when coursework needs to be completed. At other times, it is set when appropriate. Technicians provide valuable assistance in both subject areas and help students directly in some lessons. Many expensive resources that could provide a wider experience for students are underused in the resistant materials area.
151. The marking of pupils' work is completed regularly in food technology and includes corrections and constructive comments. Grades are given for attainment and progress. Little analysis of the subjects' results takes place except for Key Stage 3 and GCSE examinations. Monitoring of pupils' subject performance needs to be developed to provide information for each class and each year group as noted at the time of the last OFSTED inspection. National Curriculum levels need to be used to provide additional motivation and knowledge of relative progress.
152. Documentation includes policies and schemes of work for Years 8, 9, 10 and 11. The time to be spent on each project is clearly indicated. However, only resistant materials and food technology are taught in both key stages so the technology curriculum provides a limited range of opportunities for using materials and communicating by design. No design and technology is taught during Year 7. Two resistant materials classes and one food technology class are available for Year 10 pupils and many do not study design and technology during Key Stage 4.
153. Food technology includes the study of a wide range of foods and multicultural diets. The resistant materials projects are well structured with design booklets for Key Stage 3 pupils to use. However, these allow little flexibility for the older or more able pupils. The 'steady hand tester' is a worthwhile project but does not generally include a latching circuit even though some electronics is taught. The Key Stage 3 scheme of work in food technology is firmly based on practical tasks with the design process included at frequent intervals. The schemes of work need to be more specific for the teaching of structures, pneumatics, systems and control and computer aided design so that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The use of information and communication technology, disassembly and the opportunities for teaching scientific principles also need further clarification. The Key Stage 4 schemes of work are based satisfactorily on the GCSE syllabuses and include an appropriate balance of theory and practical work. More use of information technology could be made to aid calculation and to improve presentation.

154. Staffing and accommodation are sufficient for the present limited curriculum but the shape and size of the food technology room is unsatisfactory. This affects learning and causes some safety issues during practical work, especially where classes are as large as twenty seven. As reported at the time of the last OFSTED inspection, "the size of teaching groups makes it difficult for teachers to provide properly for the needs of all students". Replacement of expendable items is difficult due to the low departmental allowance. There are few technology books in the library.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

155. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C in the 1999 GCSE examinations was above the national average and was in line with the national average at grades A\*-G. Girls attained higher grades than boys and overall the results in geography were among the highest in the school. The results however, show a small but significant decline over the last three years. In the 1999 GCE A-level, results were in line with the national average but show a marked improvement on those of the previous two years.
156. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that pupils' attainments at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are at least in line with the national average, and they are above the national average at A level. Most students achieve appropriate standards, given their prior attainment. However lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, are not achieving high enough standards.
157. By the age of 14, most pupils are competent in a range of map and graphical skills though accuracy and presentation is weaker for lower attaining pupils than is normally seen. Pupils have a good knowledge of places; particularly the local area but many are insecure in their understanding of how to locate places by reference to latitude and longitude. They gain knowledge of technical terms about coasts, river valleys and volcanoes and show skills in identifying features on maps and photographs, but understanding about the processes of formation is below the level expected. Many pupils make regular use of number to measure scale, draw graphs and describe data. Information is represented accurately, though graphical accuracy of lower attaining pupils is reduced without the use of graph paper.
158. By the age of 16 map skills have improved in the range of applications and labelling, particularly in coursework. Higher attaining pupils' analyses of information gained from research is higher than that expected of pupils nationally; for example in work on the causes and consequences of river pollution in the Goyt valley. The use of computers to represent and process information however, is below the expected national level. Although most average and higher attaining pupils can describe and explain the reasons for the pattern of urban development in the Manchester area, in many instances the written answers lack detail. Pupils write well paying attention to grammatical accuracy, but for the minority there is a weakness in spelling accuracy.
159. By the age of 18, written work is generally of a good standard with notes and essays well constructed at a level above average attainment. Students' planning and presentation of their 'Individual Studies' such as a study of tourism in Castleton, is of a high standard by national comparison but, the quality is sometimes reduced by insufficient detail in analysis and conclusion. Many students have good understanding of management issues of developments in the World's tropical rain forests, with higher attaining students confidently giving oral accounts of group work findings. In some lessons however, students' responses in oral work lack depth in development and reasoning. This is partly due to a lack of self-confidence but for others it is due to weakness in their knowledge foundation.
160. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at Key Stage 3, good at Key Stage 4 and very good in the Sixth Form. Whereas the quality of teaching is consistent at Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form, it is more variable at Key Stage 4 where some teaching is excellent but, a small amount is unsatisfactory and this reduces progress. At Key Stage 3, lower attaining pupils make good progress in a lesson on coastal studies when learning materials designed to meet their needs, enable them to successfully achieve the tasks. In several lessons however, the absence of strategies to support individual learning needs reduces the progress made by many,

particularly higher attaining pupils. At Key Stage 4 teachers make very effective use of a range of learning resources that stimulates interest and enjoyment, leading to good progress being made in the majority of lessons. Excellence in teaching is evident when careful planning of a lesson on industrial change in South Wales, skilfully integrates a range of resources and sets challenges for pupils to develop ideas and powers of reasoning. For the minority of pupils, progress is reduced by poor attitudes to their written and illustrative work. and by marking and monitoring of the work that is not effective in ensuring improvement over time. The positive learning ethos and good student–teacher relations in the Sixth Form are central to the very good progress made. Teachers' have good subject knowledge and the clear questioning in discussion builds confidence enabling the students to accept responsibility for learning. On some occasions however, there is too much teacher direction of learning which reduces opportunities for initiative and self-reliance.

161. The subject is becoming increasingly popular at Key Stage 4. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory at Key Stage 3, good at Key Stage 4 and very good in the Sixth Form. Most pupils are well behaved and co-operate with teachers in ensuring that lessons progress smoothly and that learning opportunities are maximised. Occasionally at Key Stage 4 however, the negative response of the minority reduces progress made by the majority of pupils in the lesson. Most pupils take care with the presentation of work but the work of a significant minority is untidy, lacks care and is often left incomplete. Sixth Form students have a mature attitude to their studies and sustain concentration for long periods of time. Many lack self-confidence in oral work, but those who give oral presentations speak clearly and in detail
162. The schemes of work are detailed and provide clear guidance to teachers, particularly those new to the department and ensure consistency of provision across the subject. The curriculum is enhanced by fieldwork opportunities at each key stage and this broadens the experiences for all pupils and raises standards at GCSE. Insufficient information is provided however, to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum and the application of information technology in the geography curriculum. Although teachers consistently follow the marking policy and work is supportively assessed, there is too much 'tick' marking that does not provide information on strengths and weaknesses and how pupils can improve. The subject reports National Curriculum levels at the end of Key Stage 3 but the use of level criteria to monitor progress through the key stage does provide information on pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The leadership of the department is very good and makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. Staff morale is high. Resources are adequate but pupils do not have texts available to support work at home and this limits the range of independent learning opportunities. The available specialist accommodation is well used but is insufficient for the number of lessons required. This results in some unsatisfactory provision that reduces the quality of learning experience.
163. Since the last OFSTED inspection the standards at GCE A level have improved and the good results at GCSE have been maintained. Achievement at grades A\* and A are now significantly above the national average. The quality of teaching at A level has improved; it has been maintained at Key Stage 4, but declined at Key Stage 3. The new leadership continues to be a significant strength but the use of computers for learning remains underdeveloped.

## **HISTORY**

164. Attainment in history at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, based on assessments made by teachers, was below national expectations and represented a drop in standards from the previous year. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher grades was also below the national average.
165. Pupils have appropriate knowledge and understanding of the facts, situations and historical figures they have studied, although some pupils find it difficult to recall these in detail at a later date. Nearly all pupils develop their ability to use historical source material by selecting the information they require and some pupils begin to evaluate and compare sources of evidence. Many pupils find it difficult to use visual sources of information, for example video extracts to obtain information and require a high level of support in order to make full use of these. Most pupils understand that historical situations did not occur at random and have both causes and

consequences, although a complex set of causes, for example the causes of the First World War is too confusing for all pupils to come fully to grips with. All pupils can use a variety of ways to record their knowledge and understanding and higher attaining pupils begin to develop the skills of note making.

166. The attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 of the small number of pupils who took history at GCSE level in 1999 was above the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining grades A\*-C has been consistently above average for the past three years, although there has been some fluctuation from year to year. Attainment based on evidence seen during the course of the inspection is also above that found nationally. Pupils continue their development of good note making skills and use these to plan their written work effectively. They have appropriate knowledge, understanding and recall of the facts and historical situations they study and make good use of source material to both extract and interpret information, although there is some uncertainty over the latter. Pupils investigating the massacre of a group of native American Indians were nearly all able to decide which sources would be likely to be the most reliable and could justify their decision.
167. Pupils come into Year 7 with widely varying levels of prior historical knowledge and skills and average attainment in the skills of literacy on which so much of the work covered in the study of history depends. They make generally satisfactory progress during Key Stage 3 in acquiring not only historical knowledge and understanding but also an appropriate range of basic skills such as the use of source material and an understanding of causation.
168. Most pupils who study history in Key Stage 4 do so from a base of average or above average prior attainment in the subject and make good progress. In particular they develop the skill of making concise and informative notes and in expanding and amending these as they progress through the study of a topic. They increase both their skills and confidence in the evaluation of source material and all appreciate the importance of doing this thoroughly in order to fully understand the topics they study.
169. Attainment at A level is lower than what is found nationally although it is appropriate in terms of most students' prior attainment and the increased demands of the A level course. There is some evidence of students with higher prior attainment under-performing at A level. Most students have clear knowledge and understanding of the factual basis of their courses but there is considerable uncertainty over making independent evaluations, judgements and hypotheses. Most students undertake some additional reading under the strong guidance of their teachers and use the results of this to inform their written work, but there is less evidence of their doing this on their own initiative. Students generally work hard and are conscientious about acting upon the advice of their teachers, although there are some examples of students coming to lessons insufficiently prepared. Students are, on the whole, very reticent about contributing their own ideas in lessons and when they are prepared to do this, their contributions are made simply and without development. This situation is not helped by the fact that A level groups are very small and students do not have the opportunity to compare and defend their ideas among a diverse group.
170. Pupils in all key stages are generally quiet and attentive although their attention levels decline in response to teaching which does not fully maintain their interest. Most pupils listen to each other and are supportive of the efforts of others. There is general lack of confidence and a reluctance to participate in oral work. Sometimes this is the result of pupils not having understood the language used or what is expected of them. Pupils respond to teaching that engages their interest and is accessible to them with commitment and good levels of concentration and on such occasions make progress which is at least satisfactory. When pupils find their tasks too difficult or, very occasionally, too easy, they lose motivation and fail to make enough progress.
171. Nearly all teaching seen was at least satisfactory and a small proportion was good. The good teaching is characterised by clear explanations that make the work interesting and accessible to all pupils across the attainment range and the use of tasks and activities that engage the interest of pupils. Insufficient use is made of a range of teaching methods and tasks to meet the needs of pupils at all levels of prior attainment. As a result that there are occasions when the work is too difficult for some pupils and they fail to make sufficient progress. Although teachers generally offer additional support on such occasions, this does little to assist pupils in

becoming independent learners who will be able to proceed with their work without frequent recourse to help. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and illustrate their explanations with a wealth of examples and anecdote, but there are occasions when teachers talk to the whole class for extended periods of time and stretch the concentration span of pupils. There is evidence of teachers' using an increasing variety of activities, for example the use of video clips, to improve concentration and understanding of pupils. The quality of marking is inconsistent; some work is marked with little more than a tick or a very brief comment, while some marking indicates National Curriculum levels achieved and what should be done to improve.

172. While the management of the subject is satisfactory, there are areas for development. The scheme of work sets out clearly what should be taught throughout the key stages and this is adhered to carefully. However, there is need for additional advice and information to assist teachers with their planning and to ensure that work is provided to meet the needs of pupils at all levels of attainment. This need has been recognised by the head of department and a good start has been made in preparing material to meet it. There is lack of consistency in some aspects of the teaching and resources for the subject, for example marking, and there is need for more monitoring of these aspects. While there are procedures in place to assess attainment and progress on a regular basis, these are not used consistently and not all pupils are equally aware of how well they are doing. Insufficient use is made of the wealth of statistical information available to measure progress, identify under-achievement as early as possible and to predict potential attainment.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

173. There has been a significant improvement in information technology provision since the last OFSTED inspection. This has resulted in an improvement in pupils' capabilities during timetabled information technology lessons.
174. The teachers' assessment of pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 are near, although slightly above, the national average. The GCSE results for information systems in 1997 were in line with the national average. The GCSE computer studies results were above average in 1998 but the information technology results were below average in 1999. Girls' results were very low in 1999. The 1999 GCSE information technology results are very low when compared with the GCSE results for the rest of the school. A level computer studies results were above average in 1998 but fell to below average in 1999.
175. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is above the national expectation. Pupils are confident users of information technology and have learned appropriate skills. They can create imaginative communications that are often well presented and produced in colour. This achievement is mainly gained in Year 7 as there is little structured cross curricular input during Years 8 and 9 except by the English department. Pupils with special needs or English as a second language make similar progress to that achieved by other pupils. Talented pupils are encouraged to attempt additional tasks. During Key Stage 4 lessons attainment is in line with the expectations of the GCSE course. Pupils are able to arrange a page with appropriate spacing, headings, indents, titles, numbering of paragraphs and enhanced text with colour. They are able to use a complex spreadsheet and are learning ways to enter formulae for calculations. Some coursework is above expectations when preparing for the GCSE examination although not all pupils complete the necessary work. One third of pupils does not study GCSE information technology and must therefore rely on cross-curricular input for their entitlement. As reported at the time of the last OFSTED inspection, these pupils do not have an adequate information technology curriculum. Sixth Form students who choose A level computing achieve high standards and develop advanced skills. They become competent in developing databases and in programming.
176. Pupils have a good attitude to information technology and have no difficulty in concentrating on the intellectual challenge presented by the work. During Year 7, information technology makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development. They were particularly interested when registering to use e-mail and in the Internet. About 70 percent of a Year 7 class have computers at home and use them to help with schoolwork. Behaviour is good

because pupils are provided with structured tasks, especially in Key Stage 4. E-mail is making social changes as pupils register on line and become familiar with its use. Moral issues concerning the use of the Internet are regularly discussed.

177. Information technology is mainly taught by the co-ordinator for the subject. Teaching is good during all key stages. The teachers' knowledge and experience of information technology has ensured that appropriate topics are included in the scheme of work. Many basic skills are taught during Year 7. These include the creation of imaginative leaflets, that are well set out and printed in colour to communicate text and picture information. Lessons are well planned and use effective teaching methods. Instruction booklets are often provided. Pupils are well managed so that relationships are good between pupils and between pupils and teacher. The tasks provided are appropriately challenging in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 so that pupils have no difficulty in maintaining concentration and staying on task. Homework needs to be set on a more regular basis during Key Stage 3 so that pupils have further opportunity to increase their learning. The regular use of the printers provides a useful end-point to many lessons but day-to-day assessment could be improved. Sixth Form work is well structured by the teacher so that students become responsible for their own learning. The information technology technician provides valuable help for pupils directly, especially during Year 7 lessons. The computers are well used at all times of the day.
178. Learning is good in all lessons. Pupils acquire information and communication technology knowledge rapidly during the structured Year 7 programme. Learning is limited during the remainder of Key Stage 3 because there are no further timetabled classes. The plans to include information technology during timetabled lessons in Year 9 will give pupils further experience before the Key Stage 3 tests and their Key Stage 4 option choices. Pupils with special needs are well known by the teachers and are integrated into the classes. Their progress is observed so that they can be given extra help if necessary. There are few pupils with English as a second language and none that are unable to make satisfactory progress.
179. The departmental documentation has schemes of work for Year 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13. They would provide more precise guidelines if details of the time to be spent on each topic were indicated. There is no indication of the cross-curricular input required or expected from other departments. In Key Stage 3, the Year 7 scheme of work for information and communication technology does not contain any reference to controlling or measuring and does not therefore meet statutory requirements. The information technology co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the pupils' capabilities in Year 7. However, little analysis of whole class or whole year results is made other than Key Stage 3 teacher assessments. National Curriculum levels could be used regularly to provide additional progressive motivation.
180. During Key Stage 4, two-thirds of pupils study GCSE information technology. The remainder receive cross-curricular information technology through the work of other departments. However, this is not adequately monitored and is therefore uncertain in content. In Key Stage 4, the monitoring of attainment is effective in providing information so that pupils can be entered for the appropriate GCSE examination level. The Sixth form A level computing course provides a stimulating opportunity for able students. They receive frequent feedback so that they are aware of their achievements.
181. Cross-curricular information and communication technology is poorly developed except in English where frequent visits to the information and communication technology facility extends the range of communication skills. Other departments make occasional use of information and communication technology, including interactive CD ROMs. There are few opportunities for departments to book the information and communication technology rooms with whole classes because the rooms are well used by the timetabled classes. The use of home computers allows some pupils to develop their own work.
182. There is insufficient information and communication technology accommodation to provide for the needs of the school; particularly for cross-curricular use. However regular discussions between the co-ordinator and the senior management team have led to the development of plans to provide another room and to increase the number of available computers. The number is about half the national average when the pupil/computer ratio is calculated. Classroom demonstration facilities are not adequate especially with the larger classes. There is a useful information and communication technology facility in the library.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

183. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils attained levels slightly higher than the national expectation in their teachers' assessments. This standard is currently being maintained in class, although it is lower in the second language that pupils start in Year 8. Most pupils can follow lessons delivered wholly or partially in the foreign language. By the end of the key stage, higher attaining pupils can use different tenses and express their opinions simply. They can read, write short personal statements and dialogues. Many pupils, including some with special educational needs, can converse naturally about themselves, their families and their daily lives. They acquire vocabulary for topics such as shopping or leisure pursuits, and many gain useful insights into aspects of French and German grammar.
184. In recent years, French and German have alternated as the first and second languages taught. In 1999, GCSE results in German from a large entry were, at 33 percent A\*-C, well below the national average. Results at A\*-G were slightly below the national average at 98 percent. Attainment at A\*-C was lower than the 47 percent gained in 1997, when most pupils entered for German, but higher than the 94 percent gained at A\*-G. In 1998, a small number of pupils entered for German, gaining above-average results of 53 percent A\*-C, with all grades at D or above.
185. The GCSE results achieved in 1999 by the small number entering for French were well above the national average, with 92.3 percent A\*-C and no grades lower than D. This was higher than in 1997, when 63 percent entering achieved grades A\*-C and grades overall were F and above. In 1998, when most pupils entered for French, results at A\*-C and A\*-G were well below the national average at 29 percent and 89 percent respectively. In recent years and in line with national trends, most pupils have achieved less in their first foreign language than in other subjects, and boys have achieved lower results than girls.
186. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils can write in various styles including letters and tourist brochures. Some of them present their work effectively using computers. They work efficiently through a series of tasks, exercising skills in turn in preparation for the GCSE examination. Lower attaining pupils work steadily towards more limited targets, acquiring the simple language needed for working abroad, such as telephone calls and booking accommodation. Sixth Form students can talk and write discursively on issues such as the media, health and post-war politics. They develop their arguments in essays and lively discussions, using evidence from the Internet and CD ROMs. Some enrich their studies through working experience abroad, or at conferences in local universities and overseas.
187. In 1999, six girls were entered for German at A level and four gained grades in the range B-E. Their average score was below the national average but higher than results in the previous year. The three girls entering for French achieved one B and two D grades, higher than results in the previous two years.
188. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are co-operative and patient during teacher's presentations. Many give prompt individual replies to questions, and whole classes enjoy choral responses and singing. Sometimes they lack confidence or their pronunciation is poor, owing to lack of regular practice. Only a minority develops into fluent speakers as they progress through the school, because teachers sometime allow insufficient time for working in groups and pairs. Many pupils of all ages display genuine curiosity about grammar, and appreciate the chance to conduct a survey, play a game or act out a short scene such as a doctor's surgery. They have insufficient access to practical applications of language involving computers. While many pupils apply themselves rigorously to reading tasks, using dictionaries to help them understand, a minority fails to respond to opportunities for independent learning, and achieves little. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to individual attention from their teachers and support staff.
189. The quality of teaching is rarely less than satisfactory and in nearly half of lessons it is good or better. Pupils are usually offered a varied and interesting programme of study, although a few lessons are heavily reliant on the textbook and worksheets. Their lessons are usually well

planned to include a cumulative series of short tasks, but sometimes they place too much emphasis on listening and writing. In Key Stages 3 and 4, teachers make and use interesting books and visual aids to stimulate and guide their pupils. They motivate them, using real or symbolic rewards, or including their work in bright classroom displays. Sixth Form lessons usually draw on authentic cultural and journalistic sources. The A level course would benefit from further enrichment, including more contact with native speakers. Some teachers use regular short tests to reinforce and assess pupils' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. They all circulate in the classroom to monitor and support pupils' efforts, working in close co-operation with individual pupils and their assistants. Marking is regular and thorough, although teachers refer insufficiently to National Curriculum levels and the ways in which pupils can progress through them. Homework is regularly used to prepare and extend lessons although the tasks do not always challenge the highest attaining pupils.

190. The department is ably led and reflects a good combination of established practice, imagination and energy. Scattered accommodation that needs refurbishing makes co-ordination difficult and teaching methods are diverse and occasionally ineffectual. More delegated responsibility is needed to develop and implement common policies and more detailed schemes of work. Much more can be done to share ideas, and learn from mutual observation. More detailed assessment, new technology and consistent use of the foreign language by pupils and teachers would raise standards of achievement further.

## **MUSIC**

191. Assessments made by teachers during Year 9 at the end of pupils' half year course of study, cannot be compared with those carried out by other schools nationally where pupils follow full year courses in Years 8 and 9. At the end of their half-year course in music, the attainments of the majority of pupils in Year 9 do not meet the national expectation; although pupils who play instruments attain higher levels. Attainment is below average because teachers do not have sufficient time during the half year courses to give pupils all the opportunities they should have during Years 8 and 9 to cover the work required by the National Curriculum in music. As indicated by concerned parents, continuity of learning is lacking and the curriculum time planned by the school for music lessons in Years 8 and 9 is very low and does not currently match the emerging national patterns. The school has plans to alter the current pattern of curriculum time.
192. Most pupils enter the school in Year 7 with standards that are below national expectations. During Year 7, pupils make good progress and the quality of their learning is always very good in the tasks set for them. However, the impetus initiated in Year 7 is lost and pupils have to re-establish and re-learn practical skills in Years 8 and 9. In one class, some pupils beginning their Year 9 course in music, struggled to play a short repeated melody fragment of three notes as part of a new project on 'Blues' although they find it easier to perform a bass line containing many repeated notes. The progress made for the majority of pupils during the whole of Key Stage 3 is just satisfactory if it is compared with their attainments in Year 7. There is much potential for all pupils to make better progress and attain at higher level given the time in which to learn.
193. The GCSE results for the last two years at grades A\*-C have been well above average and at grades A\*-G they have been in line with the national average. Both the results and the numbers of pupils taking up the subject at GCSE have been improving. The current groups of pupils studying music at GCSE are relatively large, which is a good indication of the increasing popularity of the subject in the school. The work of Year 11 pupils is in line with national averages although the group includes instrumentalists with high levels of skill. Pupils compose and perform according to individual instrumental skills and their folios contain music in a variety of styles. Where possible, pupils take it in turn to compose on the new computer with music software linked to a multi-timbral keyboard, but this equipment is insufficient for the numbers involved. Pupils are developing confidence in performing and work well in partnership with each other in ensemble work on a range of instruments that include voice, woodwind, brass, electronic guitars and drum kit.



194. For A level, small numbers of students have been entered in the last two years and results have broadly matched the national average although some high grades have been obtained. Students in both years of the Sixth Form share their lessons successfully. In addition to their composing and performing tasks they are developing an understanding of the structures of music through studying a Mahler symphony. There is regular development of singing and vocal techniques throughout the school where lessons are continuous, and pupils are encouraged to perform and internalise sounds, which helps them to develop the more advanced listening techniques needed in their GCSE and A level courses.
195. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as others in their classes in the practical and listening tasks set for them. Pupils who have higher degrees of instrumental skill are always challenged at their own level. The few pupils with English as an additional language are supported to understand the technical language needed to carry out their listening and written work, although the universal language of music is not a problem to them. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in any key stage
196. Extra-curricular musical activities are excellent and there is a high level of pupil participation. There is an extensive range of opportunities available for instrumentalists and non-instrumentalists alike. The two school choirs, keyboard and guitar clubs, and school shows are open to all. The junior and senior orchestras, swing-band and flute ensembles provide a variety of styles of music to develop instrumental skills. In addition to school concerts, there has been participation in choral and instrumental events with the Halle orchestra. The school took part in the National Festival for Youth at the Royal Albert Hall. Links with primary schools are strong and pupils perform for younger pupils. Pupils pay for effective instrumental tuition on a variety of instruments in school and many more have private instrumental tuition outside the school so that the number of pupils playing instruments is high.
197. The teaching of music throughout the school is very good and some of it is excellent. This results in very good learning in lessons throughout the school. A number of aspects of teaching are outstanding. The very good relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of the supportive and productive learning environment that prevails in the department. Teachers know their pupils well. This contributes significantly to the very good standards of behaviour and the high levels of participation in lessons and in extra-curricular activities observed during the inspection. Nearly all the pupils are well motivated and have positive attitudes to learning. The management and organisation of pupils is a strength of the department and the teachers have good control of their classes. Most teachers combine very good knowledge of the subject with a good range of teaching strategies that enable pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through performing. This results in pupils making effective gains in knowledge, skills and understanding in lessons. Teachers build on pupils' previous knowledge and experience and readily check that they understand the tasks and know what they are expected to do to improve their work. Observation, assessment and feedback is a teaching strength and where pupils are working on their own compositions or performances teachers give individual coaching so that pupils can work at their own pace. High expectations of what the pupils can achieve are a feature of the very good teaching, and promote a demanding pace of learning. Pupils work hard to meet the teachers' high expectations and good standards are achieved in lessons.
198. Leadership of the department is very strong and there is an effective team of teachers who share a commitment to the improvement of the subject and to the pupils. Accommodation for music on the main site is good but there are difficulties in sharing resources with those having lessons at the lower school site. Resources are improving but there is a lack of sufficient dedicated computers with related software for music and there is no multi-track equipment for audio-taping live sounds which is especially useful for the GCSE and 'A' level courses. Schemes of work for all key stages give insufficient guidance on how they are to be implemented and targets for assessment, which would assist teachers to measure the progress all pupils are making in their musical skills through the elements of music, are not yet successfully developed. Detailed analysis of assessment is not yet undertaken by the school to discover weaknesses in teaching and learning. The structured monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet begun to be implemented.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

199. In the most recent GCSE examination in physical education 60 percent of pupils gained A\*-C grades, and 100 per cent gained A\*-G grade passes. This is above the national average. In 1995 the school began offering its Sixth Form pupils the opportunity to study A level sports studies, and in the most recent examination all pupils gained good pass grades. The number of pupils currently following GCSE and A level courses is impressive.
200. The levels of attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 continues to be in line with national expectations, with a significant minority achieving higher levels. Pupils perform well in a wide range of physical activities. Most pupils arrive at the school with only a limited experience of gymnastics, but quickly respond to the good teaching so that by the end of the key stage they are able to perform a good wide range of balances and movements using small and large apparatus. They are becoming increasingly competent in constructing good quality sequences. In dance, pupils are able to take responsibility for developing a story line, choreographing it and then performing it with fluency, imagination and control.
201. The overall attainment of Key Stage 4 pupils has improved since the last OFSTED inspection and is now in line with national expectations. Good levels of skills development are clearly evident in a wide variety of activities. Pupils have a good understanding of tactics and strategies and are able to apply the skills that have been practiced in the full game situation. In health related education pupils are attaining an understanding of fitness issues and practices and are able to maintain activity levels for appropriate periods of time. Pupils in the examination groups are developing understanding and expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. Pupils are becoming confident in their use of technical language and most pupils are producing course work folders that are generally well presented and detailed. They have a good understanding of the syllabus requirements and are able to effectively link practical and theoretical concepts.
202. In the Sixth Form attainment by the students studying the A level course is at least in line with the national average. Most pupils are producing work that is carefully researched and analysed making good cross-references to other aspects of the course. They are confident in their use of technical language and enter into lively informed debate in the lessons.
203. Many school teams take part in a large number of inter-school competitions and sporting events, and gain much success. Many pupils have represented North Derbyshire and some have gone on to gain county honours.
204. The teaching is never less than satisfactory and in most lessons the teaching is good or very good. All lessons begin and end in an orderly manner and objectives are clearly stated and understood by the pupils. Lessons are well organised and are conducted at a brisk, demanding pace, achieving an appropriate balance of activities and offering the pupils a range of appropriate challenges. The subject planning is well structured with a choice of tasks that promotes a high level of interest and effort. There is an expectation that pupils will work hard and behave well and generally these expectations are met. Teachers are encouraging their pupils to be involved with the planning and evaluation of their work, but in order to meet National Curriculum requirements this is an aspect that needs developing. Teachers show a care and concern for the pupils whilst encouraging the best in fair play, co-operation and competitive experiences.
205. In all aspects of their work most pupils are highly motivated and have a very positive attitude to the subject both in their lessons and in extra curricular activities. Pupils sustain concentration, co-operate well and demonstrate an ability to challenge themselves. The behaviour is of a good standard. Pupils are very tolerant of each other's strength and weaknesses. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated, are given much support and encouragement by the teaching staff and reach a sound level of attainment. There is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum.
206. The balanced curriculum that meets the demands of the National Curriculum allows pupils to take part in a wide variety of activities. The more able and interested pupils in Key Stage 4

have the opportunity to take a GCSE in the subject, and pupils in the Sixth Form can opt to take A level sports studies. However there is no opportunity for pupils in the Sixth Form to take part in timetabled physical education lessons, although some of them are involved with the extra-curricular activities. Many staff give very freely of their time to provide a wide range of lunch time and after school extra-curricular activities, which are very well supported by the pupils. The accommodation for the subject is good with the on-site facilities being supplemented by the excellent accommodation at the nearby leisure centre. It is, however, not satisfactory that the school's indoor swimming pool cannot be used. The school's playing fields continue to have serious drainage problems. The capitation allowance is good and the money is being wisely spent. There is no shortage of textbooks or equipment.

207. Good leadership and a positive ethos characterise the management of the subject. The department's development plan identifies a range of appropriate priorities. The high quality documentation covers all aspects of the department's work, and helps the delivery of the subject. Comprehensive records of pupils' attainment are kept, and they are used to influence curriculum planning and monitoring of performances. The staff who teach physical education work well together, support each other and show a very strong commitment to the pupils.
208. Since the last OFSTED inspection the department has continues to provide its pupils with high quality physical education. An A level in sports science was introduced in 1995, and the first cohort has produced very promising results. The system for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils work has been reviewed, and is now more effective.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

209. Religious education is not being taught in line with statutory requirements in the Sixth Form so no statement can be made about the standards of attainment for this group of students. In Key Stage 4 there are no examination groups so no comment can be made about the standards of attainment at the end of this key stage. Of the work examined and work seen in the classroom, the standards of attainment are below the standards outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This is mainly because there is a minimal amount of time allocated to the teaching of religious education at this key stage and so the objectives outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus cannot be achieved. The pupils have some knowledge of Christianity and other world religions drawn from their work in Key Stage 3 but they do not have a developed knowledge and understanding of, for example, contemporary religious behaviour and ultimate questions or of the other learning outcomes indicated in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
210. The standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with the standards outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The pupils have adequate knowledge and understanding of Christianity and several other religions represented in Great Britain. They can understand and use specialist religious language in a meaningful way and they are familiar with a good number of religious concepts that are common to religions in general. They clearly understand how religion can have an effect on human experience and they can see how religion is worked out in such things as worship, belonging, and belief and behaviour. The pupils can reflect on what might be learnt from religion in general, such as in moral and social issues, but their development is less marked in being able to relate what they are studying to their own personal lives and experiences. The pupils can work singly and collaboratively and they have good skills in being able to use holy books. Their skills in extended writing could be stronger.
211. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory as the teachers are aware of their needs and give help accordingly but nevertheless more structured support would be of additional benefit to them. There is some in-class support for some of these pupils. Some differentiated work helps both the lower and higher attaining pupils but more is needed to ensure that all are working at their best capacity. Additional extension work for the more able should be a priority. The attainment of boys and girls is generally about the same. The progress of the very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory as the teachers are aware of who they are and support them when necessary.
212. Across the key stages, the attitude and behaviour of pupils is satisfactory or good in about 80 percent of the lessons and unsatisfactory in the rest. In the classes where the attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory, a minority spoil it for the rest by failing to concentrate or adequately apply themselves to the work. This often unsettles the rest of the class and it begins to affect their own progress and learning. Strategies need to be adopted and steps taken to curb this disruption. Where the response is satisfactory or good, the pupils show an interest in their work, concentrate well and apply themselves purposefully to the tasks in hand. Their work is well presented and they participate willingly in written work and question and answer sessions. They show a willingness to express opinions but generally all pupils need to be encouraged more to give specifically personal responses to specifically religious issues and to present this in written as well as verbal work.
213. The teaching in both key stages is satisfactory in about 60 percent of the lessons and good in the rest. All lessons are well prepared and the objectives are clear, though at times the objectives need to be clearer for the pupils themselves so that some uncertainty and over reliance on the teacher in the lessons is reduced. This would be preferable in the form of a written lesson plan for each pupil or at least clear indication on the board at the beginning of each lesson. This would enable the majority who want to work to know precisely what to do and to know what the lesson outcomes are meant to be, even if others are being disruptive. The lessons are well balanced in terms of the two main learning objectives of the Locally Agreed Syllabus though a wider range of objectives drawn from the Locally Agreed Syllabus and included in the lesson plans, such as concepts, skills and attitudes, would widen the pupils learning and experience. More emphasis on drawing out the wider religious principles involved in what they are studying and showing how these principles might have relevance to their own

lives and experiences would engage the pupils more and further develop their spiritual awareness. The teachers use a wide and imaginative range of strategies and methodologies to put across the subject matter and the pupils respond positively to this. A wider range of individual work and differentiated material and extension work would enable the keen and able pupils to progress and sustain their concentration in line with their abilities and interests, and not be kept back when others are slower or less motivated. Control in the classroom at times needs to be firmer and strategies need to be in place to deal with pupils who do not finish the work indicated in their lesson plans. Homework is set and there is an assessment policy. The expectations in the lessons are generally appropriate though more intellectual rigour and a faster pace would enable more learning to be done in the limited time available. Relationships in the lessons are positive and friendly and there is good expertise in the subject matter.

214. The department is well managed. There has been distinct progress on the departmental issues raised in the last OFSTED inspection. There has been no progress on the issue of time for religious education at Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form and as such statutory requirements are still not being met at both key stages. The Locally Agreed Syllabus is being implemented at Key Stage 3. The department's handbook needs to be more detailed and to more explicitly reflect not only the two attainment targets and the content of the syllabus but also the concepts, skills and attitudes indicated in it. The use of information and communication technology is restricted by the lack of appropriate software. The accommodation is satisfactory and resources are improving. The department significantly contributes to the standards of literacy in the school with its introduction and explanation of new words and phrases. The department also makes a contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision of the school but this is limited by the lack of overall statutory provision for the subject. The Head of Department teaches a pupil religious education GCSE during her lunch breaks. The religious education rooms are attractively and appropriately decorated.