

INSPECTION REPORT

STANCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Stoke Sub Hamdon

Taunton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number:123889

Headteacher: Mr G. Ottery

Reporting inspector: Mr D. Cox
10297

Dates of inspection: 10th – 14th January 2000

Inspection number: 186678

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of students: 11-16 but includes provision for under fives
Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Stanchester Community School
Stoke Sub Hamdon
Somerset

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs G. Clark

Date of previous inspection: 15th – 19th January 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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David Cox	Registered inspector	Design and technology	What sort of school is it?
			How high are standards?
			How well students taught?
			How well is the school led and managed
Jo Illingworth	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its students?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Robert Castle	Team inspector	Geography	
Ged Gast	Team inspector	Art	
		Information technology	
Bernard Jones	Team inspector	Physical education	
Ian Kirby	Team inspector	Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
Richard Wilkins	Team inspector	Religious education	
Marilyn Nathan	Team inspector	History	
Michael Owen	Team inspector	English	
Brian Downes	Team inspector	French and German	
Ray Woodhouse	Team inspector	Science	
Cheryl Jackson	Team inspector	Special educational needs, equal opportunities	
Tom Richardson	Team inspector	Under fives	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stanchester Community School is a mixed comprehensive school for students in the 11-16 age range with 788 students on roll. The school is smaller than most other secondary schools and serves a large rural community of approximately 40 square miles in South Somerset. The school has an attached nursery school, which is an integral part of the main school.

The school has very few students from ethnic minorities; it is the catchment school for six traveller students. In the past eight years there has been a balanced distribution on entry of pupils of differing attainments. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is 9.2 per cent is below the national average. There are 159 students on the register of special education needs, this is 20 per cent of the school population and is above the national average. There are 103 students on stages 3-5 of the Code of Practice and 28 students with Statements of Special Educational Need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful school that is heavily over-subscribed. Leadership inspires students and staff to do well and to achieve high standards. The good standard of teaching has a positive impact on students' learning. The school is well organised and managed, and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Most students achieve high standards of attainment at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Good, enthusiastic teaching which motivates students and stimulates learning, is a key feature of the majority of lessons.
- Students respond well to the good teaching, and relationships in the school are very good.
- There are very good systems in place for monitoring the work of the school and for the establishment of targets for improvement.
- There is very good leadership provided by the headteacher and staff in key positions.
- There is a very good nursery school attached to the school.
- There are well-established, secure and effective links with the Area Community Education and with business.
- The school has exemplary good practice regarding the inclusion of travellers, students with physical disabilities and all students identified as having special educational needs.

What could be improved

- The provision for information technology across the school.
- The provision for religious education for all students.
- The annual reports to parents for some subjects do not contain sufficient information on what students can and cannot do in all subjects.
- The information that is provided in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The standards that students obtain have improved significantly since the last inspection in January 1996. Improvements in teaching have ensured that standards have risen in each key stage and are now consistently above the national average. The school has responded positively to the key issues identified; the monitoring of teaching that was already good has improved and there are now good systems for assessing and recording students' achievement. The school still does not provide adequate time for religious education at Key Stage 4 or provide a daily act of collective worship.

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	B	B	B	B
A-levels/AS-levels	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the 1999 GCSE examinations, students' results were above the national average in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. Results are now consistently above the national average. Results at GCSE grades A*-C were far above the national average in music; well above the national average in English, science, food technology, graphical products and German; above the national average in mathematics, art and history; in line with the national average in French but below the national average in English literature, textiles, geography and resistant materials. Students' best overall results, compared to their achievements in other subjects, were in drama and music and the weakest results were in textiles and English literature. GCSE results have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now consistently above the national average. The school is justly proud of all students in 1999 obtaining five or more passes at GCSE grades A*-G. Using performance data, the school sets challenging targets for the proportion of students obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-C and A*-G and through considerable effort achieves these targets.

The standards students achieve at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age in English, mathematics and science. In work seen in other subjects, the standards achieved are well above the level expected in German; above the level expected in art, design and technology, history, music, at the level expected in geography, information technology, French, physical education and well below the level indicated in the Locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education.

Students achieve well at both key stages, compared with their attainments on entry. The school's inclusive policy towards students with special educational needs enables these students to achieve well. The school has exemplary good practice regarding the inclusion of travellers and students with physical disabilities and these students achieve well at the school. Students who are gifted and talented also make good progress and achieve well.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students have good attitudes overall to learning that help them achieve high standards. Most have very good attitudes although there are a few students that are inattentive in lessons and some older boys that are disaffected.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Students' behave well and the incidence of exclusion is well below the national average.
Personal development and relationships	Students' personal development is very good and they are provided with many opportunities to take responsibility.
Attendance	Students' attendance is good, being above average. Students enjoy attending the school and they speak highly of their teachers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Number of lessons seen = 150	Good	Good	N/A

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

The quality of teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and in the nursery it is very good. At Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in 91 per cent of lessons seen; good or better in 65 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 20 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching is less than satisfactory in 9 per cent of lessons and it was only poor in one lesson. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics and science. The teaching of art is very good. The quality of teaching in some religious education lessons and some French lessons is unsatisfactory.

At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons seen; good or better in 63 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 21 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching is less than satisfactory in 2 per cent of lesson and never poor. The quality of teaching is good in science, English and mathematics. The quality of teaching in some religious education lessons is unsatisfactory.

In many subjects, teachers use lists of key words, and their definitions, in order to increase students' literacy and understanding. Teachers reinforce numeracy skills well in lessons but the teaching of numeracy skills is not co-ordinated across subjects.

The good teaching has a positive impact on students' learning. Teachers have good levels of expertise that underpin their authority in the classroom. Work and the pace of the lessons are carefully matched to the needs of all students. Students understand well what is expected, how to do the task, and how to move forward to a higher level. Teachers know their students very well and relationships are very good and this creates a positive learning environment. Inconsistent use is made of information technology to enhance and enrich the curriculum provided. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers' expectations are low and the work they set students insufficiently challenging.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a good curriculum that is enriched by good extra-curricular provision. At Key Stage 4, insufficient time is provided to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The use of information technology is not consistent across the curriculum.
Provision for students with special educational needs	The school operates an inclusive policy towards special educational needs. The school has exemplary good practice regarding the inclusion of travellers, students with physical disabilities. The curriculum is very well organised to meet the needs of these students.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	N/A
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good overall provision. Students' moral, social and cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory.

Partnership with parents	The school works well in partnership with parents.
How well the school cares for its students	Standards of care are high. This is a caring school where staff know the students well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is fully committed to raising standards in the school. He is very well supported by other members of the school management team. There are weaknesses in the co-ordination of information technology and in the leadership of religious education.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has a very good working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and supports the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is a particularly strength of the school. There are very good systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance of subjects and individual teachers. There are well-defined procedures for seeking best value throughout the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of the resources that are available. The school has adequate accommodation, resources for learning and staffing.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high standards that the school achieves. • The good attendance rate. • The good attitudes of the students. • The extra-curricular provision. • The strong leadership provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaknesses in information technology. • High attainers' numeracy skills are not always extended in year 7.

The inspection team agrees with the very positive views of the parents. The school does achieve high standards and most students achieve well. The attendance rate is above average and students show good attitudes towards their education. The school does have very good leadership.

The inspectors also agree with parents' concerns regarding information technology, students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to use computers.

Numeracy skills are generally taught well but the school has yet to co-ordinate numeracy across the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14, the proportions of students reaching Level 5 and above were above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The proportions of students reaching Level 6 and above were above the national average in mathematics and science and in line with the national average in English. The average National Curriculum points score was above the national average in English, mathematics and science when compared to all schools. In comparison with schools with students from similar backgrounds, students' average National Curriculum points score was well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Results have varied in all three subjects over the last three years.
2. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, the proportion of students obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-C was above the national average. Girls' results were better than boys' but the gap between their results is less marked than the difference nationally. This is because the school has successfully introduced a number of schemes that have raised boys' achievement. The proportion of students obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-G was well above the national average as was the proportion of students obtaining one or more passes. The total GCSE points score per student was above the national average when compared with all schools and with similar schools. Based on figures for the last six years, the average total GCSE/GNVQ point score per student showed a rising trend, broadly in line with the national trend.
3. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, results at A*-C were far above the national average in music; well above the national average in English, science, food technology, graphical products and German; above the national average in mathematics, art and history; in line with the national average in French; below the national average in English literature, textiles, geography and resistant materials. Results were well above the national average in short course Information Technology.
4. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, results at A*-G were well above the national average in French and German, above the national average in mathematics, science and art; in line with the national average in all other subjects with the exception of textiles where they were well below. Results were in line with the national average in short course information technology.
5. Students' best overall results, compared to their achievements in other subjects, were in drama and music and the weakest results were in textiles and English literature.
6. GCSE results have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now consistently above the national average at grades A*-C. The school is justly proud of all students in 1999 obtaining five or more passes at GCSE grades A*-G. Using performance data, the school sets challenging targets for the proportion of students obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-C and A*-G and through considerable effort achieves these targets.
7. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 and 4 at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally.
8. In work seen during the inspection in English, the standards achieved by students at the end of both key stages at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. By the age of 14 reading skills are good and students read with understanding but speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped. By the age of 16 speaking and listening remain weaknesses, with only a minority of students able to sustain a reasoned discussion or present their ideas orally in more than a sentence or two. Much reading is dominated by examination demands and wider reading is less evident. The writing of middle to lower attaining students tends to be uneven and sometimes incomplete. Boys' writing is often untidy and careless. But most students get their meaning across well, even if writing lacks sophistication.
9. Students generally have good literacy skills. Students' reading skills enable them to access a wide range of written material in all their subjects. Students become familiar with specialist subject vocabulary, which is often helpfully displayed by teachers on classroom walls. Good research skills support work in subjects such as history, where, for example, students could write a good imaginative description of life in Roman Pompeii. At Key Stage 4 higher attaining students undertake a thorough analysis of what happened in

Northern Ireland on “Bloody Sunday” and then write up their opinion. In geography, at Key Stage 4, students write about environmental issues with authority. Good note taking improves attainment in art. Students, when provided with the opportunities to do so, make good use of information technology to improve the content and presentation of their writing. Spelling, punctuation and presentation is good, though middle to lower attaining boys in particular tend to be less careful about these basic skills.

10. In work seen during the inspection in mathematics, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Students develop strategies for solving problems and conducting investigations through planned exercises included in the revised scheme of work. Students use and apply mathematics, extend a concept and articulate their thinking through set tasks. Students’ numerical skills are good and the use of the calculator is discouraged where mental skills can be applied. Students’ work with the open-ended task requirements for GCSE is good. Students continue to develop a good understanding of shape, space and measure.
11. The standard of numeracy is good. Applications and aspects of numeracy across the curriculum focus mainly on the use of terms and correct use of vocabulary, reading scales, the use of measuring techniques, graphs and interpreting information mathematically. The calculator is used well at appropriate times, without the reliance on it for straightforward calculations, which is positively discouraged. Mental and estimating skills are encouraged across the curriculum. In geography, effective use was made of graphs, such as pie charts to represent data collected from a recent field work trip. However, currently numeracy is not promoted well about the school. There are few occasions where number can be observed or reinforced through posters, displays or promotions other than within the mathematics department. The school is committed to improving standards further with a draft numeracy policy and a co-ordinated cross-curricular approach planned for the start of September.
12. In work seen during the inspection in science, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. The high standard of attainment in national tests is reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Across the subject, students approach practical investigations with confidence. They enjoy this aspect of their work, and show high levels of skill in planning the tests and in recording their observations. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. In Key Stage 4, a smaller proportion of lessons includes practical work for the students, but students in general continue to work at a high level of attainment.
13. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are above the level expected in art, design and technology, geography and history; at the level expected in all others subjects with the exception of religious education where standards are below those indicated in the Agreed Syllabus.
14. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are well above the level expected in German; above the level expected in art, design and technology, history, music, at the level expected in geography, information technology, French, physical education and well below the level indicated in the Locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education.
15. Students achieve well at the school. The majority of students enter the school with levels of ability at the level expected and by the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 most students have made good progress and are achieving above the level expected. Students achieve particularly well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This pattern of good achievement continues into Key Stage 4. The school’s inclusive policy towards students with special educational needs enables these students to achieve well. The school has exemplary good practice regarding the inclusion of travellers and students with physical disabilities and these students achieve well at the school. The school’s programme of support for the more able is well organised and is based on excellent, departmental identification of a student’s potential for high attainment. There are rigorous criteria for identifying the more able, very able and those with particular talents. Students who are gifted and talented also make good progress and achieve well with a number of students gaining higher grades at GCSE from Year 7 upwards.
16. The children that enter the nursery represent the full cross section of society and have attainment that is average overall. By the time they move on to primary school at the age of five, many of the children have attainment that is higher than expected for their age.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Students' attitudes to school are good, and have a positive impact on standards of achievement across the school. Students come to school expecting to learn and to make good progress. They are interested in their work, especially when lessons are purposeful and the quality of teaching is good. Their level of involvement in the general life of the school is good. Students enjoy serving as representatives on the Year and School Councils, and many take part in extra-curricular activities, such as the Leger project at Yeovil Art Gallery. Most are happy at school and are glad that they came to Stanchester, believing that it is a good school that will give them a good education. They are very loyal to the school and take great pride in its reputation. The quality of students' attitudes varies according to their age. Younger students show more interest and enthusiasm than their older colleagues. Attitudes are least positive in Year 11, where there is a small group of boys who have low aspirations and are generally disaffected with school life.
18. The quality of behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. This is reflected in the rate of exclusion, which is well below the national average. There were no permanent exclusions in the last academic year, and have been none to date in the current year. Characteristically, students are courteous, trustworthy, and behave well in class. They are polite to teachers, and when set tasks that challenge their abilities, work quietly without distracting one another. They show respect for the school's and other people's property. For example, in information technology lessons they use computers with care. There is no evidence of graffiti or vandalism. Occasionally there are problems with the behaviour of disaffected boys in Year 11. This was observed in one lesson during the inspection, when a student became openly defiant of the teacher's authority. In general, students behave well out of class. Most act in an orderly fashion during the lunch hour, and when moving around the site between lessons. The majority respect the school's code of conduct, even though some girls break the rules on uniform and make-up. On occasions, students are unduly noisy, for example while queuing to enter classrooms. Some are boisterous but aggressive behaviour is rare. Students say that although instances of bullying occur, they are uncommon and are not a prevalent feature of life in school.
19. The quality of relationships and personal development is very good. Students relate well to adults in the school and particularly those from the community. They trust their teachers and feel comfortable about turning to them for support and guidance. Students work well together in lessons in pairs and groups, and have very good respect for other people's feelings. They show great understanding and consideration for the needs of disabled members of the class, and give them sympathetic support. This is a major strength that makes an important contribution to integration of these students into the life of the school.
20. Students of all ages respond very positively to opportunities to exercise responsibility outside the classroom. They take an active part in the running of the school via offices such as Senior Student, Student Mediator, Student Receptionist and representative to the School Council. They exercise their initiative and show maturity when carrying out these duties. Their personal development is enhanced and the school as a whole benefits from their work. The part, which Student Mediators play in combating bullying, is greatly valued by fellow students, parents and members of staff. Good personal development is less evident in the classroom. Overall, students make satisfactory progress as independent learners, but many lack the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning.
21. Students' attendance has improved since the last inspection, and is above the national average. The rate of attendance now exceeds the 90 per cent benchmark in all year groups. The incidence of unauthorised absence is low and punctuality is good.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and in the nursery it is very good. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. This improvement in teaching has brought about improved standards at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Lively, enthusiastic teaching, which motivates students and stimulates learning, is a key feature of the majority of lessons.
23. At Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in 91 per cent of lessons seen; good or better in 65 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 20 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching is less than satisfactory in 9 per cent of lessons and it is rarely poor. The good teaching at Key Stage 3 is one reason for students' learning being good and the good progress that they make. The quality of teaching is very good in art; good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, history, music

and satisfactory in modern languages, physical education, information technology and religious education. In modern languages the quality of teaching is satisfactory but varies from very good through to poor. In religious education the quality of teaching is satisfactory but varies from good to unsatisfactory.

24. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons seen; good or better in 63 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 21 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching is less than satisfactory in only 2 per cent of lessons and never poor. The quality of teaching is good in science, English, mathematics, art, design and technology, history and music and satisfactory in geography, information technology, modern languages, physical education and religious education. The good teaching at Key Stage 4 is one reason for students' learning being good and the good progress that they make.
25. Teachers have good levels of expertise that underpin their authority in the classroom. This was evident in a Year 10 English lesson where a newspaper report of the Birmingham bombing was used effectively to help students to identify the impact of imagery and to actively engage students in a debate in which most participated. In a Year 7 food technology lesson, the teacher demonstrated clearly her very good knowledge of the topic and explained the need for food labelling which enabled all students to make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of why food needs to be labelled and the systems used. Work and the pace of the lessons is carefully matched to the needs of the students, and consistently applied literacy strategies and structures, such as a range of writing frames, as seen in a Year 9 history lesson, help students at all levels of attainment make good progress in improving their writing. In many subjects, teachers use lists of key words, and their definitions, in order to increase students' literacy and understanding. Teachers reinforce numeracy skills well in lessons but the teaching of numeracy skills is not co-ordinated across subjects.
26. Thorough lesson planning clearly targets what is to be learnt in the lesson, which is shared effectively with students at the beginning of each lesson. Students understand well what is expected, how to do the task, and how to move forward to a higher level in the subject. Students consistently demonstrate good attitudes to their work and respond positively to the good teaching. They concentrate well on the tasks, though occasionally a class will lose concentration between tasks. They respond best to the most challenging or imaginative activities. This was evident in a Year 11 science lesson when students were highly motivated by the practical work. Teachers frequently include a lesson summary in order to consolidate the work covered during the lesson. This means that students normally work well to the end of each lesson and often leave the classroom discussing their work.
27. Teachers know their students very well and relationships are very good and this creates a positive learning environment. Teachers make a point of displaying students' work and this is a strong feature of the school and this also enriches the classroom environment. Students show respect for other students' work and often find inspiration through these displays. Expectations are high, with good effect on learning and progress enabling students at all levels of attainment including those with special educational needs, to achieve well through the key stages. Firm class control, good lesson management and short interesting activities harness the students' energies and keeps students, who can be easily distracted, well on task. Occasionally however, in less good lessons, tasks are less well chosen and limit opportunity.
28. Teachers make effective use of question and answer to recap and reinforce students' knowledge and understanding and also as an effective way to involve all students in the lesson. These skills are also used to informally assess students' knowledge and understanding and are effectively integrated with a well-developed system for the formative assessment of students' attainment and learning. Teachers also make good use of target setting in order to motivate students. In a Year 10 music lesson, this enabled all the students, in a short period of time, to rehearse, arrange, and perform an ensemble or improvised piece of music, to a higher level than they had initially anticipated. Homework is carefully chosen to enable the students to develop their knowledge or undertake research.
29. Good liaison between the teacher and learning support staff contributes to the good progress at both key stages by students with special educational needs, and good professional relationships between the teacher and the students help to promote the good learning, which is a feature of the school. Extension activities, such as regular lunch time sessions for the higher attainers help these students achieve their potential. A wide range of strategies, resources, materials and activities are used effectively to stimulate students and sustain their interest. Whilst teachers make reference to students' individual education plans they do not always relate the specific needs of these students to the topic or lesson.

30. Inconsistent use is made of information technology to enhance and enrich the curriculum provided. Teachers do not always make effective use of information technology to develop students' research skills. However, in music, information technology is used very well to motivate students and to widen the cultural experiences of students.
31. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers' expectations are low and the work they set students insufficiently challenging. Year 9 students, for example, in a religious education lesson, studied marriage customs in different religions. The work was undemanding, being essentially knowledge based, with the outcomes being simple descriptive statements on a worksheet. In a Year 9 French lesson, students were not stretched, and as a result, lost interest, and concentration. Much of their conversation was unrelated to the work, and noise levels became unacceptably high, impeding learning and progress. At the end of the lesson, students had gained a limited factual knowledge.

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

32. The Curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets statutory requirements except in the provision of a daily act of collective worship which does not comply with statutory requirements, and the provision for religious education at Key Stage 4, where an inadequate allocation of time does not allow the full delivery of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum including religious education and personal and social education, taught via the personal development programme. The length of the teaching week at 25 hours is in-line with the model for comprehensive schools nationally at Key Stage 3 and for the DfEE recommended time at Key Stage 4. With the exception of religious education at Key Stage 4, the allocation of time to subjects is appropriate. At Key Stage 4, there is a core curriculum followed by all students with four further options, these also allow students to select an arts, humanities, design and technology and modern foreign language. Sociology and drama are also available as a GCSE option. A small group of students are disapplied from religious education. The school has on site a nursery that is used to positively enhance the 11 to 16 curriculum. All students in Year 10 spend a day in the nursery as part of their personal development programme.
33. The school operates an inclusive policy towards special educational needs. The curriculum is very well organised to meet the needs of students with special educational needs. The school provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities to meet the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of these students. For students with Statements of Special Educational Need, the provision in their statements is implemented. Only when students with cerebral palsy are withdrawn for necessary physiotherapy is there an impact on curriculum entitlement, but this is closely monitored and there is a rotation of affected curriculum areas. The school has exemplary good practice regarding the inclusion of travellers, students with physical disabilities and all students identified as having special educational needs.
34. The school has an effective literacy strategy, which enables students to gain full access to a wide range of experiences in all their subjects. This is having a positive impact on students' standards of literacy. Numeracy is not promoted as well about the school although this is not having a significant impact on students' standards. There are few occasions where number can be observed or reinforced through posters, displays or promotions other than within the mathematics department.
35. The school makes available a wide range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the curricular provision. In addition to music, drama and sport, many departments offer curricular clubs, activities and educational visits. Around 45 per cent of the school's student population take an active part in extra-curricular sport, supervised by a total of 14 staff.
36. The school provides very good equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum for students. This leads to all students benefiting from the available opportunities that are provided, according to their needs.
37. A well-planned personal development programme is provided for students throughout the school and this is effective in preparing them for adult life. Systems are in place to monitor the delivery and success of this programme and experienced and enthusiastic staff teaches it. The programme includes health education, sex education, bullying and issues of drug misuse, which are comprehensively covered. The scheme builds progressively throughout a student's school life.
38. The provision for careers education and guidance is good. The programme in Key Stage 4 includes the

opportunity for all students to have two weeks work experience in Year 10. All work experience is well monitored, with careful preparation and follow-up during and after the placement by members of the teaching staff.

39. The school is a community school with well-established, secure and effective links with the Area Community Education. Students' intellectual and personal development is enhanced by the school's involvement with the community. The local community is also well served, when on average 500-600 people take advantage of the thriving, varied selection of both daytime and evening sports and non-sports provision. There are good links with business that support and enhance the curriculum.
40. The school has very good relationships with partner institutions. The induction programme for Year 7 students is very successful. There is a series of meetings and events that enable Year 6 students to become familiar with Stanchester and the transfer of information between schools is very good. The school is a member of a group of secondary schools that meet on a regular basis, sharing good practice and seeking to improve the education for their students.
41. The school makes good overall provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school makes satisfactory provision for the spiritual development of students. It has not, however adequately addressed a key issue of the previous inspection report, concerning its statutory responsibility to provide a daily act of collective worship for all students. Students attend assemblies on three days a week, but no provision is made for their spiritual development on the other days, when they meet in their tutor groups.
42. The school takes the conduct of assemblies seriously, and plans them more effectively than at the last inspection. Assemblies have good moral and social content, and make a very positive contribution to the school's values. They are, however, lacking in the key characteristics of worship, and in Christian or religious content. There are some opportunities for reflection, but they are too brief to be meaningful. Opportunities are missed to enrich students' experience through the use of prayer, music, poetry, prose, art and symbolism, from Christian and other religious traditions.
43. Since the previous inspection, however, the school has developed a coherent policy, and effective strategies, for promoting students' spiritual development in a wide range of subjects in the classroom. For example, it is a strength of art, where students use the insights gained into the values and beliefs of great artists to inform their own artistic development. In science, students develop a sense of wonder at the natural world through the study of space and the cosmos, and explore scientific and religious insights into issues of creation. In English they reflect on spiritual values in poetry and literary texts, while in history they are challenged by spiritual concepts underpinning medieval culture.
44. The school makes good provision for the moral development of students. It has clear values, which inform its everyday life, and enjoy strong parental support. Students are actively involved in drawing up the rules governing their conduct, and feel ownership of them. Through the School Council, they have, for example, framed the codes of conduct for the refectory, and home to school transport. Students know right from wrong, and behave well. They enjoy very good relationships with each other, and with their teachers, who provide good role models. Students give practical expression to the values of caring in regular fund raising for charity.
45. Students are challenged by moral issues in the personal development programme, and in a range of other subjects. For example, in English, they explore the ethics of abortion and murder, and in history issues of slavery, anti-Semitism, and the Holocaust. Year 9 project work in art on conflict raises questions of Human Rights, and the impact of war on human lives. Students explore Third World issues in geography, and a wide range of moral questions in religious education, from relationships to treatment of the disadvantaged.
46. The school also makes good provision for the social development of students. Students' achievements are publicly recognised, and their self-esteem enhanced, through the system of merits and awards, and praise in assemblies. They are given good opportunities to learn to take responsibility and develop leadership skills, through the Year and School Councils, and the positions of Head Boy and Girl. They are able to contribute to the daily life of the school through, for example, acting as receptionists in Year 9, or Bus Prefects in Year 11. The school encourages service to the wider community, with, for example, Year 8 students helping to organise parties for senior citizens, and all Year 10 students undertake planned opportunities in the nursery as part of the personal development programme. Students' social skills are also developed through participation in residential activities both in this country and abroad, and through

collaborative working as an integral part of lessons.

47. Students meet important social issues in the personal development programme, and in other subject areas. In English, for example, they consider the changing roles of men and women in contemporary society. In geography, they explore the potential tensions between the needs for employment and income in deprived areas, and environmental considerations. In religious education they explore different patterns of marriage.
48. The school makes good provision for the cultural development of students outside the classroom, and particularly through the creative and expressive arts. Students enjoy good opportunities to develop musical skills through the woodwind and brass ensembles, swing band, string quartet and orchestra, and to develop acting skills in the drama Studio. Regular school dramatic and musical productions provide good opportunities for performing for an audience. Art offers opportunities for mural painting and pottery.
49. Students' understanding of other European cultures is enhanced through annual visits to France, and exchanges with Germany. The school has done much since the previous inspection to raise students' awareness of minority ethnic cultures, and to successfully integrate students from them into its community. It has, for example, established close links with the GLADE multicultural centre in Yeovil, reviewed the contents of the library stock, and strengthened the anti-racism content of the personal development programme.
50. Students are regularly exposed to cultures other than the Western European in lessons, for example, through the use of multicultural poems in English. Art and music also draw on work from a wide range of cultural traditions and styles, while religious education introduces students to different faith communities. Students now have a sounder understanding of the importance of the contribution of cultures other than the Western European to the development of present day civilisation, and of the cultural diversity and richness of contemporary British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

51. Standards of care are high, and the school makes very good provision for safeguarding the health and welfare of its students. Arrangements for child protection meet all legal requirements. There is a good formal policy, which is clearly set out in the Staff Handbook, and members of staff know the correct procedures to follow, should an issue of child protection arise. The school also has good policies and, for the most part good practices, which promote the health and safety of students, employees and visitors to the site. It makes effective arrangements for regular checks of equipment and carries risk out assessments of the premises. The only significant weaknesses in its provision are the lack of adequate space for school buses to manoeuvre on site in safety, and the absence of risk assessment in physical education.
52. The school is highly conscious of the importance of good attendance to attainment and progress. It has therefore established very good procedures for ensuring that students attend school regularly and punctually and are not absent without good cause. Registers are completed in accordance with legal requirements. They are well maintained and accurate, and are therefore reliable tools for monitoring the attendance of individuals and year groups. Form tutors and heads of year investigate promptly any instances of suspected truancy or unexplained absence and take action to get the student back into school. There is close co-operation between the school's pastoral staff and the education social worker.
53. Arrangements for preventing internal truancy are very good, with subject teachers calling class registers at the beginning of every lesson. The high quality of the school's procedures is reflected in students' attendance rates, which have improved significantly since the last inspection. Nevertheless, there is no sense of complacency, and the school is still seeking to improve its provision. For example, it is currently introducing a scheme whereby members of the governing body will telephone the families of students who are absent without explanation.
54. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school sets high standards and has put in place very good procedures to secure its objectives. Their success is reflected in the rate of exclusion, which is well below the national average. A major strength of the school's provision is the high level of involvement and approval that it has secured from both parents and students. For example, the School Council drew up the Stanchester Students' Code of Conduct, which sets out the school's principles and expectations regarding behaviour. Copies of the Code are prominently displayed

in classrooms, making all students aware of what is required of them. The school's system of rewards effectively promotes good work and behaviour by giving due recognition to students' achievement. There is an appropriate scale of sanctions and clearly defined procedures for dealing with breaches of discipline. Internal exclusion is used very effectively and, by keeping down the incidence of external exclusion, helps to keep students in school and continuing to learn. The school also uses positive measures to raise standards. All students are given opportunities to exercise responsibility, and those whose conduct gives cause for concern are given good support and guidance. This is the case with a group of underachieving boys in Year 11, who are receiving intensive mentoring from members of staff in an effort to improve their attitudes and behaviour.

55. The school has a very good anti-bullying policy. This is well supported by preventative work in personal development lessons and good practical measures to deal with actual incidents. For example, students can use a "bully box" to report cases of bullying and victims can seek help from specially trained Student Mediators. The students themselves think that the system works well, and say that although bullying occurs the school deals with it effectively.
56. The quality of support and guidance is very good, and is soundly based on information obtained from assessment and monitoring of students' progress. All teachers apply the school's systems consistently on support and guidance which students support fully. Much of the monitoring is carried out informally, particularly where personal development is concerned. Subject teachers, form tutors and heads of year know students well as individuals and understand their strengths and weaknesses. They are therefore well placed to oversee and support their progress. The school's formal procedures are both comprehensive and effective. All subjects record and monitor students' academic progress and behaviour. Consequently teachers know which students are doing well, and take steps to ensure that their achievements are acknowledged and encouraged by praise and rewards. Members of staff are also aware of those who are experiencing problems, and are able to give them the right guidance. There are good effective links between academic monitoring and the pastoral system. The school has well established procedures through which the departments pass on information to form tutors and heads of year.
57. The quality of support and guidance is enhanced by the pastoral structure, which is based on the principle of heads of year who stay with the same student group from Year 7 to Year 11. Heads of year therefore acquire extensive knowledge of students and are able build up good relations with them. Another strength is the arrangements that the school makes for individual target setting and individual tutorials. The latter enable students to discuss the content of their targets, and their progress towards meeting them, in one-to-one interviews with their form tutors. In general, members of staff are able to give guidance that meets students' needs. However, when there are exceptional difficulties the school will call in the appropriate outside agency to provide additional advice and support.
58. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. The school's assessment policy sets out the aims and principles for assessing, recording and reporting students' attainment. There is also a detailed and well co-ordinated framework of whole school assessment, monitoring and reporting procedures. Together, they provide clear prescriptions to support good assessment practice in departments. There are good assessment procedures in place in all departments and they involve students in assessing their own work and setting targets to help them to improve the standard of their work. Marking is good and guided by a well-formed policy. For example in English, teachers relate their assessments to National Curriculum levels and they give good guidance to students on how they may improve their work. Annual reports to parents meet statutory requirements. Reports focus on the attitudes of students and the effort they have made but in some subjects provide insufficient detail on what a student can and cannot do. All students receive a National Record of Achievement at the end of Year 11 which they compile using information technology.
59. The school uses a wide range of assessment information very well to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum throughout the school, in order to raise standards and inform curriculum planning. Students are tested on entry to the school, using nationally recognised tests. This information is modified and added to as students move through the school, by using, for example, Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test results and teachers' assessments. The information is used to establish a baseline against which individual, subject and school performance can be judged. Heads of department carry out formal reviews of performance in external examinations, which are well conducted and supported by an analysis of subject results. This data is used effectively to produce plans and to raise standards. The school uses baseline information to raise standards by establishing targets for examination performance in each subject

and for the whole school, particularly at Key Stage 4. It is also being used effectively to monitor students' progress through the school, in areas that include students' work, behaviour and personal development. Data gathered about students is also used effectively to identify those who may be underachieving, so that they can receive additional support and guidance.

60. Assessment, recording and reporting all meet statutory requirements for students with special educational needs. There are effective, consistent procedures in place for placing students on the Code of Practice Register. The school well meets the needs of gifted and talented students. It encourages them to reach their full potential by identifying the more able and talented students on a departmental basis. The school has a variety of effective strategies to ensure that all teachers are able to share in providing an appropriate level of subject support needed; and the school draws on a wide range of sources of support for gifted and talented students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Parents who answered the survey of parental views and attended the meeting with the registered inspector expressed a high level of approval and support for the school. They are in the main satisfied with the standards achieved. They have some concerns about standards in information technology and numeracy. Some are unhappy with the work that children are expected to do at home. They are very satisfied with standards of pastoral care and the school's provision for good order and discipline.
62. The information that the school provides for parents has some good features, but there are some unsatisfactory features as well. The main weakness lies in the quality of the annual written reports on students' progress, known as the Annual Review Statements. In some subjects the reports in these Statements are not sufficiently evaluative or diagnostic. They do not give parents a clear picture of what children have learned in the course of the year, know and can do. Suggestions for improvement are bland and in the main relate to attitudes and effort rather than skills and knowledge. The quality of subject reports was criticised by the previous inspection, and whilst there have been improvements, this remains an issue for the school. The school prospectus and the annual report of the governing body fail to meet statutory requirements. For example, neither document includes the necessary statement of the school's policy and curriculum for students with special educational needs.
63. On the positive side, the school produces two very good booklets that set out the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. These give parents useful guidance on how they can support their children and help them with homework. There is also a very good booklet on GCSE Options. Provision for parents' consultation evenings is good, as is the quality of day-to-day information. For example, students' planners are well maintained, providing parents with reliable record of the homework that their children are required to do.
64. In other respects the school has established good links with students' families. For the most part parents make a positive contribution to their children's learning and progress, and in many ways the school makes very good arrangements to foster their interest and support. It has a policy on home/school contracts that it has implemented successfully. Currently all families have signed their contract. The school has also put in place a very good system of family interviews, and has secured an excellent level of participation in it by parents. The level of attendance at parents' consultation evenings is satisfactory, being around 70 per cent on average. Most parents are interested in their children's education. They read and sign the student planners on a regular basis and attend school plays and concerts in large numbers. They give good support to extra-curricular activities, for example through financial contributions for school trips and instrumental music lessons. A few parents have an active role in the life of the school. For example they run the parent teacher association and the second hand uniform shop. Whilst the majority of parents are supportive, the attitude of a small minority impairs the otherwise very positive impact of parental involvement with the school with a small number of parents condoning truancy. The overall impact is therefore good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The quality of leadership and management in the school is very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is fully committed to raising standards in the school. He has established a very clear direction for the work of the school. The school's mission statement, aims and values are central to the

work of the school and all developments and policies are related to these aims and values. There is a strong commitment to very good relationships and equality of opportunity. The headteacher is very well supported by other members of the school management team whose individual skills complement those of their colleagues. The management structure operates very well and enables strengths to be recognised and areas for development and improvement to be identified.

66. The quality of leadership at middle management level is good. Most middle managers have established a clear direction for their subject and monitor the work of the subject effectively. For example, in science, the head of department has established a good team that work well together with a strong emphasis on improving standards of attainment and this is reflected in the GCSE results. There is a strong commitment to improve standards. However, the leadership of religious education has some unsatisfactory features. The monitoring and evaluation of the subject's performance has been ineffective in raising standards.
67. The governing body has a very good working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and supports the school well. The governing body takes an active role in monitoring the work of the school. There is a planned programme of subject reviews and governors work with the school management team in identifying areas for development, setting targets and monitoring the progress made towards these targets. It is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses within subjects. The governing body, however, fails to meet some of its statutory requirements. The school does not comply fully with statutory requirements regarding a daily act of collective worship; religious education at Key Stage 4, where an inadequate allocation of time does not allow the full delivery of the Locally Agreed Syllabus; the school prospectus and the annual report of the governing body do not include the necessary statement of the school's policy and curriculum for students with special educational needs.
68. The monitoring and support of teaching is very good. The school has made excellent progress towards addressing this key issue. There is a comprehensive programme of classroom observations carried out by the headteacher, deputy headteachers and heads of department. Subject performance reviews are regularly carried out and examination results are discussed and action plans drawn up to support subjects. The results of this approach are clear in the improvement in teaching and the significant improvement in GCSE results since the previous inspection.
69. Development planning, at a whole school level and at department level is very good, with carefully identified priorities appropriate to the needs of the school. Priorities are clearly linked to raising standards and improving the educational experiences of the students. The priorities identified have built well upon the previous OFSTED inspection. The work of the school is monitored closely by the school management team and the governors. Systems are in place to compare the school's performance with that of other schools. The school sets challenging targets for both the standard of teaching and the standards which students achieve.
70. Financial planning in the school is very good. The school manages its budget very effectively and has very good procedures in place to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. The current school strategic planning is very good and covers both short and long-term development planning related to available and projected finances. These documents provide a suitable basis to identify many of the priorities for the long-term future of the school. The governing body plays a full and active role in the financial planning and management of the school and there is a good working partnership between the governors and the staff.
71. The school is very rigorous in its approach to attaining the best value for money. The school receives broadly average funding per student and achieves above average standards through good quality teaching. It is constantly reviewing its performance against other schools both locally and nationally. The school provides good value for money.
72. Routine administration of the school's budget is very good. The school makes good use of new technology that enables the school to monitor expenditure against budget. There are well-defined procedures for obtaining quotations and tenders before placing orders. The recommendations of the Auditor's report have all been agreed and are being implemented. The quality of the school administration and routine administration is very good and ensures that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning

73. The school has sufficient teaching and non-teaching staff. The experience and qualifications of teachers

are well matched to the subjects they teach. There is generally sufficient classroom support for those students with special educational needs but this is not always allocated to best effect. Learning support staff work effectively with teachers in supporting students with special educational needs although in information technology effective use is not always made of these staff. Amongst the staff there is a good mixture of new and experienced members of staff. The induction system in place for newly qualified and recently appointed experienced teachers and newly appointed non-teaching members of staff is very effective and well managed, tracked and monitored.

74. A new cycle of monitoring for all members of the school staff via appraisal for teaching and development meetings for non teaching staff is proving very effective in identifying where relevant training is needed. This is helping identify and meet both the needs of the individual and the school. This is having a direct effect on raising standards and helps staff evaluate and improve their practice.
75. The accommodation is adequate, with many good features but some limitations that make it difficult for the curriculum to be taught effectively. The school is situated on a pleasant site that has been well developed in an attempt to provide improved facilities and a learning environment that supports the curriculum and meets the needs of all students. The buildings are generally well-maintained and very good display adds interest to classrooms and corridors, stimulating and supporting learning and enabling achievements to be celebrated. Many specialist rooms, such as those for English, geography and modern foreign languages, provide good space to enable appropriate learning activities to take place. The main hall and refectory are attractive, though acoustics in the hall are not good for drama teaching. In addition, poor acoustics in one science laboratory make it difficult for students to hear the teacher or each other. A sports hall, gym and extensive playing fields provide good opportunities for physical education.
76. However, classrooms for design technology are cramped and restrict learning opportunities. The library space, though well used, is insufficient to develop resource-based learning. An appropriate area for 3-dimensional work in art is not available. Provision for special educational needs limits opportunities, and while wheelchair access is good in many areas, parts of the school are inaccessible. The governors and headteacher have identified future requirements in the light of current pressures and rising student enrolment.
77. The school is adequately resourced for the delivery of the National Curriculum in the majority of curriculum areas to support teaching and learning. The school benefits from community use through the Community Development Group, for example in purchasing a new school mini bus. Aspects of pastoral care are well resourced. There is ample documentation such as Student Planners.
78. With respect to information technology, the number of computers available for use is below the national average and this is inhibiting some students from developing their independent learning. There is an absence of new technology in geography, history, modern foreign languages, design and technology and mathematics. There is a shortage of artifacts to support the teaching of religious education at both key stages and no heavy printing equipment for art and design. The provision of textbooks is good across the school with the exception of religious education and modern foreign languages.
79. The library and resource centre accommodation is small for the size of the school but makes an important contribution to the standard of student learning. Learning resources are good and effective. The book stock, recently reviewed, is of good quality with a ratio of books to students slightly above the national recommended level. Very good use is made of the facilities in the library to support learning by a number of departments during normal lesson time. The library is very well managed and proactive in the support of educational initiatives. Trained student librarians and the assistant librarian make a useful contribution by helping to run the library at break times and lunch times.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and senior management team should:

- (1) Improve the provision for information technology across the school by ensuring all subjects build information technology into their schemes of work and teach the appropriate Programmes of Study (para 30,78,113,121,130,139,147,156 and 157).
- (2) Improve the provision for religious education by providing sufficient time to teach the Agreed

Syllabus at Key Stage 4 and by improving the quality of teaching in some religious education lessons to that of the best practice within the department (para 32,188,190,192 and 194).

- (3) Ensure that the annual written reports inform parents what their children can and cannot do in all subjects (para 58,62,67,98 and 112).
- (4) Provide the necessary statement on the school's policy and curriculum for students with special educational needs in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report (para 62 and 67).

Minor issues

Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching in modern foreign languages (para 31 and 23).

Ensure the governing body meets all statutory requirements, including providing a collective act of daily worship (para 67).

(5) PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	150
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	65

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	20	44	29	5	1	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 students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	788	
Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals	65	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	28	
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	159	

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

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	1999	63	67	130

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	40	48	39
	Girls	53	44	47
	Total	93	92	86
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	71.6 (72.9)	69.7(61.2)	64.7(69.3)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	38.5 (38.7)	47 (35.1)	30.9(32.5)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	53	49
	Girls	37	57	64
	Total	73	110	113
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	68.4 (66.7)	80.9 (59.3)	83.1 (82.1)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	31.6 (39.3)	64.7 (32.2)	37.5(44)
	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	68	48	116

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	33	66	66
	Girls	32	46	46
	Total	65	112	112
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	56 (51.7)	100 (98.6)	100 (100)
	National	46.3 (43.3)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (95.2)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	41.3 (40.2)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	N/A
	National	N/A

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	783
Any other minority ethnic group	4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	17	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	42
Number of students per qualified teacher	18.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	286

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.9
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Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	1513503
Total expenditure	1590551
Expenditure per student	2336
Balance brought forward from previous year	-918
Balance carried forward to next year	36899

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	26.5
Key Stage 4	21.2

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

788

Number of questionnaires returned

101

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	42	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	47	4	3	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	57	18	1	0
The teaching is good.	39	56	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	38	7	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	33	2	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	39	8	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	56	38	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	45	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	49	5	1	10

Other issues raised by parents

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

ENGLISH

80. The overall standards which students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected for students of the same age nationally. Students achieve well in English at both key stages. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 3 at the age of 14, the proportion of students attaining Level 5 and above was above the national average. The proportion of students attaining Level 6 and above was in line with the national average. The average National Curriculum points score attained by students in 1999 was above the national average when compared with all schools and well above average when compared with schools with students from similar backgrounds. Over the last three years, results tend to have been above the national average and although boys do less well than girls, the gap in 1999 was smaller than the gap nationally.
81. In 1999, the proportion of students attaining GCSE grades A*-C was above the national average and in line with the national average for grades A*-G. Results are consistently above the national average, though the percentage of A* and A grades has slipped slightly. Girls achieve higher grades than boys and the gap between boys' and girls' grades has widened in the last two years. Students' results in English are not significantly different from those they achieved in most other subjects. Unlike many schools, the school enters all students for GCSE English Literature. This in part explains why the proportion of A*-C grades in English Literature is below the national average, though it has also declined in the last two years, following changes in the syllabus. Girls' results are better than boys' and both boys and girls perform less well in English Literature than in the other subjects they take, suggesting in part that many give the subject less attention when it comes to the pressure of examinations.
82. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of both key stages at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. By the age of 14, speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped. But reading skills are good and students read with understanding. Higher attaining students read aloud with clarity and expression. Most students recognise different styles, such as the writing used in travel brochures, and they can grasp the main thrust of Shakespearean language. They know about parts of speech and how imagery enlivens writing. Wider reading is encouraged and good use is made by both girls and boys of the library stock. A well-planned library induction course helps to ensure that students have good research skills, though use of the Internet is limited currently. Higher attaining students write stories that show a good understanding of the elements of effective story telling. They can adapt their style to their audience. For example, some very good illustrated children's stories are written, after visiting the nursery and researching into the books that young children enjoy. Middle to lower attaining students have good writing and presentation skills.
83. By the age of 16 speaking and listening remain weaknesses, with a minority of students able to sustain a reasoned discussion or present their ideas orally in more than a sentence or two. Much reading is dominated by examination demands and wider reading is less evident. But a few higher attaining students show a real grasp of literature, and can analyse ways in which different writers deal with similar themes. A good example was a comparison of the world of school presented by Dickens in "Hard Times" and that in Barry Hines' book "A Kestrel for a Knave". Students have a good understanding of how plays may be produced and write well about ways of presenting the characters in a play such as "Hobson's Choice". However, the majority of even higher attaining students do not have the vocabulary or the feel for language to enable them to write with real flair. The writing of middle to lower attaining students tends to be uneven and sometimes incomplete. Boys' writing is often untidy and careless. But most students get their meaning across well, even if writing lacks sophistication.
84. Students respond well to the good teaching they experience in English. They come to lessons ready to settle to work and they behave well, as expected by the teachers and reinforced by effective interaction between teachers and students. They treat each other with respect and work willingly with others, including any students with disabilities. However, they do not show a high level of initiative and are reluctant to take responsibility for their learning, tending to rely overmuch on the teacher.
85. Students' reading skills enable them to access a wide range of written material in all their subjects. Students become familiar with specialist subject vocabulary, which is often helpfully displayed by teachers

on classroom walls. Good research skills support work in subjects such as history, where, for example, students could write a good imaginative description of life in Roman Pompeii. By the age of 16, higher attaining students undertake a thorough analysis of what happened in Northern Ireland on “Bloody Sunday” and then write up their opinion. In geography, students write about environmental issues with authority. Good note taking improves attainment in art. Many students make good use of information technology to improve the content and presentation of their writing. Spelling, punctuation and presentation is good, though middle to lower attaining boys in particular tend to be less careful about these basic skills.

86. Teaching overall is good at both key stages and has a good impact on students’ learning. Students’ learning is good at both key stages. Teachers have good levels of expertise that underpin their authority in the classroom. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and use of appropriate resources, such as a newspaper report of the Birmingham bombing. This was used in a Year 10 lesson to help students to identify the impact of imagery. It was followed by a powerful video clip depicting the hijacking and blowing up of a bus. The teacher was skilfully building up appropriate language skills in preparation for a piece of creative writing. Teachers make sure students know what they should be doing and the standards expected of them. Their good use of assessment information assists in pitching work at an appropriate level and takes good account of the needs of students of different levels of attainment and those with special educational needs. The best lessons keep students actively engaged in learning by using a variety of strategies to create interest and variety. In a very good Year 10 lesson not a minute was wasted. Students answered the register by calling out some detail from a story read in a previous lesson; they were then challenged to identify the characteristics of a good ghost story. By a judicious mixture of whole class question and answer, group and pair work, and by limiting the time available for each activity, the teacher kept up the pace. By the end of the lesson all students had deepened their understanding. A weakness in a few lessons is that the pace is too slow and concentration drifts. This can be because the task set lacks real challenge or because the teacher spends too long inter-acting with a few students instead of facilitating the interaction of all students with each other. Very positive relationships help to motivate students and good classroom management ensures that boys and girls of all attainment levels and those with special educational needs work well together, respecting each others’ contributions. While students are well prepared for end of key stage tests and examinations, there is a need for more emphasis on developing independent life-long learning skills, encouraging students to take greater responsibility for setting themselves challenging targets and planning their own route to achieving them.
87. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, though the potential of information technology is not fully exploited to develop writing skills. Appropriate adjustments have been made to ensure that modules of work appeal to both boys and girls and that there is a balance of language and literature assignments. Good community links have been well used, for example students working with a local garage to produce promotional materials. There is a good system for monitoring the progress of all students and target setting is being used to challenge expectations and focus on areas for improvement.
88. The department benefits from enthusiastic and experienced leadership and a team of highly committed teachers. As a result, teachers willingly look for ways of extending good classroom practice and identifying and tackling areas in need of development. Very good displays in classrooms and corridors help to set standards and support effective learning.
89. Since the last inspection the department has made good progress. Good standards in general have been maintained and issues identified for improvement tackled. A range of procedures for monitoring students’ work at Key Stage 4 has been introduced, along with a number of strategies to ensure that work meets the needs of students of all levels of attainment. Monitoring of teaching through classroom observation now plays an important part in self-evaluation. The department sees itself as part of a learning school and this commitment to continuous improvement is at the heart of its achievements.

DRAMA

90. Drama is taught as a separate subject at Key Stage 3 and over a third of each year group normally continues with drama at Key Stage 4. GCSE results are consistently well above the national average. In 1999, all students obtained a grade and A*-C grades are above average. Students’ results in drama are significantly better than those they obtain in most other subjects. In work seen during the inspection, students’ standards at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14, are at the level expected of students of the same

age nationally and at Key Stage 4 by the age of 16, they are above. At Key Stage 3, students learn to portray character through voice, gesture and action. However, they are poor at listening to each other and they do not have the skills to evaluate their own and others' performance. At Key Stage 4 they make good progress, so that they gain a good understanding of dramatic techniques and of the theatre. Some lower attaining students are slow to grasp the link between production techniques and the essential themes and characters in the play they are considering. Their experience is greatly enhanced by the good programme of school productions and theatre visits.

91. Students enjoy drama lessons and participate with enthusiasm. They work well together and shown initiative in developing ideas, although there is an immature attitude in a small minority, mainly boys in Key Stage 3. Apart from the need to establish clearer expectations of behaviour in Key Stage 3, teaching overall is good. It engages students in effective learning, it raises their self-esteem and helps them to work with and respect others. Good leadership and teamwork result in students experiencing a well-planned curriculum that extends their horizons and makes a significant contribution to the positive ethos of the school. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

92. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected for students of the same age nationally. Students achieve well in mathematics at both key stages.
93. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportions of students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 attaining Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were above the national averages. The average National Curriculum points score attained by students in 1999 was above the national average when compared with all schools and when compared with similar schools. Since the last report Key Stage 3 average points scores have improved over the last three years with girls achieving slightly better results than boys.
94. In 1999, the proportions of students attaining both GCSE grades A*-C and A*-G were above the national averages and there has been continued improvement over the last three years. Girls performed less well than the boys and were slightly below the national average for girls, which represents a declining trend over the last three years. Boy's performance was well above the national average and represents a rapid improvement compared to the national average for boys. In 1999, a significant majority of top set Year 10 students entered for GCSE statistics achieved GCSE grades A* to C. Students' results in mathematics are not significantly different from those they achieved in most other subjects.
95. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Students develop strategies for solving problems and conducting investigations through planned exercises included in the revised scheme of work. Students use and apply mathematics, extend a concept and articulate their thinking through set tasks. For example, all students in Year 7 collected data on 'Handshakes', displaying the information graphically and interpreting their individual findings according to an initial hypothesis. Students' numerical skills are good and the use of the calculator is discouraged where mental skills can be applied. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. In Year 8, students use their knowledge of fractions well when substituting values into inverse algebraic expressions. Students are encouraged to demonstrate key algebraic routines using the correct terminology at the whiteboard. They have a good understanding of shape, space and measure. For example, in Year 9 students successfully calculate the area of regular shapes and extend this to the surface area and volume of compound objects. The standard of presentation in exercise books is good, with neat and accurate diagrams supporting learning. Students understand the difference between representative values when handling data and apply a variety of statistical methods, which provides good reinforcement of the use of number.
96. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Students' work with the open-ended task requirements for GCSE is good, although opportunities for extended work in normal lessons are infrequent. High and average attainers use algebra as a tool, from formulating expressions from simple data to solving simultaneous and quadratic equations, applying all the appropriate skills for checking and interpreting the results well. Low attainers draw straight-line graphs from given functions and complete the inverse successfully. Students continue to develop a good understanding of shape, space and measure

with high attainers applying Pythagorus' Theorem well and solving complex problems involving trigonometry. The level of attainment when handling data is good and students compare experimental and theoretical probability applied to real information. High attainers distinguish between discrete and continuous data applied to cumulative frequency in preparation for GCSE statistics at the end of Year 10. Low attainers develop good skills reading and interpreting real life data in a variety of straightforward formats, making the appropriate calculations where necessary.

97. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages leading to good quality learning by the students. Specialist teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good and a strength of the department, leading to confident interactive teaching styles, motivating students and enhancing their skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers provide good explanations of concepts. Relationships between students and teachers are good. Teacher support and reinforcement of student input to lessons is good maintaining a positive brisk pace. Control and management of the students is effective, but not in an overt manner. Teachers demonstrated good observational and analytical skills, intervening well with questions, engaging and deepening students understanding. There are clear expectations of both high standards and good behaviour by the students and the focus is on work for the whole lesson.
98. Students' attitude and response to mathematics is good leading to good progress being made. The use of time is effective, particularly for the low attaining students where work is broken down into 'bite' size activities, reflecting their capacity to concentrate. Resources that are available are used well. At Key Stage 3 lessons which were not successful, were as a result of students not understanding what they needed to do. At Key Stage 4 there were missed opportunities to capitalise on newly taught skills. For example, using a variety of strategies to consolidate students understanding of simplifying algebraic expressions in Year 10. Students' records of work are generally of a high standard with accurate diagrams, detailed examples and full exercises aiding understanding and progress. Where progress is less secure, it is a result of poor written work going unchallenged and leading to a decline in standards and values. Homework, which is consistent, is used to reinforce what has been taught in lessons and exercise books are marked up to date using the school marking policy, which matches student performance with the National Curriculum attainment levels at Key Stage 3 and GCSE grades at Key Stage 4. Regular assessment records are kept centrally and inform curriculum planning. However, diagnostic and evaluative comment by the teacher, in exercise books and annual reports to aid students learning and understanding is not common.
99. Opportunities for students' personal development through group work, open ended tasks, discussion and the use of everyday reference points are limited to the outline plan of the scheme of work. Provision for students to take more responsibility for their own learning, establish and test hypotheses and pose questions in lessons, are few. Other matters which effect the quality of teaching and standards is the lack of differentiation and extension work included in lesson plans, particularly for the high attainers at both key stages resulting in classes being taught as whole rather than responding to students strengths and weaknesses. Lessons that are less effective tend to focus on process with frequent use of the lower order skills interrupting student's conceptual development and understanding. For example, students in Year 10, drawing cumulative frequency tables from the textbook, which could have been prepared beforehand. This pattern is consistent at both Key Stage 3 and 4. The frequency and use of information technology to support teaching and learning across the whole department is poor and needs to be formally reintroduced into the scheme of work with planned opportunities for all students starting with Year 7.
100. There is no adjoining suite of rooms to accommodate the mathematics department. This factor combined with their small size inhibits a variety of teaching and organisational strategies and the sharing of good practice. The department is led and managed well, providing educational guidance and support.
101. The subject has made good progress since the previous inspection. There is clear improvement in educational standards at GCSE level, particularly the boys, since the last report coupled with a revised scheme of work, which has provided for improved standards across the curriculum as a whole. Overall, the department has made good progress against key issues raised by the last inspection report and continues to make a good contribution to standards of numeracy seen in the school.

SCIENCE

102. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected for students of the same age nationally. Students achieve well in science at both key stages.

103. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportions of students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 attaining Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were above the national averages. Results have been above the national average in each of the last three years. The average National Curriculum points score attained by students in 1999 was above the national average when compared with all schools and when compared with similar schools. While boys overall have performed better than girls in each of the last three years, especially in the proportion obtaining the higher grades, the difference is decreasing. There has been a slight reduction in each of the last two years in the average points score for all students, with the best results having been obtained in 1997.
104. In the GCSE examinations, there has been a significant improvement in the level of attainment since the previous inspection. The highest success rate for students gaining grades in the range A*-C was in 1996, but results in each of the last four years have been above the national average, and they were well above in 1999. The proportion of girls achieving grades A*-C was higher than boys in 1997, but since then boys have outperformed the girls. In each of the last three years, all students in the year group have obtained a grade in the range A*-G, which is above the national average. Students' results in science are not significantly different from those they obtained in most other subjects.
105. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. The high standard of attainment in national tests is reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Across the subject, students approach practical investigations with confidence. They enjoy this aspect of their work, and show high levels of skill in planning the tests (using planning frames where appropriate), and in recording their observations. They are aware of the need to take more than one reading to reduce potential error. The skills of analysing and evaluating their results are not so well developed. In Year 7, students build simple circuits, including batteries and ammeters to investigate how the electric current depends on the number of bulbs in the circuit and the way in which they are connected. They also study the physical and chemical characteristics of a sample of rocks, developing the skill to identify chemicals by their properties. By the age of 14, higher attaining students handle apparatus confidently when heating malachite to simulate the extraction of copper from its ore. A lower attaining group played a full part in a class discussion on the molecular make-up of solids, liquids and gases, and students were able to explain why ice is different to water.
106. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. In Key Stage 4, a smaller proportion of lessons includes practical work for the students, but students in general continue to work at a high level of attainment. Higher attaining students use data on computers to produce graphs to demonstrate how the acceleration of cars depends on factors such as engine power and mass; they are able to discuss the link between these graphs and their work in science lessons on the laws of motion. Lower attaining students are similarly involved in measuring their pulse rate before and after drinking cola, and they discuss the processes by which any changes are brought about. Students in another lower attaining group, however, were less involved in their work on the insulation of houses because of a lack of variety in the lesson structure.
107. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and has a good impact on students' learning. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject is particularly strong in biology and chemistry, but there are some weaknesses in physics. As a result, students show more confidence when discussing the nervous system or the periodic table than, say, electrostatics. Teachers use lists of key words, and their definitions, for each module of work in order to increase students' literacy and understanding. Students are adept in the use of number when using formulae, and are able to interpret the meaning of graphs. There has been an increase in the integration of computers into the work of the department, but the use of information technology is still not a regular part of the work of each class in each year group.
108. Teachers for the most part plan their lessons very carefully, giving consideration to the most effective and interesting means of presenting the subject to be studied. Their expectation of what students can do, and how hard they should work is generally high. In most lessons, particular attention is paid to students with special educational needs, including gifted students. In a minority of lessons, however, there is insufficient challenge for the higher attainers in the group; this is especially so in lower attaining groups, where there is little differentiation of work. While students are encouraged to think carefully about their work in most lessons, including the challenge of practical exercises, in a minority of lessons they are given insufficient opportunity to use their initiative. Teachers are skilled in the management of students; they show clearly that they respect students and that they care, and there is little sign of aggravation or off-task behaviour in

class. Most teachers use praise effectively, and this develops good working relationships. Marking is regular, but the grading of work is sometimes inconsistent. Homework is set frequently, and the department is developing a range of exercises that are designed to challenge students at all levels of attainment.

109. As a result of the good teaching, students' attitude to their work in science is generally very positive. They show particular interest at Key Stage 4. There is good collaboration between students when undertaking practical exercises in groups. Students in Year 7 displayed a real sense of involvement when simulating the huddling of penguins by recording the temperature fall of a group of test tubes containing hot water, and comparing results with a single test tube. Similarly, Year 11 students enjoyed revising work in electrostatics by studying the forces between charged rods. Teachers frequently include a lesson summary in order to consolidate the work covered during the lesson. This means that students normally work well to the end of each lesson, and often leave the laboratory discussing their work. Students at all levels of attainment, therefore, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. Students are aware of their standards in relation to national norms in Years 9 and 11, since they discuss minimum target grades for the National Curriculum tests with their teachers. The introduction of 'Study Guides' for each module of work provides the potential for all students to have up-to-date information about their National Curriculum level, but the use of these guides by teachers is inconsistent.
110. Much of the success of the department is due to the detailed planning of the curriculum, of schemes of work, and individual lessons. This is the result of the high level of teamwork developed between teaching staff, technicians, and learning support staff, under the very good leadership of the head of department. The positive approach to the challenge of providing the best learning opportunities for students of all ages and at all levels of attainment has resulted in a shared ethos in a commitment to continuous improvement. The department development plan is regularly reviewed, and is delegated effectively to members of the department. The department has realistic targets for future improvement, based on students' prior attainment. Members of the department realise the value of observing one another teach, and of subsequent discussions about teaching strategies, with the potential for linking these to staff development needs. The science department makes a satisfactory contribution to students' spiritual, social and moral development, but opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage students to ponder the wonders of life and the universe, as when discussing the solar system and space, or the differences in fingerprints.
111. Other factors that contribute to the quality of learning in science include the links between the department and local primary schools and further education colleges. There is also a good range of books and reference material in the school library, and its use is encouraged by teachers. The department is developing an effective system for tracking the progress of individual students, with the potential to make comparative annual judgements on student progress between each of the key stages. Good use is also being made of student assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses in schemes of work and in teaching.
112. There are a number of areas requiring further development. There are few extra-curricular opportunities. Reports to parents, though containing detail about each student's attitude and behaviour, still lack sufficient information about their scientific skills, knowledge and understanding. There are also weaknesses in the accommodation, in the level of resources (with a shortage of basic equipment and furniture), and in the level of technician hours. There is also a shortage of textbooks in Key Stage 3.
113. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection. Since the last inspection, teaching has shown a considerable improvement, resulting in improved student performance at ages 14 and 16. There is also more involvement of students in scientific investigations and practical work. The use of information technology has increased, but there is further scope for its integration into the curriculum of all students. While there has been some improvement in the accommodation, it does at times have a negative impact on the quality of education, and there is still a shortage of storage space.

ART

114. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected for students of the same age nationally. Students achieve well in art at both key stages.
115. The proportions of students achieving grades A*-C and A*-G in the GCSE examinations in 1999 were above the national averages. Examination results show an improving trend from 1997, when they were

below national averages. The attainment of girls is consistently higher than that of boys, although boys' results have improved in recent years and in 1999 their attainment was above the national averages for boys. Based on 1999 data, students' results in art were slightly above those obtained by students at the school in most other subjects. The teacher assessments for the subject were unavailable

116. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Students of all abilities have good drawing and painting skills; outcomes are imaginative and individual demonstrating a good understanding and control of the artistic elements of line, tone, colour, texture and shape. All students have a good understanding of the work of artists and other cultures and some gain this through the use of CD-ROM's. All apply this very effectively to inform their practice. Printmaking work is well crafted with a good understanding of repeat pattern and the processes involved. Three dimensional skills and knowledge are less well developed by all students.
117. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. The majority of students have high standards of drawing skills and all are recorded accurately from observation. Painting skills are above the level expected, show some breadth of technique and are often expressive; their study of artists and their good understanding of composition inform this well. Research skills are well developed and students make good use of the library and CD-ROM's to provide a stimulus for their work.
118. Students in both key stages with special educational needs are achieving standards in line with their peers and above those expected nationally. The highest attaining students achieve high standards.
119. During the inspection, staff absence resulted in a number of lessons being taught by supply teachers, although the majority seen was taught by specialist staff. Despite this situation, teaching at Key Stage 3 is very good and has a very positive impact on students' learning. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is good and has a good impact on students' learning. Lesson planning is very clear, objectives are made explicit to students and reviewed effectively at the end of lessons, which are well structured and effectively managed. Very good use is made of the work of artists and the study of other cultures, particularly at Key Stage 3. This effectively informs student's style and their imaginative responses, for example in Year 8 where their study of Native American culture and stories provides an effective stimulus to their imaginative responses. Teachers focus on developing students understanding of artistic concepts using sketchbooks well in class and for homework, to record ideas and designs. These investigative approaches are used very well and with the study of artists and cultures, this leads to good standards of learning and an understanding of how to draw and apply paint using a breadth of style. This has a very positive impact on their imaginative and expressive practice and as a consequence greatly improves their progress.
120. The attitudes and behaviour of students are consistently good and was particularly noticeable where in Year 8, students listened carefully and with sensitivity to a story of another culture and made useful notes to inform their designs. Equally in Year 11, students who have been without their art teacher for some weeks, remain well focused on their tasks and responsible in their attitudes and practice. The majority of students sustain their interest and motivation throughout projects and work consistently hard in lessons.
121. The subject is well managed. Even though the head of department was absent during the inspection, the students maintain good working practices. Development planning is effective and has properly identified priorities, resulting in improved teaching styles and standards. The only exception has been the provision of a sufficient three-dimensional experience at Key Stage 3 and planned use of the pottery to achieve this; as a consequence these skills are underdeveloped. Students have benefited greatly from the introduction of the use of information technology to support their research in art and design, but there is a need to extend the breadth of use into creative art making activities. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of learning in art are well planned for, through the study of artists, other cultures and the many project opportunities which contextualise and enrich the learning experience. Display in the art rooms is of a very high standard and effectively celebrates achievement; it supports the teaching and greatly informs students' understanding.
122. The subject has made good progress since the previous inspection. Students' standards of work have improved significantly and are more consistent. Teachers' planning has also improved and now contains detailed objectives that also determine the study of artists and other cultures and as a consequence, students make good progress. However, insufficient arrangements have been made to increase the use of the pottery facility and improve the opportunities for all Key Stage 3 students to work in three dimensions

and here, three dimensional skills have not improved.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected for students of the same age nationally. Students achieve well in design and technology at both key stages.
124. In 1999, in the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments at the age of 14, the proportion of students achieving the expected level was above the national average. The department offers four different courses at GCSE level and results across the department vary widely. In 1999, the proportions of students achieving GCSE grades A*-C were well above the national average for food technology and graphical products but below the national average in resistant materials and textiles. The proportions of students achieving grades A*-G were in line with the national average with the exception of textiles where results were well below the national average. Overall, students' results in design and technology based subjects were not significantly different from those they obtained in most other subjects. There are no significant differences between boys and girls and results have shown a steady improvement over recent years.
125. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Students have a good grasp of research techniques. For example, in a Year 9 food technology lesson, students produced questionnaires and analysed them to provide data for a new food product. When designing students draw effectively on external sources to enhance their designs. In a Year 7 textiles lesson the students used information from books and television programmes to produce patterns for their bag designs. Higher attainers produce good quality models of their design proposals as was seen in a Year 9 lesson where students were making the casing for their electronic products. Making skills are above the level expected by the age of 14. Students accurately measure, mark out and cut a variety of materials accurately using a range of tools and equipment. Students have good numeracy skills and use these well to scale their designs. In a Year 8 lesson, students produce interesting designs for their automata and accurately cut and shape the components. Most students can describe their activities and convey their intentions but do not always make use of the technical vocabulary of the subject.
126. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. In food technology, students are working at well above the level expected. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of food groups and how these impact on the health of different social groups. Again, the standards in graphical products are well above the level expected. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on packaging, students produced very good designs for their 'Jungle juice' which were creative but also met a strict specification. The standard of work in resistant materials is below the level expected but is appropriate for most students in the groups. Students do not pay sufficient attention to detail and in one group few students understood the concept of orthographic drawing techniques. In textiles, standards are below the level expected but again generally reflect the ability of the group. The highest attainers in these groups produce creative designs for their clothing project whilst lower attainers struggle to produce even basic designs.
127. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and has a good impact on students' learning. Teachers show a very good knowledge, understanding and application of their subject. For example, in a Year 7 food technology lesson, the teacher clearly explained the need for food labelling which enabled all students to make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of why food needs to be labelled and the systems used. Thorough lesson planning clearly targets what is to be learnt in the lesson, which is shared effectively with students at the beginning of each lesson. Students understand well what is expected, how to do the task, and how to move forward to a higher level in the subject. Students consistently demonstrate good attitudes to their work and respond positively to the good teaching. They are attentive and listen well to the teacher and each other. They concentrate well on the tasks, though occasionally a class will lose concentration between tasks. They respond best to the most challenging or imaginative activities. This was evident in a Year 10 graphics lesson when students were highly motivated by the packaging project and spoke enthusiastically about their designs. However, the over enthusiasm of some students, does on occasion, lead to some inappropriate calling out and disruption to the flow of the lesson, as happened in a Year 11 textiles lesson when a small group of boys were disinterested and caused minor disruption to the lesson.

128. Teachers have high expectations of students' behaviour and effort, this results in the students being effectively challenged and their making good progress in learning and enabling them to develop an understanding of the topics studied. This was noticeable in a Year 8 lesson when students were constructing their automata project. The teacher gave a very good demonstration of how to use the pillar drill with students organising themselves accordingly so that they could all observe. A common feature of lessons is the trust that teachers place in their students to carry on working hard outside their immediate sphere of control. This enables teachers to help individuals, secure in the knowledge that the rest of the class is still learning well. This was demonstrated well in a Year 10 lesson when groups of students were allowed to leave the classroom to research their projects in the library with all students returning on time. In most lessons teachers match their methods closely to the needs of the students. They use question and answer sessions effectively to establish the levels of understanding and to modify their teaching. This was demonstrated well in a Year 7 textiles lesson where the teacher asked specific questions about the students designs and modified some of the later activities to ensure all students made good progress.
129. At both key stages teachers make effective use of question and answer to recap and reinforce students knowledge and understanding and also as an effective way to involve all students in the lesson. These skills are also used to informally assess students' knowledge and understanding and are effectively integrated with a well-developed system for the formative assessment of students' attainment and learning. Students' work is always marked, with comments to inform learning, an indication of the students' level of attainment, and targets to effectively challenge them. Homework is carefully chosen to enable the students to develop their knowledge or undertake research. Whilst teachers make use of students' individual education plans, these plans are not specific enough to be really effective. However, students with special educational needs make similar progress to other students and are provided with good learning opportunities.
130. The subject is well led and managed. Documentation is of a very good quality although there is a need to develop a more corporate image of the subject. Currently, students do not always see the links between the different areas of the subject. The subject makes insufficient use of information technology and this has an adverse impact on students' knowledge and understanding of computer-aided design and manufacture. The number of students in some classes is high and impairs some of the activities that take place. The textiles room is small for some groups and inhibits some large-scale projects that would enhance students' learning. However, the quality of display in the work areas is of a high quality and enhances the learning environment.
131. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection. Two areas are now producing well above average results at GCSE. The school has recently appointed two new teachers and students' standards are improving in other areas. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good at both key stages and results have improved since the previous inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

132. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Students achieve well at this key stage. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Students' achievements are satisfactory compared to their prior attainment at this key stage.
133. In 1999, in the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments at the age of 14, the proportion of students achieving the expected level was above the national average. In 1999, the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A*-C was below the national average. Significantly better results were achieved in 1998 and 1997 which were in line with the national averages. The proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A*-G was in line with the national average. In 1999 there was no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment. Students' results in geography were not significantly different from those they obtained in most other subjects.
134. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. By the age of 14, students show a good knowledge of the factors determining original settlements, for example, features such as water supply, access to building materials and an easily defensible site. High attaining students realise the need to compromise on these factors to get the best site for its purpose. All students begin to understand about

factors that indicate rich and poor countries, for example, health care, education, and trade. High attaining students understand the concept of the gross national product of a country and effectively compare one country with another. They also sensibly discuss the moral and ethical issues that the more economically developed countries have to consider when working alongside countries that are less economically developed.

135. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally. By the age of 16, all students, including those with special educational needs, understand the environmental effect of opencast coal mining in South Wales and how it affects employment and consequently prosperity. High attaining students start to realise how the environment may best be restored. Students analyse graphs and figures in order to work out the demands for electrical power that may be made during a typical day. In plate tectonics, students know that earthquakes are caused by plate friction and where tectonic plates move against one another volcanoes may occur. They understand that volcanic activity may cause more devastation in less economically developed countries than in more economically developed countries.
136. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is good and has a good impact on students' learning. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and leads to students making satisfactory gains in their learning. Teachers show very good knowledge, understanding and application of their subject. For example, knowledge of factors determining the siting of towns linked to understanding of transport systems allows the subject to be related to present day situations. This in depth knowledge enables teachers to question in order to challenge students' own knowledge and understanding and consequently extend students' horizons. Teachers know their students very well and relationships are good and this creates a positive learning environment. Display of students' work is a very good feature of the department and this also enriches the classroom environment. Teachers ensure those students in Years 7 and 8 learn basic geographical skills and to use the correct geographical vocabulary. For example, simple well-drawn diagrams and sketch map are appropriately labelled and spider diagrams are well laid out in order to categorise brain-storming ideas and they use words like meander and interlocking spur in describing river features. They illustrate their work effectively with charts and pie graphs to represent simple data.
137. Generally, teachers have high expectations of both students' behaviour and work. For example, when studying less and more economically developed countries in Year 9, challenging questions make students consider important ethical and moral issues. However, on a minority of occasions, lower expectations constrain progress and students learning. For example, when studying birth and death rates, insufficient class questioning inhibited learning and students' insight into the complexities of population issues is diminished. Most students listen and contribute well to question and answer sessions. However, there is a small minority that find the lessons long and their concentration deteriorates. Overall, student behaviour and attitudes are satisfactory and, at times, when teaching is interesting and demanding they are good. Geography contributes to the appreciation of cultural diversity and the richness of other cultures; for example, when studying Ghana. Where teaching standards are good, students are encouraged to ask and answer geographical questions in some detail; this enhances their understanding. Planning is good and ensures progression and continuity across both key stages and gives a very good support for temporary and supply teachers. Staff use a good range of teaching methods, which motivate students, for example, the trading game and a practical activity about water basins. Students react very positively to these learning situations and their responses; question and answers show that they understand the concept of rich and poor countries and how river drainage basins work. They enjoy the subject especially when involved in practical situations and fieldwork.
138. A variety of good and thorough planning, teaching strategies, good relationships, and good geographical knowledge ensures all students, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress in their learning in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. Students show a good acquisition of geographical skill and knowledge in Key Stage 3. These are developed further so that students start to formulate and then develop geographical concepts in Key Stage 4.
139. Geography is well led and managed. The head of department shows a very clear educational direction for the development of the subject and there is a very positive ethos. Policy documents are clear and the departmental action plan is realistic and consistent with the school's aims. The curriculum and assessment are both good and well developed. Good teacher assessment informs both short and long term planning. All these contribute to ensure that there is good progression and continuity for learning. At present, the use of information technology is underdeveloped and this restricts the development of inquiry skills.

140. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection. Although the head of department was absent on maternity leave during the inspection the department ran efficiently. Teaching was effectively covered; however, her absence did constrain the department. The department is fully committed to the raising of students' attainment and progress. The curriculum has been extensively reviewed and schemes of work re-written. There has been a significant increase in the amount of Fieldwork and this has been fully integrated into the curriculum.

HISTORY

141. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected for students of the same age nationally. Students achieve well in history at both key stages.

142. In 1999, in the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments at the age of 14, the proportion of students achieving the expected level was above the national average with a good number of high levels. This represents an improvement on the last report, when standards at Key Stage 3 were in line with national expectations. In 1999, the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A*-C was above the national average and have remained consistently above average since the previous inspection. Examination results in 1999 are especially good, as a high proportion of the candidates secured A or A* grades. Although from year to year there is some variation, both boys and girls are achieving good grades at both key stages and there are no significant differences in their attainment. The proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A*-G was in line with the national average. Students' results in history are not significantly different from those they obtained in most other subjects.

143. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of both key stages at ages 14 and 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. At 14, students at all levels of attainment, demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the topics studied. Higher and average attainers produce detailed extended essays, which discuss a question, for example whether the Edwardian period was a golden age, supporting their arguments with plenty of relevant points. Lower attainers and special educational needs students produce detailed accounts, for example of the working conditions endured by the pauper apprentices, which display a good level of understanding, but offer fewer arguments in essays, which discuss a question. In source evaluation tasks, such as assessing Cruikshank's complex cartoon of working conditions, higher and average attainers demonstrate a good grasp of the cartoon's essential message and purpose, but higher attainers are also able to analyse the reliability and accuracy of the source. Lower attainers and special educational need students pick out some ideas from the source. They are best at describing what they see in the cartoon. At 16, students, at all levels of attainment, write their own notes from a range of textbooks and other source materials, and produce extended assignments for their coursework.

144. In their course work, higher attainers are able to consider a source in its context, use quotations effectively and make good critical judgements about whether a source can be trusted, giving their reasons. Lower attainers and special educational need students demonstrate a good understanding of the issues, and offer sensible deductions and some shrewd comments on what they see in a source. They understand, for example, that Protestant leaders in Ireland might exaggerate the brutality of actions carried out by Catholics and use emotive language to describe events, in order to stir up feeling against Catholics, and that the Catholics are likely to use very similar tactics when writing about the protestants. Orally they explain their ideas better than they are able to express them in writing.

145. The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages and has improved significantly since the last report. It is never less than satisfactory and there are examples of very good teaching. Expectations are consistently high, with good effect on learning and progress enabling students at all levels of attainment to achieve well through the key stages. Thorough lesson planning clearly targets learning outcomes, which are shared effectively with students at the beginning of each lesson. Students well understand what is expected, how to do the task, and how to move forward to a higher level in the subject. Students consistently demonstrate good attitudes to their work and respond positively to the good teaching. They are attentive and listen well to the teacher and each other. They always concentrate well on the tasks, though occasionally a class will lose concentration between tasks. They respond best to the most challenging or imaginative activities. At the end of a topic, they successfully evaluate their work using student evaluation sheets. This good framework helps students improve their historical skills and through regular practice

and the use of good writing frames, average and lower attainers and students with special educational needs improve their essay writing. Higher attainers develop the structure of their essays and begin to support their ideas with relevant reasons.

146. Work and the pace of the lessons is carefully matched to the needs of the students, and consistently applied literacy strategies and structures, such as a range of writing frames, help students at all levels of attainment make progress in improving their writing. Good liaison between the teacher and learning support staff contributes to the good progress at both key stages by students with special educational needs, and good professional relationships between the teacher and the students helps to promote the good learning, which is a feature of the history department. Extension activities, such as regular lunch time sessions for the higher attainers help these students achieve their potential. The teachers use their subject expertise to design interesting and imaginative tasks, which students enjoy and respond to positively. For example, in a role play about 1066, the students developed good lists of points why their character should become king and also demonstrated good powers of speech making. A wide range of strategies, resources, materials and activities are used effectively to stimulate the students' historical imagination and sustain their interest. For example, a recent visit from a seventeenth century barber surgeon enriched the Year 10 GCSE curriculum and provoked a range of response from the students. Frequent use of pair and small group work enables students to work collaboratively. In a Year 11 lesson, students visibly learned from each other, listening attentively to other students' analysis of sources about Ireland. Well managed and focussed discussions, such as the best Year 8 lessons on the causes of the civil war or a Year 11 lesson about Ireland, capture the students' total attention and challenge them to think for themselves. Firm class control, good lesson management and short interesting activities harnesses the students' energies and keeps students, who can be easily distracted, well on task. Occasionally however, in less good lessons, tasks are less well chosen and limit opportunity. Key points and ideas are reinforced consistently and help students consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Homework is carefully chosen to enable the students to develop their knowledge or undertake research, and constructive marking and regular oral feedback helps them to move forward.
147. The subject has made good progress since the previous inspection. The head of department, who was new in post in 1995, responded positively to the criticisms, most noticeably by changing the Key Stage 4 curriculum to include more world history, producing new teaching materials and in regrouping the students into mixed ability sets. The commitment of the history staff, and clear leadership and direction by the head of department has made a considerable impact on the quality of learning and to the good progress and results currently being achieved by the students. Although there has been some improvement, least progress has been made in developing the use of information technology, which remains an area for further development.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

148. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at ages 14 and 16 are at the level expected for students of the same age nationally. Students' achievements are satisfactory compared to their prior attainment at both key stages in discrete information technology lessons.
149. In 1999, in the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments at the age of 14, the proportion of students achieving the expected level was well above the national average. In 1999, the proportion of students achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE Short Course in Information Technology examinations was well above national average and broadly in line with the national average for grades A*-G. The examination has only been running for two years and results are consistent. All students take a certificate of ICT competence by the end of Key Stage 4.
150. In work seen in information technology lessons, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally. The majority of students have above the level expected standards of keyboard skills and use the main software with confidence. Students' standards are at the level expected in the application of communicating and handling information using word processors, presentation software, spreadsheets and a database, with higher attainers working more accurately and achieving above the level expected. Students' graphical outputs are at the level expected, but these are limited in their range of presentation. Students produce and incorporate simple graphics from different sources and use a variety of text and font styles effectively for different purposes. Standards are lower than expected in modelling, measuring and control, as students are not given sufficient opportunities

to develop and apply these competencies.

151. In work seen in information technology lessons, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Students gain many skills within a core information technology course, but have very limited opportunities across the curriculum to develop and apply their skills. This is particularly the situation concerning controlling and measuring activities, where insufficient learning is planned and standards remain below the level expected. The Short Course syllabus does not require coursework from these areas of study and this accounts for the difference between standards in lessons and those obtained in the GCSE course. Within information technology lessons, most students demonstrate above the level expected skills within communicating and handling information activities, particularly in their presentation skills. They create, select and place different file types accurately and generally use a database, word processor and spell checker effectively, with many using the mail merge facility well to target letters for particular groups. Spreadsheets are used effectively to calculate using formulae, but modelling skills are underdeveloped in the further use of this data, although in a Year 10 science lesson, they are used well within appropriate contexts and here, standards are high.
152. Students in both key stages with special educational needs are achieving standards in line with their peers and consistent with those expected nationally.
153. Teaching in both key stages is satisfactory and leads to satisfactory learning. In Key Stage 3, there are some strengths evident in the clarity of learning intentions, the organisation of resources, the pace of lessons and the effective use of the worksheets to support students of all abilities. Underachievement by students in some Year 7 lessons was observed, particularly where teaching lacked challenge and a limited range of teaching styles were used. However, in another Year 7 lesson, a clear presentation with a broad range of styles was used to effectively develop students understanding of cells, and the use of formulae in a spreadsheet. This improved students understanding of specialist language and built a basic concept of modelling. A good level of individual support is provided to direct learning at Key Stage 4. The principle of independent learning directed by the individual needs of students is effectively applied in many respects, but a lack of focused teaching to whole groups, fails to ensure sufficient challenge to all students and determine a specific content for these courses.
154. Overall, learning in both key stages is satisfactory. Students remain effectively on task, particularly in Key Stage 3, where the development of skills and the opportunities to apply this learning results in steady progress for many. The need for students to share computers and the lack of a means to demonstrate from a computer in both information technology suites has a detrimental impact on standards and the progress that some students make.
155. The attitudes and behaviour of students is good, although in Key Stage 4 there are some variations in students' attitude and effort. The majority of students sustain effort and work hard throughout their lessons. In Key Stage 3, they listen attentively and respond well to questions when the teaching maintains pace and direction. In Key Stage 4, many students effectively determine their own project content and show good levels of independence, although some others do not sustain their effort or identify suitably challenging opportunities for their projects.
156. The day-to-day management of information technology lessons is satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the co-ordination of information technology across the school. The management of information technology has effectively led to the development of a second computer suite and the Certificate of ICT Competency in collaboration with local business at Key Stage 4. This course provides all students with opportunities to pursue project work identified within subject areas, but does not provide a taught course with a specified content and full coverage of the areas of experience. In addition, the GCSE short course is only available to a small number of students who agree to take this as an extra-curricular course. Recent developments have done much to improve facilities and student entitlement, but there remains little effective co-ordination of students' information technology experience across the curriculum. The monitoring and assessment of information technology capability and competency is well developed within the core courses, but is very underdeveloped within subject areas, where the strands of entitlement are not equally developed, particularly regarding controlling, measuring and modelling. Despite the development of a new computer suite, the student to computer ratio is lower than the national average, mainly because many computers within curriculum areas are old and redundant and are not used by departments.
157. The subject has made unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Since the last inspection,

standards of teaching materials have improved and are generally well matched to the needs of all students. Additional differentiated sheets effectively provide opportunities to extend the very able and standards of teaching show some improvements in challenge and pace. The use of computers across the curriculum has developed very slowly and is still not in place in many subjects and is still without any means of recording and assessing students' information technology capability across the curriculum. The ratio of students to computers has also reduced despite recent purchases and the development of an additional information technology suite, because of the age and suitability of a large number of the older computers within departments.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

158. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 in German and French are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 in German are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally and at the level expected in French. Students achieve well in German. Students' achievements are satisfactory in French compared to their prior attainment at both key stages.
159. All students study French at Key Stage 3. Higher attaining students are offered the opportunity to study German as a second language in Year 9. These students can then opt for either language in Key Stage 4.
160. In 1999, in the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments at the age of 14, the proportion of students achieving the expected level was broadly in line with the national average but with only a small minority above that level. In 1999, the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A*-C in German was well above the national average and the proportion of students achieving A*-C grades in French were broadly in line with the average. The level of A*-C passes in French showed a significant rise on previous years' results. In both languages, all of the students entered achieved a pass at A*-G which is well above the national average. Students' results in both languages were not significantly different from those they obtained in most other subjects.
161. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are at the level expected for students of the same age nationally in French. Standards are well above that expected for students of the same age in German, partly because it is higher attaining students who are studying this language. There are no significant differences in attainment between girls and boys or across the four aspects of the subject. Students with special educational needs achieve appropriate standards in relation to their prior attainment. Inspection evidence indicates that students' standards are rising over time, especially in French.
162. By age 14, students answer questions, in a basic way, about such topics as sport and leisure activities, clothing, their likes and dislikes and comparisons of life in towns and villages. Where the teaching is satisfactory or better, the vast majority of students listen carefully to the teacher and to other students when they are speaking and can respond appropriately. Students are generally confident when speaking and try hard with pronunciation. Their spoken responses progress from single words in Year 7 to short conversation pieces in Year 9. Students read frequently from books and often aloud in class and they have satisfactory reading skills. In their written work, most students write a number of sentences or short paragraphs with reasonable accuracy by age 14. Higher attaining students produce good extended writing using a variety of language and tenses. In general students take care over the presentation of their written work. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, few if any, of the students attain these levels or make satisfactory progress.
163. By age 16, students return to these topics and add others such as the differences between French and United Kingdom schools, illness and medical problems, further work on towns and villages and travel in France and Germany. Students develop a greater range of speaking skills in preparation for their examinations and the majority is able to carry out longer conversations. Preparation for examinations gives students greater scope in their written work and students make good progress, although few write at great length and grammar and punctuation are inconsistent. Students studying German make particularly good progress over this key stage.
164. Overall, the quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory and leads to the quality of learning being satisfactory and enables students to make satisfactory progress. Within this overall picture, there is good or

very good teaching in nearly half of the lessons and unsatisfactory or poor teaching in a significant minority. During the inspection all of the unsatisfactory and poor teaching occurred in French, and in Year 9. Where teaching is at its best teachers use their very good subject knowledge to carefully plan lessons that provide a high level of challenge for the students and a number of activities that move at brisk pace and keep the students actively involved. These involve the use of the overhead projector, group work, role- plays and word reinforcement “games” as well as listening and writing tasks. There is a high level of use of the language being taught by both teachers and students, and skilled use of questioning makes students extend and vary their use of language. Regular homework is set. In general, students have good attitudes to work and take care with the presentation of their written work. Relationships between students and with their teachers are generally very good. Where these are combined with good teaching, students make good progress and this has a significant effect on raising standards. Where students with special educational needs are supported in class there is a good level of teamwork between teachers and support staff, and this contributes to students’ progress.

165. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, there is little challenge to students that is at a suitable level. This is seen, for example, in lessons in which Year 9 students are required to spell short simple words where the teacher has already filled in most of the letters for them. Students in lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor rarely use their spoken language to speak more than single words and the teacher often translates what she is saying into English thus making it unnecessary for students to try to understand the language being taught. The vast majority of students behave well in lessons even where the pace and challenge are poor and lead to boredom. Inconsistent use is made of information technology to enhance and enrich the curriculum provided. Marking of students’ work is also inconsistent and there is limited use of marking to point out ways in which students can improve.

166. A number of trips and a school exchange with a school in Germany make a good contribution to students’ personal, social and cultural development. There is generally good provision for social development in lessons through sharing, taking turns and working together in groups. The department has re-written the scheme of work to provide a broad and balanced programme, although time allocations in Year 9 are barely satisfactory. There are good procedures in place for assessing students’ attainment and progress and these are helping to raise standards by producing a method for discussing what students need to do to improve. The head of department has shown very good leadership and management since her appointment in revising the scheme of work, establishing a vision for future priorities for development which is realistic, and in monitoring and supporting both teaching and learning, working with the senior management team. Standards in French, in particular, are already beginning to rise as a result.

167. The subject has made good progress since the previous report. The previous report judged that expectations of students needed to be raised, specifically because students’ written work was often limited and inaccurate and because higher attaining students were not sufficiently challenged. Overall, these issues have been addressed and are certainly high in the priorities for the head of department and senior management.

MUSIC

168. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally and above the level expected at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16. Students achieve well overall in music.

169. In 1999, the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A*-C was far above the national average with all candidates achieving a grade at A*-C. The same high standards were achieved in 1998. Students’ results in music were significantly better than those they obtained in most other subjects. The teacher assessments for the subject were unavailable.

170. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Analysis of students work produced in Year 7 evidences that the majority of students enter the school with a level of attainment that is below that expected nationally for students of the same age. They perform an individual part on a range of instruments with confidence and control, both in solo and ensemble performances, always with an awareness of pulse and beat. Lower attainers, by the age of 14, perform on classroom instruments with some degree of control but with a lack of fluency and insecure rhythm. Most students compose in a variety of forms, developing their ideas whilst making good use of appropriate information technology to support,

create and present their ideas. Lower attainers compose using basic ideas and forms, for a limited range of instruments, but with little extended development of ideas.

171. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are above the level expected of students of the same age nationally. In their performances, many students are achieving well above the expected levels, this high standard being supported by the good range of peripatetic teaching and the good quality extra-curricular opportunities available. Students perform with confidence and control on their chosen instruments, many being proficient on a number of instruments. Ensemble work is well developed and they recognise when to take the lead and when to support others. They compose in a variety of styles and forms and use a wide range of instruments to perform their work. Students make very good use of a full range of information technology in their compositions and performances. Their level of attainment in listening and appraising is in-line with national expectations. They identify resources and conventions used throughout music and evaluate and critically appraise their own work, and that of others. They make clear connections between music and its' historical, social, and cultural contexts. However, the majority of students do not use an extensive technical vocabulary in their analysis.
172. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and has a good impact on students' learning. Teachers have high expectations of students' behaviour and effort, this results in the students being effectively challenged and their making good progress in learning and enabling them to develop an understanding of the topics studied. This was noticeable in a Year 9 practical lesson, where all students successfully performed on the drum kit, although the majority had not attempted it before. Teachers have good class management and very good subject knowledge and understanding, which produces confident teaching and a respect for the students, which in turn, leads to students working with enthusiasm and interest. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, where students were working on individual performance and composition, the teacher was able to move between students offering individual help and advice, whilst the other students worked on the task, supporting and advising each other very effectively. This is also an example of the good relationships that exist between the students and also the students and the staff.
173. Teachers also make good use of target setting in order to motivate students. In a Year 10 lesson, this enabled all the students, in a short period of time, to rehearse, arrange, and perform an ensemble or improvised piece of music, to a higher level than they had initially anticipated. At both key stages teachers make effective use of question and answer to recap and reinforce students knowledge and understanding and also as an effective way to involve all students in the lesson. These skills are also used to informally assess students' knowledge and understanding and are effectively integrated with a well-developed system for the formative assessment of students' attainment and learning. Students' work is always marked, with comments to inform learning, an indication of the students' level of attainment, and targets to effectively challenge them.
174. However, the over enthusiasm of some students, does on occasion, lead to some inappropriate calling out and disruption to the flow of the lesson, as happened in a Year 7 lesson when they were asked questions following a session listening to a performance of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons". Also, the late arrival to lessons on occasion leads to an unstructured and unproductive start to the lesson. The structure of some lessons, where students are working individually or in small groups also leads to some unproductive activity. In a Year 9 lesson on drum technique, as students were each performing in small numbers, whilst the rest of the class sat and observed, towards the end of the lesson the concentration of some students lapsed and resulted in low levels of chattering and inappropriate behaviour.
175. There is very clear direction and leadership for the subject, with the work of all teachers being monitored and evaluated. Those students identified with special educational needs are well integrated and make similar progress to other students. The department operates an equal access policy for all students at both key stages and there is an effective use of new technology throughout as a result of very good information technology resources.
176. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection report. The quality of learning and teaching, were broadly sound or good and are now good at both key stages. The improvement in the quality of teaching has brought about a significant improvement in students' GCSE results, from below the national average at the time of the previous inspection to far above the national average.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

177. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at ages 14 and 16 are at the level expected of students of the same ages nationally. Students' achievements are satisfactory compared to their prior attainment at both key stages.
178. In 1999, in the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments at the age of 14, the proportion of students achieving the expected level was broadly in line with the national average. The school does not offer physical education in its option programme for the GCSE examination.
179. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally. There are examples of students gaining higher levels of attainment. For example, boys in a Year 9 class demonstrated good individual skills in a soccer lesson. These skills were then used very effectively in the competitive game situation and they showed a higher than expected appreciation of the principle of using width in their play when attacking in order to break down a defensive organisation. In a Year 9 dance lesson, girls showed average levels of attainment. However, their ability to evaluate their own work and that of their classmates was higher. It is in this area that the main weakness lies in the attainment at Key Stage 3, particularly in games. While students' practical performance levels are often above the level expected their levels of understanding about the effects of exercise on the body and the role of exercise in maintaining health are below the level expected.
180. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved by students at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 are at the level expected of students of the same age nationally. The same pattern of strengths and weaknesses is apparent. For example, Year 11 girls' levels of attainment in netball, basketball and volleyball are at the level expected amongst the majority and higher than this amongst a few. However, their abilities to adopt different roles, such as coach or referee are not as well developed. Similarly, while Year 10 boys are able to show safe practice and accuracy in performing exercises in a health related fitness situation, their knowledge and understanding about the effects of exercise and their ability to plan and evaluate a safe, health-promoting exercise are below the level expected.
181. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages is satisfactory. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and prepare resources for their lessons carefully. As a result, students respect them, enjoy positive relationships and come to lessons with a positive attitude. Teachers organise effective lessons where a satisfactory quality of learning takes place and students make satisfactory progress. The responses of students in lessons are good, they enjoy their lessons and are interested and keen to impress and do well. Relationships are good even in the very competitive situations in which they find themselves during games. They work well in pairs and groups. On occasion, lessons lack pace where teachers do not give enough attention to making the transition between different activities smooth enough. For example, in a Year 8 hockey lesson, students spent too long watching as demonstrations were set up and taught rather than observing a correct demonstration that had already been established.
182. The teachers have high expectations of the efforts and behaviour of their students. As a result, behaviour is always good and students respond to the impact of good teaching by producing their best efforts. They generally work hard and maintain their efforts and concentration and persevere to produce their best efforts. Throughout the age range, students' attitudes and behaviour are good. This was very well demonstrated in a Year 9 soccer lesson where students watched carefully and listened attentively. As a result they were able to work at their own practice and could analyse why a particular strategy was not working in the larger game situation. A common feature of lessons is the trust that teachers can place in their students to carry on working hard outside their immediate sphere of control. This enables teachers to help individuals, secure in the knowledge that the rest of the class is still learning well.
183. In most lessons teachers match their methods closely to the needs of the students. They use question and answer sessions effectively to establish the levels of understanding and to modify their teaching. In a Year 11 volleyball lesson the teacher planned carefully to cater for the different ability levels in the class and ensured that the tasks planned matched the needs of the students. As a result, while overall attainment levels were below the level expected in a low attaining group, nevertheless all students made good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Here, students were given some room to bring their own thinking to the practice situation. They responded well, showing some initiative and taking responsibility well to persevere and improve. The individual education plans produced for students with special educational needs are not specific enough to be really effective and the teaching does not address sufficiently closely the matching of tasks to the needs of particular groups of students in any one class.

184. Teachers are effective in assessing the learning taking place in classes. They are adept at using question and answer techniques to establish levels of understanding and to consolidate work. As a result, students often make good progress as in a Year 7 dance lesson. Here, the teacher's use of technical language and further careful explanation helped students towards answering the task of producing a pair dance around the theme of "Robots". Teachers rehearsing the lesson objectives and returning to these at the end of the lesson often enhance the learning taking place in many lessons. This helps students to consolidate their progress as in a class of lower attaining Year 9 students coming to grips with the idea of supporting the player in possession in a rugby game.
185. Higher attainers make good progress in all three areas of planning, performing and evaluating the variety of activities they study in games, gymnastics and dance. However, the middle and lower attainers are weaker in their ability to evaluate their own performance or that of their classmates against criteria that are most appropriate for the activity. For example in a Year 7 dance lesson, all were able to undertake the activities and make good progress in their practical performance, but few could explain why the performance of observed groups was good or poor.
186. A minority of higher attaining students throughout the age range makes good progress and lower attainers make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment and in line with their classmates generally. Across the age ranges, there are no significant differences made in progress between the boys and the girls. In all lessons throughout the age range, students with special educational needs are well integrated and make progress in line with their peers. Teachers know their students well and normally modify their methods to match the needs of these students, but the formal planning for differentiated tasks to ensure that progress made by these students is consistent is largely absent.
187. The subject has responded positively to the last inspection report and made satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained at Key Stage 3 and improved at Key Stage 4. Teaching has improved, and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. The curriculum has been modified at Key Stage 4 and this has led to improved standards of attainment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

188. The overall standards that students achieve at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are below the level indicated in the Locally Agreed Syllabus and well below the level expected at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16. Students' standards at Key Stage 4 are adversely effected by the time the school allocates to teaching the Locally Agreed Syllabus, which is insufficient for it to be studied in the breadth and depth necessary for its expectations to be reached.
189. The school offers religious education in its programme for the GCSE examination but there were insufficient numbers of students opting for the subject to form a group. In work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 3 at age 14 are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, and at the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16 they are well below them. Students' knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, of the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country, of their distinctive features, and of how their adherents' lives are shaped by their beliefs, is below the level expected at the age of 14, and well below the level expected at age 16. Their understanding of religious language, ideas and symbols, and their skills in applying religious insights to their own experience, and to that of others, are also underdeveloped.
190. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but they do vary from good through to unsatisfactory. Where teaching is strongest, teachers know clearly what they wish their students to learn, communicate their aims clearly to them, and have high expectations of them. They challenge students with a variety of interesting and demanding activities and tasks, and ensure that lessons get off to a business-like start, and a crisp pace maintained. Students respond positively to such demands on their intellectual and creative efforts. For example, in a Year 7 introductory lesson on daily life in Jesus' day, high expectations were established through review of students' targets for the previous unit of work, and initial negotiation of targets for the new unit. Students were then guided through a series of well-structured and interesting tasks, with appropriate time for each, including a quiz on their prior knowledge, and paired work demanding written responses to visual material. The work was pulled together well in a plenary session, where students were keen to contribute to discussion, and listened with respect to each others' views and opinions. As a result of the good challenge and use of time, students made good progress in understanding some of the characteristics of life in first century Palestine, including dress, occupations

and housing, and were able to enter empathetically into this very different culture.

191. The interest of Year 8 students was caught and held by a “Desert Island” project, exploring values and beliefs, and their pride in their work was evident in the high quality of its presentation. The overall task was well structured, and broken down into clearly defined activities for each lesson. Helpful teacher intervention and good judgement of the time appropriate to each task kept the lesson moving briskly on. The buzz of conversation was work-related, as students worked well together in pairs to complete the tasks. The inherent interest of the work, and the teacher’s high expectations and good management of time, led to students making good gains in understanding the connection between values and beliefs, and moral codes and law, and they were able to evaluate and prioritise rules for living in community.
192. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers’ expectations are low and the work they set students insufficiently challenging. Year 9 students, for example, studied marriage customs in different religions. The work was undemanding, being essentially knowledge based, with the outcomes being simple descriptive statements on a worksheet. Students were not stretched, and as a result, lost interest, and concentration. Much of their conversation was unrelated to the work, and noise levels became unacceptably high, impeding learning and progress. At the end of the lesson, students had gained a limited factual knowledge about choice of partner, dress, ceremonies and symbols in a number of religions. However, their understanding of why there were differences in practice between religions, and of how the beliefs of their adherents shaped their customs and influenced their lives, had not been advanced.
193. In some instances, teachers are unclear about their aims and lessons are insufficiently focused. For example, a Year 10 lesson on disability attempted to explore both the issues relating to the integration of the disabled into the community and also the problem of suffering for belief in God. Despite good use of a video clip from the film “My Left Foot”, which the students were visibly moved by, the split objectives resulted in neither aspect of the topic being pursued in the depth or rigour necessary to maintain their initial interest. Students’ concentration began to lapse as the direction of the lesson changed, and they did not make the gains in understanding of which they were capable.
194. The fortnightly intervals between lessons makes it difficult for teachers to motivate students and for students to sustain interest, build on their prior attainment, and make progress over time. The leadership of religious education has some unsatisfactory features. The monitoring and evaluation of the subject’s performance has been ineffective in raising standards. At Key Stage 4, there is a shortage of textbooks, and, for timetabling reasons, difficulties in accessing information technology, which inhibit the development of students’ skills of independent learning, research and enquiry. There is also a shortage, at both key stages, of the artefacts necessary to help to bring the subject alive in the classroom.
195. The subject has made unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection report. The provision of sufficient time for teaching the Locally Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 4 was a key issue at the previous inspection and the school has not effectively addressed it. Adequate provision is made for teaching the Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 3, but, as a consequence of an element of some unsatisfactory teaching, standards of attainment are lower than at the previous inspection.

THE NURSERY

196. The school runs a local education authority nursery that has places for 40 part-time children. Twenty children attend each morning and another group of 20 attend each afternoon. Children from a wide catchment area gain admission to the nursery through an admissions panel. One full time teacher and one full time nursery nurse staff the nursery. Parents often volunteer to help and the nursery is well regarded in the community.
197. The children that enter the nursery represent the full cross section of society and have attainment that is average overall. By the time they move on to primary school at the age of five, many of the children have attainment that is higher than expected for their age in one or more of the desirable outcomes for learning. The nursery has made good progress since the last inspection; all areas identified for improvement have been addressed effectively; and the school now makes very good provision for children under the age of five. The strength of the provision is the quality of teaching. The teaching team works at such a consistent level of quality that is judged to be very good overall. Through this consistent, calm and positive approach, children sustain concentration for long periods of time and work productively with one another, co-operating effectively and behaving very well.

198. Children all achieve higher levels of personal and social development than expected for their age. Those new to the nursery learn the class routines very quickly and learn to get on with one another very well. Children know to clear up after themselves and, for example, clear any spilt sand away without having to be reminded. During snack time, they pour themselves a drink and engage in conversation around the table with a high level of maturity. Those children using the art trolley choose their materials and handle paints responsibly. Sessions are designed so that children learn to make choices more and more and take greater control of their learning. During group activities, such as playing with a model castle, children play co-operatively and take full notice of one another. This high level of social interaction is the result of well planned teaching and high expectations for what children can achieve.
199. In conversation with one another, and with adults, children show speaking and listening skills at an appropriate level for their age. Nursery staff are very skilled in helping children to gain confidence in their communication. For example, a minority of children enter the nursery with delayed speech and language development, but quickly gain expertise and confidence so that they catch up and communicate as expected for their age. This confidence enables other children to address the whole group with clarity to announce, for example, 'we found wood-lice under the logs'. Children listen carefully during story time and think ahead to predict what may come next in the story. They gain a good awareness of books, handle them carefully and try to obtain meaning from the illustrations and text. There is a good focus on the teaching of reading skills and many children already know letter shapes and sounds, and recognise their own names in print. Well planned activities lead the children into practising mask making, colouring and writing skills. As a result, most of the children have skills above those expected for their age and write recognisable letter shapes. A majority are already writing their own names and trying to form other words for themselves.
200. Children are provided with many opportunities to develop and extend their mathematical knowledge. This leads to most of the children having number skills at a level usually seen in Key Stage 1. For example, a group of students playing 'skittles' without an adult were counting accurately the number of skittles they knocked down and calculating how many were left for their next turn. During registration, children count one another correctly to find how many are in school today. A minority then extend this and calculate how many would be present if other children had arrived. Teachers make sure that individual attainment is extended and one child adds and subtracts confidently using numbers to ten.
201. Children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, they explore the attractive and well designed outdoor area to investigate the creatures they may find in differing habitats. They discuss and record their findings, learning correct identification names quickly and using them consistently. During snack time, children discuss the fruits and vegetables they eat and already name a large number correctly and compare and contrast their flavours and textures. Children follow well planned activities on the computer and show good mouse control for their age as they select and move items on the screen.
202. Children make good progress and develop creative skills above those expected for their age. The art trolley is a popular activity and children take great care with their painting. They are encouraged to develop their own ideas as well as learn skills through activities directed by their teachers. The paintings and models children make are attractive and well finished off. Some children draw carefully from observation and colour very accurately to produce very good records of the mini-beasts they find outside. Children enjoy singing and learn rhymes and songs quickly. They extend their creative ideas through co-operative play with puppets, in the home corner and with shared toys and games. Teachers value the ideas and suggestions children make and this encourages them to extend their imagination and expression.
203. Children develop physical skills that are appropriate for their age. Through creative and writing activities they learn successfully to control pencils, brushes, scissors and glue. Outdoor play activities are very well planned and through effective use of very good large toys, children learn to balance, pedal, run and control their movements with care. During each week, children also experience physical education lessons where they practice their movement and ball control skills.
204. Children respond very well to the daily routines of the nursery. They feel safe and secure and above all are happy in their learning. They want to be busy and are eager to learn and, as a result, work hard and give high levels of concentration. The high standards and the warm and positive atmosphere in the nursery are a direct result of very good teaching. Teachers know the children very well, assess their needs carefully and plan activities that are interesting and challenging to move childrens' learning forward at all times. Teachers organise the day very well and communicate most effectively so that children follow all the

activities provided with enjoyment and very good behaviour. Plenary sessions ensure that children tell and show others what they have done and so encourage others to try similar things for themselves. The curriculum provided is good and the nursery has very good links with parents and families of the children. Parents express extreme satisfaction with all aspects of the nursery and this is supported fully by the inspection. The provision is led and managed very well, benefits from very good links with students and teachers in the main school and is rightly, respected and valued within the community. Children do well, standards are high and the nursery provides very good value for money.