

INSPECTION REPORT

TEDDINGTON SCHOOL

Teddington

LEA area: Richmond-upon-Thames

Unique reference number: 102925

Acting Headteacher: Mrs. Judith Branch

Reporting inspector: Mr. J. M. R. Overend
12336

Dates of inspection: 20th – 24th March 2000

Inspection number: 186737

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Broom Road
Teddington
Middlesex

Postcode: TW11 9PJ

Telephone number: 020 8943 0033

Fax number: 020 8943 2999

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. Roger Sutton

Date of previous inspection: 22nd January 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
J. M. R. Overend	Registered inspector	Equality of opportunity	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
J. Lindsay	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Partnership with parents and carers
G. Binks	Team inspector	Geography	
A. Braithwaite	Team inspector	Physical education	Pupils' welfare, health and safety
P. Caspari	Team inspector	English	
		English as an additional language	
		Drama	
H. Davies	Team inspector	Religious education	
O. Hall	Team inspector	Art	
		Special educational needs	
P. J. Ingram	Team inspector	Science	Teaching and learning
B. Juxon	Team inspector	Mathematics	
N. Mayfield	Team inspector	Music	
T. Osgerby	Team inspector	History	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
R. Patterson	Team inspector	Design and technology	
		Information and communication technology	
J. Peach	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Teddington School is a mixed comprehensive school with 1164 pupils on roll. It is bigger than many other secondary schools. There are twice as many boys as girls in the school. Pupils are of mainly white ethnic origin. Fewer pupils than the national average (9.4%) are eligible for free school meals. The number with English as an additional language (2.2%) is a bit higher than in most schools and the number of pupils on the register of special educational needs, including those with statements (2.2%), is in line with the national position. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school, which is currently in a period of transition, is popular and oversubscribed. Standards of attainment are high. They are above the national averages at the ages of 14 and 16 and well above the averages for similar schools. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers work hard to maintain the high standards of attainment. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Overall these strengths outweigh the current weaknesses in the management of the school and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment are high.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to high quality learning.
- Teachers work hard to maintain high standards of achievement.
- The management of subject teaching is good.
- The school provides a wide range of extra curricular activities.
- There are good administrative and management procedures.
- Programmes for the induction of new staff and for staff development are effective.

What could be improved

- The behaviour and supervision of pupils at breaks and lunch times.
- The maintenance of the school building, especially the condition of toilets and drains.
- The spiritual development of pupils.
- The provision of information and communication technology and religious education at Key Stage 4 and of a daily act of collective worship.
- The effective operation of current management responsibilities.
- The marking of registers.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Sufficient improvements have been made in response to the report of the last inspection in January 1996. Standards of achievement have risen overall in external tests and examinations and pace has been injected into lessons. Development planning is more systematic and provides a satisfactory basis on which to move forward. It needs, however, to be linked more closely to financial planning and to encourage greater whole school involvement in the preparation of the plan. Pupils' moral development has improved but spiritual development remains weak. Religious education and a daily act of collective worship are still not provided for all pupils and pupils in Key Stage 4 do not receive their entitlement to information and communication technology. The minor issues of supervision at breaks and lunchtimes have not been rectified and the condition of much of the school building remains unsatisfactory. Absence has increased and relationships have deteriorated. Possible improvements have been inhibited by both leadership and financial

difficulties over the past two years. These are in the process of resolution and the school is now in a position to address those shortcomings identified in this report and not fully resolved from the previous one.

STANDARDS

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

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

Pupils attending the school achieve high standards in tests at the age of 14 and in GCSE examinations at age 16. Their results are above national averages and well above those of pupils in similar schools. Although high overall, performance varies between subjects. Results in English, art, geography, history, physical education and religious education are above the school's average performance levels. In design and technology, modern foreign languages and science they are below. Results have risen since the previous inspection in line with the rise in national results and the school is meeting the targets set for improvement. The highest attainers could achieve even higher standards with greater challenges and the lowest attainers could raise their achievements with more individual support in lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of pupils are interested and involved in all aspects of school life but a minority displays negative attitudes to the school as a whole.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons is good but not so good outside the classroom. There are reports of incidents of bullying, especially verbal bullying. Some pupils show little respect for staff or other pupils.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is satisfactory but there are few opportunities to exercise responsibility or to show initiative in lessons.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory overall and in line with national averages though there has been a rise in the level of unauthorised absence.

There has been some improvement in behaviour in lessons since the last inspection but behaviour around the school is unsatisfactory. Relationships are not always constructive and there is a lack of mutual respect on some occasions, which has an adverse effect on learning and the ethos of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good in two thirds of lessons and very good in 15 per cent. It is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons. Teaching is unsatisfactory or poor in less than five per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching is good in English, science, drama, geography, history, music and religious education. It is good in information and communication technology, in physical education at Key Stage 3, and in art and business education at Key Stage 4. In mathematics, modern foreign languages and design and technology, it is satisfactory at both key stages. The strategy for the teaching of literacy is good, that for the teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. The school effectively meets the needs of the great majority of pupils but there is a lack of additional support for pupils with special educational needs. The strengths of teaching include good planning, high expectations and effective teaching methods.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Although generally broad and balanced and open to all, the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements at Key Stage 4. There are good extra-curricular opportunities available for pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory though there is only a limited amount of additional in-class support available. Some statutory requirements regarding review and assessment are not met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Most of these pupils have a good command of English but where additional provision is required, it is matched to particular needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good, for moral and social development it is satisfactory but provision for spiritual development is weak.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides satisfactory care for its pupils. There are some behaviour and health issues that need to be addressed.

In general the school curriculum has breadth and balance but some statutory requirements for information and communication technology and religious education are not being met. A wide range of extra curricular activities is available for pupils and residential and overseas visits are both valuable and popular. The curriculum is fully available to all pupils. Parents are well informed about the work of the school and many give active and informed support. They appreciate the care the school gives to its pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Expedient decisions made in the last nine months have reduced the size of the senior management team and exposed some weaknesses at this level.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors exercise their responsibilities fully and have good procedures to ensure they play a full part in the management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is regular, but informal review of the work of the school and teachers and development planning is improving. Although good quality data is available on standards achieved, not enough use is made of it to challenge pupils or to inform target setting.
The strategic use of resources	Recent reductions in the finance provided for the school have restricted the options available in terms of staff and resources for learning.

An adequate number of teaching and non-teaching staff is employed at the school, the levels of resources for learning are satisfactory but many are in need of replacement or updating. There has been insufficient expenditure on the maintenance of the buildings in recent years and urgent attention is required to the state of toilets and drains. Overall, accommodation is adequate but the quality of teaching suffers from a number of small sized and scattered rooms. There are effective strategies to ensure that best value is sought when making purchases. There are good overall systems through which management is organised both within the school and the governing body but there are weaknesses in the way current management operates that arise from the need to make speedy, expedient decisions in the light of a deficit budget and the resignation of the previous headteacher. Some of the consequences of these decisions have only recently surfaced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High standards of attainment. • Teaching of good quality. • The provision of extra-curricular activities. • The way the school cares for pupils. • Residential experiences. • Transfer arrangements from primary education. • They can approach the school with concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management. • The behaviour of pupils. • The provision of homework. • Information about progress. • The response of the school to some of their concerns.

Inspectors confirm parents' views about what pleases them most and their concerns about standards of behaviour and some of the features of leadership and management that parents wish to see improved. Homework, however, does not require improvement. It is set and marked regularly and complements the work done in lessons. The school makes every effort to provide information about the progress of pupils and offers more opportunities than most schools through weekly surgeries and formal consultation evenings for parents, to discuss the progress of pupils. It meets the statutory requirements for reporting to parents annually.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards achieved by pupils at the school are good. They are above those obtained nationally and by pupils in similar schools in both national tests at the age of 14 and in the examinations of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) at the end of Key Stage 4. Since the previous inspection standards achieved in public tests at the end of Key Stage 3 have risen in line with the national trend while results in GCSE examinations have risen at a higher rate than nationally. The school has maintained its high levels of achievement during the last twelve months.

2. Pupils entering the school at the age of 11 attain standards above the national average. Although many local parents choose to send their children, particularly girls, to local single sex schools in neighbouring local educational authorities or to private education, there is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls when they enter the school. The school receives few pupils of below average levels of attainment.

3. Results in GCSE examinations taken at the end of Key Stage 4 are well above the national average for boys and above the national average for girls. For all pupils they are well above the national position and have remained so for the past three years both in terms of the number of grades awarded at levels A* to C and the average points score achieved by pupils taking the examinations. In recent years, including 1999, when results fell slightly, the proportion of pupils at the school gaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C and A* to G was well above the national position. In this respect the school has added value to the educational achievements of pupils during the key stage. In comparison with the results obtained by pupils in similar schools to Teddington, the results obtained in GCSE examinations are well above those for grades A* to C, above those for grades A* to G and well above the average in terms of the points scored per pupil.

4. Within the overall good standards achieved by pupils from the school there are variations in the relative performance in different subjects. In the core subjects results in English are better than those in mathematics and science and in mathematics better than those in science. Overall results in art, geography and history are significantly better than those in all other subjects and in design and technology, modern foreign languages and science below. In recent years the overall performance of boys has been better than that of girls but this is not universally the case. This is partly because boys have taken more advantage of additional lessons provided by the school outside normal school hours. Results vary from year to year and between subjects. Overall there is little difference in the standards achieved by pupils of different gender.

5. At the end of Key Stage 3 at the age of 14, attainment for both boys and girls in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is well above the national averages and is rising in line with the national trend. The achievements of pupils at this stage of their education are in advance of those in all other schools by about nine months. Although the results obtained in public tests at the end of the key stage fell slightly in 1998 they were well above in 1999. The performance of both boys and girls exceeds the national position with that of boys slightly above that of girls, partly because there are more boys in teaching groups that reflect higher levels of attainment. Results at the end of this key stage are very high in comparison to the average achieved in similar schools in English, mathematics and science. Levels of attainment are highest in English and currently better in mathematics

than in science. In other subjects the results of assessment by teachers show that pupils, by the end of Key Stage 3 are achieving good standards, particularly in geography, history and information and communication technology, but less so, though satisfactory, in design and technology and modern foreign languages.

6. Pupils with special educational needs reach satisfactory standards of achievement and those with English as a second language reach the same standards as their peers as many of them are bilingual, having no difficulty in understanding or using English. Although many departments, such as history and music, provide materials at levels appropriate to their needs, the standards achieved by pupils with special educational needs are not as high as they might be. This is because pupils, especially those on stages 2 and 3 of the register of special needs, receive inadequate additional support in lessons and targets in individual educational plans are not sufficiently focused towards subjects. Achievement for pupils in the Year 7 literacy scheme withdrawal programme is good. Pupils taking the study skills option in Key Stage 4 achieve satisfactory standards overall and many are successful in external examinations. Pupils with special needs respond well to individual and small group support in the literacy, 'Successmaker' and study skills programmes. Pupils are keen to improve their reading, spelling, writing and numeracy skills.

7. The standard of oracy is good. Pupils speak fluently and can easily express their thoughts as most have a well-developed vocabulary which they use accurately. They discuss capably in most subjects, correctly using appropriate technical terms. A good example of this was seen in a history lesson where there was a lively balloon debate. Occasionally speech is very rapid and words are not fully pronounced. Some attention is paid to public speaking and competitors are entered for the local Rotary Club's annual "Youth Speaks" competition. Pupils mostly listen attentively and when they do so, the quality of their listening is high.

8. The standard of reading is generally good. Across all subjects pupils read with ease and understanding from both the printed page and the Internet. Borrowing rates from the school library have risen in the last eighteen months, especially at Key Stage 3, and pupils who are engaged in preparing project work make very good use of this facility. In their first term in the school they are given a good induction course on how libraries are organised. They know how to find information by means of books and computers. When in difficulties, they consult the librarian.

9. The standard of writing is good. The majority of pupils write fluently and legibly in standard English. They are skilled at taking notes, especially in physical education where these are extensive. Many opportunities are given for extended writing, especially in English, science, history and geography. Presentation is often good but is sometimes poor. Spelling is sometimes surprisingly inaccurate in work that has otherwise been very competently executed. The majority of pupils punctuate and paragraph quite well. Use of word processors brings significant improvement to the work of all pupils, especially those of lower or average attainment.

10. Pupils enter the school with above average standards of numeracy. These are continually developed not only in mathematics lessons but also by using mathematics in some other subjects. For example, in physics pupils measure volumes and temperature, substitute in formulae, solve equations and construct graphs and bar charts for electricity, motion and energy. In chemistry they use equations and formulae. In geography they collect data and construct and interpret graphs and bar charts. In information technology they use spreadsheets, formulae and evaluate costing. In design and technology they measure areas and volumes and calculate scale. In physical education graphs are used to

compare performances in different activities. In these and other activities pupils show above average competence with number and use graphs effectively. By the end of Key Stage 4 almost all pupils have well developed numeracy skills which they use confidently.

11. In science at Key Stage 3, pupils construct electrical circuits for lighting lamps, take meter readings accurately and tabulate their results. They comprehend the action and functions of muscles in both humans and animals. They understand the importance of removing oxygen in the reduction processes used in the extraction of metals from their ores. Number and graphical work of a good standard is used extensively throughout the key stage. Pupils use and substitute observational values in formulae, use all types of graphs well to show the results of experiments, for example temperature changes on heating and cooling, and they can accurately observe and record results and describe their observations in single sentences. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have built on the work undertaken earlier in the school although not all grasp the differences between power and energy, and electrical charge and electrical current, even though the importance of transmitting electrical energy at high voltage is fully explored. They continue to record well such items as voltage readings and to tabulate them for different metal electrodes to work out which metals are more reactive than others. Number work is extended from Key Stage 3 to calculations on motion, electrical properties and the balancing of chemical equations. Graphical work is further developed to describe motion and electrical properties, and by the use of scatter graphs in a study of photosynthesis. By Year 11 investigative work is better than in many other schools and writing by pupils to describe their work and findings is more extensive.

12. Standards of attainment are good in most subjects because the quality of teaching is good and teachers work hard to ensure that work is regularly marked, expectations are high and the planning of lessons is thorough. The pace of lessons has improved since the last inspection. Despite the concerns of some parents, teachers make good use of homework to extend work undertaken in lessons and a variety of teaching strategies keeps pupils interested and motivated. There is less disruption in lessons than at the time of the previous inspection, though this does still occur.

13. Attainment is very good in history, geography and religious education at both key stages, though the time available for these subjects at Key Stage 3 is lower than that recommended. Pupils in geography have a good understanding of place, they can interpret and analyse data well and can argue successfully from the evidence they collect. In history pupils learn well because teachers insist on high standards and through good skills of historical research and analysis. In religious education in Key Stage 3, and in external examination courses at Key Stage 4, pupils have a good knowledge of religious beliefs and practices and the ways in which religious and moral issues affect the lives of people. Pupils have good sketch book skills in art, they achieve good standards in three-dimensional work and compose well, but their systematic drawing skills are under developed. Learning and attainment are good at both key stages in music as the pace of lessons is good and pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. They enjoy listening to each other and cooperate well in a range of musical activities. Learning is enhanced through extra-curricular activities such as ensemble work, singing and school performances. Pupils have the skills to play games in physical education but their knowledge of tactical play is less well developed. They often have high standards in dance and gym, especially at Key Stage 3, and they plan and evaluate their work well, but this aspect of learning does not progress sufficiently well into Key Stage 4 unless they are pressured by teachers.

14. Learning is more variable in design and technology; mechanisms are not always well constructed, machinery is not accurately aligned and the quality of soldering is not

consistent. On the other hand, there is some innovative work with resistant materials, such as in the production of storage systems, a music support tree and the use of jigs to cut slots in plastic tubes. In information and communication technology the quality of learning suffers because there is no discrete teaching of the subject in Years 8, 10 and 11 and the lack of equipment in classrooms discourages its use within the teaching of subjects. It is well used in business education in Key Stage 4 where pupils have a good grasp of word processing and the construction and use of data bases but there is insufficient use of information and communication technology in mathematics, science and geography. While the standards achieved by boys in modern foreign languages have risen in the last two years those of girls have declined. Overall pupils make less progress in the skills of speaking and writing than in those of listening and reading. They are not helped by too much copying of material and some inconsistency and the lack of helpful comments in the marking of their work.

15. The lack of challenge for some of the highest attaining pupils mentioned in the last inspection report still exists, partly because insufficient use is made of the good statistical data available in the school to set realistic targets for pupils who are reaching high standards, and partly because teaching does not always provide tasks which stretch pupils. In some subjects, such as geography, the standards achieved by pupils in coursework which they undertake themselves, are higher than those achieved in lessons. In other subjects, such as mathematics, design and technology, and modern foreign languages, there is insufficient challenge for these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall and the majority of pupils are interested and involved in school life, with many participating in extra-curricular activities. Particularly where teaching standards are high and class control is effective, pupils concentrate well on their work and the tasks they are set. This was evident in a Year 8 religious education lesson where pupils were looking at symbols and saints. They remained interested in their work, listened well, talked about their work enthusiastically and applied themselves eagerly to the tasks set for them. At the beginning of the inspection, two girls very politely and without adult intervention, welcomed two inspectors to the school and were obviously eager for the school to be seen in a good light. There are occasions, however, when a minority of boys displays negative attitudes to their lessons and the school as a whole, which can have implications for others around them. Movement around the school is not always purposeful and a minority of pupils shows a lack of enthusiasm for arriving in class on time. Corridors are not consistently well supervised by staff and this, combined with an inconsistent approach to tardy pupils, can lead to a feeling of a lack of urgency.

17. Behaviour in the classroom remains good in the majority of lessons and there were fewer lessons observed during this inspection that were disrupted by poor behaviour than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs behave co-operatively and are keen to improve their reading, spelling, writing and numeracy skills.

18. However, the school has not addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection relating to behaviour outside the classrooms. There is still a lack of adequate adult supervision at break times and the introduction of closed circuit television does not seem to have had any impact on behaviour. The problem remains of toilets being taken over by smokers and also being vandalised even after pupils themselves had decorated them. Younger pupils continue to feel intimidated by older ones and pupils from nearly every year group reported incidents of bullying. There are no indications that racist or sexist intimidation occurs. Parents are also very concerned about the standards of behaviour in

the school as was evident from many comments made on pre-inspection questionnaires and at the parents' meeting. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour during the inspection, such as the setting off of fire alarms and an attack on one pupil by another, as well as many immature comments and acts, lead to a judgement of unsatisfactory behaviour.

19. The number of exclusions from school has fallen since the last inspection with a big drop particularly in the number of permanent exclusions. Several recent temporary exclusions are the result of the school's problem with a proliferation of graffiti. The school adopts the correct procedures when pupils are excluded and a high level of support, including from outside agencies, is available to assist pupils. The discipline committee of the governing body and the headteacher carefully monitor reasons for exclusions and the pupils involved.

20. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory although the school has few formal roles of responsibility and no sense of developing responsibility as pupils mature. The school is represented at the Richmond school parliament, there are year council representatives from each form and also school council representatives but there is no system of prefects or a house system to give older pupils responsible roles. One good area of personal development is the "buddy" system. This involves Year 9 pupils befriending pupils in Year 7 when they are new to the school. It is successful and is appreciated by the younger pupils but involves only two or three pupils from each form group. Year 10 pupils organised and performed a recent show in the school and there are several non-uniform days to raise funds for charities selected by the school council. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative in class are limited, however, and do not provide a strong platform to enhance personal development further.

21. Relationships in school have deteriorated since the previous inspection and are now unsatisfactory. Whilst the majority of pupils relate well to each other and cooperate in class with many instances of effective working together seen in, for example, physical education lessons, there were several occasions where a lack of mutual respect was evident between teachers and pupils, and amongst pupils. When this occurs in class, for example in a Year 10 design and technology lesson, learning is adversely affected. Pupils are not always prepared to accept the views of others in small group discussions as was evident in a Year 7 personal and social education lesson on the subject of smoking, when an argument became over-heated resulting in one boy slapping another. Relationships in the playground continue to be dogged by incidents of intimidation and a lack of respect for the feelings of others, although this is not targeted at any particular groups such as pupils with special educational needs or from different races.

22. Attendance at the school has declined since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory rather than good. Both the authorised and unauthorised absence figures have risen since the last report, the latter more than the former. Registers are called correctly at registration periods but not all registers conform to legal requirements in that there are many incidences of pupils without a mark against their name in the documents that were inspected. The school does not ensure consistency, or fully meet the statutory requirements, for the marking of registers. An analysis of attendance by year group is undertaken and the school is aware of where the biggest problems lie in relation to attendance. The education welfare officer visits on a weekly basis to meet with individual heads of year and works closely with the school on attendance matters.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching is very good in 15 per cent of lessons. Teaching is good in

two thirds of lessons and at least satisfactory in 95 per cent. Teaching is unsatisfactory or poor in less than 5 per cent of lessons. There is a consistent quality of good teaching in both Key Stages 3 and 4.

24. Teaching of good quality is especially found in English, science, drama, geography, history, music and religious education. It is good in information and communication technology and physical education at Key Stage 3 and in art and business education at Key Stage 4. In mathematics, modern foreign languages and design and technology it is satisfactory. Information communication technology is only taught in Years 7 and 9 giving a break in continuity in Key Stage 3 and a gap in specialist provision at Key Stage 4.

25. At both key stages teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. In the best lessons the enthusiasm teachers have for their subject is conveyed to pupils which in turn enables them to acquire good skills, knowledge and understanding. A revision lesson on 'Of Mice and Men' in English illustrates good teacher's knowledge, good rapport with pupils, good pace and expectations and a challenge to pupils to think about many of our current social problems. Pupils' intellectual efforts are demonstrated in most lessons as, for example, in history pupils have to consider the causes of events and their effects. This was particularly evident in a research project undertaken by Year 8 pupils on the 'Renaissance'.

26. The school has introduced new strategies to promote basic literacy across the curriculum. These are linked particularly to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All pupils are presented with a range of literature in English and make a good response to it. In science, the subject vocabulary is tested to ensure that words are correctly spelt. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory despite the lack of an overall school numeracy policy. Individual subjects such as science are providing good opportunities for the use of number and graphical skills. Despite the gap in specialist provision for information and communication technology at Key Stage 4, very good use is made of computers in business education, an improving use is made of them in geography, and in religious education computer work supports independent learning.

27. The effectiveness of teachers' planning is good in most subjects, being stronger at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Planning has weaknesses in mathematics at Key Stage 3, where insufficient regard has been given to the range of standards achieved by pupils in mixed ability classes and in design and technology, where the needs of higher attaining pupils are not recognised.

28. The management of pupils in lessons is at least satisfactory and is good on many occasions. Teachers have high expectations of, and secure the co-operation of, the great majority of pupils. Challenging behaviour by a small minority of potentially disruptive pupils requires good management to ensure that lesson objectives are achieved. In the unsatisfactory lessons, class management is not effective enough to ensure the full participation of all pupils in the work of the lesson.

29. The use of time is good in most lessons. There is good pace in learning notably in history, music and religious education and in both mathematics and physical education, there is good pace in the best lessons. In English the pace of lessons is crisp because objectives are clearly explained, teachers have a good understanding of the needs of all pupils and support, though limited, is focused where and when it is most needed. On occasion, in physical education, the pace suffers as teachers deal with challenging behaviour by some pupils and sometimes in other subjects, for example in English, mathematics and French, too much input by the teacher reduces the pace of the lesson.

30. Teachers and learning support assistants have good relationships with pupils with special educational needs and provide good support in a calm reflective environment. In the Year 7 literacy programme, teachers use effective questioning to check what pupils know and understand and encourage them to work to targets, for example, through regular tests on spelling, writing, word sounds and reading. There is some imaginative writing of a good standard on display showing a systematic development of extended writing skills. Behaviour in group work is managed well through teachers' encouragement and praise and the pace of learning in most lessons is good. Achievement is recorded regularly and pupils know how they are progressing through constructive marking and feedback. In lessons, there is insufficient planning between teachers and learning support assistants in many areas of the curriculum. Teachers make good use of information about the special needs of pupils. There are, however, insufficient subject specific targets on individual education plans and these plans are inconsistently used to identify work that matches pupils' specific needs.

31. The quality and use of assessment and marking of pupils' work are good. Comments made are generally helpful to pupils, as in for example religious education where comments enable pupils to see clearly where they have made errors and how they can improve on the quality of their work. Although there is a school marking policy departments adopt a variety of schemes in the assessment of pupils' work. There is regular monitoring of the marking of work by heads of subject departments. Good practice is found in evaluation sessions in art and in targets to improve spelling for pupils with special educational needs. Achievement in science is monitored on a regular basis with the results of end of topic tests. Good verbal feedback is given to pupils on their performances in physical education.

32. Homework is set on a regular basis and is used to re-inforce and to extend the learning that takes place in the classroom by the majority of teachers. Although a significant number of parents expressed concerns that insufficient homework is being set, good use is being made of homework to extend learning that takes place in the classroom. In all but a few cases homework is marked and corrected on a regular basis.

33. The quality of learning matches the quality of teaching. Pupils' interest in all their lessons is at least satisfactory and is good on many occasions. Most pupils concentrate for the whole lesson and want to succeed. Learning is enhanced, for example, by the good use of visitors to extend experiences and raise awareness in personal and social education and religious education, through the wide use of audio-visual material in geography, modern foreign languages and music and pupils' evaluation of their own work in drama and physical education. The increasing, though still limited, use of information and communication technology in some subjects, such as business education, geography and for special educational needs, together with occasions when pupils use the library as a learning resource without direct supervision of their teacher, are further examples of the means by which good quality learning takes place.

34. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The number of lessons judged to be of good quality has risen by one third and the number of less than satisfactory lessons has fallen from three to less than one in every ten. There is now a consistent quality of teaching across both key stages. Pupils' standards of achievement have risen since the last inspection and although there is some improvement in the challenge presented to higher attaining pupils, this aspect of teaching does not receive sufficient attention.

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

35. Whilst the quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are satisfactory across both key stages, some requirements of the National Curriculum are not being met. In Key Stage 3, there is no teaching of information and communication technology in Year 8 and the arrangements to provide it through subjects in Key Stage 4 is not being satisfactorily addressed. Religious education is not taught in Key Stage 4, except as a course leading to GCSE examinations. The present plan for a short course in the subject to commence in the next school year will not fully meet legal requirements until 2001. In design and technology, computer aided design/computer aided manufacture (CAD/CAM) and pneumatics are not taught. Overall, the curriculum in Key Stage 3 has satisfactory breadth, balance and relevance, but it is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4.

36. The equality of access and opportunity in the curriculum is satisfactory. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, study ten subjects at Key Stage 4, this includes a 'free' option choice, some of which is studied outside lesson time, for example, Latin which takes place at lunch time. Whilst the provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, the implementation is not consistent as programmes of work for many pupils on the register of special educational needs are not sufficiently well planned across the curriculum. Some lower attaining pupils, however, are steered towards a study skills course in Key Stage 4 rather than have a completely free choice in the free choice option column. The time allocation for the humanities subjects in Key Stage 3 of just over four per cent, is less than the recommended amount of six per cent. At Key Stage 4, modern foreign languages receive only just over 8 per cent of teaching time, which adversely affects the quantity of work covered and the opportunities for independent learning. The strategies for teaching literacy skills are good, whilst those for numeracy are satisfactory.

37. The extra-curricular activities provided by the school are good. There are many opportunities for pupils, often at lunchtime, to attend activities connected with their studies, for example, the clubs in art and science. In pursuit of equal opportunities girls are encouraged to attend a girls only computer club at lunch times. The school has a good provision of dance, drama and musical events. There are several visits run by subject areas, for example, fieldwork in geography, theatre visits in English, an exchange visit to France for over sixty pupils in Year 8 and appropriate local visits in religious education. The residential experience provided for all pupils in Year 7 is popular with both pupils and parents and makes a valuable contribution to the development of pupils in their first year in the school. Coaching of good quality is available in cricket, football and netball. There is a good range of sporting activity, including team sports, with approximately 45 per cent of the pupils in the school taking part in some way or other.

38. The provision for the personal, social and health education of pupils, which includes careers education, is satisfactory, although a current lack of direction makes implementation inconsistent. The school has satisfactory policies and teaching programmes for sex, drugs and health education.

39. As reported previously, the school is not providing a daily act of collective worship. The assemblies seen had a satisfactory spiritual content, but, although a short time for reflection was provided, there were no prayers, or hymn singing. Opportunities exist in English for pupils to discuss the deeper issues of life on earth and of living together. Religious education makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual development of pupils. As they discuss, they appreciate the need for a spiritual dimension in peoples' lives and the

sanctity of life. Schemes of work rarely incorporate a spiritual element. Overall there are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life. Consequently the provision for the spiritual development of pupils is weak.

40. On the other hand the school has improved the provision it makes for the moral development of pupils and there is satisfactory promotion of moral values across the curriculum, for example in English, where pupils consider the moral problems posed in their reading and in drama where discussions take place around moral issues such as those arising from the trial of Craig and Bentley. Good examples of moral issues were raised in history lessons as the history of medicine was studied in Year 11 and in geography as pupils discussed the moral and commercial arguments for deforestation of the world's rain forests. The teaching overall promotes a satisfactory emphasis on distinguishing right from wrong.

41. Social values are appropriately encouraged, with pupils working well together in the classroom. There are limited opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility, including a school council and a 'buddy' system, where older pupils support younger ones joining the school in Year 7. Consideration of current social problems as part of lessons in English, in geography through the study of world population movements and the results of natural disasters, promote the social development of pupils. It is further enhanced by local public speaking events, the provision of work experience for all pupils in Key Stage 4 and through contributions made by school productions and learning to live together on residential courses and other school visits. Those pupils representing their colleagues on the school council and the local school parliament benefit from the social interaction and responsibility these positions bring to their development.

42. There is good provision for the cultural development of pupils, especially multi-cultural education in religious studies, where there is a good study of other religions and visits to places of worship of different faiths. In Year 7, there are effective studies of native peoples of America in history. The music curriculum has a strong multi-cultural content through studies of music from a variety of different worldwide cultural traditions and in art much work has a multicultural focus through the study of classical European, native American and aboriginal designs.

43. The school has good links with the community. The governors are actively involved in the school and the monitoring by the curriculum sub-committee is satisfactory. The careers service, and the school careers coordinator provide good support for pupils from Year 9 onwards, counselling them about their educational choices, and there is an adequate range of careers literature available in the school resource centre. Work experience in Year 11 is viewed as a positive and valuable contribution to learning. Outside visits and speakers encourage the pupils to take an active part in the community. There are satisfactory relationships with partner institutions, particularly with the local further education college, where some 40 pupils in Year 10 follow courses leading to General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ). Parents and pupils are pleased with the close links the school has with feeder primary schools, some of which lie outside the Local Education Authority area, and the arrangements that are made for the transfer of pupils at age 11. Closer and financial links are currently being sought with a national organisation developing land adjacent to the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for the care and safety of its pupils.

Their welfare and safety are supported by a system in which tutors know their pupils well. Tutors generally stay with groups for the full five years and build up a clear picture of each pupil. Procedures for child protection are good and appropriate health and safety assessments ensure a safe working environment in classrooms. During the week of the inspection blocked drains were not dealt with quickly causing foul water to stand on the hard play area. Several boys' toilets were locked in the early part of the week, limiting the access for pupils. The poor maintenance and availability of toilets was raised by parents and in meetings of the school council. This issue has not improved since the last inspection.

45. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal and academic development are satisfactory. The form tutor is the key figure in this process. Pupils have a target setting interview each year and parents can attend. The targets provide a clear focus for improvement in both personal and academic development but are not always sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. In establishing targets, particularly for this latter group of pupils, not enough use is made of the information already available in the school on the performance of pupils. The good intentions behind these procedures often break down once the targets have been set as too often they are not reviewed for many months and the review process lacks rigour. Targets are not pursued with sufficient vigour and energy by staff and pupils to make them effective in improving performance.

46. The school has appropriate measures to encourage good attendance. The school works closely with outside agencies to reduce persistent absence. In general registers are marked regularly, but in a few cases registers were not completed at the end of each session as legally required. The school has a satisfactory behaviour policy and reacts quickly to instances of bullying and poor behaviour though many pupils claim that incidents of bullying go unreported. The active promotion of good behaviour has little prominence in school or in the personal and social education programme. The supervision of pupils at break times is limited and this situation is made worse by the difficult nature of the crowded site. Incidents of poor behaviour, by a minority of pupils, were observed during the inspection. Incidents are carefully recorded and dealt with by the heads of year but there is no process by which this data is monitored by the school overall to identify changing patterns in behaviour across the school.

47. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Subjects regularly assess pupils' performance and this information is well used by form tutors to monitor and support pupils. It is not often used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school has yet to use the considerable assessment data available to identify strengths and weaknesses in its overall performance and the performance of pupils. The school does not yet have methods of measuring its success at building on the good levels of attainment of pupils on entry to the school.

48. Pupils with special educational needs have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and most are well integrated into the life and work of the school. Pupils with behavioural difficulties, particularly those on stage 3 of the special needs register, have insufficient support and individual behaviour targets are insufficiently monitored. Provision for improving literacy is good though overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is not fully satisfactory because statutory requirements are not being fully met in the assessment and review of pupils on stages 2 to 3 of the register of special educational needs. Programmes of work for the large number of pupils identified at stage 1 on the register are inconsistently planned across subject areas. There are examples of good planning in art, geography, history and science. In mathematics, teachers are aware of the needs of pupils with special needs, though the lack of support, particularly in mixed ability

sets in mathematics where class numbers are high, has an adverse impact on the quality of attainment and achievement overall. The special needs department uses the expertise of external agencies appropriately.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The majority of parents are satisfied that the school provides a satisfactory education for their children and they are pleased with the standards of attainment and the good quality of the teaching. The school has developed effective links with parents, who feel that the school is approachable when they need to raise matters or express concerns. In addition to the weekly surgeries, general information evenings are held to discuss topics such as setting in subjects, or drugs and sex education. Regular newsletters are produced. The governors' annual report and the prospectus are satisfactory although the prospectus has one minor omission that is statutorily required.

50. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. Parents volunteer to help in the resource area, redecorate parts of the school and provide transport to sporting fixtures. The parent teachers' association is particularly active and donates very substantial amounts to school funds, raised through a covenant scheme as well as several fundraising events. These monies are presently being used to fund new equipment for information and communication technology. In addition to raising money, parents also support school events by providing refreshments. The majority of parents check and sign homework diaries on a regular basis and the home-school agreement that is in place has formalised parental involvement and their contribution to pupils' learning, which is good.

51. There is concern, however, from a significant minority of parents, about a decline in the standard of behaviour, including behaviour outside the school and on school buses. The inspection found that there are behaviour problems outside lessons, particularly at breaks and at lunchtimes that the school needs to address. Other parents are also concerned about homework, but in this respect, the evidence seen during the inspection shows homework levels to be good and the tasks set appropriate to enhance learning.

52. The school provides a good number of opportunities for parents to meet with staff to discuss progress and any concerns they may have. In this respect the weekly surgery provides a good opportunity for parents to meet with relevant staff. In addition, there are form tutor consultation evenings, subject teacher evenings and target setting days, where parents can be involved. Homework diaries are well used as a form of two-way communication. The annual written reports to parents, however, are unsatisfactory and to an extent endorse the negative views of some parents. In 1998/9 there was no reporting of the levels of the National Curriculum reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 levels in art and music or of progress in information and communication technology for pupils in Years 8, 10 and 11. The practice of using level 1 as the highest grade in mathematics in Year 8 on reports conflicts with the levels of the National Curriculum where 8 is the highest grade. This practice is sometimes confusing for parents.

53. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about the progress of their children and are fully involved when reviews take place.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The last twelve months have been a difficult period for the school. Decisions following the resignation of the previous headteacher and a large deficit in the school's budget dictated that management decisions were made in the interests of expediency

rather than for the educational development of the school. As a result some constraints have been placed on the way in which the school has worked over the past year. Despite these restrictions high levels of attainment by pupils have been maintained, the quality of teaching has improved and the school and its governors are committed to reducing the budget deficit and re-establishing stable management under a new headteacher.

55. Clear aims and objectives, policies and guidelines that are clearly communicated to parents through the school prospectus and staff handbook, guide the work of the school. The governing body is organised through a strong and effective committee structure that enables it to undertake its responsibilities seriously and to reach corporate decisions about the way forward for the school. Management structures within the school are good and a series of well-established and organised meetings ensures that information is shared among managers of all levels on a regular basis.

56. The full consequences of expedient decisions made to ensure the school functioned as effectively as possible during the current academic year have only recently surfaced. The staff have not fully adjusted to a change in management style which, combined with the increased workloads arising from the decision to enlarge some class sizes, has resulted in low staff morale. The reduction in size of the senior management team, the consequential increase in their workloads and a reorganisation of duties has exposed weaknesses and resulted in less effective management. In addition the re-organisation of management responsibilities within the school was not always appropriate. As a result, although levels of attainment have been maintained, there are signs of declining behaviour around the school, more casual attitudes to the wearing of school uniform, less respect for adults and an increasing amount of vandalism and graffiti in school toilets. These weaknesses in management are now beginning to be addressed.

57. Although recent major spending decisions have of necessity been linked to the need to reduce the financial deficit of the school, good progress has been made to ensure that the financial affairs of the school are restored to a satisfactory position. Longer term budget projections, savings made in the cost of staffing and in some other areas of expenditure, and an agreed programme of repayments indicate that the school is on schedule to successfully redress the financial position on or before the target date. Constraints on financial expenditure, however, have meant that much badly needed repair and maintenance of the school buildings has not taken place and some facilities, such as toilets and drains are a health hazard to pupils. The lack of major expenditure on this aspect of the school since the previous inspection has ensured that the environment in which pupils and staff work is generally unsatisfactory.

58. Development planning has improved since the last inspection with eight major areas for development. The plan is in place for three years and the school is now in the second year of the current programme. There is close cooperation between the school and governors in the production of the plan. Financial planning is not yet fully incorporated into the plan, there is a lack of criteria against which the success of the plan will be monitored, and little indication of how targets will be met, or progress reviewed. Department development plans incorporate school development targets, but with the exception of design

and technology and science, are not fully costed and some plans include only limited contributions to whole school targets.

59. Systems of financial control and the exercise of financial responsibilities are good. Financial management benefits from the appointment of a new finance officer and a responsible finance committee of the governing body, which plays a full part in the formulation of the budget. There are efficient systems for the ordering, receipt and payment for goods, for ensuring value for money for all purchases and for providing those with responsibilities for the expenditure of finance with regular information regarding the financial position within their budget area. As a result there is careful and effective monitoring of financial affairs. Funding from the Department for Education and Employment, which is designated for special purposes and for pupils with special educational needs, is spent appropriately. The latest audit report, which arrived in school during the week prior to the inspection, points to a small number of school based deficiencies in practice which the school accepts and has agreed to ensure are rectified by the end of the financial year.

60. The management of subject departments and year groups is generally good. There is good leadership overall and there is a clear sense of purpose and direction in many departments and years. There is regular monitoring of the work of teachers and pupils, schemes of work are well planned, effective planning and assessment, though carried out regularly, is however, insufficiently used to inform teaching. Good records of the attainment of pupils are available but insufficient use is made of such information to monitor overall progress across a range of subjects, to challenge pupils to reach higher levels of attainment or set precise targets for improvement. There is currently insufficient monitoring by senior managers of the work of those areas for which they are responsible. There are, however, regular, minuted meetings of managers which provide information on levels of performance and the work of departments and year groups. The appraisal of teaching staff is currently in abeyance and there are only skeletal job descriptions for posts that have been re-organised and generic job descriptions for all other staff. This is a weakness of management.

61. Because of recent disruption in the leadership and management of the special needs department, clear educational direction and monitoring of development has been inconsistent. There has been effective improvement since the last inspection in the development of a literacy scheme for special needs pupils and in the monitoring and evaluation of staff. Support staff, however, are not yet fully involved in the planning of lessons. A whole school programme of targets has been developed though these are not always specific for pupils with learning and behaviour difficulties and the time scale for monitoring progress is too long.

62. Arrangements for the professional development of staff, the induction of new teachers and the support given to newly qualified teachers are good. A regular review of the needs of both the school and individual teachers through subject departments leads to the development of a plan for in-service training. Training opportunities are open to all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching and regular whole school training on issues of importance, such as appropriate teaching strategies, are organised on training days. There is a good system of mentoring for newly appointed staff and a weekly series of meetings to familiarise them with school affairs and procedures and to provide support when required.

63. The number of teachers employed by the school is sufficient to teach the curriculum provided. Staff are well qualified, are effectively deployed and have an appropriate range of

subject expertise to teach all subjects on the timetable. The reduction in the number of teaching staff employed by the school has resulted in an increase in the number of teachers who teach more than one subject but there is no evidence to suggest that this is having a detrimental effect on standards. The number of technical and administrative staff is adequate to support the work of departments but there is an insufficient number of classroom assistants to provide help for pupils on the register of special educational needs, particularly when classes are large.

64. The school benefits from a good resources centre that is well supplied with texts and other material for research and teaching, including information and communication technology equipment that incorporates the 'Successmaker' programme for pupils with special educational needs. There is a very good television studio to assist the teaching of media studies and the music department has a good supply of audio-visual equipment and instruments. Resources for teaching are satisfactory, though many textbooks and atlases are now dated, particularly in science, geography and modern foreign languages. The number of computers in the school is growing as a result of increased expenditure on these items, but currently the re-furbishment of one computer room restricts the access to information and communication technology equipment for pupils. There are, however, too few computers in classrooms other than computer rooms. As a result subjects such as science, design and technology, geography and history are not able to make sufficient use of information and communication technology as part of their teaching programmes. The school's decision to provide information and communication technology teaching through subject departments in order to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in Key Stage 4 is not being implemented. There is no CAD/CAM equipment in design and technology, no data logging equipment for science and the sewing machines used for textiles are in need of repair.

65. There is sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of the school though much of it is in urgent need of re-decoration and re-furnishing. A commendable programme of self-help by parents and pupils is beginning to re-decorate some rooms and toilets and caretaking staff are undertaking a weekly programme of minor repairs. These efforts do not address major deficiencies such as worn floors in design and technology, the state of the astro-turf and the poor condition of toilets. Overall the poor condition of much of the school building and the small size of many teaching spaces adversely affects the quality of teaching and the environment in which pupils learn. Too often accommodation for a subject is scattered, as mentioned in the previous report, and where this is the case there are difficulties in sharing resources between teaching rooms.

66. Although plans are in hand for the new school year to include religious education for pupils in Year 10, the school does not meet statutory requirements for the provision of religious education for all in Key Stage 4. It does not provide an act of collective worship for all pupils each day. This was the case at the last inspection and no progress has been made to address these key issues. In addition, there are discrepancies in the marking of registers and the school does not meet the requirement to review and assess the progress of pupils on stages 2 and 3 of the register of special educational needs. In respect of information for parents, the school prospectus does not include information about the right to withdraw pupils from religious education and collective worship. Reports to parents do not currently include information about the levels of the National Curriculum being achieved by pupils in art, music and information and communication technology for some year groups.

67. In a period of transition the school has maintained standards of achievement that are above the national average at the end of both key stages. Results in national tests and

in GCSE examinations are well above those obtained in similar schools. Pupils' attainments on entry to the school are above average but pupils add value to their education as they proceed up the school. Although the amount of money made available to the school is above that received by many other schools in England, operating costs are more expensive than in other parts of the country. The education of pupils currently suffers from buildings that are in a poor state of repair, ageing textbooks and furnishings and a lack of certain essential equipment. Despite the efforts of a committed acting headteacher there are some weaknesses in leadership and management and development continues to be adversely affected by a deficit budget. Nevertheless, the school now has the potential to resolve both management and financial problems and is providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to improve the quality of education provided by the school, to maintain the high standard of achievement and to improve the personal development of pupils the governors, senior staff and teachers should:

- (1) Improve the behaviour of, and relationships between, pupils outside the classroom.
(Paragraphs: 18, 21, 28, 46, 48, 51, 56, 57, 61)
- (2) Seek ways to improve the condition and maintenance of the school buildings, furnishings and facilities.
(Paragraphs: 44, 57, 67, 105)
- (3) Meet the statutory requirements for;
 - an act of collective worship each day
 - information and communication technology and religious education at Key Stage 4
 - the assessment and review of pupils with special educational needs
 - the marking of registers.(Paragraphs: 14, 22, 24, 35, 39, 48, 64, 66, 89, 92, 120, 122, 123)
- (4) Resolve current weaknesses in the allocation of management responsibilities and the operational consequences of expedient decisions made recently.
(Paragraphs: 54, 56, 61, 67)

In addition to the above the school should address the following less important issues:

- Place a greater emphasis on the spiritual development of pupils in teaching, schemes of work and in lessons. (Paragraph: 39)
- Make greater use of available data to inform teaching and to provide greater challenge and more specific targets for pupils. (Paragraphs: 6, 15, 30, 45, 48, 60, 61, 87, 123)
- Strengthen development planning even further by incorporating financial information and involving all staff more closely in the development planning process. (Paragraph: 58)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	164
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14.7	49.3	31.1	4.3	0.6	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1164
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	120

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	28
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	202

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	30

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	45
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	50

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	1.6
National comparative data	1.1

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	7.0

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	145	85	230

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	131	115	119
	Girls	71	61	59
	Total	202	176	178
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	88 (91)	77 (80)	78 (80)
	National	63 (64)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	66 (67)	53 (55)	38 (39)
	National	28 (34)	38 (46)	23 (29)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	117	112	107
	Girls	63	62	59
	Total	180	174	166
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (81)	77 (78)	73 (79)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	42 (42)	50 (50)	38 (38)
	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	129	69	198

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	84	127	129
	Girls	39	62	65
	Total	123	189	194
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	62 (64)	95 (97)	98 (98)
	National	46.3 (44.6)	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 pupil	School	45 (46)
	National	37.8 (37)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	3
Indian	16
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	3
White	1109
Any other minority ethnic group	22

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	3	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	39	5
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	63.33
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	23

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	82
---	----

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	33
Key Stage 4	25

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	2 898 224
Total expenditure	2 959 264
Expenditure per pupil	2 617
Balance brought forward from previous year	34 804
Balance carried forward to next year	(26 236)

Figures in parenthesis indicate negative values

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1164
Number of questionnaires returned	506

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	54	8	5	2
My child is making good progress in school.	34	54	6	4	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	13	51	14	12	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	53	15	11	3
The teaching is good.	17	71	4	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	52	11	10	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	44	4	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	46	4	5	2
The school works closely with parents.	21	56	10	7	5
The school is well led and managed.	14	47	13	13	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	57	8	4	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	46	7	4	5

Other issues raised by parents

Many parents expressed concern about the impact of management decisions taken at the beginning of the school year.

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

ENGLISH

69. In the 1999 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C in both English language and English literature was well above the national average. During the past three years the percentages of both boys and girls gaining grades A* to C in GCSE English language have been well above the national average for their gender but showing different trends. Boys have achieved a marked improvement in their performance while the attainment of girls has declined by an almost similar amount, though still remaining significantly above the national average for girls. In English literature girls have consistently gained a higher percentage of A* to C grades than the national position for girls. In 1998 pupils of both gender, but especially boys, achieved exceptionally improved grades in English literature and very much higher than the national averages. In 1999, for the first time, the boys outperformed the girls in both English language and English literature. At the end of the key stage results in English are better than those in mathematics and science.

70. Pupils perform consistently well in public tests and examinations in English at the end of both key stages. In the national tests in English at the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' results, in 1999, were very high compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching National Curriculum levels 5 or 6 and above was, in each case, well above the national average. Both girls and boys achieved well above the national average for their gender. When compared with the other core subjects over the last four years, performance in the English tests has steadily improved and, in 1998 and 1999, attainment in English was higher than in both mathematics and science.

71. The quality of teaching is good or very good in the great majority of lessons. Where the teaching is very good, all pupils make progress because a crisp pace is maintained, activities are varied to keep interest alive and objectives are well understood. In such lessons the teachers have good understanding of the needs of all pupils and plan carefully so that support may be focused where it is most needed and challenge is provided to match the abilities of all present. Expectations are high. Teaching is less successful where activities are not sufficiently varied to maintain interest, where the teacher talks too much and so prevents the pupils from making their own contributions or where the lesson is disrupted by the presence of too many pupils with a low attention span and requiring individual support. Where support teaching exists, it is of very good quality but the scarcity of support staff is a serious weakness in provision for pupils, especially those with special educational needs.

72. The quality of learning is mostly good. At Key Stage 3 standards of achievement are satisfactory and at Key Stage 4 they are good. The teachers work as a cohesive team to provide for learning in all attainment targets. Soon after pupils arrive in the school their reading ages are established. The majority read and write in line with, or above the national expectation but, where performance is below that standard, extra help with literacy is arranged either by support or withdrawal from lessons. By these means all pupils, including those for whom English is a second language, are enabled to make progress appropriate to their abilities and needs. Reading aloud in role is mainly fluent but lacking in expression. Teachers lay great emphasis on reading and, at both key stages, many tasks are set which require pupils to read and write discriminatingly. A particularly fine example of this was seen in an extended essay written by a girl in Year 9. She gave her own response to '1984' by George Orwell and showed a capacity to describe and analyse which was well in

advance of her years. That this policy has considerable impact on pupils' learning is indicated by the very high standard of their evaluative powers by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 3 and by the generally good quality of their writing. At both key stages pupils' work shows continuous improvement as they learn to write in a variety of forms for different audiences and for many purposes. Their construction of sentences and use of punctuation are mostly sound but in some cases spelling remains erratic. The majority presents work well and many enhance it skillfully by means of word processors. Homework is very well marked, with constructive, diagnostic comment and good guidance on how to improve its standard. In most lessons throughout the school the standard of oracy is very good and pupils listen well. They speak confidently and their accurate use of a wide vocabulary was noted in nearly all subjects. Most can discuss constructively and defend a point of view. At Key Stage 4 they empathise well with characters in novels and plays they are studying and have some understanding of the psychological complexities of motivation. Pupils of all levels of attainment gave good evidence of this as they revised 'Of Mice and Men' by John Steinbeck or 'To Kill a Mocking Bird' by Harper Lee. Those following the new course in media studies at Key Stage 4 are doing very good work and enjoy deconstructing media text and analysing films.

73. The English department is well organised to provide learning opportunities for all pupils and makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Teachers draw attention to the deeper issues underlying life on earth such as the nature of duty and the difficulties which arise between people of different gender, race, creed, culture or class. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available including theatre trips, visits from actors, an annual book week, public speaking and extra classes. Relationships between staff and pupils are mostly good and foster progress. The teachers are committed to raising standards and to the well-being of their pupils.

74. A positive response has been made to the last inspection. Since then a development plan has been devised and is being followed to good effect. Schemes of work have been amended to improve the pace of lessons. A comprehensive language policy is now in place to target and provide for those who need extra help with literacy. A group reading project, which involves help from parents, encourages pupils to research on their own initiative, often making use of the school library. GCSE results have been improved, especially the performance of boys, by focusing on underachievers in Year 11 and inviting them to participate in extra-curricular lessons. Media studies has been introduced as an examination subject for GCSE. Information communication technology has been successfully integrated into the English syllabus at Key Stage 3 but is not yet properly in place for Key Stage 4. Currently in preparation is a scheme for earlier identification of high attainers and the provision of more extension work for them.

75. The most important area for further improvement is to increase the amount of learning support in the classroom. Other requirements include increased use of information and communication technology on a more organised, regular basis, especially at Key Stage 4, more attention to improving the skill of reading expressively; a whole school drive on spelling, and the development of more cross-curricular activities.

Drama

76. Over the last three years the proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in the GCSE examinations in drama has been consistently at, or just below the national average for all schools. During that time, the performance of boys has improved considerably so that in 1998 they were in line with the national expectation for boys and in 1999, for the first

time, above the national average for boys. The performance of girls has shown an opposite trend and in 1999, for the first time, dropped slightly below the national position for girls.

77. The quality of teaching is good or very good. Some of the best teaching was seen when teachers allowed pupils to exercise their creativity to the full. An example of this was shown in a class where pupils in Year 11 were preparing for their GCSE examination and several boys gave lively performances as soldiers while other pupils were occupied with design projects for sets or costume. Good teaching by example was observed in an improvisation class which the teacher began with a ten minute talk on Bertolt Brecht, illustrating her remarks with animated actions and impersonation. This set a good standard for the pupils whose subsequent work reflected the lively start and all remained on task throughout the lesson. Many pupils perform particularly well in groups and inspire one another so that their language, awareness of others, body language and vocal control are enhanced. This was seen when Year 8 groups enacted their own versions of the banquet scene in 'Macbeth' by William Shakespeare. The result was a surprising blend of the story by Shakespeare and the language of P. G. Wodehouse. In lessons pupils listen well, speak confidently and audibly and many move expressively. All classes show familiarity with the process of preparing, performing and evaluating, which forms the basis of drama.

78. The standard of achievement is very good at both key stages. The teachers know their pupils' particular needs and take care to assign them tasks that provide appropriate individual challenge. Where necessary they consult the special needs coordinator. Those for whom English is a second language blend easily with the rest of the class and are quickly assimilated because the majority of these pupils are bilingual. Homework is set at both key stages and some good written work is produced, showing evidence of thought, imagination and personal research. Pupils write good performance diaries and evaluations of what has been achieved by themselves and their peers. Some of their written work is very well presented especially when use is made of information and communication technology. The standard of marking is good and there is plenty of comment indicating how improvement may be achieved. Continuous assessment of pupils' work informs teaching so that the great majority makes appropriate progress. Drama makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education at both key stages. Pupils value the subject and regard it as having a beneficial moral effect on them. This was exemplified in the discussions of groups preparing to enact aspects of the Craig and Bentley trial. The techniques they study in drama, such as how to convey the thoughts and feelings of a character in a variety of ways, are of use also in media studies and English literature.

79. The head of department was recently appointed and has made a good start in her new post. The three drama teachers are a successful team who lead their pupils through a well structured syllabus. At Key Stage 3 the curriculum focuses on improvisation, on working from scripts and on technical design. It is organised as a preparation for the GCSE course. Very good schemes of work are followed and the subject is well resourced.

80. Since the last inspection the department has maintained its good standards but there are some aspects which require improvement. The most important of these is the lack of support staff for pupils who need extra attention such as those of lower attainment or special educational needs. The drama section in the library is very small for the size of the school. Written projects make insufficient use of information and communication technology for research and presentation.

MATHEMATICS

81. GCSE results in 1999 for A* to C and A* to G grades were above the national average for all schools. They were similar to the results in 1998 and at the time of the last inspection. Overall results, when compared to national averages, are above those for the same pupils in other subjects. The results for boys are better than the results for girls. Results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were well above the national average at all levels. They were very high when compared to similar schools. They were above those obtained in 1998 and at the time of the last inspection. There is no significant difference between the results for boys and the results for girls. In 1999 results in mathematics at the end of both key stages were below those in English but better than those in science.

82. In lessons and other work the overall attainment of pupils is above the national expectation at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 3 almost all pupils have acquired basic number skills. Lower attaining pupils understand and use decimals, fractions and percentages. They construct and interpret graphs and bar charts and evaluate probabilities. They use calculators to solve problems. Other pupils reach standards equal to or above those expected. Higher attaining pupils use Pythagoras theorem and trigonometry to solve problems involving right-angled triangles. They factorise and simplify algebraic expressions and solve equations. Many reach standards that are well above those expected. By the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils have good data handling skills. They construct cumulative frequency graphs to find medians and quartiles. They also evaluate areas and volumes of prisms and cones and solve quadratic equations. Investigational skills are above average, pupils suggest their own questions and follow their own lines of enquiry. Higher attainers generalise their solutions, testing and justifying their results.

83. Although the quality of teaching and learning is good in almost one-half of lessons it is not always satisfactory at Key Stage 4. It is similar, overall, to that at the time of the last inspection. Teachers are well qualified and have good expertise to teach their classes effectively. They plan their lessons well. They introduce them clearly giving suitable examples to illustrate methods. For instance in a Year 11 lesson of lower attaining pupils equations were represented as the two pans of a pair of scales. By adding and subtracting weights pupils were helped to understand the methods used to solve equations and effective learning took place. Most lessons have clear objectives which pupils understand. This enables pupils to settle down quickly and focus on their work. Individual learning lessons in Years 7 and 8 are usually well organised. Teachers give satisfactory support and encouragement and most pupils make sound progress. In other Year 7 and 8 lessons teachers have difficulty in effectively challenging the wide range of attainments in classes. This limits the effectiveness of oral work and higher attaining pupils sometimes fail to make the progress of which they are capable. In other lessons, teachers strike a good balance between class teaching and pupils working independently. This helps to sustain the interest of pupils and enables them to learn effectively. Occasionally teachers spend too long class teaching leaving too little time for pupils to work independently. This limits their learning and progress. Most teachers have good class management skills and control their classes effectively. They make good use of questioning to emphasise important points and help pupils to clarify their ideas. They mark and assess work regularly and this assists pupils to identify and correct errors. Homework is set regularly. It is appropriate and helps to reinforce the work covered in class.

84. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons. They have good attitudes to their work and want to make progress. They react positively to good teaching and ask questions to advance their learning. Higher attaining pupils often persevere determinedly with difficult

problems. Concentration is good in the early part of most lessons although sometimes it weakens later, particularly if pupils are insufficiently challenged. Pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers and respond willingly to suggestions for improvement. In some lessons collaboration between pupils assists learning.

85. The department is well led. Relationships are good and staff are mutually supportive and committed to raising standards. The ethos for learning is positive and supports the school's aims. The curriculum is broad and balanced for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Setting arrangements are good in Years 9 to 11 and support teaching. There are sufficient good quality books and resources.

SCIENCE

86. Standards in science of pupils on entry to the school are above national averages. They are above national averages at the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 as indicated by the results in national tests and examinations, evidence from exercise books and course work, and observation during the week of the inspection. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards for boys have been consistent over the last three years but standards for girls have fluctuated and overall are slightly less than those for boys. At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils awarded higher grades (A* to C) in GCSE examinations increased during the period 1997 to 1999 and was above national averages in 1999. Standards of boys were higher than those of girls in both 1998 and 1999. This reverses the position in 1997. Although standards in science are below those in English and mathematics at both key stages, there has been an improvement since the previous inspection report.

87. Achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory with respect to prior standards at both key stages. Different materials support their work but there is a lack of in-class support in the majority of lessons. Their achievements are recorded on a regular basis but these pupils are not set targets in a systematic way for the improvement of scientific skills. Pupils are grouped successfully in Years 9 to 11 according to their prior attainments and this practice enables the introduction and teaching of topics to be varied accordingly.

88. Learning during the week of the inspection was good at both key stages. At Key Stage 3, pupils constructed electrical circuits for lighting lamps, took meter readings accurately and tabulated their results. This enabled them to draw the necessary conclusions as to the correct connections for the lamps. In a contrasting topic, pupils examined the action of human arm muscles and compared this to the action of a bird's wing. Pupils are made aware of the importance of removing oxygen in the reduction process in the extraction of metals from their ores. Number and graphical work of a good standard is used extensively throughout the key stage. Pupils use and substitute observational values in formulae for the densities of objects, pressures exerted by forces, and the turning effects of forces. Pie charts are used to show the composition of the air. Column graphs are used to show the distribution of living creatures and different hair colours. Line graphs are used to show temperature changes during both heating and cooling, how springs are extended by forces and to describe the movement of objects. Observations are taken accurately and pupils are starting to appreciate the importance of recording results to an appropriate degree of accuracy. Pupils describe their observations in single sentence answers but some opportunities are missed for extending this work.

89. In Year 11, pupils obtain information on inherited diseases and other aspects of inheritance and in one lesson they reported back to the whole class using correct scientific language and with good standards of speech. The importance of transmitting electrical energy at high voltage and the use of transformers to achieve this is fully explored. In another revision class, however, pupils were unclear about the difference between power and energy and electrical charge and current, and these concepts required careful explanation by the teacher. Pupils record voltage readings and tabulate them for different metal electrodes to deduce which metals are more reactive than others. Number work is extended from Key Stage 3 to calculations on motion, electrical properties and the balancing of chemical equations. Graphical work is further developed to describe motion and electrical properties. The line of best-fit in scatter graphs is used successfully to show the effect of a light source on photosynthesis in plants. Investigations in science provide an opportunity for higher attaining pupils to write extensively, present numerical values in standard form and all investigative work is of national average standard or better. Opportunities for the use of information and communication technology are limited to measurements of motion and the demonstration of waves. Given the lack of other specialist opportunities at Key Stage 4 in this subject, this is unsatisfactory.

90. Most pupils are interested in science and work individually, in pairs and in groups in a constructive and co-operative way with the teachers. They make good progress based on secure skills of literacy and number. A small number of pupils, however, are potentially disruptive in lessons and good class management by experienced teachers is required to ensure that the aims of the lesson are completed successfully.

91. Teaching standards are good at both key stages. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection and at a time of some change of teachers. During the inspection it was satisfactory in all but one lesson and good in over two thirds of them. Planning and teaching of basic skills is good. Other teaching is effectively planned and has high expectations. Time management is good and resources, including video recordings, are used effectively. Scientific vocabulary is tested to ensure proper use and correct spelling. Good question and answer technique, on a class or individual basis, is used to introduce and summarise lessons and promote learning. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory due to insecure class management and a failure to follow the scheme of work. Technicians give very good support to teaching and both they and the teachers are hard working. Examination preparation classes take place after school twice a week and the science lunchtime club enables pupils to gain an insight into the application of science by means of simple experiments. Work, including homework, is marked and corrected on a regular basis and standards are recorded and monitored using a central record within the department. The reporting of National Curriculum levels to parents does not take place and this reduces the understanding of standards achieved by pupils.

92. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met in science apart from the provision for information and communication technology. The department is well led and teachers and technicians work as a team. Health and safety procedures are enforced. The comprehensive range of schemes of work has been revised and will be revised further to ensure greater continuity of teaching at Key Stage 4 in the separate aspects of biology, chemistry and physics. There are ten laboratories in four main groups in the school with secure storage for chemicals and other materials. Some of the laboratories have a layout appropriate to modern teaching approaches but many are dated. Although one laboratory has been redecorated, several laboratories are in need of refurbishment as a matter of urgency to make them compatible with modern teaching requirements and some need redecorating to ensure the removal of graffiti.

93. Science has made good progress since the last inspection in addressing the essentials of good teaching and raising standards and has the capacity for further improvement.

ART

94. Examination results in art in GCSE in 1999 were significantly above national expectations for grades A* to C (91 per cent compared with 62 per cent nationally). Both boys and girls gained A* to C grades well above their respective national averages and a grade higher on average, in art than in other subjects. The department has responded positively by raising A* to G grades to be in line with expectations and the trend since the last inspection in A* to C and A* to G results has been upwards. In Years 10 and 11, a well-structured approach to investigating and developing ideas has improved results in the higher grades. Pupils have developed confident and effective skills in recording from direct observation and are able to explore a wide range of materials to produce a high standard of work. Attainment in lessons and in work seen is above national expectations. Pupils visit museums and the local environment as starting points for projects and make thoughtful and analytic visual references using techniques employed by artists to improve their painting, drawing and three-dimensional studies. Many of the more able pupils show a good understanding of form in their compositions. Average and below-average pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, show a marked improvement in their performance through the use of mixed media. There are some imaginative mixed media sculptures of a high standard in Year 11. Achievement is very good for the majority of pupils by the end of the key stage.

95. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. Pupils learn about colour and mix and control paints with increasing accuracy. Sketchbooks are used to record investigations in and out of class and most pupils show a systematic development of ideas, such as, planning a visual map of their journeys to school inspired by aboriginal art, in Year 7, using colour and pattern with confidence. Pupils communicate ideas and feelings imaginatively and effectively through open-ended projects that extend the more able and give the lower attaining pupils time to improve and complete work. Drawing skills are developing steadily. Higher attaining pupils understand the nature of a fluid line and achieve a sense of proportion in their drawings. A few average, and many pupils of lower attainment, have drawing skills that are below national expectations, whilst clay modelling skills are underdeveloped for pupils generally. Achievement throughout the key stage for all levels of attainment and for pupils with special educational need is good because pupils have the opportunity to use a wide range of materials to improve their recording skills.

96. Pupils respond well to the positive climate for learning. Most enjoy art, expect to work hard and concentrate on learning and improving their skills and understanding. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are independent, self-reliant and confident with creative ways of working. Many share their views and readily contribute in class discussions. Many take part in lunchtime clubs. Behaviour is generally good though a significant minority of boys in Year 9 have poor listening skills and lack respect for each other and the teacher.

97. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. In nearly two-thirds of lessons it is good or better. Good teaching is found in both key stages, but particularly in Key Stage 4. Teachers know their subject well and plan and prepare thoroughly. They have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour and are skilled in preparing pupils well for examinations. In this way they contribute to well-above-average results. Most teachers use effective questioning at the beginning of lessons to link with past work and get the lesson off to a good start. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate and explain tasks and skills

effectively and support individual pupils throughout the lesson with constructive comments so that pupils improve their techniques. Examples include, helping pupils to use lino cutting tools accurately to achieve a flowing line and explaining how to achieve space and depth in a composition. Where teaching is less inspiring, pupils are not sufficiently engaged in evaluating each other's work to extend their art vocabulary. Worthwhile homework is regularly set and constructive comments are fed back to pupils.

98. The art curriculum is broad and well balanced and meets statutory requirements. The department is very well led and a handbook gives clear guidance to staff. With the exception of information and communication technology, which is insufficiently used, improvements relating to the quality of investigative studies, drawing from direct observation, less prescriptive teaching at Key Stage 3, and the development of independent learning skills for all pupils have been well addressed since the last inspection. The departmental policy has a good assessment and multicultural focus. Visual reference material for use in the art department is limited because the school library categorises a wide range of art books for reference only. Art is enriched with visits, art clubs and visiting artists for older pupils, though there is lack of art activity days for younger pupils. A commendable display of good quality art around the school enhances the environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. By the end of both key stages, standards are in line with national expectations. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last report. Attainment, however, is lower than in other subjects in the school, and in similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessments in 1999 show that 62 per cent of pupils reach level 5 of the National Curriculum and above. Standards of work observed during the inspection were below this level, but are in line with national averages for both designing and making. In Year 7 food technology, pupils are able to effectively research a potato product, and then work to a time plan, taking into account quality factors. In Year 8, pupils have improved their practical and designing skills, can make electronic circuits and are able to populate correctly circuit boards and test performance. In Year 9, sketches for a clock show some creative flare, with bold, contemporary and colourful designs.

100. By the end Key Stage 4, results have improved and are better than at the time of the last inspection report, with 51 per cent of pupils gaining grades A* to C and 96 per cent grades A* to G in GCSE courses in resistant materials, textiles, food technology, graphics and electronic products. Graphic presentation has also improved and is now a strength, with pupils usually producing designs of quality such as the drawings and models for theme bars. Wide research and a clear development of initial sketches frequently support these. In textiles, some pupils make quality garments such as a complete Elizabethan dress and garments based on fashion themes from the 1960s. In food technology, some pupils conduct research with rigour, as in a project to investigative food products for diabetics. Standards in electronic products are below national averages, in terms of pupils' knowledge and the understanding of components and systems, and of their ability to develop designs in folder work, as in a lesson where they were building a transistor timer circuit. In resistant materials pupils now make more adventurous products, which are attractive and well crafted. Some of these reflect contemporary themes, for example in tables in Year 11, sheet music organisers and clocks based on the Memphis school of designers.

101. A small number of pupils take GNVQ part 1 engineering and their standards are in line with national expectations, in terms of reaching pass and merit awards. In a study of variable resistors, pupils showed some good planning, and use of numerical skills to graph and analyse results. There are, however, only small numbers of pupils taking these courses

nationally, so a comparison is difficult.

102. Pupils with special educational needs show appropriate standards and some pupils, in graphics and resistant materials, show attainment that is in line with national expectations. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of using information and communication technology is not well developed, in particular computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture in textiles, graphics and resistant materials. The organisational skills for low attainers and pupils with special educational needs are not fully satisfactory. Some folders lack rigour in the initial specification and evaluation against the product in use, and do not have a wide range of technical vocabulary in design work at both key stages. Achievement however is still not high enough across both key stages.

103. The standard of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages, promoting satisfactory learning, although the Year 7 lessons taught during the inspection week were not the normal ones planned for the pupils. Teachers are proficient technologists, confident in their own specialism, but less so when, at Key Stage 3, for example, they have to teach outside their specialism in textiles, or food technology. This leads to the underdevelopment of some pupils' making skills, for example in the textiles storage projects. In a lesson where pupils were completing a food product based on potatoes, good classroom management promoted pace, and enabled pupils to work to schedule. In a lesson where pupils were completing a moisture detector, the quality of the soldering lacked rigorous quality control. Teachers do not make sufficient use of the departmental database to clarify their expectations and therefore do not allow pupils to gain high levels of self-knowledge in designing and making.

104. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory in both key stages. Although there is challenging behaviour in some design and technology lessons, most pupils work safely, and are courteous. They persevere, as in a textiles lesson where they were practising more complex sewing demanding accurate and precise machining. Relationships with teachers and other pupils are usually good and, when sharing equipment, pupils cooperate well, as in a Year 9 lessons where pupils had to use one bench to solder circuit boards for their moisture detector. In other lessons, however, pupils do not take a sufficiently responsible attitude to using machinery, particularly the use of eye protection and clamps when using the belt sander and pillar drill for work.

105. The curriculum is well planned with regard to content, but lacks work in computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture and pneumatics. Staffing is adequate, although some teachers in Key Stage 3, working outside their own areas, have insufficient training in other specialisms. The standard of accommodation is poor. Most rooms are well worn, and drab. Fittings and flooring are of poor quality. The graphics accommodation is cramped or taught in an art room. Electronics is taught in a workshop, with no clean facilities. The technical support has a backlog of maintenance duties, and although the maintenance of hand tools is good, overall cleanliness and housekeeping in the workshops are poor. Resources are generally in short supply. The quality of sewing facilities requires attention and there is no computer aided design/computer aided manufacture or information and communication technology facilities for graphics. There has been insufficient improvement in these items since the last inspection.

106. The management of the department is satisfactory. In Key Stage 3, however, there is no agreed standard for differing levels with each project. The department lacks any benchmark materials, in the form of a portfolio of project work, showing the required levels related to national exemplars. The department does not promote use of the Key Stage 3 database to enable teachers to be proactive in their planning of work for new groups.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Attainment in geography is well above the national average at the end of Key Stage 4. This represents a major improvement since the previous inspection when examination performance was below national levels. In the most recent GCSE examination almost seven out of ten candidates gained a higher grade (A* to C) pass and more than one in five gained an A* or A grade. Attainment by girls and boys is very similar. Pupils with special educational needs are supported satisfactorily and achieve graded passes. In the 1999 examination pupils' grades in geography were significantly above the grades they achieved in most other subjects. The work in progress in Year 11 is in line with that required to achieve above average GCSE grades at the end of the year. Teaching is currently focussed on extending pupils' general geographical knowledge by introducing particular case studies to illustrate, for example, population movement in Kenya, urbanisation and counter urbanisation in Los Angeles, and flood control systems in California. The new geography teachers have identified GCSE coursework as an area for further improvement of attainment. Year 10 pupils, for example, will carry out a more focussed study of the Norfolk coastline on a residential fieldtrip.

108. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above average. The end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments in 1999 indicated that pupils were achieving well above the expected levels for their ages. The work in progress in Key Stage 3, including longer assignments such as the country studies of Italy and Japan in Year 9, shows that most pupils have a good understanding of economic development and reflects well their ability to research and interpret data. The attainment of girls and boys is very similar. Some pupils in Year 9 produce completed assignments of a higher standard than the work they produce in lessons. This includes a minority of boys in groups observed who are not wholeheartedly committed to classroom work.

109. Teaching and learning are good. All the teaching observed was satisfactory or better and most lessons were planned and taught to a good standard. During the inspection no judgement could be made of the teaching by non-specialist teachers which takes place in the Year 7 and Year 8 humanities course as only specialist subject teachers taught the geographical topics during the inspection week. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in the use of information and communication technology to help learning. Effective use is made of the library resources to gain access to information from web sites. Recent use has been made to guide Year 10 GCSE pupils studying the development and population growth of Bombay, and to examine the devastating effects of recent flooding in Mozambique. All teachers encourage pupils to collect data via CD-ROM and to use library books and newspaper files. More opportunities are planned to use fieldwork observation to support learning. Year 8 pupils, for example, have observed the adjacent River Thames as part of the hydrology topic. Teachers use up to date video recordings, slides, and overhead projectors well to illustrate their lessons.

110. There is considerable variation, however, in the demands made on pupils in lessons. The most effective lessons require pupils to think carefully about a range of factors and then to complete a task in a given amount of time. Year 8 pupils, for example, learned much about migration into cities in Kenya, and Year 7 planned, enthusiastically, a journey from Scotland to Zaire taking into account climatic and vegetation zones as well as the essential route planning. The least effective lessons rely on setting questions based on worksheets made up from extracts of textbooks, charts, and diagrams. At times, however, teachers have to take some short cuts to meet the National Curriculum and the GCSE requirements because the time allocated to geography (one hour per week in Key Stage 3

and two hours at Key Stage 4) is low compared with other schools. Teachers set homework regularly and, in the samples of work seen, it is marked carefully and graded to the levels of the National Curriculum. In many lessons valuable help is given to pupils with limited literacy skills by providing them with prompt sheets and guides.

111. The behaviour of pupils in lessons is generally good. In the main, pupils respond well and most complete their homework assignments on time. Standards of writing and general presentation are good.

112. Geography is an effective subject department, committed to improving the attainment of pupils. The new head of department recognises the weaknesses in the schemes of work for Key Stage 3 which have not been revised in recent years, particularly those taught within the humanities programme. Some of the existing units are based on the original National Curriculum orders and on the main textbook bought to guide teachers. A good start has been made to revising these topics and to prepare for the new requirements for September 2000. Improvements are needed to the department's resource base. The department does not have a set of up-to-date world atlases, nor does it have sufficient access to computers to develop its work. Many books and internally produced materials need to be replaced.

HISTORY

113. The standards of work in history are good. At the end of Key Stage 4 results are well above the national average. In 1999, 85 per cent of candidates entered for GCSE examinations gained Grades A* to C, compared with 60 per cent nationally. Forty per cent gained Grades A* or A grades, compared with 20 per cent nationally. All candidates gained Grades A* to G, which is above the national figure of 97 per cent. Results in 1999 matched those of 1998, all of which were well above national averages. In the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are achieving standards above national averages. In 1999, 81 per cent gained level 5 and above of the National Curriculum, with 11 per cent achieving level 8. In 1998, 72 per cent gained level 5 and above, with 15 per cent gaining level 8.

114. The attitudes of pupils to the subject are good in both key stages. They are fully involved in the lessons, with good levels of concentration and interest. Good examples of this were seen in the Year 11 lessons on the history of medicine, enabling pupils to consider moral as well as historical issues. There is a good understanding of chronology as shown by the use of timelines in both key stages and pupils link cause and effect well as shown in Year 9 lessons on the rise of Hitler. Behaviour in the classroom is good, with pupils remaining on task throughout lessons.

115. The department continues to build on the good practice commended in the last inspection report. There are learning activities which provide appropriate challenges for pupils of all attainments. Pupils with special educational needs have tasks matched appropriately to their levels of attainment, with limited support from classroom learning assistants. The teachers support these pupils well in the classroom. There are good opportunities to develop literacy skills, with competent reading aloud in both key stages. A good example of speaking and the use of historical terms was shown in the use of a 'balloon debate' for a revision of the history of medicine in Year 11.

116. The quality of teaching is good. In Key Stage 3, history is taught in Years 7 and 8 in rotation as a humanities subject, which means there is some non-specialist teaching. During the inspection, specialists taught only their own subjects, which is not the normal

situation. The one lesson taught by a non-specialist was of good quality. Learning is enhanced because teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned. There are high expectations of pupils, as shown in the study in Year 8 of the Renaissance, which involved effective individual research. There are clear lesson aims. As a result a good pace of learning is maintained. There is good classroom control and appropriate teaching methods ensure that pupils learn well, with teachers giving good support to pupils in their learning. There are good displays of the work of pupils and resources are adequate. There is limited use of information and communication technology. Books are regularly marked, and an appropriate amount of homework is set.

117. The leadership and management of the subject are good, with frequent consultations taking place between teachers. Regular assessment of the performance of pupils is linked to levels expected by the end of each key stage and this information is clearly indicated to pupils. There is sometimes a loss of continuity in learning, particularly when pupils are absent, and some constraints on teaching as a result of the provision of only one lesson each week for pupils in Year 9. There are appropriate extra-curricular activities including a visit to the operating theatre in Old St. Thomas' Hospital in Year 10. History is a good department, exemplified by high levels of pupil attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. By the end of Key Stage 4, the standard of attainment in information and communication technology is well below national expectations. This is because there is no direct teaching of the subject and other departments do not teach sufficient information and communication technology as part of their schemes of work. In subjects such as business education and the pilot GNVQ part 1 intermediate and foundation courses, where information and communication technology is incorporated into learning, standards match national expectations, in terms of pupils extending their skills and planning assignments. This was demonstrated, for example, in a business education lesson where pupils used spreadsheets and graphs to determine break-even points for the manufacture and sale of goods. In geography, some pupils contribute to web page design and learn how to communicate with a school in Guyana. The lack of curriculum provision and hardware is suppressing standards for most other pupils in Key Stage 4 and the provision for information and communication technology in this key stage fails to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

119. By the end of Key Stage 3, the standard of attainment is above national expectations in terms of pupils reaching National Curriculum level 5 and above. Compared with standards achieved in other subjects and by pupils in similar schools, it is high. There has been improvement since the last inspection report, and now the curriculum is effectively taught in a structured way. Pupils in Year 9 are aware of how data is structured in a database and can describe advantages and features such as mail merge. In designing multimedia presentations, pupils can insert sound files and graphics images downloaded from the Internet, and use digital cameras, as seen in a sequence using images showing pet rabbits. When programming in logo computer language, Year 7 pupils can build precise procedures, but high attaining pupils do not use variables. Pupils with special educational needs reach appropriate standards, for example in a lesson where pupils designed multimedia presentations.

120. Teaching is good at Key Stage 3, and in some Key Stage 4 lessons in business studies and GNVQ. Teaching promotes good learning, especially in Years 7 and 9. Specialist teachers of information and communication technology demonstrate confident knowledge and understanding of the subject and respond quickly to pupils in the

classroom. They provide sensible advice but allow pupils to respond and experiment, drawing on their personal experience of using information and communication technology at home or in the well attended computer clubs, including one specifically for girls. In one lesson where Year 9 pupils use 'PowerPoint', there was very good teaching, with the teacher making sure there was appropriate use of text and colour, and discouraging garish effects. This teaching ensured the work of pupils met the needs of an unfamiliar audience, and demanded the use of a wide range of relevant sources of information. The discipline of teaching information and communication technology is usually well understood; lessons involve effective whole class question and answer sessions, as seen in a Year 7 lessons on logo. However, there is no facility in the department to use a data projector, which limits the clarity of whole class demonstrations. Class management is good, with teachers adopting a sensitive approach to pupils with challenging behaviour. Some teachers' planning, however, does not include reference to the levels of the National Curriculum and there is little use of portfolios of work as benchmarks. Teachers are improving literacy skills in information and communication technology by considering the use of text to match an audience, and identifying keywords.

121. In Key Stage 3 the attitudes of pupils in lessons are good. This is enhanced by sufficient equipment to ensure pupils do not have to share computers and the close cooperation between pupils. In Key Stage 4, while pupils taking business education and the GNVQ option show good attitudes, some pupils are disappointed with the lack of opportunities within lessons to develop their skills and learn to use new features, such as the Internet.

122. Currently the number of staff contributing to the teaching of information and communication technology is insufficient to meet the entitlement of pupils to the subject. Accommodation and resources are inadequate and do not meet whole school needs although further accommodation is planned for next year. One computer room is very cramped, lacks adequate ventilation and has seating of poor quality for pupils. Software is adequate, but e-mail addresses include the school name, which identifies pupils to the school site. The low ratio of computers to pupils and the lack of availability of peripheral equipment prevent many departments meeting the needs of pupils. As a result standards are not as high as they should be.

123. The school fails to meet statutory requirements at Key Stage 4. Mathematics, science, art, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages all make very limited use of information and communication technology. Although the specialist department uses the levels of the National Curriculum in Years 7 and 9, these are not linked to specific targets in lessons, and record keeping relies on a skill audit taken as pupils work to an external certificate. There is no report on the progress of pupils in Years 8, 10 or 11. The overall management of information and communication technology has shortcomings, in that curriculum requirements and the entitlement of pupils to information and communication technology have not been addressed since the last inspection report.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

124. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are achieving slightly above the standard expected nationally. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils achieve standards which are below the national average for modern foreign languages. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* to C in GCSE examinations was significantly below that expected nationally for both French and German. The number achieving A* to C grades in French was 36.7 per cent compared to a national figure of 46 per cent and in German the figures was 33.3 per cent compared to a national figure of 52.2 per cent. The percentage achieving A* and A

grades was also particularly low. The number of pupils achieving A* to G was broadly in line with the national figure, being slightly above in German and below in French. There is, however, a greater percentage of pupils and thus a wider spread of abilities in the year group taking French and German than is found nationally. The performance of pupils in modern foreign languages is not as good as that in the other subjects they take in the school. Over the past three years there has been considerable variation in the results. French results have shown an overall decline over the past three years despite an improvement between 1998 and 1999; boys' results have been slowly rising, girls' have been declining. In German, results have declined and this has been most marked among the girls.

125. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have covered a range of topics and can understand the present, past and future tenses. Higher attaining pupils can also understand the imperfect tense but their ability to use this and the other tenses when speaking and writing is less well developed. They are able to work within a range of personal topics, such as their family and school life, and can hold conversations on these topics. During the key stage pupils increase their ability to understand the language but make slightly less progress in speaking and writing. This is because they are not always keen to extend their answers in front of their peers and are not always encouraged to improve their accuracy. Higher attaining pupils make better progress in all areas than would be expected nationally, being generally accurate in their work and having a reasonably varied vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

126. By the end of Key Stage 4 the standard of work seen is satisfactory. Pupils can read and understand texts on a wider range of topics but pupils do not write at length in a variety of styles frequently enough. The writing of a few of the highest attaining pupils includes the use of conjunctions and idiomatic phrases and much of it is accurate. This was not always apparent, however, in the majority of their work seen during the inspection. Lower achieving pupils make errors similar to those made in Key Stage 3 and continue to be reluctant about speaking the language, often offering the shortest of replies with weak pronunciation. Pupils, particularly the less able in German, often have a shaky command of the basic grammatical features of the language and they have to revise much of the vocabulary originally taught in Key Stage 3.

127. In almost all lessons seen pupils behaved well and had satisfactory attitudes to languages. Pupils were respectful to the teachers and to each other, although there were isolated examples of disruptive and distracting behaviour from a minority of boys in Key Stage 3. They were, nevertheless, appropriately managed within the classroom. The lack of a support teacher in a Year 9 classroom where there were several pupils with behavioural difficulties meant that pupils learnt less than they otherwise might have done. Pupils are not enthusiastic about oral work but they are generally very willing to complete reading and listening tasks. A good proportion attend the language club run twice a week which allows them to improve any area with which they feel they need help. Visits and exchanges are also well supported and provide pupils with invaluable insights into the culture of France and Germany.

128. All of the teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory, often good, and on occasions very good. Teachers speak the language well and present a good model for pupils to follow but insufficient emphasis on oral work during some lessons means that many pupils have weak pronunciation. Most of the lessons are conducted at a lively pace with a variety of resources and activities, which are carefully explained. A particularly good example of this was seen during a Year 10 lesson on directions. Pupils are almost always clear about what they have to do to complete a task but are not given enough guidance on

what they could do to improve their work. On occasions the teacher dominated the lesson allowing pupils too little chance to use for themselves what they had learnt. Pupils are given opportunities to listen to tape recordings on their own and to use computers to help with research or presentation but this is not a regular feature of classroom practice. Access to computers is limited; therefore there is little chance for pupils to redraft their work to improve accuracy, presentation and style. There is wide use of taped materials which means that pupils' listening skills are quite well developed and there are a range of readers available to pupils in the library so they experience reading beyond the confines of a text book. Pupils are encouraged to work independently of the teacher but the shortage of curriculum time in Key Stage 4 means that this is an aspect of learning that is underdeveloped. Teachers do supplement the course book with their own excellent resources but there is a need for a more relevant text book in Key Stage 3 German for pupils to be able to refer to at home. There is inconsistency in the way that pupils record grammar and vocabulary and this means that some have difficulty in revising or using their exercise books for reference. Nevertheless, pupils are well trained in examination techniques during lessons and the useful revision booklet provides further assistance.

129. The leadership of the department is good. The head of department has a clear vision of the current strengths and weaknesses of the provision for modern languages. There is much sharing of good practice and a joint commitment to raising standards still further. The large mixed ability classes in Key Stage 3, especially in Year 8, are a cause for concern as teachers have difficulty meeting the needs of all the pupils in the group. The accommodation is barely adequate. Two teachers work some distance from the base which makes communication more difficult and the proximity of a drama room with insufficient sound proofing means that pupils sometimes have difficulty listening to tape recordings.

130. Since the last inspection progress has been unsatisfactory overall. Standards in Key Stage 3 have remained above the national average and there is more curriculum time allocated to languages. In Key Stage 4 standards achieved at GCSE have declined. Although pockets of underachievement still remain this downward trend is being reversed and standards seen in lessons, especially in Year 10, are better than examination results in 1999 would indicate.

MUSIC

131. At Key Stage 4 recent GCSE examination results have been above the national average for music. In lessons, Key Stage 4 pupils show particular strengths in composing, using musical structures fluently. They use technical language well and perform adequately with musical notation. Music is a popular option at this level. GCSE pupils of different abilities maintain a good standard of achievement based on a good grounding in all aspects of the subject at Key Stage 3.

132. Attainment in classes at Key Stage 3 is good overall. However, the reporting requirements at the end of Key Stage 3 are not consistently met and an accurate judgement of overall progress could not be made. Pupils sing well in parts with confidence and ease. They also reach good levels of achievement particularly in composing and listening to music in a variety of styles. Where the management of pupils is only satisfactory, for example in

Year 9, the level of achievement tends to follow suit. Unusually there are no differences between the performance of boys or girls at either key stage.

133. At Key Stage 4 pupils work very well independently and are enthusiastic. They also work well with examination criteria. They enjoy preparing performances and discussing alternative solutions to listening problems. At Key Stage 3 attitudes are good or very good. Pupils co-operate well together. They enjoy preparing and listening to performances of their own atmospheric music for 'Macbeth' by other pupils in the class. At both levels behaviour is good and pupils relate well to staff.

134. The standard of music teaching is good at both key stages. At Key Stage 4 lessons are well planned, delivered with clear targets and give pupils confidence to improve their skills. At Key Stage 3 some teaching is very well paced providing a variety of demanding activities balanced with teaching that is satisfactory or better. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a good command of basic skills. Teaching methods are appropriate and effective and teachers make good use of time and resources. The quality of assessment is good at Key Stage 4 and work is marked regularly. At Key Stage 3 self evaluation is a valuable feature of assessment. Pupils record their achievements in class in homework diaries and this provides adequate reinforcement of what they learn in lessons.

135. At both key stages the standard of learning is good as a result of good teaching and enthusiasm in the classroom. Pupils make sustained efforts to listen to and compose music. The pace of their learning is generally good. Pupils at Key Stage 3 have satisfactory knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses through regular assessment tasks. Year 7 pupils quickly learn new singing techniques and songs. Key Stage 4 pupils are confident in their learning and are fully aware of their progress. Pupils with special educational needs learn at an appropriate pace. Pupils at both key stages have satisfactory keyboard skills. Good singing is traditionally a strong feature of music in the school. Pupils in Year 7 and 8 enjoy singing in parts and classes often contribute musical items to assemblies.

136. The teacher responsible for music is an effective leader who shares a clear vision for the subject with staff and pupils. As a result the consistency in teaching and learning is good. The staff are well qualified musicians and provide strong role models for their pupils. They have a strong commitment to music and review development plans and schemes of work regularly. The range and quality of resources and accommodation are good and they are efficiently managed and deployed. Since the last inspection a limited amount of information and communication technology equipment has been supplied and is effectively used in teaching composition. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but assessment is not always clearly used to inform teaching.

137. The curriculum at both key stages is broad, of good quality and is open to all pupils. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The music curriculum has a strong multi-cultural content. At Key Stage 3 pupils study Reggae, Blues, Japanese, Indian and Chinese music. Pupils studying for GCSE examinations listen to music from a wide range of cultures. The subject makes a good contribution to the personal development of pupils as they work together in groups in and out of the classroom.

138. Extra curricular provision is very good and provides good social and cultural experiences for pupils. A good proportion of pupils takes up the wide range of instrumental lessons. The singing club, jazz band and orchestra are well attended and meet regularly. Pupils regularly rehearse their class music out of class time to prepare for concerts and

assemblies. There are frequent performances in school and in the community, actively involving large numbers of pupils and parents.

139. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the overall quality of teaching, which is now, good at both key stages. The work of the peripatetic teaching staff is now monitored by a local agency. Information and communication technology equipment is now available and used in teaching and the standard of keyboard skills in the classroom is now satisfactory. Links between assessment and teaching, however, are not fully developed and the reporting of assessment by teachers at the end of Key Stage 3 remains inconsistent.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. In 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in the GCSE was significantly above the national average, this has been the case for the last three years. Boys and girls achieve equally well and when compared with other subjects in the school attainment in physical education is above the average. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils attain the standard expected nationally. They play a variety of games to a satisfactory standard and have a sound understanding of the rules. They can plan and perform interesting sequences of movement in both dance and gymnastics. In a Year 9 gymnastics lesson pupils worked in pairs to invent sequences, demonstrating good skills of balance using a variety of apparatus. By the end of Key Stage 4, in core physical education lessons, pupils attain average standards. They take part in a wider range of games and activities and have the knowledge and understanding to act as coaches and officials.

141. Pupils throughout the school have a satisfactory understanding of how to prepare for activity but do not always do so with sufficient care. They have a good awareness of the principles of a healthy lifestyle as a result of the well-planned units of work on this aspect. Pupils observe accurately and comment on what they see. They try to identify the strengths and weaknesses in a performance and what to do to improve. A good example was seen in a Year 9 lesson when pupils analysed and evaluated a partner's sprinting technique and then gave ideas for improvement. In the same way pupils can demonstrate satisfactory planning skills, in a Year 9 netball lesson, for example, they quickly planned and used tactics for starting a game from the centre pass. These opportunities for planning and evaluation are not, however, a consistent feature of the teaching. Standards of performance are satisfactory in classes leading to GCSE examinations in Year 11 and good in Year 10.

142. Physical education makes a sound contribution to pupils' skills of speaking and listening through the use of questioning, but currently there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills of numeracy and information and communication technology. Pupils of all abilities achieve appropriate standards. The good programme of extra curricular activities provides for pupils of all sporting abilities and several pupils achieve good standards in competitive sport at local, district and national level.

143. The majority of pupils enter the school with satisfactory standards in physical education. They make satisfactory progress through the school as they increase their skills, knowledge and understanding. They acquire greater control and technical knowledge in existing skills as well as new skills in activities such as trampolining. This satisfactory progress is the result of well-planned schemes of work, especially in Key Stage 3, and the positive attitudes of the majority of pupils. Pupils bring the appropriate kit to lessons and take part regularly. They respond well to tasks set and the physical effort they make is good. A small minority, often boys, does not respond in this positive manner. They do not

listen or make sufficient effort and some have difficulty accepting rules and decisions in games. These pupils are usually managed well but take time and attention from others. In the small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching the management of these pupils was not satisfactory and as a result the progress of all the pupils in the lesson was inadequate.

144. The quality of teaching is good overall and there is little difference between the key stages. Around half the teaching seen was good and in only one lesson was it unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan tasks that carefully develop pupils' skills. They use a variety of teaching methods to sustain the interest and motivation of pupils. They gave clear demonstrations and explanations so pupils know what to do when learning new skills and how to improve existing skills. The progress of pupils is also encouraged by the support and feedback teachers give, both in lessons and in the marking of written work. The use of assessment tasks at the end of each unit of work is particularly effective in giving pupils a clear picture of their attainment and progress.

145. The organisation of pupils and equipment is generally satisfactory, pupils change quickly and lessons start on time. The pace of most lessons is appropriate but on some occasions when explanations are too long or groupings of pupils unclear then the pace is slow and pupils lose interest. This was a contributory factor in the unsatisfactory teaching. By contrast in the best lessons the teacher sets challenging tasks that demand the attention of pupils; then they respond with energy and enthusiasm. In a Year 10 GCSE hockey lesson the teacher changed tasks quickly and pupils rapidly organised themselves into working groups so the teacher could concentrate on more advanced coaching of skills. Most lessons end with a review by the teacher but pupils are rarely asked to comment on their own work.

146. Leadership and management of the subject are good and there is a clear sense of purpose. The considerable changes in the last two years have been well managed. Teaching is regularly monitored and considerable support given to the newly qualified teachers. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The GCSE course is achieving high standards and there is better use of assessment. The opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate for themselves, however, remain inconsistent.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147. GCSE results in 1999 were significantly above the national average for pupils in maintained schools, in relation to higher A* to C grades. Overall grades A* to G were close to the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving A* or A grades was also well above the national average. Boys results at grades A* to C were 20 per cent above the average for boys nationally and two per cent above the national average for girls. The large option groups performed better in religious education than in most of their other subjects. In 1998 and 1997 results were also significantly above the national average for grades A* to C. Average point scores per pupil have been above the national average for the last three years.

148. By the end of Key Stage 3 overall attainment is above the level of expectation of the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils display good knowledge and understanding of the significance of symbolism in religion and of the significance of Christianity and other faiths to modern day life. The knowledge and understanding shown by higher attaining pupils is very good and they are beginning to develop good understanding of key ideas and issues shared by the religions they encounter. Most pupils have good listening and speaking skills. They are able to carry out research tasks competently and work well as independent learners and within

groups. Most pupils display good and, higher attainers in particular, very good knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of the major world faiths. Pupils with special needs are making satisfactory progress in relation to their targets.

149. By the end of Key Stage 4 the attainment of pupils currently on the course leading to GCSE examinations is just above the national average. Most pupils possess good listening skills as well as a satisfactory understanding of the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity. They also have good knowledge of the influence of religious belief on the lives of people. They are able to formulate and discuss moral and social issues in a confident manner and are aware of the variety of opinions, even within one faith, to such issues as the sanctity of life.

150. Learning overall in lessons, and over time, is good in both Key Stage 3 and in the GCSE groups. The quality of learning is positively influenced by good and very good teaching and in the case of most pupils by positive attitudes to the subject. Teaching is always good with a high proportion of very good practice. In Years 7 and 8, religious education is taught together with history and geography on a rotational basis, with the same teacher teaching all three subjects. This organisation was altered during the week of the inspection and all lessons except for one, were taught by specialist teachers. Enthusiastic and interesting teaching contributes very positively to learning. Lessons are well planned, to enable pupils to learn the beliefs, practices and concepts required by the Agreed Syllabus and the examination syllabus. Attention is given to the development of basic literacy and information and communication technology skills and there are opportunities for pupils to write in a range of styles. The use of topic work helps to develop information gathering and analytical skills, as for example in topics on places of worship and the influence of religion on famous people. Teachers use religious artefacts skilfully to enable pupils to understand symbolism, beliefs and practices. Good examples were observed in lessons on Buddhism. Learning is helped by the use of homework, which integrates with classwork and assists pupils to develop research and writing skills. Lessons are conducted at a rigorous pace and are interesting in content. Very good classroom management enables all pupils to learn. Detailed marking and assessment enhance learning. The positive attitudes of pupils towards the subject also influence the quality of learning and the progress made. Pupils on the register of special education needs make satisfactory progress with the support of class teachers. Virtually no additional support for pupils with special educational needs is provided in lessons.

151. The amount of time allocated to religious education in Key Stage 3 is low, but the department manages to cover the programme of study of the Agreed Syllabus. As there is no current provision for pupils in Key Stage 4, outside the GCSE option scheme, the school is still not meeting legal requirements for all pupils in this key stage. The department continues to be enthusiastically and well led and managed, within the structure of the humanities faculty. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, only restricted by the lack of statutory religious education in Key Stage 4. Accommodation is very well organised to create a good learning environment. Resources and time are very well used to influence standards.

152. Since the last inspection examination results have improved considerably. The quality of teaching has also improved with the specialist teaching being good and frequently very good. Attention has been given to exploration beyond the factual with greater investigation into understanding beliefs and religious practices. Marking and assessment continues to be a strength of the department. Compared to the time of the last inspection, storage space and accommodation are now much improved.