

INSPECTION REPORT

CRAWSHAW SCHOOL

Pudsey

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108084

Headteacher: Giles Elliott

Reporting inspector: Paul Simmons
8840

Dates of inspection: 13-17 March 2000

Inspection number: 186784

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Robin Lane
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Dr Jerry Knapp

Date of previous inspection: 26 February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Paul Simmons	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
			Other specified features, school data and indicators
Eva Mills	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Marian Burdon	Team inspector	Design and technology	How well are pupils taught?
Alan Waters	Team inspector	Geography	Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development
		Humanities	
Avril Ellis	Team inspector	Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Adrienne Carmichael	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities	
		Special educational needs	
		Post 16	
		Business Education	
		GNVQs	
		Psychology	
David White	Team inspector	English/literacy	
		Drama	
Chris Savory	Team inspector	Science	
Thomas Howard	Team inspector	Mathematics/numeracy	
David Mason	Team inspector	Art	
Kathryn Pink	Team inspector	History	
		Religious education	
		General Studies	
		Sociology	
John Lewis	Team inspector	Information technology	

Carey Chidwick	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
Howard Todd	Team inspector	Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Crawshaw School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 18. The number of pupils has risen steadily over the last four years from 838 in 1995 to the current number of 1,113. The school is bigger than average for a comprehensive school and is over-subscribed. The sixth form has grown in size over recent years and now has 132 students. The school offers a wide range of A-levels, GNVQ Advanced courses in art and design and business, one-year Intermediate GNVQ courses in business, health and social care and information technology and a one-year pre-vocational course.

The attainment of the pupils on entry has improved over the last three years and is now above average at age 11. The school draws its pupils from a catchment area which has a lower proportion of adults with higher education qualifications than the national average and a lower proportion of pupils from high social class households. The school has a small proportion of pupils from Chinese, Indian and Pakistani backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including Statements, is broadly in line with the national average.

The school has recently joined the Excellence in Cities initiative and is working to develop its programmes for mentoring pupils and for gifted and talented pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Crawshaw School is a good and improving school. Standards of achievement are currently sound and are expected quite rightly to rise in the near future. The school cares very well for its pupils and as a result attitudes and behaviour are very good. The quality of education, the teaching and the leadership and management of the school are good.

Crawshaw School is a very effective school and provides good value for money for the resources available to it.

What the school does well

- Improves the attainment of pupils well over time
- Achieves high standards in English, mathematics and geography
- Enables good progress to be made by pupils with special educational needs
- Provides a high proportion of good and very good teaching
- Provides a high proportion of good and very good learning
- Makes good use of time, support staff and resources
- Ensures pupils work productively and at a good pace
- Ensures pupils are aware about what they are learning
- Provides a good quality and range of sixth form courses
- Provides well for the moral, social and cultural development of the pupils
- Provides very good levels of care for the pupils
- Works well through good leadership and management
- Uses best value principles to provide good value for money
- Ensures the school's aims and values are reflected in all its work
- Develops well through the commitment of governors to the school
- Shows clear signs of improvement since its first inspection
- Demonstrates a shared commitment to continuous improvement

What could be improved

- The GCSE results for lower-attaining pupils
- The unsatisfactory teaching in a small minority of subjects, in particular in history and in design and technology
- The provision for personal, health and social education in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form
- The provision to meet statutory requirements in the curriculum for religious education (RE) and information and communication technology (ICT)
- The provision for pupils' spiritual development
- The quality of information provided for parents
- The quality of accommodation and learning resources
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures
- Longer-term planning
- The management of health and safety

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has sustained good levels of improvement since its last inspection in February 1996. It has made good progress overall on the issues identified for improvement in 1996. The attainment of boys at GCSE has improved substantially. The attainment of girls at A-level has improved to the extent that their average points score is now half a grade above the national figure. The quality of teaching has improved significantly at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Current pupils in Year 11 and in the sixth form are being taught much better than they were in 1996. The quality of provision in the sixth form has improved. Levels of resourcing and aspects of accommodation have been improved significantly within tight financial constraints.

Issues outstanding from the 1996 inspection include the provision for RE, for the spiritual development of the pupils and for ICT at Key Stage 4.

STANDARDS

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

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

The school is succeeding in raising standards over time with particular strengths in English and mathematics, including numeracy, and geography. The attainment of pupils last year in their Key Stage 3 tests was above the national average, showing an improvement on the last two years when attainment was in line.

Attainment at GCSE overall was below the national average when compared with all schools and against similar schools. Boys were close to the national average for boys, girls were below the national average for girls. The results are explained by the below average performance of lower-attaining pupils and the notably weaker attainment of pupils in information technology and design and technology. Across their different subjects pupils tended to achieve widely differing results. They achieved better results in English, English literature, mathematics, geography, history and physical education (PE)/sports studies. Pupils tended to achieve less well in science, German, art and design,

business studies, home economics and design and technology.

The overall points score for pupils entered for two or more A-levels was above the national average in 1999. Many A-level groups have too few students to make subject comparisons against national statistics valid.

Standards of work seen in lessons during the inspection show higher levels of attainment than past results would indicate. Particular strengths were noted in Year 7 and in the sixth form. Literacy and numeracy are strengths of the school. Attainment is currently below expectation in information technology (IT) due to inadequate provision for pupils rather than any underachievement on their part. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Overall, pupils are achieving highly and the school has set itself appropriate targets for raising attainment at GCSE to above the national average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are positive and this is a clear strength of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils in the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Positive working relationships are a strong component of life in the school. Personal development is good.
Attendance	Attendance is good.

Pupils show interest and commitment to their work and are able sustain concentration. Pupils listen attentively and have a genuine enthusiasm for school. Relationships between pupils are a positive feature of the school.

The school is a very orderly community where pupils are very well behaved in lessons. There is very little bullying and when it does occur it is handled quickly to eliminate it.

Where opportunities are provided, pupils show initiative and take responsibility. However, pupils should be given wider opportunities to develop independently and to take responsibility. Pupils have a clear sense of what is right and wrong, and make a positive contribution to the orderly social environment.

Attendance is good and attendance rates are improving.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
188 lessons seen	Good teaching	Good teaching	Very good teaching

Teaching was good in 35 per cent of lessons observed, very good in a further 27 per cent and outstanding in a further nine per cent. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons observed. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in five per cent of the lessons and poor teaching was seen in one per cent of lessons.

Overall the quality of teaching in the school is good and is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. The school is very effective in meeting the needs of pupils. Teachers' expectations are high, they have good subject knowledge and they use good questioning skills. They plan well, use effective teaching methods and make good use of time and resources. Numeracy skills are well taught in both

key stages. Literacy skills are taught well in Key Stage 4, satisfactorily in Years 7 and 8 and well at the end of Key Stage 3.

The small proportion of lessons which were unsatisfactory were characterised by poor lesson planning, work not matched to the needs of pupils, slow lesson pace, poor skills of the teacher and poor behaviour management.

Pupils enjoy learning and much of the teaching encourages pupils to learn well and to make good progress. In 94 per cent of lessons observed pupils were learning at least satisfactorily; in 36 per cent of these lessons pupils were learning well and in a further 24 per cent of lessons pupils were learning very well. In a further eight per cent of lessons the quality of learning was outstanding. Where teaching was unsatisfactory it had a negative impact on pupils' learning. In six per cent of lessons pupils showed unsatisfactory learning and poor progress. Particular strengths are the ways in which pupils work productively and persevere with their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3. Personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3, however. Provision at Key Stage 4 offers a broadly satisfactory curriculum; it fails to comply with the statutory requirements for RE and IT. Careers and work experience are good. The curriculum provision at post 16 is good. The school provides some excellent extra-curricular activities. The range of everyday clubs and activities outside lessons is not extensive, however.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs in the majority of subjects is good. However, pupils' individual education plans are too vague and are not used effectively enough in the school to support pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The pastoral system is very effective. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very caring school. Procedures for health and safety are a weakness, however.

At Key Stage 3 the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory, however.

At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is broadly satisfactory. Provision in many GCSE subjects is excellent. However, alternative accreditation to GCSE is limited. The Challenge course provides effective learning opportunities for a small number of pupils. The provision fails to meet the statutory requirements for religious education and information technology.

Provision in the sixth form is good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, there is no provision for religious education and physical education.

The pastoral system is very effective and is a strength of the school. The school has a caring ethos where pupils are valued and respected. Pupils with Statements of Special Needs are well supported. There are good systems in place to monitor and track pupils' attendance in school and their progress within subject departments. Procedures for health and safety are a weakness, however.

The parents are generally very positive about the school and the school has developed satisfactory

partnerships with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides positive, optimistic and very effective leadership. The senior management team is committed, well informed and effective. Much middle management is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are equally committed to the development of the school and are well led by an effective chair of governors. Statutory requirements are not fully in place, however.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is aware of its strengths and works hard to tackle its identified areas of weakness. Monitoring of teaching, for example, requires further development.
The strategic use of resources	Finances are well managed and the school makes very efficient use of its resources. Non-teaching staff make a very positive contribution to the life of the school. Best value principles are applied satisfactorily. The school provides good value for money.

The school does not meet statutory requirements for:

- The provision of religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form;
- The provision of ICT at Key Stage 4;
- Reporting annually to parents on the strengths and areas for development for their children;
- The provision of a daily act of collective worship.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good teaching • The school's high expectations for hard work and high standards • The good progress of pupils • The good behaviour • The good leadership and management of the school • The good support to help pupils to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about their child's progress • The way the school works with parents • The range of activities provided by the school outside lessons.

A significant minority of parents feel they do not receive sufficient information regarding the progress made by their children and statutory requirements in reporting to parents are not fully met. Parents also feel that the school does not provide a wide enough range of extra-curricular activities.

The findings of the inspection confirm the views of parents. Teaching, expectations, leadership and management, behaviour and progress and the support for pupils are all good features of the school. Information to parents needs to be improved. Extra-curricular activities are good, yet the range of everyday clubs and activities is not as broad as in most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school is succeeding in raising standards over time with particular strengths in English and mathematics, including numeracy, and geography. Good standards of work were seen at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Weaknesses are the performance of lower-attaining pupils at GCSE and the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 4 in IT and in design and technology.

The school's results

2. The attainment of pupils last year in their Key Stage 3 tests was above the national average, showing an improvement on the previous two years when attainment was in line. They attained well above the national average in English, above the national average in mathematics and in line with the national average in science. The percentages of pupils reaching both Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above in English were well above the national average. In mathematics a similar percentage of pupils, well above the national average, reached the higher level, Level 6. The percentage reaching Level 5 and above was close to the national average in both mathematics and science. Far fewer pupils in this year group reached Level 6 and above in science.

3. Attainment at GCSE overall was below the national average in 1999 when compared with all schools. Boys were close to the national average and girls were below. The percentage of pupils who achieved five or more higher grades (A*-C) was in line with the national average. The below average performance overall can be explained in part by the low percentage of pupils who managed to achieve five or more pass grades (A*-G), which was well below the national average. Across their different GCSE subjects, pupils tended to achieve widely differing results. They achieved better results in English, English literature, mathematics, geography, history and PE/sports studies. Pupils tended to achieve approximately half a grade less on average in science, German, art and design, business studies, home economics and design and technology.

4. The average points score for pupils entered for two or more A-levels was above the national average in 1999. Overall, boys gained grades which were approximately half a grade below the national average, whereas girls gained grades which were half a grade above. The small size of A-level groups makes subject comparisons with national averages unreliable.

Trends in results over time

5. Trends in the attainment of pupils over time show above average attainment in the core subjects at the end of Key Stage 3, with attainment well above average in English and close to the average in both mathematics and science. Standards have been improving in art and design, music, French, geography, PE, English and information technology. Standards have been declining recently in business studies and German, but current teaching of these subjects has reversed this downward trend. The trend in the school's average GCSE/GNVQ points score per pupil is broadly in line with the national trend. The trend over time in attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 matches the 1999 results. It is close to the national average for pupils gaining five or more higher grade GCSEs yet well below for the percentage of pupils gaining five or more pass grades (A*-G). Results have been well above national expectation in religious education (although numbers are small). Results at GCE Advanced Level and Advanced GNVQ show an improving trend over the last three years.

The school's progress towards its targets

6. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in collating and presenting its results and other performance data. The school has identified areas of weakness through its review procedures and has begun to take steps to tackle the issues arising. In the longer term the school expects to raise attainment above the national average. The GCSE targets which the school has set itself for 2000 represent a small increase on previous performance. These targets still fall short of the England average; they are appropriate for the current Year 11, given their performance at Key

Stage 3 in 1998, however. The targets which the school has set itself for 2001 are above the national average and, again, are appropriate given the prior attainment of the pupils at Key Stage 3 in 1999. Nevertheless, in comparison to similar schools the school has set itself a lower target than would be expected for GCSE average points score in 2001.

Standards of work seen

7. Standards of work seen in lessons during the inspection show higher levels of attainment than past results would indicate. Overall standards were below average in only one in seven lessons. Particular strengths were noted in Year 7 and the sixth form. In Year 7, attainment was judged below expectation in only three per cent of lessons and above expectation in half of the lessons. In the sixth form, students were attaining course expectations in all lessons observed and in Year 13 attainment was above course expectations in 60 per cent of lessons.

8. Towards the end of the current Key Stage 3 the standards pupils achieve are well above average in English; above average in drama, modern foreign languages, art, geography and mathematics; and in line with the national average in science music, history, design and technology, religious education and information technology. Attainment is average in PE, although below average in gymnastics.

9. Towards the end of the current Key Stage 4 standards are well above average in mathematics and music, notably in composing and performance; above average in English, drama, business studies, geography and modern foreign languages. Attainment is slightly above average in history, although standards are inconsistent, depending clearly on the quality of the teaching which pupils receive. Attainment is in line with or close to the national expectation in art, design and technology and science, although some pupils are achieving highly in their investigations (attainment target 1). In design and technology however, standards at both key stages are unsatisfactory because of the underachievement of higher-attaining pupils.

10. Attainment is currently below national expectation in IT at Key Stage 4, due to inadequate provision for pupils rather than any underachievement on their part. Exceptions, where standards were above expectation, were noted in the way pupils use ICT in their foreign language learning and in science. Standards in PE are above expectation for those pupils taking the GCSE course and in line with expectation for other pupils. In religious education standards are generally below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at Key Stage 4.

11. Towards the end of their sixth form course, students attain standards which are well above course expectation in drama and German; above expectations in mathematics, sociology, art, geography, history, French, design and communication and business studies; and in line with expectations in English, science, information technology.

12. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are good. Their keyboarding skills and basic understanding of computers are satisfactory and not significantly different from those found nationally.

How well pupils achieve

13. At Key Stage 3 compared with similar schools, pupils attained well above average in English; in mathematics their attainment was in line with the average and in science their attainment was well below average. The high levels of attainment at the end of the current Key Stage 3 represent appropriate achievement given pupils' prior attainment on entry to the school

14. Attainment at GCSE in past years was below the national average when compared with similar schools. The profile of achievement at GCSE in 1999 becomes more accentuated when compared with the attainment of the same pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 two years earlier. Seen in this light, the achievement at GCSE overall was in line with what would be expected nationally. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more higher grades (A*-C) shows high achievement when looked at against their known attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more pass grades (A*-G), however, shows pupils doing worse than they should have done, given their attainment levels at the end of Key Stage 3.

15. Nevertheless the inspection found that pupils across the school are achieving highly. The vast majority are constantly working hard and concentrating. They respond well to the good quality of teaching and apply themselves well to their work.

16. The fact that English is not the first language for a small proportion of pupils does not pose any barrier to their progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in science, physical education, art, geography, English at Key Stage 4 and modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3. They achieve well in music in practical sessions, except when the work relies heavily on the ability to read music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attitudes to learning

17. Attitudes towards learning are very positive and this is a clear strength of the school. Pupils show both interest in and commitment to their studies and are able to sustain concentration for prolonged periods. Their willingness to accept and respond positively to challenge is very noticeable throughout the school and this is the case for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. The high quality of much of the teaching and the very clear expectations which prevail throughout the school are very powerful influences in this respect. A positive work ethic is well embedded and there are clear benefits for pupils' progress. There were many examples where positive attitudes were both reflecting and reinforcing the quality of learning. In English, high attainers in Key Stage 3 responded very well to the high pace set by demanding teaching, and similarly middle and very low attainers in Key Stage 4 applied themselves well to their tasks. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 English lessons were taking an active role in preparing themselves for GCSE, asking questions and deciding themselves when it was appropriate to make notes during class discussion. Enthusiasm for learning was equally evident in mathematics: most pupils listened very attentively to teachers and felt free to ask questions to deepen their understanding. The number of pupils attending extra voluntary classes in mathematics is a measure of this willingness to persevere and learn. A feature of many lessons was the very high proportion of time which pupils spent on task. In science, art and geography this was almost always the case apart from a few isolated incidents in lower attaining groups. In information technology pupils engage readily with their work and good support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they too are able to remain busy and build on their enthusiasm for the subject. High levels of motivation were equally evident in physical education: all pupils changed quickly, listened well to instructions and persevered even in difficult weather conditions to practise and improve their skills. A similar picture of commitment and maturity towards learning was evident throughout the sixth form with the exception of some time wasting observed in GNVQ intermediate groups. Particularly positive attitudes to study were noted in A-level geography, history and sociology lessons.

18. The majority of pupils take pride in their work and show the desire to make improvements. This is not just in their written work, which is generally well presented and frequently enhanced by the use of home computers. In English younger pupils have the confidence to explore reading materials by themselves, often of a challenging nature. Such confidence is equally applied to poetry and prose by older pupils in Key Stage 4. The capacity to work co-operatively in a variety of settings was observed in English and a wide range of other subjects. In drama, pupils of all abilities worked well together as a whole class and in small groups. In mathematics and information technology, pupils helped each other with problem solving activities, having a positive effect on their progress. Successful discussion work in pairs and groups was seen in many lessons and many subjects, especially in geography, history, religious education and art. However, some lessons in history and in design and technology offered few opportunities for pupils to learn in ways other than listening and responding and consequently pupils were passive and too compliant. Where questioning was encouraged, pupils responded positively and this was particularly evident in many lessons in geography and modern foreign languages. Willingness to share ideas and to question each other was a strong feature of learning in art and music. In these and many other lessons, pupils were willing to listen and respond with respect, paying due regard to the feelings of others. Such sensitivity was very much a feature of work in religious education, English, drama and mathematics.

19. Positive working relationships are a strong component of life in the school. Respect between

teachers and learners is almost universal and this shows itself in the shared commitment to achievement and to success in examinations. Similarly relationships between pupils are a positive feature of school life. This is a well-ordered community which functions well for the good of all. There is very little bullying and where it occurs it is clearly outside what both pupils and teachers consider to be acceptable and is firmly handled. Pupils work together, sharing and responding positively to the expectations set by the staff, and this provides a climate in which pupils can and do learn.

20. Where opportunities are provided, pupils are clearly able to show initiative and take responsibility for both their actions and their learning. In drama pupils showed good social skills and strategies when working together towards common goals. They were confident in speaking out in front of their peers and willing to move their learning forward in appropriate ways. Similarly in A-level sociology, students initiated fresh ideas and made links with their own experience to deepen understanding. When provided, research tasks were readily completed. This was very evident in art where pupils also took the lead in setting up their equipment in readiness for the lesson. In some subjects there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop such independence or to carry out research and are particularly lacking in history and in design and technology. The individual pursuit of excellence, however, is a marked feature of pupils' response in music. Here older pupils regularly visit the department on a voluntary basis to refine and develop their performance. Standards are high in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form in terms of appreciation of audience and courtesy towards other performers.

Behaviour and attendance

21. Behaviour, particularly in the great majority of lessons, is very good. Most pupils have a very clear sense of what is right and wrong, and make a very positive contribution to the orderly, social environment. Movement around the school is smooth and there is very little time wasting or lateness to lessons. Even on congested narrow stairways pupils show due regard for efficient movement and for the safety of others. Outdoor play and the use of social areas around the school is similarly good-natured. A minority of pupils do, however, fail to observe the normal courtesies of holding doors when occasions arise, but for the majority this is simply normal behaviour. Pupils are very aware that teachers have high expectations of them and are able to see the collective benefit of responding in a mature way. Behaviour is effectively and yet sensitively handled by the school and pupils respond to the high expectations in terms of trust, respect and courtesy. As a result exclusion rates are lower than would be expected nationally for a school of this size.

22. Attendance at the school is good with figures above those achieved nationally and, together with much of what has been observed above, reflects a community where the great majority of pupils take pride in themselves, their school and their learning. Due to measures put in place to encourage good attendance, rates are improving further. The school records parentally condoned absence as unauthorised, resulting in apparently high rates of unauthorised absence although levels of unexplained absence are similar to the national average.

23. The school should now:

- offer further opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning and research work, particularly in design and technology and in history.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good and it is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers are dedicated and committed and work hard in providing the best education for their pupils.

25. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons observed. Teaching was good in 35 per cent of lessons, very good in a further 27 per cent and outstanding in nine per cent of lessons. Teaching in five per cent of lessons was unsatisfactory and in one per cent of lessons it was poor. The proportions of outstanding, very good and good teaching were similar at both key stages. However, a higher proportion of the unsatisfactory and poor teaching was seen at Key Stage 4, with seven per cent unsatisfactory and three per cent poor, than at Key Stage 3. The quality of teaching in the sixth form was always at least satisfactory. In 41 per cent of lessons

teaching was good; it was very good in a further 32 per cent of lessons and outstanding in five per cent.

26. Good or very good teaching was seen in all year groups with a higher proportion of very good lessons seen in Years 7, 12 and 13. Excellent lessons were seen in all year groups except in Year 12. There were a higher number of unsatisfactory lessons seen in Years 7, 10 and 11. The small proportion of poor teaching was seen in Years 10 and 11.

27. Examples of high quality teaching which helped pupils' progress well and encouraged their learning were seen in most subjects. At Key Stage 3 very good teaching was seen in mathematics, geography, art, history, information technology, French and religious education. At Key Stage 4 very good teaching was seen in English, mathematics, science, drama, geography, music, physical education, information technology, business studies, art, German and religious education. A minority of unsatisfactory lessons were observed in English, French, geography, design and technology and history.

Strengths of teaching

28. Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Many have high expectations of themselves and their pupils and more often than not lessons have a brisk pace and offer pupils challenging experiences which actively engage them in productive work. Many teachers offer pupils good support and guidance. The quality of this teaching is having a significant impact on pupils' learning. Pupils rise to the challenges given; they concentrate well, show interest and work productively. Many pupils learn well as a result of the high levels of skilful questioning and explanations which encourage them to think. When exposed to this level of high quality teaching, pupils show faster than average progress in their work. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson in response to some excellent teaching, pupils consolidated their understanding of a prose text, shared their perceptions of a theatre production of 'Romeo and Juliet' and developed their understanding of some key characters in Shakespeare's play through drama. In a religious studies Year 7 class, high expectations and challenging tasks set by the teacher encouraged good, descriptive, analytic writing, which developed the pupils' ability to reflect on themselves and their humanity.

29. Very good teaching is often characterised by good planning and interesting, varied lessons. Lessons were often well sequenced with clear objectives, which took account of the prior attainment of pupils. For example, in mathematics teachers focus on the concepts to be learned and plan their lessons to contain a range of activities which engage pupils and students in their learning. In geography the school grounds were cleverly used to teach both erosion with Year 8 pupils and aspects of the water cycle with Year 7. Time and resources were effectively used in many lessons and appropriately chosen to make lessons stimulating and interesting. For example, in art lessons in Year 7 and Year 10 all the materials and equipment were readily available, and lesson introductions and demonstrations were brief but effective to maximise the time available.

30. Relationships with pupils were often very good in effective lessons. Support given to pupils and the positive feedback helped pupils progress with their work. They valued the praise given.

Weaker features of teaching

31. The least effective and unsatisfactory teaching at both key stages was often caused by poor lesson planning where objectives were unclear and the lesson did not plan for the differing levels of pupils' attainment. Too often pupils were carrying out mundane tasks that were not challenging or providing them with further knowledge and skills to help them progress further with their work. Sometimes these ineffective lessons did not plan appropriate tasks to help low attaining pupils succeed. Questioning skills were often poor and did not help pupils think or inspire them to answer. For example, in a Year 7 history lesson, the lowest-attaining pupils were not engaged because of lack of variety of activity and the poor pace of the lesson. In a Year 8 design and technology lesson, pupils did not succeed in gaining new knowledge and skills, because they were put into groups that were too large, guidance from the teacher was insufficient and the tasks themselves were not stimulating enough. In some instances teaching was unsatisfactory because the teacher did not teach the pupils to apply the appropriate skills or help them to improve their work. For example, in a Year 10 design and technology lesson the skills taught to the pupils to assemble their project work

were not good enough to ensure that the pupils would produce a quality product. In a French lesson the teacher did not use the language well enough to help pupils improve their vocabulary.

Literacy and numeracy

32. Literacy skills are taught well in Years 9, 10 and 11. The teaching of literacy in Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory rather than good, because lesson planning is less effective and lesson objectives are less clear than in the other years. Overall, however, the effective teaching of literacy is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Numeracy is well taught in all year groups and the numeracy skills of pupils are good. The good teaching of both numeracy and literacy is reflected in the high levels of attainment pupils are achieving in the school. Literacy and numeracy are strengths of the school.

Pupils with special educational needs

33. Where teaching is very good, pupils with special educational needs are well taught and learn well. Individual education plans prepared for pupils with special needs with key targets are frequently used to plan appropriate activities well matched to the pupils' needs. Learning objectives and activities are well pitched to provide the pupils with opportunities to succeed and make good progress. Assessments of the pupils' work are often thorough. The management of pupils' behaviour is often good which enables pupils to learn in a positive and productive learning environment. Learning support assistants are well deployed in the school. Where teaching was good teachers had effectively used these assistants in the classroom and involved them in the planning of the lesson. The 'Challenge course' at Key Stage 4 is well taught and is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and progress. For example, pupils are learning well in Spanish. Many teachers have focussed well on basic learning skills to improve pupils' learning and gain access to wider opportunities. This was evident in mathematics, English and modern foreign languages. Where teaching was less successful teachers had no access to individual education plans to devise appropriate work to support pupils, had not planned lessons which met individual pupil needs and on some occasions the handling of pupils' behaviour was inappropriate.

Pupils' learning

34. Pupils enjoy learning. The quality of learning reflects very closely the quality of teaching which pupils receive. In the lessons observed across the school as a whole, the quality of pupils' learning was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of the lessons; it was good in 36 per cent, very good in a further 24 per cent and outstanding in a further eight per cent. The quality of learning was unsatisfactory in six per cent of lessons. It was particularly good in the sixth form. Pupils learned well and made progress when teaching was good. Pupils really liked to work productively and many kept on task and persevered with their work. Pupils were generally interested and enthusiastic, especially when they were given challenging, exciting work to do. They were often able to transfer their skills and knowledge to new situations and were able to recall what they had previously been taught. This was often evident through the answers given by pupils to effective questioning by some teachers. Many pupils were able to apply intellectual, physical and creative effort to their work. This was apparent in most subject areas where pupils worked diligently. Unsatisfactory learning was generally due either to poor behaviour in lessons which did not offer stimulating or challenging activities to pupils; or to very low levels of interest or concentration from the pupils because the lesson had not been planned well enough to take account of their prior attainment.

Improvements since the last inspection

35. Teaching in the school has steadily improved since the last inspection. Teaching in the sixth form has made a significant improvement. However, there are some subjects that still have shortcomings, notably design and technology. There is also a small minority of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory.

36. In order to improve teaching and learning further the school should now:

- concentrate on improving the weaker features of teaching in design and technology and in history;
- improve provision for special educational needs to ensure that pupils' individual education

plans are sufficiently detailed to support progress across all subjects and that teachers make effective use of them;

- improve those areas of pupils' learning which are unsatisfactory.

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

37. The curriculum is generally broad, balanced and relevant at Key Stage 3, reflecting the school's aims and meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school complies with the agreed syllabus for religious education in Key Stage 3.

38. Since the last inspection the school has made substantial improvements to the quality of the core ICT curriculum at Key Stage 3, and this is now a strength. The planned curriculum for information technology meets statutory requirements when it is taught as a distinct subject; planning and provision for its integration across all subject areas is generally unsatisfactory, however.

39. In line with national recommendations, the total time available for teaching is almost 25 hours per week, and in addition to the subjects required by law, the school makes a commitment to the provision of drama and offers pupils a choice of French or German as their first foreign language. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a full curriculum entitlement across all subject areas, and consequently organises its timetable on a half-termly rotating cycle. This is largely successful in Key Stage 3, although some grouping arrangements are unsuitable for PE, resulting in classes that are unequal in size, ability and gender mix.

Key Stage 3

40. Pupils experience a wide range of worthwhile curricular activities at Key Stage 3. In art and design, for example, they are offered challenging and interesting work that integrates the two attainment targets effectively, providing good opportunities in two- and three-dimensional work; and in mathematics, the planning and organisation of the curriculum ensures that pupils are able to make rapid progress. Drama provision is a strength at Key Stage 3, and the geography curriculum is well planned and taught, providing pupils with a wide variety of opportunities for learning through enquiry and research methods. In music the Key Stage 3 curriculum is largely traditional in approach, and currently provides pupils with too few opportunities to experience a broad selection of music from other times and places. A lack of resources in music also has a detrimental effect on the quality of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The PE curriculum in Key Stage 3 allows for good coverage of the aspects of physical education, and is therefore suitably broad; it is unbalanced, however, in that it places undue emphasis on games activities.

Key Stage 4

41. At Key Stage 4, curricular provision in many GCSE subjects is good, and at times outstanding. In music, for example, individual targets are negotiated with pupils on a weekly basis, leading to high levels of achievement and increased motivation and interest. Pupils are kept informed as to how well they are doing and, more importantly, they know exactly what they need to do in order to improve further. Business studies, English and drama also provide good learning experiences for Key Stage 4 pupils, as do PE and geography. Overall, the Key Stage 4 curriculum offers pupils a broadly satisfactory education. It offers a broad choice of subjects and a suitable balance of activities, many of which are clearly strengths. However, in some areas the needs of every pupil are not being met. For example, the curriculum still fails to provide sufficient time to comply with the statutory requirements for RE and ICT. Planned provision is in place for delivering the ICT curriculum; in practice this is not implemented, however.

42. The Challenge course provides effective learning opportunities for a small number of pupils, and is a valuable component of Key Stage 4 provision. The mathematics department provides alternative forms of accreditation for those pupils for whom GCSE is inappropriate. Opportunities to gain alternative accreditation in other subject areas are not pursued, however. This is a weakness in the school's provision for its Key Stage 4 pupils.

Post 16

43. The post-16 curriculum has substantially improved since the last inspection and is now good. Provision for sociology and psychology is now very good. Taking into account the size of the sixth form, the school offers its pupils a good, well-balanced range of subjects, including GNVQ

accreditation and pre-vocational courses. The curriculum still fails to meet the statutory requirements for RE, however, and this was an issue in the previous inspection. The school makes no provision for PE at post 16, apart from the Junior Sports Leader Awards (JSLA) award in Year 12.

Extra-curricular

44. The quality of extra-curricular opportunities offered to pupils across a variety of subjects, interests and activities is good, but not extensive. Those subjects offering regular extra-curricular events are well supported, and pupils indicate that they would welcome more such opportunities. In physical education, for example, pupils can take part in a good range of varied and interesting activities including soccer, netball, rugby league, hockey, cross-country and dance; in music pupils are given very good opportunities to enhance their enjoyment of the subject through 'Connexion', which functions on an open-access basis, and by taking advantage of instrumental tuition; and in geography, field trips and residential provide excellent curricular enhancement. Maths, drama and art also offer good quality provision. The strength of the school's extra-curricular provision lies in large-scale events such as field trips, visits abroad and musical productions, for example. Weekly clubs are less well established, and some departments offer only 'surgery' type activities consisting of extra opportunities for catching up on classwork. Participation rates in extra-curricular activities are very good, and older pupils provide good role models in terms of demonstrating a firm commitment to extra-curricular provision, and in encouraging younger pupils to take part.

Wider curriculum aspects

45. Careers education provides pupils with good support to help them plan their stages of career development. Pupils receive good information and advice and careers lessons are well planned for offering pupils purposeful information and advice. There are good links with the careers service.

46. Personal social and health education (PSHE) is effective at Key Stage 4 and pupils gain a range of positive experiences that contribute to their education. The curriculum is well planned to take account of more sensitive issues such as sex education and drugs education. However, PSHE is taught in conjunction with religious education. As a result there is insufficient time overall to provide well for both subjects and the statutory requirement to cover the agreed syllabus for religious education cannot be met within the time available.

47. The provision for PSHE is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 and post 16. At Key Stage 3 the time allocated in Years 8 and 9 is insufficient to offer pupils a range of experiences. Presently it is taught as an extended tutor period one day a week which includes assemblies and this cuts down on the time available for PSHE. The themes of the assemblies are not connected or followed through in tutor periods to offer a continuous relevant programme of work within the tutor period. Staff teaching PSHE are not fully trained to carry out some of the more sensitive areas and consequently all pupils are not receiving an equal experience in PSHE. The co-ordinator is also a tutor and therefore does not have the opportunity to monitor the programme and its effectiveness. At post-16 the school does not provide structured opportunities for students to engage in a range of PSHE issues.

Community aspects

48. The school has good links with its contributory schools. Induction procedures are effective and contact with primary schools continues with regular liaison meetings to discuss relevant issues. During the inspection a meeting between primary and secondary staff included the planning of visits to primary schools by staff from the modern foreign languages department to teach 'taster' lessons in German. Links with the local secondary schools consortium are used to widen opportunities for pupils.

49. There are appropriate links with local colleges of further education for pupils post-16. The school emphasises to pupils the value of continuing their education and ensures pupils are aware of the full range of choices, including the school's own sixth form provision. The school has good relationships with teacher training institutions and during the inspection eight trainee teachers were working in the school.

50. Pupils in Year 10 carry out work experience, much of this in the local community. The quality

and organisation of this are good with good support and positive feedback from employers. The premises are well used by community groups. Local organisations use the sports facilities well and the school provides a meeting place for a club for young people and adults with physical and learning difficulties.

Moral, social, spiritual and cultural aspects

51. The school's provision for the moral and social development of its pupils is very good. Provision for their cultural development is good overall, but with variations, and provision for their spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

52. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. There is no whole school policy or plan for spiritual development nor any formal monitoring of provision, with the result that provision is inconsistent between subject areas and is of variable quality. The school does not satisfy statutory requirements for a daily act of broadly Christian worship. Assemblies are used well to promote the strong supportive ethos of the school. Within lessons, provision for pupils' spiritual development is variable, ranging from good to inadequate. In religious education, pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on their own experiences in a way that develops self-knowledge. For example, in Year 7 pupils were asked to reflect on the question, 'why am I unique?' In English and drama, pupils are provided with the opportunity to reflect on issues of inequality and to show empathy and understanding of characters through role-play. In geography, teachers refer to the awesome power of nature and natural hazards, whilst in art, teachers draw attention to the beauty to be found in natural and human-made forms. In many other subjects, opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual development are missed, and there is little evidence of planning for this in subject documentation across the school.

53. Across all subject areas, and in all aspects of school life, the school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Teachers consistently provide good role models for the pupils in terms of their behaviour. They promote positive behaviour and attitudes, expecting high standards of pupil conduct and respect for school property. Moral issues are considered in a number of subjects. For example, in English discussions about character and motivation within 'Romeo and Juliet' are underpinned by clear moral values. In science moral issues involving genetics and global warming are explored in Year 11 and Year 10 lessons respectively. In geography learning occurs when teachers invite pupils to understand the issues that lie behind decisions, which relate to other people's lives, homes, and well-being. In information technology two Year 10 pupils are producing an "agony aunt" web page for the school's Intranet, dealing with the issue of drugs and drugs education.

54. The school's provision for pupils' social development is very good overall. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to work together and to relate to one another, both within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. In physical education many opportunities are provided for the pupils to take part in team games. In religious education pupils are provided with opportunities to work together at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. In art pupils are given good opportunities to work together on large-scale projects, both within the curriculum and specifically in Year 8 Arts Days. In drama pupils work in mixed gender groups in Year 8, exploring feelings and character motivation. Opportunities for group work in drama also occur in Years 11, 12 and 13. Group work is used effectively in English to promote co-operation.

55. The school provides some good opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility, participate in the community and develop an understanding of citizenship.

56. The school's provision of opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation of their own cultural traditions is variable, but good overall. In physical education good links have been established with the two local rugby league teams. In music good use is made of examples from the 20th century repertoire, including songs featuring social comment. In art pupils have many opportunities to respond directly to aspects of the local environment, and in English a recent visit to a production of 'Romeo and Juliet' has sparked an interest in Shakespeare in Year 9 pupils. In most other subjects, however, the provision of opportunities in this area could be developed.

57. The school's provision of opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures has improved since the last inspection, and is now good overall. There

are, however, still clear areas of strength and weakness. In modern foreign languages, for example, Year 7 pupils make a day trip to Boulogne each year and there are also sixth form cultural visits to Alliance Francais in Leeds. The food of other countries is explored through modern foreign languages and a French/German cafe is organised on open evenings. In mathematics there are some displays of Indian artefacts, featuring similarity and reflection, whilst in religious education faith communities are studied at Key Stage 3. In art many very good opportunities are provided for pupils to experience and respond to work from other cultures. For example, in Year 10 textiles pupils explored aboriginal imagery as a basis for batik work, taking advantage of an input from the school librarian, who had personal experience of living and working with an aboriginal tribe. In music, however, the Key Stage 3 curriculum is impoverished in terms of providing exciting inter-cultural musical opportunities, there being no authentic resources available to support this. In science and in design and technology provision for pupils' cultural development is under-developed.

58. In order to upgrade provision for the curriculum the school should:

- improve groupings at Key Stage 3 for PE and provide a better curricular balance of activities;
- fulfil the statutory requirements at Key Stage 4 for RE and IT;
- provide PE for post 16 pupils;
- improve the range of extra curricular activities;
- improve provision for PHSE at Key Stage 3;
- provide further opportunities for pupils' spiritual development;
- provide wider opportunities for pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

59. The school has a very effective pastoral system which is a strength. Teachers know pupils well and have a good understanding of their needs. The school has a caring ethos where pupils are valued and respect is shown for what they have to say. Form tutors often deal with pupils' concerns and heads of year are fully involved in ensuring that pupils' individual needs are met. Heads of upper and lower school also play a major part in providing pastoral guidance, showing genuine concern and providing practical help for those who are experiencing difficulties. Instances were seen during inspection where staff dealt sensitively with pupils who were upset or concerned and procedures are in place to ensure that all pupils have a member of staff whom they can approach for help and advice.

60. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs are well supported by their learning support assistants. Their needs and problems are well known to staff and regular meetings between their learning support assistants and the special needs co-ordinator ensures that any issues concerning these pupils are tracked. Individual education plans are not fully in place for others on the special needs register and existing plans are often too general and are not subject specific.

61. The school has due regard for issues involving child protection and follows guidelines agreed locally. There is good contact with supporting agencies.

62. The school does not have appropriate procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils and does not fulfil statutory requirements in this matter. The school does not carry out necessary risk assessments in any department and several matters were brought to the attention of staff during the inspection which were potentially hazardous. The school should take urgent steps to ensure that it fulfils its legal obligations in matters of health and safety. First aid arrangements are in place and effective.

63. Good behaviour is expected, promoted and achieved. Instances of poor behaviour are recorded in pupils' individual planning records (called 'planners') and this information is collated, ensuring that patterns of misbehaviour are noted and dealt with, involving senior staff where necessary. The school takes very seriously any instances of bullying or harassment. They are monitored well by staff and both parents and pupils report that bullying is not tolerated, being dealt with quickly and effectively.

64. There are very good systems in place to monitor pupils' attendance and to follow up any unexplained absence. The school has recently introduced 'first day call' to parents for pupils whose absence causes concern. Pupils with poor attendance are given support and some are included in

the Challenge course for older pupils, resulting in improved attendance for these pupils.

65. Overall the school has improved its arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance, though inconsistencies do remain between subjects. Particularly good practice in assessment exists in geography, information technology and modern foreign languages. Here there is regular assessment of pupils' progress and departments have developed their own effective systems, frequently using computers, to record pupil performance. The assessments are carefully planned, marked and then compared by teachers and subject managers to ensure consistency. The best of these systems have two further advantages: the assessments are graded to match the needs of different groups of pupils and the information is then used to review and refine the allocation of pupils to differing teaching groups and to inform both individuals and teachers of the next steps in learning. Mathematics and music are especially strong in this regard. The use of National Curriculum levels to help shape the assessment process is patchy, though some subjects such as geography are making good progress. However, as reported in the previous inspection, there is no clear whole school requirement to develop the use of these levels to better validate the eventual end of judgements about pupils' performance at the end of key stages. As a result, in some subjects such as history these judgements are not secure. Similarly, though there is some good practice in marking pupils' work, inconsistencies remain within and between subjects and this feeds through into inconsistencies in the centralised recording of performance in the school. The clarification of expectation requirements for marking and assessing pupils' work, particularly within Key Stage 3, is a point for further development in the school.

66. Some very good practice has developed in the monitoring and tracking of each pupil's progress within subject departments. In mathematics, IT, geography and modern foreign languages, teachers are making very good and effective use of regular assessment results to monitor progress. Information technology is being well used. Subject managers are able to gain a clear picture of both the effectiveness of the teaching programme and the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils. At its best the information provides clear targets for improvement and this is well seen in mathematics and modern foreign languages. The practice of setting individual targets for pupils and continuous review of their performance is highly developed with older pupils in music.

67. As in the last inspection, the use of student planners to help pupils review their own performance remains patchy. Some subjects make very little use of this system whilst some individual subject teachers use it to good effect. These inconsistencies were confirmed by both the planners and the pupils themselves. However, some improvements have been introduced: the introduction of a system of codes to monitor both work and behaviour is a success and through form tutors this has improved the overall school monitoring of attitudes and effort.

68. Since the previous inspection an assessment co-ordinator is now in post and has established a centralised recording and monitoring system for subjects to make use of. The influence of such systems needs to be spread to all subjects through clear guidance and expectations in order to improve consistency in monitoring and to spread the existing good practice throughout the school.

69. The school should now:

- improve individual education plans for special educational needs;
- take urgent steps to improve health and safety measures in school which include the preparation of risk assessments and the production of a policy and procedures;
- ensure that assessment, recording and reporting are consistent across all subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

70. Parents are generally supportive of the school and are confident that the school has high expectations of their children to work hard and achieve well. They feel that teaching is good and that high standards of behaviour are achieved. Most believe that the school is "tough on bullying" and that incidents of aggressive behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They feel that their children are making good progress.

71. Although most parents would feel happy about approaching the school with any problems or concerns, many do not feel well informed about their child's progress or that the school works closely with them. A significant number feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of

activities outside lessons. Whilst teachers are clearly already working more than their contractual hours, pupils and the school would benefit from enlarging the activities on offer.

72. Opportunities provided by the school to discuss pupils' progress are satisfactory with well attended consultation evenings held annually along with further meetings for those first entering the school and for those who are making choices at the end of Key Stage 3. Reports to parents are contained in pupils' annual records of achievement and are variable in quality. In some subjects, including English, mathematics and modern foreign languages, they provide information on strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement, but sometimes in other subjects comments tend to concentrate on attitude and behaviour. The school does not report on information technology in Key Stage 4 and religious education is reported along with personal social education. In reporting to parents the school therefore does not meet statutory requirements.

73. A main routine link between school and home is the child's planner. These are not simply homework diaries but contain useful sections on evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and also targets for improvement. These planners are checked weekly by form tutors and some are used well by parents and teachers to exchange information. Their use by parents is, however, inconsistent.

74. Information provided to parents about the school in the prospectus is mostly good but the school fails to publish the rights of parents to withdraw their children from religious education. The governors' annual report to parents contains insufficient information about the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. This report is only sent to parents who request a copy. It is a legal requirement that this report is sent to all parents. In the publication of both of these documents, the school therefore fails to fulfil legal requirements.

75. A few parents provide some very valuable support in extra-curricular activities and on out-of-school visits. Support for their children when performing is good and during inspection an audience of around 120 attended an excellent performance of 'Connexion'.

76. The school should now:

- provide more information to parents on pupils' progress;
- provide a wider range of activities outside lessons;
- fulfil the statutory requirements for reports and improve reports to parents to include details that say how well the pupils are progressing with targets for development;
- ensure the prospectus informs parents that they have the right to withdraw their child from RE.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Senior management and governors

77. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides positive, optimistic and very effective leadership which is recognised and appreciated by parents. As a result the school has explicit aims and values and a strong commitment to confidence and good relationships as the foundation for a successful organisation. All its work is clearly focused on the needs of the pupils and the quality of their education. Staff show a genuine interest in and respect for the pupils. The successful management of the school can be seen clearly in its everyday life. The school is welcoming, standards are rising, relationships are good and the school continues to improve.

78. The governing body plays an active part in the life of the school and is committed to improving the school. Governors are aware of the school's performance and take an interest in the work of the school. The chair of governors works well with the headteacher and senior management group. Many governors are involved with a number of activities such as supporting school trips and events. Many have been fully involved in the process of appointing the new headteacher. All governors have clear roles and responsibilities and many governors carry these roles out with enthusiasm. The governing body has a positive impact on special educational needs and the annual report to governors on special educational needs is both informative and celebratory. Finances are diligently monitored and checked. The school values the expertise and broad experience which the governors bring to their work for the school. The governors fulfil their statutory duties with the exception of ensuring a daily act of collective worship; providing satisfactorily for RE and ICT; and ensuring risk assessments and health and safety procedures are carried out. The latter includes having a policy in

place for health and safety. The governors have not yet developed procedures for formally monitoring the work of the school or evaluating the impact of expenditure on resources.

79. The senior management team is committed, well informed and fulfils its roles and responsibilities effectively. It co-ordinates the work of the school well, leads working groups effectively and develops the management skills of middle managers. Roles and responsibilities at senior management level do not fully match the key priorities of the school, however - for example, raising standards, assessment, departmental links and ICT.

Middle management

80. Departmental management is very effective in business studies, mathematics, geography, religious education and the social sciences, modern foreign languages and art. Key common strengths are the enthusiasm of the staff, the ways in which they care about the achievement and interests of the students, the good levels of challenge which they provide for all pupils and the very effective use of the resources available to achieve maximum effect for pupils' learning. New arrangements for the management of modern foreign languages are already showing a positive impact on the quality of pupils' language learning. In mathematics, the very good management creates a strong subject identity, an ethos of reaching for high standards and a generosity of spirit within the department which clearly enhance the quality of pupils' education. Here, as in many other subjects, staff give freely of their time to help pupils to revise and to stretch and stimulate the higher-attaining pupils. Assessment is very well managed and is well used to improve pupil grouping and learning and to set high targets for pupils in Key Stage 4. The management of geography provides clear, strong educational direction and leadership for the subject and results in consistently high standards and quality. Strong features of such management include excellent subject planning and documentation, good strategic thinking, clear procedures and routines and careful monitoring of outcomes and results. Departmental leadership is good in English, music, information technology, business studies and art. In music, for example, the good management results in a clear vision and philosophy for music education, which is put into practice on a daily basis.

81. Management in science, although judged satisfactory overall in that staff are committed, work well together and the department is improving, lacks sufficient strategic planning. As a result the recommendations from an external review have not been implemented swiftly enough. Also there is insufficient linking of the analysis of pupils' performance with what should be improved in teaching and learning. Management is poor in history. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Policies do not get to the heart of teaching the subject and there is no monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the department. Management is unsatisfactory in design and technology. The inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning arise from the lack of co-ordination across the subject. The department still does not operate fully as a design and technology team with regular meetings, joint planning and the sharing of development planning. Procedures are insecure and fragmented and the department has no clear direction.

82. Middle managers are clearly, and for the most part effectively, focused on their own departmental work. Their contribution to whole-school development should be extended, however - for example, in developing the contribution of special educational needs to improvements across the school, in developing and clarifying the contribution of the English department to ICT or in the linking of developments in ICT across all subjects and in particular with reference to the National Grid for Learning (NGfL). Similarly the pulling together of the work of senior and middle managers requires further attention to develop a concerted, whole-school approach to the school's key priorities. For example, heads of department are not sufficiently aware of the monitoring work on student attainment done by pastoral management. The management links between drama and modern foreign languages, two clear areas of improvement in the school, and senior management are valued and these should be extended. Pastoral management is good in the lower and upper schools and in the sixth form. The management of PHSE is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient planning, monitoring and evaluation of the PHSE programme across the school. The programme also has insufficient teaching time and resources available at Key Stage 3 and many teachers have not been given the appropriate training.

83. Alongside the review of senior management roles and responsibilities, the school should review middle management roles and responsibilities – for example, within ICT, religious education,

personal and social education, spiritual development, social sciences, within mathematics and within pastoral management.

Monitoring, evaluation and planning

84. The school monitors and analyses its standards. It faces up to its weaknesses and works hard to overcome them. The school is aware, quite rightly, of the need to extend the process of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school in classrooms. In ICT the department has developed good processes to raise standards through the setting of targets. In English monitoring is a strength. The head of department has a clear view of the work of the department through a good range of monitoring strategies: the monitoring of schemes of work, assessment tasks, teaching and learning in classrooms and the standards of pupils' work. Here, as also in business studies, performance data is well used to analyse teaching issues and to identify areas for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation within subjects, and taking effective action as a result, is unsatisfactory in history and PE.

85. Planning links whole-school targets to school goals within a good one-year framework. Management planning has focused well recently on teaching and learning. Management responsibilities, staff development implications and costs are not identified clearly enough. Planning has been successful in bringing about improvements in many areas of the school: in pastoral work, in art, modern foreign languages, geography, mathematics, sociology and business studies; in gaining accreditation for Investors in People; and in aspects of financial planning. There are, however, issues in planning. The short timescale tends to list annual activities and allows insufficient opportunity to plan strategically for raising standards and improving quality both within subjects and across the whole school. The one-year timescale also promotes an emphasis on external priorities which limits the capacity of the school to develop and assert its own identity.

Strategic use of resources and best value

86. Finances are well managed and the school makes very efficient use of its resources. Spending decisions are taken clearly in the best interests of the education of the pupils – for example, to develop the learning support unit and the programme for gifted and talented pupils, to provide well for pupils to learn a musical instrument. The school has managed a deficit budget situation well and has secure plans to balance its budget within the next few months. The school has succeeded in improving provision for pupils within these demanding circumstances. The policy to ensure best value in the management of the school is embedded in its thinking. Teaching time is used very effectively and practice within most other areas is sharp and rigorous. Learning support assistants are well managed and effectively deployed. The internal programme of repairs and refurbishment makes very efficient use of available resources. Financial control and administration are effective, with good quality information and support from the local education authority (LEA).

87. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well in helping shape the direction of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The systems for financial management are secure and efficient and expenditure is monitored rigorously. However, the strategies for systematically gathering information about the educational provision and measuring the impact of planning and spending decisions on the quality of pupils' outcomes are not well defined. Currently, procedures are too informal and not linked firmly enough to clear strategic priority planning within the school development plan or to clear criteria for measuring success.

88. The specific grants made available to the school are effectively used for its delegated purposes. The school supplements the grants from its own delegated budget to ensure that the provision is maintained at the highest level and for the best effect - for example, in additional funding to support those pupils with special educational needs.

89. In seeking best value, governors are confident and competent when comparing the school's performance against others locally and they are beginning to make good use of analysis of assessment results to target spending. However, they are not yet secure in their understanding or practice of measuring outcomes against expectations and spending decisions. The governing body invites formal tenders for building maintenance and will often adopt a self-help scheme to save money without compromising quality. It has appropriate criteria in place for selecting contractors.

Overall, the school shows satisfactory application of best value principles.

Staffing

90. Teaching staff are well qualified and of sufficient numbers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Their delegated responsibilities are generally well matched to their qualifications and expertise. This ensures that pupils make good progress in their work. Exceptions are in religious education and PHSE at Key Stage 4, where there is a negative impact on pupils' learning and attainment. Teaching staff are supported well in the classroom by a number of classroom assistants, technicians and system managers. Their contribution to pupils' well-being and progress is very good and sometimes excellent. Many give up more time than their contracted hours; this is symptomatic of the school's caring and challenging strategy to improve attainment.

91. The procedures for appraisal are secure. The school follows the Investors in People model for appraisal and self-review. It has maintained this accreditation which is an indicator of the school's clear procedures for staff development. Teachers have professional discussions annually, which they value. Targets for teachers' improvement, development and training are negotiated and agreed during this process. Heads of department appraise their own departmental staff and this often results in targets for improving performance. However, the line management structure is not clear to all staff beyond the head of department and needs clarifying further. Any training is carefully scheduled to ensure a balance between meeting the needs of individuals and the school's priorities. This has ensured that money is spent wisely. Most staff have attended in-service training in recent months. Staff have had opportunities to continue to keep abreast of developments in other areas of the curriculum and supporting those pupils with special educational needs.

92. Non-teaching staff also have a formal appraisal with their line manager to ensure that their professional development needs are considered. For example, administrative assistants have received a considerable amount of training from very experienced people in-house and from external providers. This has resulted in the school making very efficient use of its non-teaching staff, taking many people forward professionally into enhanced positions of responsibility within the school. This enables them to make a very positive contribution to the life of the school as, for example, in science.

93. The school is already beginning to deal successfully with the additional demands of performance management in setting targets for improvement in teaching and the deployment of rewards to good teachers and senior managers.

94. The school is an effective provider of initial teacher training, the programme of induction and support is good. Trainees generally have good mentors who provide a wealth of teaching expertise. Trainees are fully involved in teaching and learning activities and this has a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Accommodation and resources

95. The accommodation is generally satisfactory. The school has worked hard to secure funding to improve some of its accommodation, in particular the science, information technology and art facilities. The school is very aware of its deficiencies in accommodation in modern foreign languages, drama, history, religious education and science. It has a rolling programme for development and is clearly successful within financial constraints in improving the quality of the accommodation. Improvements to the physical education, information technology and library facilities feature in the school's development plan for future investment. The school generally makes effective use of the space available. It is used extensively by the community for out-of-school activities. The school is well maintained, clean and well organised. Classroom wall space is used well for displaying pupils' work where it is shown with the care and dignity it deserves. In science, for example, many of the displays are attractive, of high quality and enhance the learning environment. Many high quality exhibitions of pupils' art work, together with good, photographic displays of past school events, are a feature of the public areas of the school. In science, for example, many of the displays are attractive, of high quality and enhance the learning environment. Design and technology lacks display of any quality.

96. Within the financial constraints imposed, all departments have made effective use of their resource allocation. The resources to support teaching and pupils' learning are generally adequate, of appropriate quality for most areas of the curriculum, and easily accessible apart from information technology. Resources for teaching and learning are seen to be inadequate in mathematics and religious education, however, and there are insufficient mats for indoor work in physical education. In science library provision is insufficient both in quantity and range; resources for experimental and investigative work are barely adequate overall. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, the combination of a poorly equipped laboratory, a shortage of power packs and inappropriate lenses had a negative impact on pupils' attainment.

97. The school has taken significant steps since the last inspection to improve the information communication technology equipment; however, the resources have yet to show a positive impact on pupils' attainment across the curriculum. Elsewhere, the school is making effective use of new technologies. Much of the office administration and budget management is now computer generated and associated ICT is being used well to help display pupils' work better, to prepare quality publications and to help teachers in the preparation of teaching materials. The school is linked to the Internet but electronic mailing is not yet available. The new systems that are in place have made the school more efficient in its day-to-day management. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

98. The school should now:

- develop processes for monitoring and evaluating standards and quality of provision which lead to prompt and concerted action in improvements;
- develop whole-school approaches to school improvement which tie together senior and middle management, academic and pastoral management;
- ensure that expertise and experience at senior management level are directed to key priorities
- ensure statutory risk assessment procedures are put in place;
- improve accommodation and resources.

99. The governing body should ensure that the school meets statutory requirements in:

- the provision of religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form;
- the provision of ICT at Key Stage 4;
- annual written reports to parents;
- the school prospectus with regard to the withdrawal of pupils from religious education;
- the publication and circulation of the governors' report and due notice of the parents' meeting;
- health and safety.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

100. The school should now:

- (1) **Improve GCSE results for lower-attaining pupils** by:
 - reviewing curriculum provision (paragraphs 14, 42); and
 - reviewing the policy for examination entry (3, 5, 14).

- (2) **Ensure all teaching is at least satisfactory** by:
 - improving teaching in history and design and technology (31, 148-155, 169-173);
 - monitoring and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school (28-33);
 - tackling urgently areas of identified weakness (31); and
 - sharing current good and very good practice (28-30).

- (3) **Improve provision for PHSE at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form** by:
 - making more effective use of available teaching time and resources (46, 47);
 - ensuring staff have the appropriate expertise to teach PHSE (90); and
 - clarifying expectations for the leadership and management (82).

- (4) **Ensure the curriculum meets statutory requirements for RE and IT at Key Stage 4** (41, 78).

- (5) **Improve provision for pupils' spiritual development** by:
 - ensuring management responsibility is clear and at an appropriate level (83);
 - monitoring existing provision (85); and
 - developing a positive approach to this aspect of pupils' education across the whole curriculum (52).

- (6) **Improve the quality of information available to parents** by:
 - providing more information on pupils' progress (71);
 - improving annual reports so that they fulfil statutory requirements (72); and
 - seeking the views of parents more systematically (73).

- (7) **Improve the quality of accommodation and learning resources** by:
 - improving accommodation in modern foreign languages, drama, history, RE and science (95, 193, 159);
 - improving indoor accommodation for PE (95); and
 - improving accommodation for design and technology and in particular for food technology (154).

- (8) **Improve procedures for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the work of the school** by:
 - clarifying expectations of all staff with management responsibilities (79, 81-83);
 - linking the monitoring work of senior and middle management (79-85, 87); and
 - ensuring good practice is celebrated and shared and that planning for improvement tackles the issues identified in this report (84, 85).

- (9) **Improve development planning** by:
 - agreeing a strategic plan which sets out expectations and ambitions for the longer term beyond 12 months (85); and
 - co-ordinating middle management planning and whole school planning; ensuring responsibilities, success criteria and costs are clearly identified (85, 87).

- (10) **Ensure as a matter of urgency that health and safety issues are tackled throughout the school** by:
 - clarifying management responsibilities (79, 62);
 - preparing policy, procedures and staff guidance (62, 69); and

- carrying out an audit and risk assessments in all areas of the school (69).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	188
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	179

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	27	35	23	5	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 - Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	981	132
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	129	-

Special educational needs	Y7 - Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	200	5

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	per cent
School data	5.1
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	per cent
School data	2.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	94	92	186

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	64	59	55
	Girls	80	63	49
	Total	144	122	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (63)	66 (67)	56 (57)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	48 (31)	46 (42)	15 (27)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	59	62	60
	Girls	76	65	64
	Total	135	127	124
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	73 (64)	68 (63)	67 (61)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (27)	46 (30)	27 (30)
	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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	1999	86	81	167

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	35	68	79
	Girls	36	73	77
	Total	71	141	156
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	43 (37.6)	84 (87.1)	93 (90.5)
	National	46.3 (44.6)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (94.1)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	34 (33.3)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	11	23	34

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	16.4	19	18.1(18.4)	n/a	n/a	n/a (0)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	per cent success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	60
	National	72.9

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	11
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	2
White	1037
Any other minority ethnic group	9

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other	1	
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	20	8
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	64.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	581

Deployment of teachers: Y7-13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	25.2
Key Stage 4	21.7

Financial information

Financial year	1998 - 1999
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	£
Total income	2,431,988
Total expenditure	2,402,868
Expenditure per pupil	2,340
Balance brought forward from previous year	-61,820
Balance carried forward to next year	-32,700

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,113
Number of questionnaires returned	171

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	23	59	14	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	36	60	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	59	8	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	54	16	5	2
The teaching is good.	26	58	6	2	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	44	28	8	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	36	46	12	5	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	44	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	18	47	25	8	2
The school is well led and managed.	47	42	6	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	55	8	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	36	24	8	12

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

ENGLISH

101. Standards in English are high and show an improving trend. The standards pupils achieve are well above average at the end of Key Stage 3. In the 1999 tests pupils' results were very high in comparison to pupils in similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards are above average and in 1999 pupils achieved results in GCSE English which were well above average for pupils in similar schools. GCSE results in English literature were also high, although fewer pupils than average were entered for this examination. Standards in the sixth form are in line with national expectations.

102. A strength in pupils' attainment is their growing ability to develop and express an understanding of challenging literary texts. For example, Year 11 pupils were seen discussing poems from other cultures and traditions. Their comments showed a very good understanding of theme, structure and the way in which poets use language to achieve certain effects. The pupils were able to sustain the discussion for the whole lesson expressing themselves clearly and listening to each other with concentration. A relative weakness, on the other hand, is the persistence of basic errors in spelling and punctuation in the written work of some otherwise high-attaining pupils, in spite of conscientious correction by their teachers.

103. There have been clear improvements in standards since the last inspection in 1996. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are higher, a higher percentage of Year 11 pupils are now gaining A*-C grades in GCSE, and more students are gaining A-level qualifications. The standards achieved by boys have improved and are now above average with the gap between boys' and girls' attainment smaller than that seen nationally.

104. The main factor in the achievement of high standards is the good progress pupils make in response to good teaching. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is most consistently good in Key Stage 4 where more than one third of the lessons seen were judged to be very good or excellent. Very clear strengths in teaching were observed in Years 9, 10 and 11. When focused on reading and responding to literary texts, teaching was characterised by good subject knowledge, high pace, high expectations and a blend of appropriate methods. Pupils respond very well to this challenging teaching. They listen with concentration and interest and apply themselves very well to the tasks set, co-operating with each other effectively in group or paired work when required. The result is that they make faster than average progress in knowledge, understanding and skills. In one Year 9 lesson the pace of learning was particularly high as, in response to some excellent teaching, pupils consolidated their understanding of a prose text, shared their perceptions of a theatre production of 'Romeo and Juliet' and developed their understanding of some key characters in Shakespeare's play through drama. The best teaching shows two main characteristics: the structuring of work so that pupils are allowed to explore the meaning of texts for themselves within a supportive framework, and skilful questioning and explanation which allow the teacher to communicate effectively to pupils with a range of prior attainment. Thus, the majority of pupils develop as confident, independent learners.

105. Although satisfactory overall, the teaching in Years 7 and 8 is weaker. This is because the planning is less effective and lesson objectives are not as clear. Pupils make slower progress in response to this teaching, which is sometimes less purposeful than that for older pupils. There has been good improvement on the weaker aspects of teaching mentioned in the previous inspection report, but further improvement is required to ensure that work for Year 7 pupils is always well matched to their prior attainment. The teaching of reading comprehension to pupils with special educational needs also requires further improvement.

106. The quality of teaching and learning in English is one of the strengths of the school. To bring about further improvements in standards of English:

- the school should continue to develop its literacy policy with an increased focus on supporting children's writing across the curriculum and on strategies to maximise learning from the written word;
- the English department should further develop Key Stage 3 schemes of work around a

progressive framework of objectives, provide more opportunities for pupils to use ICT in English and widen the range of teaching strategies and resources for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 3.

MATHEMATICS

107. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment in mathematics is above average. The 1999 tests showed the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 and above was close to the national average and the percentage of pupils reaching Level 6 and above was above the national average. Results were average when compared with similar schools. Since the last inspection the trend has remained above the national average, a trend which is confirmed by attainment in lessons and by teachers' assessments. By the end of Year 9 high-attaining pupils work to levels above national expectations. They are able to work with trigonometry in right-angled triangles, produce cumulative frequency graphs and apply Pythagoras' theorem to a variety of situations. Pupils in a Year 9 lesson were successful in finding the factors of a quadratic expression by analysing their previous multiplication techniques. Most pupils work successfully when multiplying and simplifying algebraic expressions and finding volumes of prisms. Low-attaining pupils work well with time and dates from tables of data. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils successfully plotted simple shapes using co-ordinates in all four quadrants. They understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Progress is good throughout the key stage.

108. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is well above average. In 1999 GCSE results were well above average for grades A*-C and have been above average in each year since the previous inspection. Boys out-performed girls in the A*-C grade by about four per cent for the first time this year. The trend since the last inspection indicates a rising attainment above the national average. Almost 100 per cent of the year group have achieved grades A*-G in recent years which is above the national average. Progress from Key stage 3 was excellent. Pupils in Year 11 work at levels appropriate to their highest potential. Pupils' books show high-attaining pupils working at levels of exceptional performance. They use trigonometry in the general triangle, draw histograms with variable intervals and solve quadratic equations by a variety of methods. Average-attaining pupils use basic trigonometry in right-angled triangles and can calculate areas and volumes of compound shapes and solids. Lessons observed showed pupils working at a variety of levels in their different attainment target areas as they revised for their final GCSE examinations. All of the current Year 11 low-attaining pupils are entered for GCSE and are expected to achieve grades at foundation level. When comparing pupils' results in mathematics to other subjects they take, it has remained the best performing subject since the last inspection. Current progress in Key Stage 4 is very good.

109. In both key stages, low-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with others, producing work at an appropriate level. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson in which pupils worked with time and the calendar. They successfully analysed given forms of data because they had a good understanding of the various forms of notation.

110. At the end of the sixth form attainment is above average. In 1999 the average points score was well above the national average. The small numbers of students involved make statistical comparisons over recent years uncertain. Progress of students within their A-level course is very good. In a Year 13 lesson observed, some students worked successfully developing their statistical sampling methodology, while others worked independently on mechanics problems and others followed revision texts for 'AS' qualifications. Students' files show comprehensive coverage of all aspects of their course requirements and an understanding of pure mathematics and the content of their differing modules.

111. Pupils' attitude to their work is very good in all key stages which produces an enthusiastic learning atmosphere. This was seen in a Year 10 lesson in which pupils eagerly engaged in their investigations into fractional enlargement of figures. They co-operate readily with staff and one another when working as groups or in pairs. Presentation in pupils' books is neat and tidy, reflecting a positive attitude to the subject. They are considerate of each other's points of view and are prepared to share their findings with others. In a Year 10 lesson pupils worked at a brisk pace, discussing the intricate algebra involved in finding solutions to quadratic equations. Many pupils attend voluntary lessons and activities offered by teachers to enrich their learning.

112. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. However, the department is unable to provide planned ICT experiences for all pupils owing to insufficient access to modern computers.

113. The improvements in levels of achievement at all key stages are due to a number of key factors: the department has changed its textbooks to better match the courses followed by pupils, thus enhancing the quality of the learning experience; new staff appointments including younger, well-qualified teachers have brought new energy to the department; an ethos of challenge raises the aspirations of all pupils to do better and to reason for themselves; and the department has upgraded its central recording system for pupil data, which enhances pupil tracking and provides accurate information, assessment and the setting of targets for pupils.

114. Teaching in all key stages is very good. All lessons observed were good, very good and excellent in equal proportion. Teachers are suitably qualified and use their excellent subject knowledge well to help pupils learn. A Year 7 lesson, in which pupils were finding the probability of winning a game with cards, was typical of the many lessons containing good organisation, high expectations of pupil behaviour and a respect for the individual. These qualities helped to maintain good discipline and a brisk pace to lessons. Lessons are carefully planned and contain a variety of activities which engage pupils and students in their learning. Teachers focus on the concepts to be learned and demonstrate understanding of the needs of their pupils, often varying the use of language to ensure pupils' understanding. Assessment is an integral part of lessons; it is thorough and helps pupils to develop their understanding and skills. Homework is used well to consolidate learning or to allow pupils to prepare data for use in following lessons.

115. Numeracy skills displayed by pupils in subjects across the curriculum are good. There is no whole-school numeracy policy in place but it forms part of the development plan for action in the current year. The mathematics department recognises its major role in developing these skills and has already put in place extra numeracy activities during mathematics lessons. Other subjects use, or make significant contributions to, the numeracy skills of pupils. In science pupils use a variety of specialist units, including compound units of density, velocity and pressure. Their ability to plot graphs and handle data is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and improves as pupils progress through the school. Pupils' ability to handle formulae and algebraic calculations is good, especially in the sixth form. In geography pupils collect and tabulate data, producing graphs to demonstrate differing forms of information. They analyse data for pattern or trend and calculate averages. In design and technology subjects pupils use number, graphs and unit costs in mass-production investigations. They use accurately a variety of units for measuring lengths, weights and volumes in food technology and produce quality graphs from data analysis. Modern language subjects have identified opportunities for numeracy in their schemes of work. They use money, time and counting in their target language projects, often using ICT to produce graphical analyses of their investigations. ICT teachers make use of data from a variety of subject areas when demonstrating spreadsheets in Key Stage 3. Pupils' proficiency increases as they progress through the school. In the sixth form students use statistical presentations when reporting findings of surveys. GNVQ pupils develop their numeracy as part of their key skills course. Business education students display proficient numeracy skills in data handling and accounting procedures. There are missed opportunities to develop or use pupils' numeracy in history and music.

116. The school should now:

- improve resources for mathematics, both in lessons and in the school library;
- improve access to ICT facilities.

SCIENCE

117. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were close to the national average for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 and above and below average for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 6 and above. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 and above was below that found in similar schools and for Level 6 it was well below. The trend in test results over the past three years for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 and above has mirrored the national trend. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 6 and above in 1997 and 1998 was close to the national average but this showed a greater drop in 1999 than was the case nationally. Boys and girls performed similarly in 1997 and 1998 but boys did better than girls in 1999 to a greater extent than nationally. In 1999 teacher assessments were markedly higher than the test

results and the department needs to continue to investigate the reasons for this.

118. GCSE results have improved slightly since the last inspection but pupils attain less highly in science than they do in English, mathematics and in the school overall. Results in both 1998 and 1999 for the higher grades (A*-C) in science were close to the national average. Performance is close to the median when compared with schools that are similar, whether in terms of entitlement to free school meals or the prior attainment of pupils. There is no clear pattern to the performance of boys and girls over the past three years although results for 1999 show a strong link between GCSE grades and Key Stage 3 results two years earlier. The department currently carries out some analysis of results and recognises that this needs to be developed.

119. Pupil numbers at A-level are small and this makes national comparisons insecure. However combining the results over the past three years shows that physics results are broadly in line with national averages while those for both biology and chemistry are below.

120. On the evidence of the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment overall towards the end of both key stages and in the sixth form is close to the national expectation. Some pupils are attaining highly at both key stages and in the sixth form. At Key Stage 3 there are no great differences between pupils' attainment in the three knowledge and understanding attainment targets. An overall judgement about experimental and investigative science could not be made as Year 9 carry out full investigations after the national tests. Towards the end of Key Stage 3 many pupils recognise the effects of pollution on the environment, can describe typical properties of metals and can show how energy is transferred. More highly attaining pupils showed a good grasp of pyramids of numbers, appropriate detail of atomic structure and the principle of moments. At Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment in the four attainment targets is similar. Towards the end of Key Stage 4 many pupils are able to indicate how particular cells are adapted to their function, write simple chemical equations and carry out calculations involving current and voltage. More highly attaining pupils can, for example, provide good explanations of heat insulation, regulation of blood sugar levels and the evolution of the earth's atmosphere over time. Many pupils at both key stages have satisfactorily organised and presented notes although the purpose of these is not always clear. Generally most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. Most pupils handle number and graph work at least satisfactorily and some graphs were very well presented with clear headings and, where appropriate, good lines of best fit. Some good examples of the use of information technology were seen involving use of the Internet and the school's Intranet to enhance science displays. Most pupils carry out experimental and investigative work with appropriate care and with sufficient attention to health and safety issues. At Key Stage 4 some well-produced investigations were seen - for example, on dissolving, heat loss and water loss from leaves. In an investigation on helicopter descent by a highly-attaining pupil, a good understanding of terminal velocity and the factors affecting descent resulted in the selection of appropriate experiments to carry out and in a performance that was equally strong across the four aspects of investigation. More generally the analysis and evaluation skills were slightly weaker than the planning and obtaining evidence skills in investigations. In the sixth form students towards the end of their courses, for example, show a good understanding of the origins of mutations, are able to calculate equilibrium constants and have a sound grasp of the principles of particle-wave duality. At all stages pupils' recall of immediate work is more secure than that over a longer period of time.

121. Overall pupils' attitudes to learning in almost all lessons seen at both key stages and in the sixth form are good. At Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form attitudes were very good in about two-thirds of lessons observed while at Key Stage 4 attitudes were very good in about one third. Most pupils show considerable interest in their work and the majority behaves very well. Overall most pupils sustain their concentration on work well. Most pupils are courteous, trustworthy and respond well to their teachers and one another. Most show appropriate respect for equipment that they collect, use and return appropriately. Most pupils work well together during experimental work and in small group discussion. Most pupils show a high level of respect for one another's feelings when discussing work and answering questions

122. Since the last inspection, science accommodation has improved significantly with the provision of six new laboratories which provide a very good learning environment. However, two old laboratories with noticeable shortcomings remain in use. Technician support has also improved as has text provision at Key Stage 4. The work of the technicians has a very positive effect on the

quality of education and standards achieved by pupils. The department has also given greater prominence to experimental and investigative science but this still needs to be further improved at Key Stage 3.

123. Overall teaching is good across both key stages and in the sixth form. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. At Key Stage 3 half the teaching was satisfactory and half was good. At Key Stage 4 just over half of the teaching was satisfactory, one third good, with a further one ninth being very good. In the sixth form one third was satisfactory, one half good and a further fifth very good. Pupils' and students' learning matches this very closely. Many lessons contained some good or very good features. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of their subject and most sustain a good level of interest and enthusiasm. Expectations of pupils are generally appropriate and sufficiently high. Most lesson planning is at least sound and some is good. Methods and organisational strategies are usually appropriate. The management of pupils and standards of discipline are usually either good or very good. Time and resources are generally well used.

124. Teaching was most effective where the lesson plan showed clear structure and learning outcomes, coupled with teachers' high level of interest, enthusiasm and demand. For example, high teacher expectations of a Year 7 class were well matched by pupils' good recall of previous work and their interest and enthusiasm in the topic on light and sound. In Year 8 skilful questioning by a teacher allowed pupils to build on their own incorrect response to correct and clarify their understanding of elements and compounds. The good use of climbing equipment in a lower-attaining Year 9 class hooked pupils' attention and helped them get a better grasp of friction; while further questioning made good use of pupils' knowledge of friction and plate tectonics from geography. In Year 10 pupils of average attainment were able to make informed comments and ask good questions about the likely positive and negative effects of global warming after watching a high quality video recording. A Year 11 lesson involving work well matched to pupils' prior attainment concluded with a good summarising of key points with sharp questioning to check pupils' understanding of food webs and predator/prey relationships. Another Year 11 lesson on genetics involved carefully targeted teaching and good encouragement of pupils which resulted in some very good learning about gene crosses and increased pupils' confidence in their own ability. Many lessons were characterised by teachers' genuine interest in their pupils, a desire to want them to succeed and an ability to value all contributions and turn these to good effect. In the sixth form good examples of student discussions were seen where small groups were invited to explain phenomena or sequence events after talking it through with one another. Some sharp and penetrating questioning of individuals was also seen which made students link current knowledge and understanding with that from other areas of the syllabus. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen.

125. However, there were parts of lessons where teaching was less effective. These included: teachers making the necessary points but then talking for too long (Year 10, work and power) with the result that pupils started to switch off; a rather loose lesson plan which resulted in pupils making less progress than they might have done (Year 7, diet); and an over-academic approach to a topic where pupils had grasped the general idea but not its relevance (Year 8, sight and sound). Pupils' work is regularly marked though the quality of marking varies. Some of the better marking sets targets for pupils' learning and indicates how they might improve both in terms of knowledge and understanding as well as in investigative work. Some instances of incorrect work accepted as correct were seen; examples included poorly drawn ray diagrams, a model drawing of a liquid with large gaps between the particles and freehand drawing of apparatus. Such inconsistency does not promote high expectations and standards. Reports at the end of Key Stage 3 reports do not clearly identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for development.

126. The department recognises the need to continue to develop the use of information technology within the curriculum at both key stages. The department also recognises the need to continue to develop the schemes of work and more fully integrate experimental and investigative science into Key Stage 3.

127. The departmental documentation is helpful but contains no specific references to awe and wonder, a commitment to high standards, teaching and learning styles or any detailed analysis of performance. The department development plan does not show clearly how specific action is linked to achieving higher standards or continuing professional development although staff share a determination to want to raise standards within the science department. This is reflected in the

purchase of revision books and the provision of revision classes. Reaction to an independent report on standards in the science department has taken place albeit rather slowly. The minutes of departmental meetings indicate that these occasions are largely administrative. The management of health and safety in the department is insufficiently rigorous.

128. In order to raise standards to the level in the other core subjects the department should:
- further analyse test and examination results to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for development;
 - develop a full scheme of work at Key Stage 3 (and improve those at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form) to build more effectively on pupils' prior attainment and integrate scientific enquiry more fully into the work of all three years;
 - continue to develop a wide range of teaching and learning styles including making pupils more responsible for their own learning and building on a culture of success;
 - continue to improve the use of information technology in science lessons;
 - improve the strategic management of the department including development planning, in-service provision, resource deployment, health and safety arrangements and using departmental meetings more effectively.

ART

129. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is above national expectations overall. Pupils' drawing skills are satisfactory overall, but with few examples above expectations. Some higher-attaining pupils make effective use of tone in pastel drawings, however. Pupils' use of colour is bold and generally effective. Collage techniques are used to good effect in building up colour relationships. Batik work is generally good. Higher-attaining pupils produce relatively complex multi-coloured images, and average and lower-attaining pupils produce simpler, but still vibrant, images. Sketchbook work is above expectations. Pupils use sketchbooks well for research and development purposes. Their knowledge of the work of other artists is at least satisfactory and good in the case of higher-attaining pupils, who make effective use of the characteristics of other artists' work in their own work.

130. At Key Stage 4 GCSE results for 1999 were below national expectations, continuing the trend of recent years. Inspection evidence, however, indicates that the performance of current Year 11 pupils is in line with national expectations and this accords with the school's targets for performance in GCSE art this year. Most pupils make good use, and higher-attaining pupils very good use, of the sketchbook, both as a means of collecting and organising research material, and as a vehicle for the generation of new ideas. Textile work is also of a high standard. For example, Year 10 batik work based on Aboriginal imagery shows effective use of both colour and tone. Three-dimensional work, particularly ceramics, is at least satisfactory, and good in the case of higher-attaining pupils. Ceramic work reveals good control of clay in terms of both construction of forms and decorative detail. Knowledge and use of the work of other artists is in line with expectations overall, but variable. Higher-attaining pupils undertake extensive self-initiated research and use the results of this to enrich their own work. Average and lower-attaining pupils have satisfactory knowledge of the work of other artists but do not really apply this to enrich their own work.

131. At GCE A-level, results were above national expectations in 1999, continuing the trend of recent years. In both A-level and GNVQ Advanced courses, students' work is above national expectations. For example, Year 13 A-level students use textiles in a highly creative and effective manner, combining a range of textile techniques and processes, including appliqué and free embroidery. The GNVQ students have a thorough knowledge of the elements of the course, and plan and execute their work well.

132. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 3 is good overall. Pupils enter the department at the start of Key Stage 3 with average skills, knowledge and understanding, and, whilst they make satisfactory progress in terms of their objective drawing skills, they make good progress in terms of their ability to use three-dimensional, collage and textile materials. Pupils also make good progress in their ability to use sketchbooks as a vehicle for the development of their own ideas.

133. At Key Stage 4 pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils consolidate their drawing skills, but continue to develop their use of three-dimensional and textiles media. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress in terms of using their developing knowledge of the work of other artists to enrich their own work. Some average and lower-attaining pupils, often but not exclusively boys, do not progress beyond a superficial use of the salient characteristics of other artists' work. In the sixth form, students make good progress overall, particularly in terms of their ability to initiate and develop creative and imaginative work in a range of media. The progress of pupils with special

educational needs is consistently good across the school.

134. The pupils' response in lessons is good overall and very good at times. Nearly all pupils take a keen interest in their work and respond positively to the tasks set. Pupils maintain concentration well overall, but very small numbers of pupils, mostly but not exclusively boys, lose concentration easily and can disrupt each other's work. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. They listen carefully to instructions, and use tools and equipment safely, and with thought for others. They all willingly join in with clearing up the room, taking responsibility for their own equipment and work. They readily help each other when required, and take full advantage of the many opportunities provided to show initiative and willingly take on responsibility for the development of their work.

135. At Key Stage 3 teaching was good in four lessons observed and very good in one other lesson. At Key Stage 4 teaching was very good in one lesson, good in two lessons and satisfactory in one other lesson. In sixth form lessons teaching was good in three lessons and very good in one other lesson. The most effective teaching showed some notable features, including very thorough planning, which was fully matched to National Curriculum and examination board requirements, and which provided a range of tasks, which were well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Teachers also made good use of resources. For example, in a Year 11 GCSE lesson the teacher had produced a high-quality sketchbook, which was used to good effect when the teacher was discussing the development of one pupil's ideas. The examples shown helped the pupil to establish a new and productive direction in his work. The teachers' classroom organisation was generally of a very high standard. For example, in Year 7 and Year 10 lessons all of the materials and equipment required were readily available, and lesson introductions and demonstrations were brief but effective, maximising the time available for the pupils to work. Teachers made effective use of a variety of teaching methods; individual support and guidance were used particularly effectively. For example, in a Year 10 textiles lesson, individual pupils were engaged on a variety of tasks, but all were well supported by the teacher. Where teaching was less effective, guidance was not directed to individual needs, and pupils were not effectively challenged.

136. The art curriculum provided by the school is very good. It is well planned, and ensures that pupils' learning builds as they move through the school. It also provides them with the opportunity to work in a range of materials and techniques in both two and three dimensions. It provides good access to the work of a range of western European artists and also provides very good access to the artwork and artefacts of a number of other cultures, both ancient and modern. For example, a Year 10 textiles project based on Aboriginal imagery was enriched through an input by the school librarian, who had personal experience of living and working with an Aboriginal tribe. Opportunities for the pupils to use information technology within art lessons are severely restricted by the lack of access to appropriate facilities. In this, the school has not made progress since the last inspection. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' social, moral and cultural development, but does not make sufficient contribution to pupils' spiritual development. In a Year 7 lesson, the teacher drew attention to the beauties and complexities of natural forms through some inspiring photographs. Opportunities to explore the spiritual dimensionality of both other artists' and pupils' own work in other lessons were missed, however.

137. The curriculum and resources are managed effectively, but teaching within the department is not yet monitored systematically. The department's development plan does not take sufficient account of school development planning priorities, nor yet take a sufficiently strategic view for the future, identifying ways in which the success of the pupils can be used to judge the success of the department. The accommodation and resources available for the department are good, and are efficiently used by the teaching staff.

138. In order to develop provision further the school should now:

- establish a strategic plan for the future development of the subject, which is built around clear targets in terms of pupil outcomes and which also aligns with strategic school development priorities;
- develop the use of information and communication technology in the art curriculum, through the provision of opportunities for pupils to access and use appropriate information and communication technology facilities as part of a planned art and design curriculum;
- monitor and evaluate the teaching of the subject formally and systematically, and use the results to help form curriculum and teaching developments.

BUSINESS STUDIES

139. The school offers four courses leading to qualifications in business, namely GCSE business studies in Key Stage 4 and, in the sixth form, GCE A-level, GNVQ Advanced Level (Vocational A Level) and, for the first time in the current school year, Intermediate Level.

140. In 1999 pupils' standards of attainment in GCSE were below national averages for A*-C and in line for A*-G grades. This reverses a rising trend in standards of attainment in the subject since the last inspection.

141. In GCE A-level business studies pupils attained standards above the national average in 1999 which consolidates a rising trend in attainment over the last five years. In addition, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades of A and B compared favourably with the national average. The two students who were the first cohort to complete the GNVQ Advanced Level in 1999 both attained passes at distinction level which is above the national average but the small numbers make such comparisons unreliable.

142. Pupils in Year 11 on GCSE programmes attain good standards in their coursework and can apply a range of skills to case studies effectively. Numeracy skills are well developed and pupils use them in, for example, construction of a profit and loss account to achieve accurate results.

143. At the end of sixth form courses pupils have a secure grasp of the knowledge and understanding required in many GNVQ Advanced Level units and are developing an improved understanding of complex concepts in business and the economy, assisted by skilful explanation by the teacher. In addition, pupils use and apply the key skills of communication, application of number and information technology well in the vocational context.

144. Pupils make good progress in GCSE and Advanced Level courses. All pupils acquire subject-related knowledge and understanding well and develop and apply key skills and problem solving techniques to positive effect. Pupils of high prior attainment often make the most rapid gains but average and lower-attaining pupils also make steady progress because of their positive attitudes to the subject and their learning.

145. A majority of pupils on the GNVQ Intermediate course are progressing well through their learning programme but time-wasting and an inability to collaborate with their peers hamper steady gains by one or two pupils.

146. Teaching is never less than satisfactory with three-quarters being good and very good across Key Stage 4 and post 16 courses. Good teaching - for example, in a session on consumer rights - is characterised by meticulous planning and preparation, which sets clear and challenging learning goals for pupils. Teachers give very good explanations, as in a lesson on profit and loss accounts, and then pose well-constructed questions that extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Relationships are positive and high teacher expectations produce positive attitudes and purposeful learning amongst pupils. Teaching has few weaknesses and where they exist they are associated with too heavy an emphasis on input by the teacher, which allows pupils to disengage from their learning and waste time.

147. The business studies department is energetically managed. The head of department is forward thinking and has developed a range of good policies, which are being applied to positive effect. Long-standing staffing difficulties have hindered more rapid improvements in pupil standards of attainment and it is a credit to the subject teachers that the quality of pupils' learning experiences has been maintained.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

148. Standards in design and technology in 1999 for the higher grades (A*-C) were below national averages overall. Standards for grades A*-G were well below. Standards in resistant materials were well below national averages for 1999 and below for design and realisation in 1998. Standards in graphic communications in 1999 were slightly above national averages for the higher grades (A*-C)

but well below for grades A*-G. Results in 1998 were better. Standards in home economics in 1999 were above national averages, which were an improvement on results in 1998 and 1997, which were well below. Pupils' GCSE results both in 1997 and 1999 in design and technology were lower than results they achieved in their other subjects at GCSE. Numbers taking A-level subjects are too small to make valid judgements.

149. Standards at Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. In terms of pupils' prior attainment however, these standards are unsatisfactory given the current standards of the higher-attaining pupils. Standards at Key Stage 4 are in line with national expectations. However, there is currently some underachievement with higher-attaining pupils as a result of teacher expectations which are at times too low and insufficient monitoring of pupils to track underperformance. As a result of their own positive attitudes and diligent hard work some pupils are attaining high standards. They listen well, persevere and are well able to apply to their work the knowledge and skills they have been taught. For example, pupils in a Year 11 graphics course had carried out a lot of research on their design project and were able to modify their designs and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses to improve their work. At both key stages there are pupils who are underachieving in both designing and making products. Pupils' research skills are underdeveloped and many are unable to carry out detailed evaluations. Skills in using equipment and techniques to make products are not well developed to ensure a quality product that meets the original specification. For example, pupils in a Year 10 class had limited understanding of how to use tools correctly to achieve an accurate result when constructing their major projects.

150. There have been some important changes, implemented from September 1999, since the last inspection. These include some useful and purposeful planning of schemes of work at Key Stage 3. These schemes of work are having a beneficial effect in ensuring that all pupils are gaining a relevant and purposeful experience of National Curriculum design and technology. Lesson structures are now beginning to take account of the design process and the department is beginning to adopt a corporate approach to design and technology.

151. Teaching at both key stages is satisfactory. At Key Stage 3 teaching was satisfactory in six lessons seen with a small minority of good features in two of these lessons. Good teaching was seen in one lesson and unsatisfactory teaching was seen in one other lesson. At Key Stage 4 teaching was good in two lessons, satisfactory in a further two lessons and unsatisfactory in two other lessons. Teaching in the sixth form was satisfactory in one lesson and good in a further lesson.

152. Features of the good teaching were strong subject knowledge, good support and encouragement, clear learning objectives and good planning. These skills helped pupils understand what they were to do, they developed pupils' motivation and interest and they encouraged pupils to work productively with a real sense of purpose and achievement. For example, in a Year 12 lesson pupils worked diligently on their designs and they were able to talk fluently about their research, design intentions and product development as well as transfer the skills they had been taught in art and design. The teacher leading this lesson gave these pupils good support and encouragement as well as pointing out how they might improve their work. Teaching in a Year 10 food technology lesson had prepared pupils well to develop their projects on 'Cook Chill', where most pupils worked enthusiastically on their portfolio work. However, there were too many lessons that showed unsatisfactory aspects of teaching. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on quality control in the production process, pupils were placed in teams that were too large and many pupils learned very little in the lesson and had a limited understanding of the lesson objectives. Skills taught in a Year 10 resistant materials lesson were of a poor standard and did not help pupils learn the appropriate skills to improve their work. The management of pupils' behaviour was also ineffective which created a poor learning atmosphere. Expectations of pupils are low in some lessons and consequently some of the work is not challenging enough for more able pupils and is generally not well matched to the abilities of pupils.

153. Assessment of pupils is underdeveloped. There is insufficient guidance with targets given to pupils to help them improve their work. Marking is variable across the department and too often information given on pupils' work does not identify their strengths and areas of improvement to give pupils a clear understanding of how well they are doing. There is also insufficient monitoring of pupils at Key Stage 4 to track underachievement within the subject or to encourage pupils to try and improve their grades.

154. The management of design and technology is unsatisfactory. The inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning arise from the lack of co-ordination across the subject. Recent improvements in planning have begun to address these issues. Currently however, the department still does not operate fully as a design and technology team with regular meetings, joint planning and the sharing of development planning. Procedures are insecure and fragmented and the department has no clear direction. Monitoring the work of the department is not yet in place. Accommodation, in particular for food technology, is unsatisfactory. Health and safety measures and risk assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.

155. The school should now:

- improve standards at Key Stages 3 and 4;
- monitor and track pupils' performance to overcome underachievement;
- improve research and evaluations skills;
- improve some weak teaching skills;
- develop better assessment procedures;
- improve the management of design and technology;
- improve health and safety to include risk assessment.

DRAMA

156. Drama is taught to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and is an optional subject in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Recent GCSE results in drama have been in line with the national average but standards observed in lessons were above average. The standard of practical work now being produced by A-level students is well above average. Key strengths in pupils' attainment are the pupils' growing understanding of drama techniques and their growing ability to go into role and sustain this with conviction. They use drama well to explore and reflect on crucial issues in life.

157. The teaching of drama is consistently good. The teachers have a good knowledge of their subject, they have high expectations and they offer the pupils challenging work. Pupils respond very positively by applying themselves well to practical work both in whole-class and group situations. In this way pupils make good progress and their knowledge, understanding and skills grow step by step as they move through the school.

158. The main evidence for improvement in drama is in the increased uptake of the subject for GCSE and A-level courses. The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is a strength of the school. The drama department also makes a major contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils both within lessons and in its extra-curricular activities.

159. The school should seek ways of improving the quality of accommodation and teaching resources available for this subject.

GEOGRAPHY

160. Standards in geography are high across all year groups and this reflects the consistently high quality of teaching together with very effective subject leadership.

161. On entry to the school pupils are attaining in line with expectations for this subject. They quickly begin to make good progress and by the end of the key stage their standards are above the national expectation for many pupils. This is confirmed by the school's own assessment of performance which is accurate and secure. A particular strength is the knowledge which pupils gain of the correct vocabulary associated with the subject. This strength is evident amongst all pupils; both low and high attaining groups in Year 9 were able to offer detailed descriptions of the rainforest using terms such as flora, canopy, undergrowth and buttress roots. Similarly, pupils of all abilities in Year 7 had a secure knowledge and understanding of terms and processes such as precipitation, infiltration, evaporation and condensation from their studies of the water cycle. At this stage, mapwork skills are secured and pupils are able to locate and name places with reasonable accuracy. From very early in this key stage, pupils of all abilities develop a firm grasp of geographical enquiry skills, something which is given clear emphasis in the scheme of work.

162. Recent results at the end of Key Stage 4 have been exceptional. GCSE A*-C grades have been comfortably above the national levels, but particular significance should be attached to the fact that nine out of ten pupils who took GCSE in 1999 gained at least a grade D; with almost all pupils being entered for the examination this is excellent. The significant progress made in Key Stage 3 continues into Key Stage 4 and pupils make good gains in both knowledge and understanding of places and processes as well as further developing geographical and enquiry skills. Pupils in Year 10 produce high quality coursework which shows both their grasp of fieldwork techniques and their understanding of the topic studied; they spoke confidently and accurately about the differences in retail patterns and provision between contrasting centres and were able to evaluate the methods they had used to collect and present the information collected. Particularly noteworthy is the progress made by all pupils; both boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs.

163. In the sixth form the relatively small numbers make comparisons with national figures difficult. The pattern of grades varies and in some years there is an absence of the highest grades, and this is confirmed by inspection evidence when comparing the years within the present sixth form. However, results are very good; there is a record of 100 per cent pass grades and clear evidence that students are achieving to their potential. As in previous key stages the overall trend in standards attained is upwards, and is underpinned by secure understanding of geographical ideas and well-developed enquiry skills. In Year 12 in particular, students' ability to understand urban processes and population movements and to relate these to countries at different levels of economic development was of an especially high standard. A relative weakness, evident in both Key Stage 4 and post 16 is in the capacity to accurately name and locate places to support and illustrate their knowledge and understanding. To some extent this reflects a weakness in emphasis in the schemes of work and in the lessons observed.

164. The quality of teaching in geography is exceptionally high and makes a major contribution to the high standards which pupils achieve. Apart from one unsatisfactory lesson in Key Stage 4, good or very good teaching was seen in all lessons and in some the quality was outstanding. A particular strength lies in teachers' ability to set high expectations for all pupils including those with special educational needs and then to use the skills of clever, well-sequenced explanations and questions to ensure that all pupils can understand. At times the clarity of the sequence was remarkable, even allowing some Year 7 pupils, when prompted, to predict what the next questions might be as part of an explanation of the water cycle. Teachers value every minute of their lesson time and the brisk organisation of classroom activities reflects this. Equally, time is well used when learning takes place outside the classroom, and the commitment to fieldwork and to this way of working is a major success. The school grounds were cleverly used to teach both erosion with Year 8 pupils and aspects of the water cycle with Year 7. Recent fieldwork in Year 10 was followed up with high quality guidance on how best to draw out the similarities and differences between shopping patterns in York and the local town centre. In all cases, the teachers' subject knowledge was secure and well used to support learning; this included those lessons taught by non-specialist teachers in Key Stage 3. A further strength is the department's willingness and ability to match the best approach to learning with the topic in hand. Erosion is studied through a simulation of the effects of wave action on a threatened stretch of coastline and through this pupils gain a secure appreciation of the costs and benefits of coastal defences. In the sixth form, students take the role of strategic planners in exploring the use of international aid to bring about successful developments in a less developed economy. Here, as with Year 7 pupils studying 'water-aid', teachers pay careful attention to detail in terms of pupils' understanding of the geographical context and what is or is not appropriate to support people in other cultures. In this and other ways the teaching makes a very positive contribution to pupils' appreciation of sustainable development and global citizenship. The desire for pupils to succeed is shown by the very thorough programme of preparation for all pupils approaching final examinations and by the careful individual checking of progress towards achieving the best possible marks in their examination coursework.

165. The achievements outlined above represent a significant improvement since the last inspection. Standards have improved for all, with almost a doubling of GCSE A*-C grades in the last three years. The subject is growing in popularity with increased uptake in both Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The head of department provides clear educational leadership and rigorous management at all levels; the outcomes of this management provide a very supportive climate in which to achieve high quality provision for all learners. Given this, there are a number of ways in which the subject

could make further gains:

- develop the new suite of rooms by building on the best of current practice and improve the arrangements for audio-visual learning at the same time;
- develop the use of ICT in geography as access to equipment becomes available;
- develop the use of thinking skills and approaches to oracy, by building on the excellent though occasionally over-directed classroom practice that currently exists;
- rectify the relative weakness in pupils' locational knowledge of place, as pupils' progress through the school;
- extend the best of the outstanding provision that currently exists for future pupils at the school.

HISTORY

166. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. Over the past three years teacher assessments at the end of the key stage for the percentage of pupils at Level 5 and above have been well above national expectations. However, these assessments are not supported by evidence of past work by pupils or of standardisation across the work of the department. Evidence from the inspection is that in some classes and tasks set, pupils were not given the opportunity to attain at the higher levels. Pupils of all levels of attainment demonstrate appropriate factual knowledge of key events and people. Higher-attaining pupils are able to describe events, people and changes and to make links between relevant reasons for, and results of, events and changes. In a lesson on the Treaty of Versailles, for example, pupils showed good knowledge and understanding of the context of the task, and were able to make links between the prior experiences of the various countries and the terms of the treaty. Such pupils can organise their knowledge and ideas and communicate it orally and in structured extended writing. For some lower-attaining pupils, however, extended writing is limited to narrative or comprehension answers from a text book, and in some cases, higher- and average-attaining pupils' writing was largely narrative; it was detailed but dependent on the teacher's input with little evidence of independent research or learning.

167. Over the past three years, attainment in Key Stage 4 has been variable. In 1997 and 1998 the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C was in line with national expectations and well above average in relation to other subjects in the school. In 1998 there was a significant decline, from 53 per cent in 1997 to 43 per cent. Inspection evidence, however, suggests that the standards of 1999 are at least being maintained and that attainment of current Year 11 pupils is slightly above national expectations. Pupils in Key Stage 4 demonstrate good understanding, knowledge and recall. For example, Year 11 pupils were confident in their knowledge of the Indian Wars of the 1840s and both average and lower attainers were able to use this to predict what the next events might be. They had good understanding of cause and effect of previous events studied and were able to make links between new learning on Red Cloud's War to an analysis of the 'vicious circle' pattern as a feature of the conflicts of the 1840s.

168. Attainment in the sixth form is good. This is an improvement since the last report. The trend over the past three years has been for A-level results to be at least in line with national expectations; slightly above if students from other schools, but taught at Crawshaw, are included. Reliability of judgement is limited by relatively small numbers, but the attainment of current Year 13 students continues this trend. Students in Year 13 demonstrate good knowledge and recall. Their ability to understand an argument, summarise it succinctly and then identify further evidence for and against it, is good. Their standard of written work is good. They are able to analyse the question, identify their argument and sustain it with substantiated evidence to a rounded conclusion.

169. Teaching was very good in two lessons observed, good in four lessons and satisfactory in one lesson. Teaching was unsatisfactory in three lessons observed. In the sixth form, the good teaching was characterised by enthusiasm and very sound subject knowledge. For example, references to the wider context of the area under scrutiny emerged naturally in discussion. Carefully structured learning, with attention to students' understanding of terminology and causal links and use of appropriate resources, created a highly effective ethos of shared learning and discovery which allowed students to consolidate their knowledge and understanding confidently and to take risks in putting forward their own analyses - for example, on the political comment implicit in nineteenth century cartoons. Teachers' modelling of tasks, as in a summary of outside lectures attended by Year 13, provided good exemplars. Skilful questioning by the teacher enables students to map prior and new knowledge. They make good progress in their ability to communicate knowledge and

understanding orally and in extended writing. There is less progress in terms of independent thinking, research and wider teaching, for which resources in school are limited.

170. In Key Stage 3 effective teaching is characterised by high expectations, a brisk pace and challenging tasks made accessible by structured questioning and explanation. A clear focus on intended learning outcomes, made explicit to pupils and reviewed at the end of the lesson, enables pupils to attain above expectations. In a low-attaining Year 8 class on the Native Peoples of North America, pupils were deeply engaged by carefully selected sources on The Sioux Sun Dance, and made very good contributions to a brisk brainstorm which developed their knowledge and understanding of the ritual and their use of appropriate terminology. Constant references by the teacher to the work of the historian, the need to support statements with evidence, and carefully structured questioning to lead pupils to the most difficult questions about interpretations helped pupils to develop a real understanding about different ways of interpreting the past and reasons for the differences. Similar characteristics of highly skilful questioning were evident in a Year 9 class studying a video extract on women in the First World War, when pupils made real progress in their knowledge and understanding of the role of women and of the ways in which the past is interpreted to influence a particular audience. When given the opportunity, pupils work well together in pairs and small groups, learning from each other to develop understanding and skills – as in a Year 9 lesson on the First World War. However, across the key stage, too few opportunities are provided for independent research and learning and in some cases there is severe over-reliance on exposition by the teacher, as in a Year 7 mixed ability class where over 45 minutes was spent by the teacher talking to the class with references to narrative notes on the board and a handout map outline interspersed with questions requiring only a short right or wrong answer. High-attainers were not challenged by the level of questioning, and the lowest-attainers were not engaged because of the lack of variety of activity and pace. As a result, the learning of higher- and lower-attainers was limited to basic factual-knowledge of some of the events of 1066 with a superficial understanding of the reasons for the success of William I. Similar characteristics of less effective teaching were observed in a low-attaining Year 9 class where pupils were compliant and passive, but the slow pace and limited range of resources - almost all written - limited the progress of all pupils in the class. Pupils' written answers lacked detail and priority in the information included because the teaching and teachers' notes provided little structure or guidance to support the recording of ideas or details.

171. Effective teaching in Key Stage 3 is supported by careful short-term planning and structured learning by individual teachers. The departmental scheme of work meets statutory requirements in its coverage of the National Curriculum, but does not support pupils' learning because it fails to indicate planned progression across the key elements within the key stage. Lack of consistency in planning, marking and assessment and in expectations about pupils' progress and attainment leads to variable standards of learning within the department. Lack of clear planning and procedures for adapting tasks or materials to meet the needs of pupils according to their different levels of attainment leads to restricted learning, particularly for the lowest attainers.

172. High- and average-attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress. Good teaching is closely focused on the requirements of the examination syllabus, and particular emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills in historical enquiry. Initial pupil learning in this area is slow because of emphasis in some cases on narrative writing in Key Stage 3. However, once the principle of enquiry has been grasped, pupils are able to forge ahead when they are given the opportunity. Low-attaining pupils in some cases make less progress because of relatively low teacher expectations, and learning is restricted to factual knowledge and recall.

173. History is taught by committed specialist staff and uptake at Key Stage 4 and post 16 is good. Good teacher-pupil relationships are a strength of the department. Lack of consistency in procedures across Key Stages 3 and 4 is limiting the attainment of some pupils. To further develop and build on the strengths of the department, the school should:

- implement planning in Key Stage 3 which incorporates intended learning outcomes, carefully stepped learning tasks and methods, and materials to match different abilities across the key stage;
- formalise the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the department to enable the exchange of good practice to take place and to raise standards;
- standardise marking, assessment and recording procedures in Key Stages 3 and 4 and use assessment to inform curriculum planning and individual pupil progress;

- further develop the use of ICT as a teaching and learning strategy;
- increase the number of staff able to teach history in the sixth form.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

174. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. Teacher assessments show an improving trend over the last three years with more pupils each year achieving Level 5 and above. It is not possible to make comparisons with national averages at Key Stage 4 because pupils do not take an external examination in information technology. From the scrutiny of pupils' work, attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below national expectations; this constitutes a slight decline in standards since the last inspection. This is due, in part, to a lack of separate information technology curriculum time at Key Stage 4, and a lack of opportunity within some subject schemes of work for pupils to use their information technology skills. In addition, the design and technology department, charged with delivering key components of the information technology agenda to enable the school to meet statutory requirements in Key Stage 4, is not fulfilling its obligation. Statutory requirements are therefore not being met and pupils are underachieving as a result. The school plans to introduce a new short GCSE examination course in information technology for all pupils in September 2000, which will enable the school to meet statutory requirements. Two new computer rooms are also planned, helping those departments keen to encourage pupils to use information technology in their work, to do so, because at present they find it difficult to get into the computer rooms when they need to.

175. There was insufficient evidence available during the inspection to make a judgement on standards in information technology in sixth form courses. Information technology courses in the sixth form are new. However, pupils' attainment on these courses is in line with national expectations.

176. Many pupils have good access to computers at home and this has a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and learning. Throughout the inspection there were some excellent examples seen of pupils presenting project work in a creative and imaginative way using a wide range of computer software tools. In modern foreign languages in Year 8, for example, pupils use the modern language functions of the computer well to write an account and present the outcomes of a survey on food and drink in French. In information technology lessons in Year 8, some higher-attaining pupils are able to write quite complex procedures to control a sequence of events using a programme called WinLogo. Also in information technology lessons pupils are able to use the school's excellent Intranet service well. This computer facility contains relevant information gathered from the Internet to help pupils with their work - for example, to find out about robotic engineering and temperature sensing. In Years 10 and 11, pupils in the core technology group use Netscape Communicator software to design some quite excellent Web pages covering a multitude of topics from drug related help-lines to school rugby reports and team information. In art pupils have used the computer, digital camera and scanner very successfully to capture and manipulate images. In music, pupils use keyboards in Key Stage 3 quite successfully to perform musical renditions. In Key Stage 4 in music, pupils use the Sibelius 7 software to a high level to compose music, enhancing already high quality musical thinking. In English, some pupils with special educational needs are able to use information technology successfully to improve the presentation of their work when they sometimes have difficulty writing neatly. The school's Intranet site is developing quickly and many other departments have 'cached' Internet sites to help pupils access valuable information - for example, in art, science, religious education, mathematics, design and technology, business studies, English, PHSE and sociology. In geography the site is used well in a study of local history and alongside the use of digital camera, to help pupils manipulate images and where school generated text helps pupils develop their research skills. This site is beginning to have a very positive impact on pupils' learning, developing research and investigation skills and improving pupils' factual knowledge. In GNVQ and business studies courses the small number of students involved have produced reports, accounts, questionnaires, surveys, brochures and business guidance information to gain a greater awareness of business management and to develop key skills.

177. Since the previous inspection the school has made major and significant improvements to the information technology provision enabling pupils to have the opportunity to use computers regularly to apply their knowledge and understanding of word processing, databases, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, research and investigation using the Internet. These opportunities have enabled all

pupils including those with special educational needs to make at least satisfactory and often good progress in their learning. Their gains in knowledge of computer functions are marked in Key Stage 3 but do not progress at the same pace into Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Many pupils take the opportunity to make better progress and refine their information technology skills by using the computers after school, during break and lunchtimes and through open access during the school day when facilities are available.

178. When tasks are challenging pupils respond with enthusiasm and commitment. Their enthusiasm for information technology work is infectious. They are busy learners; they remain on task, they persevere, show interest, work independently and are sometimes willing to take risks in investigating, testing and solving problems. Some activities enable pupils to experiment a little outside the laid-down limits of the task and they enjoy this approach - for example, in information technology courses in Key Stage 3, designing control procedures, and in information technology work in Key Stage 4 designing Web pages in core technology. Relationships are good. Pupils are very courteous, trustworthy, helpful and mutually supportive of one another when using information technology.

179. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good and often very good. Two of the lessons observed were excellent. Very good lessons are characterised by: very good planning, good assessment, classroom organisation, resource management, subject knowledge; an enthusiastic approach, good pace, high expectations, and focused guidance and help to pupils in mid-task.

180. The information technology department staff work very well together in the design and implementation of the scheme of work. They, and many other teachers, have good information technology skills and are keen to encourage pupils to become self-reliant and independent in their use of information technology as a curriculum tool for learning. Some are more reluctant to take responsibility for integrating information technology into schemes of work, however, and this hinders the school's progress in integrating information technology fully into the curriculum. The planned programme of training for teaching staff, when implemented fully, should help teachers fulfil the potential of information technology as a cross-curricular tool for learning at the school.

181. The department has a satisfactory plan for continuing to improve the quality of provision and raising standards in information technology. This is supported by a satisfactory National Grid for Learning action plan. However, neither plan has any clear criteria to help the school measure the impact of its planning and spending decisions. The co-ordinator should link the plans together to provide a clear strategic view for development which takes into account the rapidly changing face of information technology in school.

182. The assessment and recording arrangements in information technology lessons are rigorous and used effectively to help teachers with their long-term curriculum planning. However, measuring pupils' attainment in other areas of the curriculum, and the monitoring and evaluating of the department's work across the school are underdeveloped.

183. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The school is fortunate in that it has excellent technician support which provides a simply outstanding service to the department and the school's facilities manager in the maintenance and development of systems. The school will need to address the issue of risk assessment, however, as currently arrangements do not meet statutory requirements.

184. Some accommodation is cramped, for example in a room called UF 39. The chairs are too low and the space between computers is inadequate. Pupils are very tolerant over this. The school must consider all aspects of good design in the layout of information technology rooms if they are to be totally effective in meeting the needs of all who use them.

185. The school has made significant progress since the last inspection, The information technology resources have been increased; they are now of very good quality and new facilities are coming on stream at a pace. The statutory requirements have been met at Key Stage 3 but still do not fully comply at Key Stage 4. The school's computer management system is now efficient and effective in helping the school manage its finances, pupil records, salaries, attendance records and in part tracking pupils' assessment and performance. New reprographic facilities have been introduced and

are beginning to be used effectively.

186. In order to continue to improve the school should now:

- sustain the improvements to the information technology facilities;
- develop further the cross-curricular links between information technology and other departments by:
 - reviewing other subject schemes of work to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their information technology skills;
 - implementing the professional development programme for teachers to develop expertise in subject applications and in the use of information technology across the curriculum;
 - putting fully in place monitoring and evaluating procedures in respect of the department's work across the school;
 - increasing Key Stage 4 provision to ensure that statutory requirements are met fully;
- address the issue of risk assessment so that procedures meet statutory requirements;
- prepare a long-term strategic plan for the development of information technology in the school with clear criteria to help the school measure the impact of its planning and spending decisions.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

187. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are slightly above the national average at Level 5 and well above average at Level 4 in both French and German. Standards are equally high in both languages in Key Stage 3. Pupils quickly reach Level 3 in the skills of listening, speaking and reading in both languages. Some examples of Level 5 and Level 6 writing were seen in Year 9 lessons in both French and German.

188. At Key Stage 4, French results at GCSE have improved significantly since the last inspection so that they are now broadly in line with the national average: in 1999, Crawshaw students achieved 50 per cent A*-C grades in French against a national average of 54 per cent. Boys' results in French have improved very significantly though. Whilst they slightly exceeded the national average in 1999, 38.5 per cent A*-C as against a national average for boys of 37 per cent A*-C in French, they still lag behind girls by more than a fifth (11.5 per cent).

189. German results at GCSE have declined to little more than half the national average since the last inspection, when they were well above average. In 1999 they were well below average, 29 per cent A*-C against a national average of 59 per cent A*-C in German, though all students entered achieved a pass grade. This being said, the school has successfully dealt with recent staffing problems which had a negative impact on standards in German at GCSE. There was clear evidence in the lessons observed that skills have improved in German at Key Stage 4. In particular students were seen speaking at length, using a broad vocabulary and handling grammar competently. Attainment is now closely monitored in both French and German; teachers track individual pupils' progress and tackle underachievement. The positive impact of this development is already showing in the trial GCSE examination results where there is a high proportion of higher grades. Some Spanish is taught well to a few students in Key Stage 4 who have special needs and who receive a school certificate for their attainment.

190. A-level groups in both French and German have been very small. Therefore any comparison with national averages would lack validity.

191. Teaching in French is good, with some very good teaching in Key Stage 3. However, a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Key Stage 4. Teaching in German was always good in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and post 16. Some very good teaching was seen in Key Stage 4 and post 16 and some excellent teaching in Key Stage 3. Where teaching was good or excellent, it was characterised by excellent subject knowledge, good relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves and high expectations from teachers both of behaviour and standard of work. Good teachers planned their lessons effectively to make good use of the time available and organised learning tasks to achieve a balance of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Where teaching was very good, teachers prepared extra home-made materials to achieve a closer match to pupils' needs. For example, in one German lesson, the teacher used role play based on a soap opera to enable Year 11 pupils to generate a good range of vocabulary to describe relationships. In a Year 7 German lesson, pupils used a card game to consolidate their newly

acquired vocabulary to describe rooms and furniture. In a Year 8 French lesson, ICT was used very effectively as the vehicle to complete work on a survey of favourite food and drink. The unsatisfactory teaching was characterised by low expectations, poor match of materials to ability and too heavy a reliance on the use of English. At post 16, teaching in both languages was consistently good. ICT was used well in a Year 13 German lesson to consolidate work on a grammar and word order as part of a topic based study.

192. Pupils respond well to the learning opportunities provided by their modern languages teachers. They arrive at lessons promptly, properly equipped, settle quickly and work enthusiastically. Pupils are willing to accept challenge and sustain effort to improve their grade. They were able to articulate this and explain what they were doing to improve. In all Key Stage 3 lessons, pupils were seen using dictionaries competently and confidently; they were able to explain how they had been taught to do this. Pupils expressed appreciation of the lunchtime modern languages homework club; two Year 7 pupils said that it was difficult for them to get homework done at home and that they valued the opportunity to keep pace with other pupils.

193. Accommodation in the department is inadequate and has a negative impact on learning in that rooms are too small for large teaching groups where good role-play, for example, becomes difficult to manage and there is a problem for the teacher to move around and support individuals. Acoustics are poor and only two rooms have adequate storage.

194. Since the last inspection the department has made improvements in several areas. There are now very good, clear schemes of work in place in both French and German. These are mapped against literacy, numeracy and ICT and are under regular review. There has been a significant investment in resources for both French and German. The overall quality of teaching has improved; in the last inspection, teaching was sound with some good teaching; teaching is now good with some very good and some excellent.

195. In order to improve further, the school should:

- consolidate its work on the new schemes of work to reflect opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development under the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative;
- further develop the monitoring of pupils' progress and seek guidance on ways in which the departmental assessment might feed into the whole-school procedure, thereby making the process less onerous and more efficient for the heads of French and German;
- monitor the quality of teaching within the two languages and deal with inconsistencies such as approaches to target language.

MUSIC

196. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with national expectations. Most pupils are able to demonstrate an appropriate level of musical knowledge and understanding, together with relevant keyboard and singing skills. Pupils' classroom work is largely based around performance, and a significant minority are able to achieve standards in composing and improvising that are beyond what would normally be expected at the end of Key Stage 3. In a Year 9 lesson on the Blues, for example, a few pupils were able to work effectively in pairs producing fluent and authentic melody lines and good attempts at improvisation, accompanied appropriately by a Blues-style backing. In their listening and appraising work pupils are able to use an appropriate level of technical and musical vocabulary in order to describe the music they listen to and take part in. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are usually able to achieve well in practical music lessons, except where the work relies heavily on the ability to read music. Statutory teacher assessment has been carried out at the end of Key Stage 3 and appears to indicate standards that are well above the expectation. The assessments used by the school are not all practically based, however, as should be the case, and these high standards are not borne out by the inspection evidence.

197. Results at Key Stage 4 are well above average, with 93 per cent pupils achieving grades A*-C in 1999. This represents a generally rising trend of high attainment at GCSE. In the 1999 examination one pupil produced an outstanding portfolio of original compositions, showing an unusually mature understanding of repertoire, approach and technique. The work included a setting for male voices of the 'Libera Me' from the Latin Mass, and a two part invention in the style of J S

Bach, both of which were executed with high quality musical thinking and individual compositional flair. Inspection evidence indicates that the present Year 11 pupils are likely to maintain these high standards. Most are able to demonstrate very high quality work in ensemble and solo performance, responding well to material that is 'tailor-made' by the music staff to suit the pupils' abilities and interests. A good example of this was seen in the arrangement of an extract from the 'Concerto d' Aranjuez' for a quartet consisting of piano, bass guitar, flute and drums. Levels of pupil motivation are high, and all are conscious of the need to work hard and to practise in order to produce the very finest performances. Standards in pupils' written work are improving in response to specific, individual targets negotiated between staff and pupils.

198. Standards in the sixth form have been consistently high, with a 100 per cent pass rate at A-level. The numbers of pupils in the A-level cohorts are extremely small, however, and comparisons with national averages therefore lack any validity. During the inspection, standards of attainment at A-level were judged to be average, and the department should maintain its 100 per cent pass rate.

199. Teaching throughout the school is always at least satisfactory. It is very good and sometimes outstanding in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Teachers have exceptionally good subject knowledge and communicate this effectively to pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive, and the department provides a very good learning environment for all. Teachers are friendly and approachable; they maintain very high expectations in terms of standards and behaviour. This is particularly effective in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

200. Where teaching is outstanding, the work has been carefully matched to the needs of the individual, and targets for improvement are set and reviewed on a regular basis. The teaching is musically very rigorous, enabling pupils to improve their performance at a rapid rate, and leading to increased levels of personal motivation. Teachers use ICT very effectively in their work with older pupils, helping them to produce sophisticated compositions of high musical quality. The best teaching enables pupils to develop all aspects of their musicianship, and through the many performance opportunities that are provided by the department, pupils are able to refine their performance and audience skills. A range of questioning techniques is used effectively in order to target individuals, and to support, encourage and challenge them appropriately.

201. At Key Stage 3 teaching was at least satisfactory in four lessons observed, good in one lesson and very good in one other lesson. When teaching is very good, pupils' analytical skills and understanding develop quickly. They are confident enough to use and apply ideas that have been generated in class, working with these materials to produce their own good quality compositions and performances. Where teaching is less effective, lessons may be based around the same printed worksheets for all, and some pupils lose interest in the task since they are unable to decode the musical notation. Similarly, in the less effective sessions, pupils were simply taking part in a 'sing-through', with insufficient guidance from the teacher as to how to improve and refine their performance. Teaching is therefore currently not addressing the specific needs of all the pupils in Key Stage 3, and this is because the planned curriculum is insufficiently matched to the needs of all pupils, and provision for lower-attaining pupils and those with special needs is inconsistent.

202. The school is well served by a team of visiting instrumental staff who work with approximately 80 pupils on a weekly basis. There is no charge for instrumental tuition, and this committed approach to widening opportunities for pupils is a particular strength of the school. The department provides a very strong and inclusive extra-curricular programme that promotes high self-esteem among pupils, and leads to professional standards in performing. The school band, 'Connexion' is a well established and accomplished group of performers that has made many public appearances. Their repertoire is interesting and varied, including jazz standards, ballads and pieces that have been specially composed by departmental staff to suit the abilities of the performers. 'Connexion' operates on an 'open-access' basis, drawing together all the musical expertise in the school and allowing pupils with an interest in music to take part as vocalists or instrumentalists, whether they are high attainers or pupils with special educational needs. Parents are extremely supportive, and pupils value and appreciate their membership of the band, showing unusually high levels of commitment, motivation and teamwork.

203. The music department has recently undergone a programme of refurbishment, relating mainly to the fabric of the buildings. The teaching rooms still lack carpets and curtains; this exacerbates

noise levels and can lead to tiring working conditions for teachers and pupils. The previous inspection indicated that resources were limited to keyboards, and this remains the case. Instrumental resources for class use are still unsatisfactory, particularly for the varied needs of Key Stage 3 pupils.

204. In order to continue to raise standards in music for pupils in all key stages, the school should now:

- review and revise the curriculum for Key Stage 3 pupils, by:
 - taking into account the requirements of Curriculum 2000;
 - providing carefully structured programmes of work that reflect a wider range of types and styles of music from different times and places, particularly emphasising the inter-cultural nature of modern society;
 - placing the emphasis firmly on practical musical experiences; and
 - ensuring that pupils of all abilities are able to take part in all aspects of the work;
- increase the use of ICT in Key Stage 3, by taking the best practice from Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, and by widening the approach to include more than just computer software;
- improve the acoustics in the music teaching room;
- increase the range of resources available in both teaching rooms, so that two classes of pupils are able to take part simultaneously in worthwhile practical lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

205. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectation with the exception of gymnastics where standards are below expectation. This is similar to the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment overall is in line with national expectations but above for GCSE pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

206. In 1999 the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades in GCSE was well above the national average with almost one-third achieving the highest grades A*-A, and no pupil achieving less than an E grade. Since 1998, when the subject was introduced, boys have outperformed girls and achieved better results in their PE than in their other subjects.

207. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils demonstrate above average attainment in performing a range of practical skills in the team games of basketball, football and netball. Control when receiving, sending and travelling with a ball are strong features in all three activities. In a Year 7 rugby lesson, girls showed confidence and good hand-eye co-ordination when passing a ball off the ground to a partner with both speed and precision. Pupils can adapt and refine existing skills when participating in modified games; they recognise the importance of rules and apply them. They know why they should warm up and the long- and short-term effects of exercise on their body. Performance in gymnastics is more variable. Girls demonstrate better body management than boys do, but neither meets the standard expected by the end of the key stage. A limited range of known skills results in sequences that lack flow, fluency and rhythm. However, pupils' skills of planning, analysing and evaluating their performance are better developed in Year 7 and Year 8 gymnastics activities than in games.

208. At the end of Key Stage 4 many pupils continue to perform well in the major games and use more advanced tactics and strategies. The GCSE group shows increasing understanding of concepts and makes accurate links between practical application and theory. They anticipate responses by others and use this information to adapt their own performance. With the exception of GCSE pupils and those involved in extra-curricular games too few opportunities are provided for pupils to plan activities and take responsibility for judging the quality of a performance.

209. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. It is good in games where they consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding in a number of activities. In gymnastics it is satisfactory or better in individual lessons, but because time is limited to two half-term units across three years it is unsatisfactory by the end of the key stage. Progress overall in Key Stage 4 is good, and very good for pupils taking the GCSE course. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. Teachers have access to pupils' individual education plans and know the pupils well. There is no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls.

210. The response of pupils to the high expectations of their teachers is very good. In both key stages pupils enjoy their lessons and take part enthusiastically. They are anxious to please and concentrate hard on the tasks given. Despite a strong wind and low temperature pupils in a Year 8 class demonstrated their ability to listen attentively and sustain their effort and commitment to practise skills and techniques over a long period. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils form constructive relationships with one another and with teachers; they are friendly and courteous to visitors. Pupils look after the equipment well, taking on additional responsibilities as they move through the school. They lead warm-ups and older pupils involved in the Junior Sports Leader Awards organise activities for younger pupils and the wider community. Large numbers take part in extra-curricular activities and represent the school in various district, county and national events.

211. Teaching is good in both Key Stages 3 and 4. In half of lessons observed in Key Stage 4 it was very good. Specialist teachers who have a good knowledge of the subject teach almost all lessons. Features of the most effective teaching include very high expectations of behaviour and improvement in performance; a good pace to lessons with appropriate balance between listening and physical activity, very effective whole class teaching but with sensitivity to individual differences in attainment. Teachers' planning is effective. Intentions for lessons are clear and usually shared with the class so that the pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Lessons build carefully on the achievements from previous work and almost always include challenging activities. Demonstrations are used very effectively to point out strengths and weaknesses in individual performance and the way groups interact in games. Two lessons were observed where teaching was satisfactory, but could be improved further: insufficient guidance was given to suggest what the pupils needed to do in order to raise standards. For example, in gymnastics, pupils were aware of the importance of quality in their sequences but the detailed teaching points were not provided to help them move towards the standard expected. Lesson planning does not include details of what assessments will be made in the course of the session. Such assessments would assist in making appropriate provision for different groups of prior attainment. GCSE coursework is well marked and provides sufficient guidance to pupils on what they should do to improve.

212. The department is well managed by a hardworking and enthusiastic head of department. The staff are very committed and work as a team to maintain high standards and introduce new initiatives. However, other extenuating circumstances restrict the effectiveness of their work and make a negative impact on standards. The curriculum for Key Stage 3 is broad but not balanced; a strong emphasis on invasion games leaves insufficient time to develop other aspects of the subject. Blocked units of work for each half term are too short to allow effective learning, and the existence of a lengthy period before the same activity comes into the programme again makes it difficult to ensure steady and careful steps in learning with appropriate links between relevant aspects of the work. Grouping and setting arrangements by other subject departments result in physical education classes of varying size and mix according to ability and gender. For example, in one period there was a class of 11 pupils when another had 31. This makes it difficult to plan a cohesive programme that gives equality of access over the whole key stage. The Community Sports Leaders Award is a worthwhile activity for post 16 students but the lack of an A-level course or additional curriculum time means that there is no opportunity for students of this age to make choices about their involvement in physical activity. Indoor accommodation is limited for a school of this size and a significant amount of time is lost from lessons when the rooms are used for other purposes. Residential visits in Year 7 make a significant contribution to the work in outdoor and adventure activities and in establishing cross-curricular links.

213. In order to raise standards in physical education the school should now:

- review and revise the curriculum for Key Stage 3 pupils by:
 - providing long-term plans that result in a better balance in the distribution of time across the four aspects of the subject to be taught;
 - ensuring that the size of teaching groups provides equality of opportunity and continuity in learning;
 - further developing opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their work;
 - making greater use of assessment to inform planning;
 - increasing the length of some units to allow planned progression over a longer period of time;
- monitor and evaluate teaching and learning to:
 - provide a sound basis for planning improvement;
 - ensure that staff training and development tackles the priorities of the department;

- improve provision for post 16 physical education;
- ensure that statutory risk assessments are undertaken.

PSYCHOLOGY

214. Attainment in A-level psychology is high. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was very good and resulted in high standards in both course work and students' study skills. Students responded with very positive attitudes to the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

215. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations and those of the Leeds City Council Agreed Syllabus. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. All pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of religions and of what is distinctive to each and are able to recall information from previous learning well and with confidence using correct terminology. By the end of the key stage, high-attaining pupils are able to express their own values and commitments orally and in extended writing which is reflective in nature - for example, in evaluative work on suffering. They are able to recognise and discuss similar features of different faiths. This was demonstrated in some very high quality creative letter writing in a study on Hinduism. Their ability to argue a case and support it with evidence and judgement, and to establish their own position on religious and moral issues was clear in debates for and against abortion. Middle-attainers and lower-attainers, while less able to write reflectively, were nevertheless able to use evidence to support their statements, and had good knowledge of the interplay of dharma, karma, samsara and moksha in the Hindu faith. A small number of the lowest attainers, however, showed limited understanding. Although their knowledge was more secure, their responses to moral issues tended to be simplistic.

216. Over the past three years, attainment in GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4 has been consistently above national expectations and above most other subjects in the school. However, the small numbers of pupils entered for the examination make comparisons unreliable. There is no current Year 11 GCSE group in religious studies. Attainment in Year 10 is in line with national course expectations given the relatively short time pupils have been studying the course. High attainers showed very good knowledge and understanding of the meaning, cost and reward of discipleship in the Christian tradition and produced strong arguments backed up with appropriate Biblical and religious references. Middle- and lower-attainers were able to produce a coherent definition of discipleship with references to Jesus and some reflection on their own views.

217. The attainment of Key Stage 4 pupils in non-examination religious education is variable and generally below the expectations of the agreed syllabus in terms of knowledge. However, pupils of all abilities in Year 11 were able to build on prior learning in Key Stage 3 and to draw on their own knowledge of recent events to discuss the concept of a just war, and to make connections between their own views, Christian views on pacifism and Jesus' teaching on peace. They were able to reflect well on the impact of war as presented on television on their own perceptions and judgements. Attainment at A-level over the past three years has been in line with national expectation, although the very small cohort makes judgement unreliable. Currently there is no A-level religious studies group.

218. Teaching of religious education is always at least satisfactory, and in two-thirds of the lessons observed it was good or very good. Teachers' planning commitment, subject knowledge and enthusiasm are strengths of the department, and have a strong positive impact on pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour in lessons. High expectations and challenging tasks, such as Year 7 work on 'Why I am unique', encourage good descriptive and analytical writing which develops pupils' ability to reflect on themselves and their humanity. Imaginative tasks – for example, 'Who is this man?' - drew out very good responses from pupils, developing investigative skills and teaching pupils the need for accuracy and supportive evidence.

219. Very good teaching was further characterised by confident, secure and structured explanations and questioning which made clear links between pupils' prior learning, their own experiences and new learning. In a Year 9 lesson pupils were taken through a review of vocabulary and concepts, such as

prejudice and racism, enabling them to consolidate prior learning, to a well co-ordinated discussion on the differences between legislation and individual moral stances. Pupils thus made real progress in knowledge and understanding as well as in their ability to express opinions supported with evidence. The teacher's questioning drew out ways in which beliefs affect action, leading to the story of The Good Samaritan, which was new learning. Pupils' active involvement in their own learning, due to skilful managing of group activity, was further enhanced by short, prepared role-plays followed by peer assessment in the form of comments from fellow pupils, which reflected real knowledge and understanding of the issues being studied.

220. Such careful structuring of pupils' learning and the motivating, lively and interactive styles of teaching are further supported in Year 10 with revision task booklets which are effective in enabling pupils to consolidate and reinforce prior learning and understanding and to identify any gaps. Good guidance is given on techniques of essay writing, enabling pupils to make real progress across the key stages.

221. When teaching is less skilful in using oral questioning and explanation to secure good learning from all pupils in mixed ability classes, questions in written tasks demand long written answers which do not allow a small number of the lowest-attainers to make good progress in understanding. They produce knowledge-based answers which show little understanding - for example, of the point of The Good Samaritan story. Neither do the highest-attainers make sufficiently good progress in such situations as their thinking has not been sufficiently challenged or developed before they attempt the written answers - for example, on why they think modern day Christians have particular views on racism.

222. Teaching by specialist teachers in Key Stage 4 non-examination religious education is at least good. Pupils make good progress in their understanding of moral issues and in further developing their ability to reflect on their own values and the influences on them. Learning is well developed by careful class teaching, group activity and individual work and careful selection of appropriate resources – a poem 'War Spectacular' clearly engaged pupils of all abilities. Teachers' subject expertise enables clear explanation of complex philosophical points such as Thomas Aquinas' conditions for a just war, which further develops knowledge and understanding. However, learning in religious education in Key Stage 4 is adversely affected by curriculum time and by non-specialist teaching – a result of religious education being included in the PSHE programme.

223. Teaching in the department in Key Stage 3 is well supported by clear and consistent application of departmental policies of assessment and marking and half-termly self-reviews of work which allow for identification of strengths and weaknesses, and targets for improvement in knowledge, skills and understanding. These targets are clearly used to shape both curriculum planning and learning. Year 10 GCSE work is closely marked with detailed comments linked to the body of the written work which enables pupils to identify ways in which they can improve. In every lesson observed, the intended learning outcomes were made explicit to pupils and reviewed at the end of the lesson, reinforcing assessment procedures.

224. The religious education department is very well led and managed. All teachers are provided with schemes of work and lesson plans in Key Stage 3. Marking and assessment are monitored. Clear, shared expectations lead to a strong ethos of tolerance, respect and commitment among pupils; and very good relationships between teachers and pupils as well as among the pupils themselves were evident at all times. Resources are well managed, but remain poor in terms of quantity and range. The department has only very limited ICT which reduces the range of teaching methods available, despite a clear departmental vision of ways in which ICT could be used to enhance pupil learning in the subject.

225. Religious education is a successful subject in Key Stage 3 and at GCSE in Key Stage 4, and makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. However, the school is failing to meet statutory requirements for religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, both issues raised in the last inspection and which have still not been tackled.

226. In order to develop provision for religious education further the school should now:

- plan for and implement the use of information technology in religious education as a teaching and learning resource;

- plan teaching to meet the learning needs of the very lowest-attainers in Key Stage 3 mixed ability classes;
- plan for and implement structured monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the department;
- provide a greater quantity and range of resources;
- review schemes of work in the light of suggested level descriptions for assessment at the end of Key Stage 3;
- ensure that all the requirements of the agreed syllabus are met in Key Stage 4;
- meet statutory requirements for religious education at post 16.

SOCIOLOGY

227. Attainment in A-level sociology is high. Students attain higher standards than their prior attainment would indicate and attain standards in sociology which are at least as good as, and usually higher than, their attainment in their other subjects. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm this picture of high attainment. Coursework is of a high standard. The quality of teaching and learning observed was outstanding. Teaching was well structured and provided good guidance for all students. Such teaching has a very positive impact on the attitudes of students and on their attainment. Students are committed, enthusiastic and interested and they apply their knowledge well to other subjects - for example, to work on sects and cults in General Studies.