

INSPECTION REPORT

CALTHORPE PARK SCHOOL

Fleet

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116436

Headteacher: Mr C J Heasman

Reporting inspector: D Klemm
2049

Dates of inspection: 13 – 17 March 2000

Inspection number: 187002
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:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11 - 16
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Hitches Lane Fleet Hampshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Hawkins
Date of previous inspection:	12 February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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			Teaching and learning
			Curriculum
			Management
W G Barton	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development
			Care for students
			Partnership with parents
P Bowyer	Team inspector	Mathematics	
J N Hedge	Team inspector	English English as an additional language (EAL) Special educational needs (SEN)	
R Dickason	Team inspector	Science	
P Sellwood	Team inspector	Design and technology (DT)	
		Information technology (ICT)	
J Dockrell	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
M J Harding	Team inspector	History Religious education (RE)	
B Greasley	Team inspector	Geography	
A P McGough	Team inspector	Art	
A Lees	Team inspector	Music	
P Wall	Team inspector	Physical education (PE)	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Calthorpe Park School is an 11 - 16 comprehensive school with 787 boys and girls on roll and has experienced a slight reduction in numbers since the last inspection in 1996. Students on roll are starting to increase now and the school anticipates a large intake in September 2000. Students are recruited mainly from local primary schools but an increasing number are attracted to the school from neighbouring villages and towns. The majority of students are from affluent backgrounds and 2.9 % are known to be entitled to free school meals which is well below the national average. The number of students for whom English is a second language is low. Although the percentage of statemented students is low there are above average numbers on the SEN register with mainly language difficulties.

Attainment on entry to the school is well above average although the school's test data indicates a slight decline in overall attainment of the present cohort of students. 88% of students continue in full time education on leaving the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with more strengths than weaknesses. Teaching is good and there is positive leadership by the headteacher and the senior management team. Students do well in examinations and in their personal development. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Management has focused successfully on strategies to improve standards.
- Teaching is generally good and promotes high attainment.
- All students are well cared for, behaviour is good and there are positive relationships within the school community.
- Support for students with SEN is very good.
- Recent innovations such as the reading programme in Year 7 and the enrichment scheme for more able students have strengthened provision.
- Extra-curricular activities and visits enrich the quality of school life.

What could be improved

- Some of the teaching and the management of the English department .
- Consistent implementation of school policies including the monitoring of teaching.
- Statutory act of worship and provision of RE.
- Resources for ICT and other specified curriculum areas.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1996. Since then there has been significant improvement. Results in the national tests for 14 year olds have improved in line with the national trend in science and mathematics although there has been a slight decline in English. At GCSE the proportion of students achieving 5 A*- C grades improved considerably in 1999 and the average points score was in line with similar schools. Teaching has improved significantly with very few unsatisfactory lessons now and the number of good and better lessons has increased from just over a third to almost three quarters. Long term planning is now in place but the school needs to focus further on consistency of approaches to issues such as marking and the monitoring of teaching. The school still does not meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and provision for RE remains inadequate.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds based on average point scores in Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Key Stage 3 tests	A	A	A	B
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	C

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

Standards in the national tests for 14 year olds are well above the national average and above average for schools with a similar proportion of students entitled to free school meals. The numbers of students achieving Level 6 are very high. Science and mathematics results have improved in line with the national trend but there has been a slight decline in English standards. Boys' attainment is weaker than girls overall.

At GCSE standards are well above the national average. They are average in comparison with similar schools on the basis of average points score but are above average in the numbers achieving five A*-C. Standards at GCSE were good last year in science, mathematics, physical education, music and modern foreign languages but were weaker in design and technology (DT), English and English Literature. Girls' attainment is stronger than boys.

Students achieve well and the school sets challenging yet attainable targets for individual students and for overall school examination results.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of students enjoy school, work hard and develop positive relationships with staff and each other.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students use the building carefully and take good care of resources and equipment.
Personal development and relationships	Students develop mature and responsible attitudes to each other and their academic work. Many use well the opportunities to extend their interests through involvement in a wide range of extra curricular activities. Bullying is not a major issue but when it does occur it is dealt with sensitively and swiftly
Attendance	Attendance is very good and unauthorised absence is well below average.

The positive attitude of students and their good attendance and behaviour in school are important factors in why they do well at school. They develop mature attitudes as they progress through school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	

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

The good quality of teaching is a major factor in the high levels of attainment observed in most lessons and in the above average standards achieved in tests and examinations. Teaching is much better than at the last inspection with only 3% of lessons considered unsatisfactory; 72% at least good and 25% very good or excellent. There are no subjects where teaching is weak overall and no teaching which is poor. Teaching in mathematics is sound and often good and in science it is good and sometimes very good. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in English. Teaching in other subject areas is good with particular strengths in ICT. Students learn literacy and numeracy skills well in English and mathematics and there are strong contributions to literacy developments in many subjects including geography, drama and history. Students learn well across the attainment range.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good quality broad and balanced curriculum with the exception of provision for RE. Extra-curricular activities are good and enhance students' personal and academic development.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Students with special needs make good progress especially at Key Stage 3. Specialist support is very good.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Students with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress in their writing and in art.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for students' social and cultural development and moral issues are explored well in assemblies and across the curriculum. Spiritual education is weak.
How well the school cares for its students	This is a strength of the school. The quality of pastoral support is very good and students appreciate the care they receive. Systems for monitoring progress are good but need consistent implementation

The school works well with parents who are particularly pleased about the progress their children make and the care and support they receive at school. The range and quality of extra curricular activities and the well balanced curriculum, with the exception of provision for RE, are particular strengths.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher and senior management team is good. There is a clear sense of direction which is shared by many staff. A clear focus on raising standards has led to improved results. Day to day management of the school is efficient. There is a need to ensure consistent implementation of policies.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is involved closely in shaping the school's future development. It plays an increasing role in monitoring the work of the school and provides excellent support to the headteacher. Governors need to reconsider their policy with regard to a daily act of corporate worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's procedures for evaluating examination performance and priorities for development are appropriate and well developed.
The strategic use of resources	The school has managed its resources effectively over the last few years. As funding increases extra monies should be allocated to those areas where there are shortages in learning materials.

The school has enough accommodation for present needs but some areas are in need of refurbishment. Learning resources are good in many subject areas but there are weaknesses in some and resources for ICT are inadequate. There are sufficient well qualified staff to meet curricular needs.

The school ensures that its resources are used efficiently to maximise learning and ensure best value for money.

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 progress their children make. • The provision for students with special educational needs. • The care students receive at school and the lack of bullying. • The friendliness and approachability of staff. • The overall quality of teaching is good. • The leadership and management of the school is of a high quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More parents' evenings to discuss their children's progress. • Behaviour in Year 7. • Provision for ICT.

The inspection team agrees with parents that this is a good school. The inspection team supports their views but did not find evidence of poor behaviour in Year 7.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Results in the national tests for 14 year olds have been well above the national average for the last three years and above average for similar schools. The numbers of students achieving Level 6 or above has been very high. In English the performance of girls has been well above average and overall results have been above average for similar schools. However, standards in English in 1999 were not as strong as at the last inspection and boys' attainment is weaker than girls.

2. In mathematics results have improved in line with the national trend and are well above the national average. They are above average for similar schools and the proportion achieving Level 6 or above has been very high. Girls have achieved a little better than boys. There has been a steady improvement since the last inspection. In science results have been well above the national average and in line with similar schools. From 1996-1999 results have improved in line with the national trend. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

3. In 1999 70% of students achieved at least five GCSE passes at A* - C. This was well above the national average and above average for similar schools. The average points score was well above the national average and in line with similar schools. Over the last three years boys and girls have gained above average results with girls out performing boys particularly last year. Last year, results were good in science, mathematics, physical education, music and modern foreign languages but were relatively weaker in design and technology (DT), English and English Literature. The school has set a target of 70% five GCSE A* - C grades and an average points score of 45 for 2001. This target is challenging yet achievable.

4. Results in tests, teacher assessments and examinations indicate that students make good progress during their time at school. On entry attainment levels as measured by national tests are high and these are maintained and improved as students move through Key Stages 3 and 4. The school records progress in a detailed and systematic way. Although both boys and girls achieve standards above the national average girls' attainment is stronger than boys. At Key Stage 3 boys' attainment is significantly weaker than girls in history and in English throughout the school. In DT the research skills of boys are weaker than girls. However, in art boys' attainment is similar to girls.

5. Standards of work observed during the inspection week were in line with these results and demonstrated some considerable strengths. In geography at Key Stage 4 students can collect and analyse information and draw appropriate conclusions. Written work is good in languages and attainment in musical performance is well above average. In science practical skills are good and students with special educational needs make good progress. Standards in ICT are very good at Key Stage 3 in discrete ICT lessons and although less well developed across the curriculum due to limited resources good examples were observed of Year 7 students using word processing and graphic techniques to present course work. In a Year 9 history lesson students demonstrated good skills in evaluating hypotheses and finding relevant evidence to support their views. Standards in RE are good at Key Stage 3 but there is insufficient provision at Key Stage 4 to form a judgement. Students with special educational needs make good progress especially in those lessons when they receive specialist help. Their progress is satisfactory in most

other lessons. They make good progress in art but this could be improved with the use of more appropriate learning materials. The small number of students with English as an additional language make good progress particularly in their control and use of written English. They receive good specialist support and are eager to do well. In their creative work in art at Key Stage 4 they make good progress.

6. Students develop their literacy skills well as they progress through the school. At Key Stage 3 they develop good listening skills in a number of subjects including drama, modern languages and music. In a GCSE humanities lesson and a Year 11 history debate on Queen Elizabeth 1 students demonstrated high order skills in using language to persuade and convince others. Most students speak confidently and fluently. Written work is well presented and many students take great care over their work and write in considerable detail. Good written work was observed in geography and science and most students improve the accuracy of their written work. The new reading programme in Year 7 has been successful in encouraging students to read more widely for pleasure and reading is being developed well across the curriculum.

7. Standards in numeracy are good in mathematics lessons at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Students make good progress in developing these skills across the curriculum. In geography students can interpret statistics and use graphs accurately and in science they can carry out calculations about the use of energy with a good degree of accuracy.

8. Since the last inspection standards overall have improved in history, science, art, ICT, modern languages, music, physical education and have been at least maintained in other subject areas with some weakness in DT and English.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Students' attitudes to their work are very good. The majority enjoy school, apply themselves well, are attentive, work hard and do their best. During lessons they are often enthusiastic about their work and in interviews with inspectors were appreciative of the caring ethos of the school and the support they received from staff. Relationships between students and teachers and amongst the students themselves are good. They concentrate well, co-operate effectively and are prepared to share knowledge and understanding when working in groups. They are receptive to new ideas and concepts. In a Year 10 art lesson one student used photographs to produce a powerful visual statement about the First World War and in a Year 9 religious education lesson students developed a good understanding of the ethical values of Buddhism. Students are generally sensitive about the impact of their actions on others.

10. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. There were few occasions when behaviour was poor although in a minority of mathematics and science lessons students were inattentive. More typically students arrive on time for lessons and as in modern languages are well prepared for work having brought their own dictionaries and completed work for lessons. Discipline is effective and largely unobtrusive and inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively. Parents and students generally agree that the small numbers of incidents involving bullying are dealt with promptly and well by the school. Exclusion rates are comparable with the national average. Students respect property, handle equipment with care and generally value and care for the school environment. Behaviour on the school buses is good.

11. In many lessons students demonstrate respect for the beliefs and customs of others. In RE they study the major world faiths and respond sensitively and thoughtfully to the new ideas presented to them. In art and music they study a wide range of artistic traditions and are given opportunities to use this knowledge in practical work. In assemblies they respond maturely to the plight of people in Mozambique and discuss these issues sensibly and confidently.

12. The school provides many opportunities for students to take responsibility and demonstrate mature behaviour. There are regular meetings of the School Council where students present their views about school policies. Many Year 11 students are prefects and assist staff in day-to-day management of the school. Some older students act as mentors to younger students. The debating society encourages personal responses to a range of political and social issues.

13. Attendance at school is very good and unauthorised absence is very low. Absences are carefully monitored by school staff and the education welfare officer.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is generally good throughout the school. Some teaching is very good or excellent. During the inspection week, teaching was at least satisfactory in 97% of lessons, was very good or excellent in 25% and was good in a further 47% of lessons. At the last inspection almost 1 in 6 lessons were considered unsatisfactory and this report indicates the progress the school has made. There are no departments where teaching is unsatisfactory overall but there are some weaknesses in English. Good teaching has had an impact on students' progress and attainment.

15. Most teaching is underpinned by good subject knowledge. In many lessons and subjects teachers create enthusiasm and interest for work presented to students. A Year 9 history class used a range of quality resources to prepare for a field trip to the Somme Battlefield and in music a Year 8 group used much creative energy and skill in a lesson on Indian music. Well planned lessons are now a strength in the school. In science ideas are sequenced effectively and student progress is checked regularly. Modern languages teachers conduct lessons in the target language very effectively and this has a real impact on learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good.

16. Classroom management is very good. Students work hard and make good progress in the majority of lessons. There are few occasions when poor behaviour affects the quality of learning. In food technology students have a positive work ethic, prepare in advance for lessons and plan time efficiently. Consequently they make good progress and learn quickly. In geography they are attentive and settle down to work quickly. Most students at Key Stage 4 understand what they need to do to improve but more could be done at Key Stage 3 to assist students in helping them to improve their work by setting precise learning objectives.

17. In the best lessons teachers use a range of teaching strategies and have high expectations for students. Year 7 students in a religious education lesson presented the parable of the unjust steward in the context of soccer management and enjoyed and learned from the experience. A Year 8 art group used well a range of learning strategies when studying aboriginal art.

18. Students with learning difficulties receive very good support from the Learning Support team of 1 full time and 2 part time teachers and three non-teaching assistants. Assessment is thorough and on going and teaching responds to individual needs either in withdrawal groups or in full class lessons. This very good teaching is characterised by high expectations, good consolidation of prior learning and very careful planning. SEN students have clear learning targets in their homework diaries. Teaching staff have specialist knowledge in how to teach dyslexic students. Students enjoy these lessons, work hard and are making very good progress. In ICT they make good progress in keyboard skills and knowledge of programmes. Progress is very good across the curriculum especially when students receive additional support. There are particular strengths in drama and geography and at GCSE they do very well in food technology and automotive studies.

19. Homework is set regularly by most staff and homework diaries are checked by form tutors. The amount and quality of work varies across and within departments but is generally satisfactory. Marking of work is usually constructive but a more consistent whole school approach would assist in improving standards. There are weaknesses in marking in science and English. The use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning and to set clear targets for students is generally satisfactory but needs to be developed.

20. Learning was unsatisfactory in less than 3% of lessons and was good or better in over seven out of ten lessons. The quality of teaching and learning is the main reason for students doing well at school.

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

21. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all its students with the exception of the provision of RE which receives insufficient time as a separate subject at Key Stage 3 and is a relatively small part of the PSHRE programme at Key Stage 4. All National Curriculum requirements are met and at Key Stage 3 provision is enhanced through drama and the opportunity for all students to study a second modern foreign language in Years 8 and 9. Students' personal development is covered by the programme for personal, social and health education and ICT is taught as a discrete subject within technology. Strategies for improving literacy and numeracy skills are good.

22. At Key Stage 4 all students follow a broad based curriculum with opportunities to choose a technology subject from a wide range of courses including automotive studies, resistant materials and business studies. Students can choose two options from a range of subjects including a second language, arts subjects, humanities and GCSE physical education. High attaining students take separate sciences and do well at GCSE. Low attaining students follow a study skills course which includes a foreign language component, a GNVQ unit on leisure and tourism, basic skills work and RSA CLAIT. This course is well taught and students learn well. Considerable efforts are made by staff to ensure that all students follow courses which meet individual needs. The school's policy on equal opportunities is clear, coherent and practical. Materials used in lessons are checked to avoid stereotyping and no one subject area is dominated by girls or boys. Experiments with single sex groups in modern foreign languages in order to raise attainment are being monitored carefully.

23. The school's programme for extra curricular activities is very good. There are a wide range of sporting activities. Musical activities include various musical groups, concerts in and out of school and lessons for all instruments. During the inspection week over 50 activities were available to students ranging from bridge to a fashion show. A number of departments including mathematics and modern foreign languages provide study support groups. Identified high attaining students are encouraged to take part with other students in a range of enrichment activities including visits to the Oxford Union and the opportunity through Young Enterprise to run a mini enterprise group. In addition some of these students choose to study extra subjects including psychology at the school's evening classes. Links with the community are very good and include local business people assisting in curriculum activities such as industry day and other adults helping to run extra curricular activities. Students are involved in a wide range of community events including fund raising and environmental groups. The school has developed very strong pastoral links with its feeder schools and has started to develop curriculum links with some staff observing the new developments in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. There are regular meetings for staff and students with post 16 institutions and this provision is good.

24. Personal, social and health education is taught to all students at Key Stage 3 and is extended to include religious education at Key Stage 4 although this provision is inadequate in terms of time allocation. The programme has been developed since the last inspection and is well planned, managed and taught. Issues relating to drugs and sex education are taught sensitively. Students are taught about the target setting process in these lessons. Careers education is part of this programme and also receives an extra period in Year 10. Students feel confident that they are prepared well for the next stage of education or employment and value these lessons and the individual counselling they receive from staff and careers officers. Year 10 students participate in a well organised two week work experience programme. The quality of this entire provision is very good.

25. The provision made by the school to support students' personal development is good overall although the development of spiritual understanding is a weakness. Good use is made of those opportunities that do arise for students to reflect on the beliefs, values and ideas of others as in RE, humanities, history and art but is inhibited by the very limited time available for RE and collective worship. Good moral values are well established through the high standards of behaviour and responsible attitudes expected of students across the school, through assembly themes and through curriculum content as, for example, in PSHE and history which promote exploration and understanding of issues of right and wrong within a wider context.

26. Very good provision is made to support students' social and cultural development. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively in such subjects as science, music, modern foreign languages, geography and DT. They show respect for each other, for teachers and for the wider community as demonstrated in their support for charities. Social issues are well addressed in PSHE and students extend their understanding of society and the world of work in careers education and in humanities. Many opportunities are provided to enrich students' experiences of their own cultural traditions and those of others in lessons and through extra curricular activities. In music and art, students gain experience of a wide range of styles and approaches from many different cultures. Museum and gallery visits, field trips and foreign exchanges further enhance provision as do the opportunities taken to bring visiting performers into school as, for example, in the workshops run by singers from the Royal Opera.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

27. The welfare of students is a major school priority and provision for ensuring students are well cared for is very good. Form tutors and pastoral staff develop close relationships with students and are sensitive to their development and social needs. Measures to promote good behaviour are positive yet unobtrusive. Contact with parents is good and procedures for monitoring attendance are thorough and effective. The matron provides an excellent support service for students with medical problems and provides a counselling service for students who need help.

28. The school has very good systems in place to monitor students' academic progress and this is having an impact on raising standards. All students know what they are capable of achieving and are becoming more skilled in setting targets for improvement. Progress is assessed against benchmark levels of attainment based on national tests. Staff are starting to use this information more confidently although they need to set more specific targets to enable students to improve their work. In DT and art there is very good monitoring of students' folders of work. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress although some do not understand the attainment grade system.

29. The school ensures that bullying and other inappropriate behaviour is monitored and dealt with promptly. There is a clear code of conduct which is well supported by students and their parents. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and are appropriate. The school is a civilised place which promotes good learning and progress has been good since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

30. The school has established good links with parents who comment favourably about staff approachability and the care taken to promote student welfare. Parents are welcomed into school and active parent governors represent their interests well. Liaison with parents is established in the primary schools where parents receive a good quality prospectus and can meet and question key staff.

31. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the day to day life of the school and many accompany staff on school trips and help to run extra curricular activities such as 'Young Enterprise'. A monthly newsletter and letters home keep them well informed about the life of the school. Many parents meet staff at the well attended parents' evenings held at the school and the Calthorpe Park School Association is very active in fund raising to support school developments. Discussions are held with this group to inform decisions about new developments such as a home/ school contract.

32. There are reports three times a year outlining student performance and progress. One of these reports is a detailed profile by subject. Parents are appreciative of these. There are opportunities for staff and parents to ask for specific reviews about students and parents welcome this. Parents of students with special educational needs are fully involved in annual reviews and arrangements for support. Some parents would appreciate the opportunity to discuss their children's progress at more than one parents' evening a year. The vast majority of parents are satisfied with the achievement and progress made by their children and the high expectations set by the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

33. The school is well led and managed. The leadership of the headteacher and senior management team is good. Since the last inspection the focus of their energies has been on raising standards by improving curricular provision and the quality of teaching. There is now very detailed monitoring of test and examination results to ensure that all students achieve their potential and departments are aware of their areas of weakness and can plan improvements. Standards have improved alongside improvements in teaching although some departments continue to need support in the use of assessment data to set targets for students and identify areas for improvements in teaching. There is a clear sense of direction in the school which is shared by many staff and consultation with parents, teachers and students is good. The school operates well on a day to day basis and uses effectively computer systems to assist in the daily running of the school and in financial and curriculum planning.

34. The governing body plays a major role in shaping the direction of the school and its three year strategic development plan is sound. It is appropriate, realistic and coherent although it could be improved if monies for development activities were separately costed from operational funds. Increasingly the governors play an active part in monitoring the work of the school and they offer invaluable support to the headteacher. Statutory obligations are fulfilled with the exception of a daily act of worship and the provision for RE. Financial planning is sound and best value principles are pursued efficiently. Monitoring of the use of school monies is efficient.

35. Heads of department, year heads and other middle managers are effective in helping the school to run efficiently on a day to day basis. Year heads and year tutors provide high quality support to form tutors and students and this is a real strength of the school. Heads of department offer good support to their colleagues but there are inconsistencies across the school in implementing whole school policies. The monitoring of teaching by middle managers and senior staff has not been implemented across the school and is a major area for development. There are weaknesses in the leadership of the English department where issues relating to curriculum developments, boys' under attainment, monitoring of teaching, learning, assessment and marking have not been addressed adequately.

36. The school has sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff to meet curriculum needs. Non-teaching staff are effective and well deployed although there is a shortage of ancillary help in DT. The quality of support offered by non-teaching assistants to students with special educational needs is very good. The system for teacher appraisal has not been implemented pending new procedures for performance management. The very detailed programme for staff training days and attendance at courses has been linked directly to extending and improving teaching methods. This has proved to be extremely effective. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are good and the support of the teacher mentor is valued by newly qualified teachers. Students on initial teacher training are well supported.

37. The school has sufficient accommodation for current numbers but maintenance costs are high and some areas of the building are in urgent need of refurbishment.

Although some parts of the school are in a poor condition, the buildings and grounds are well cared for and the leisure centre is a major asset. Much of the accommodation for DT is in urgent need of refurbishing to provide suitable and discrete areas for design and practical work and updated facilities for food studies. The music department has very cramped accommodation. Some toilet provision is very poor. Good use is made of display to enhance learning. The school is aware of the need to address the health and safety issues detailed in the DT report.

38. Most subjects have sufficient and sometimes good resources to meet curriculum needs. Although there has been a major development of ICT, there remains a shortage of hardware and software in music, art and some aspects of DT. The high demand for ICT restricts access to computer rooms and this has affected mathematics and geography. Some equipment in DT is old and outdated and there are an inadequate number of books in English, RE and mathematics. The school library is well managed and stocked appropriately although provision of reference materials is uneven amongst subject areas and the layout and furnishings are somewhat limited. Some use is made of the library by the English department for lessons to develop library and reading skills at Key Stage 3 and by other departments primarily for research or quiet study. There is appropriate access for students at breaks and lunch times for use of the ICT facilities and for quiet reading.

39. The funding the school receives is average in relationship to similar schools as is expenditure. Staffing costs are above average and this has had an impact on the amount of monies available for resources, maintenance and staff development. Spending decisions are taken carefully and the school manages all its resources very well. There have been significant improvements in the quality of management since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40. The school should now seek to raise standards further and improve the quality of provision by:

- Improving the quality of some teaching and the management of the English department; (paragraphs 14, 35, 46, 47, 48 and 49)
- Monitoring the quality of teaching in a systematic way involving all heads of department and ensuring consistent implementation of whole school policies; (paragraphs 35, 62, 68, 77 and 91)
- Reviewing current policies on Religious Education and a daily act of worship; (paragraphs 34 and 122)
- Improving the quality of resources for ICT and other identified curriculum areas. (paragraphs 37, 61, 90, 105 and 112)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	175
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	22	47	24	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	787	
Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals	20	

Special educational needs	Y 7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	10	
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	201	

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	13

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	.%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.09
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 students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	65	69

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	46	52	46
	Girls	59	57	55
	Total	105	109	101
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	[89] 79	[74] 81	[84] 75
	National	[63] 65	[60] 62	[56] 55
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	[61] 51	[46] 63	[40] 40
	National	[35] 28	[36] 38	[27] 23

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	52	48
	Girls	59	58	56
	Total	103	110	104
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	[78] 76	[78] 82	[85] 78
	National	[61] 64	[64] 64	[61] 60
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	[47] 51	[46] 65	[45] 44
	National	[30] 31	[37] 27	[30] 28

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	81	74	155

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	46	78	78
	Girls	63	72	73
	Total	109	150	151
Percentage of students achieving The standard specified	School	70 (64)	99 (96)	97 (97)
	National	46.3 (44.6)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (95.2)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	45 (44)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and The percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	10 90
	National	72.9

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	747
Any other minority ethnic group	15

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	
Black – African heritage	0	
Black – other	0	
Indian	0	
Pakistani	0	
Bangladeshi	0	
Chinese	0	
White	22	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	43.6
Number of students per qualified teacher	18.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	29.2

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.8
Key Stage 4	21.7

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	1,830,561
Total expenditure	1,861,932
Expenditure per student	2,421
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,361
Balance carried forward to next year	-1470

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	787
Number of questionnaires returned	208

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	56	10	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	30	63	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	52	6	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	58	14	7	2
The teaching is good.	26	65	6	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	44	20	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	37	4	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	39	4	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	27	56	11	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	44	50	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	56	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	50	11	0	5

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

ENGLISH

41. Attainment in English in the National Curriculum Test at the end of Year 9 is above average when compared with results of similar schools. Over the last 4 years performance in English is well above average, in particular the performance of girls is very high. Overall performance in 1999, however, was not as high as in the previous year and was lower than at the last inspection.

42. Attainment at GCSE in English in 1999 was well above the national average. Girls did particularly well especially at the highest grades. Results in English were better than the previous year but the Literature results were significantly lower than in 1998. Attainment in English Literature was above average but the proportion of A and A* grades was lower than that attained nationally despite the selective entry policy last year. Girls do much better than boys – boys' performance is only average whereas girls are doing very well. The relative performance of students in English and particularly in English Literature is not as high as in other subjects at GCSE.

43. Tests indicate that when students enter the school attainment is above average and by the end of Years 9 and 11 overall attainment observed in English lessons is above average. Progress in both key stages is generally satisfactory. Most students have oral skills which are at least at the national average. They respond well in discussion and in questioning. Students' oral skills are well developed and in a Year 9 lesson, for example, groups were able to talk about 'Twelfth Night' and explain and develop their ideas. They are beginning to draw on quotation from the text to support their views. In Year 11 high attaining students discussing 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' were very articulate, and able to demonstrate their knowledge of character and development in the plot using literary terminology confidently. Although students often work in pairs or in small groups there are too few carefully considered and structured opportunities to develop these skills so that progress is only satisfactory. Students listen carefully. Lower attaining students in Year 11 preparing for the examination were more fluent in discussion than in their written work. Students with English as an additional language use a wider range of vocabulary in their written work than in discussion.

44. Year 7 students' writing is competent, many have good command of vocabulary and above average grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar. They make steady progress and by Year 9 high attaining students' writing is well structured, perceptive and mechanically accurate. Some students write at length. Presentation is good. Low and middle attaining students studying Shakespeare have a good understanding of aspects of the text. They have learned to draft their work and to make satisfactory notes. Most students read fluently and with a good level of understanding. Writing is generally above average though some lower attaining students need much support with ordering and sequencing their ideas. Where additional support is provided students with special needs make good progress. At Key Stage 4 some higher attaining students can write in formal academic style commenting on such texts as 'The Canterbury Tales' and 'Lord of the Flies'. They can make comparisons between texts and are able to draw on quotations to illustrate points. Low and middle attaining students write reasonably well although their work is generally briefer and some technical aspects of writing, for example paragraphing, are less

secure. Students in Year 10 have read and considered different styles of writing in the press in preparation for writing their own articles in the style of a tabloid or broadsheet paper. Some good poems written by Year 10 students based on 'The Seven Ages of Man' were on display in the classroom.

45. The school has an excellent and high profile initiative to promote reading in Year 7 involving all subject areas. Students have time for quiet reading once a week. Their reading is recorded and students are rewarded. Students generally think well of the new system and say it is making them read more. Standards of literacy are good and in some subjects attention is given to key words and specific terminology. In a history lesson, for instance, the teacher ensured that Year 8 students studying Oliver Cromwell knew and understood relevant vocabulary such as 'republic' and 'rebellion'. In modern languages students have a good level of awareness of grammar and are encouraged to use dictionaries. In science and geography students write accurately and in depth.

46. The quality of teaching varies considerably in this department. Overall, it is satisfactory in both Key Stages 3 and 4. A minority of teaching is very good. Some teaching is unsatisfactory. In the best lessons expectations are high and tasks are carefully planned to stimulate and challenge students and focus their thinking. In a Year 11 class, for example, the teacher had a very clear idea of key learning points and led discussion very skilfully so that students were able to express and develop a personal response. The lesson then moved on to a brief sequencing task to reinforce knowledge and understanding of the text. Students made very good progress in understanding character and theme in this lesson as a result of dynamic pace and interesting presentation of material. In the weakest lessons, however, students do not make satisfactory progress because teaching does not provide a clear focus and students are given too many open ended tasks without guidance or structure to help them. In these lessons too little is expected of students, the pace is very slow and sometimes students have difficulty in sustaining concentration. In most lessons, however, learning is satisfactory. Students are well motivated and interested even though tasks are not always presented with enthusiasm but there is sufficient planning to sustain the lesson and relationships in the classroom are good. Tasks are varied and in some lessons materials are adapted to suit the needs of students as in a low attaining Year 9 class on 'Macbeth'. This is not always the case, however, and in Year 10, for instance, some students found the text of a work sheet difficult to understand. In mixed attainment classes in Key Stage 3 there is little evidence of strategies to accommodate the needs of students at the extremes of ability and where teaching is not strong both high and low attaining students under-achieve. Teaching provides opportunities to discuss in pairs or groups and students respond well to this approach. They are able to work independently and co-operate well. The range of oral tasks, however, is narrow and some discussion is too dominated by the teacher as, for example in Year 9 where students would have benefited more from an opportunity to listen to the outcomes of other groups' discussion. Knowledge of the subject is satisfactory and sometimes very good. Marking is variable. The best marking provides encouragement, appropriate targets and responds to the needs of individual students but some is perfunctory, brief and not specific enough to be helpful.

47. Statutory requirements for the teaching of English are met but some of the current curricular arrangements are in need of further attention. At present the English department's approaches to students' reading partly replicate rather than support the whole school reading programme. They are not consistently used within the department. The department should ensure that its work builds on the experience students are given in Key Stage 2. A library induction programme runs in Year 7 and is continued in Year 8. Good efforts are now being made to improve and update departmental planning but new

schemes should take account of the range of ability and provide for developments in teaching and learning strategies as well as other important aspects of development such as the integration of ICT. Current arrangements for the organisation of teaching groups in Years 9 and 11 are unnecessarily complex and disruptive.

48. The department functions smoothly on a day to day basis. Teachers are loyal to the department and are well qualified and experienced. The head of department has been in post for many years. Nonetheless, there are some serious shortcomings in the leadership of this department. Although students' performance in SATs and in GCSE is monitored there is little evidence of departmental focus to address the marked under-performance of boys. A new policy to improve access to the GCSE English Literature examination in line with most other schools has been adopted but with little enthusiasm. Although the department is small the quality of teaching is not monitored and there is little indication that the development of teaching and learning is a central focus of leadership. Inconsistencies in approaches to assessment and marking have not been addressed.

49. Since the last inspection results in English at GCSE have improved although Literature results have fallen despite the selective entry policy. Standards at Key Stage 3 have declined against the national picture of improving standards. The quality of teaching and consequently of learning has declined since the last inspection. Some issues raised by the last report have not been satisfactorily addressed. These include access to ICT, aspects of teaching, assessment and resources.

DRAMA

50. All students in Key Stage 3 have a weekly period of drama. At Key Stage 4 drama is offered as an examination option and has been a popular choice. Since the last inspection performance at GCSE has been consistently high, the proportion of students entered is above national figures and students do very well at the highest grades. Attainment by the end of Year 9 is above average. Students are able to read fluently from a script, can work co-operatively and have a reasonable grasp of some dramatic conventions, for example, they understand and are able to use still imaging in their group work. They are able to evaluate each other's work. Standards by the end of Year 11 are above average. By this stage students have developed good skills in group work and are able to work independently. They respond well to opportunities to direct their own work. Students working on preparation for their final examination performance reached standards above average. They made good use of space and movement, empathised well in role and explored and developed their ideas thoroughly. SEN support is used well in drama.

51. Teaching of drama is good. Lessons are well planned and objectives made clear to students so that learning is coherent and progressive, as in Year 9 where dialogue was gradually phased into the lesson and the task demanded considerable intellectual effort from students. Learning is very strong where the lesson has good pace and expectations are high, as in Year 8 where knowledge and understanding of events and their consequences in 'Macbeth' are constantly reinforced through different tasks. Relationships are good and students respond well. They made good progress in developing listening skills and personal control.

52. Excellent planning and documentation support the subject. In Year 9 there are some very good cross-curricular links between history and drama based on the First World War – these are understood and appreciated by students.

MATHEMATICS

53. Standards in mathematics at Key Stage 3 are well above the national average and are above average for similar schools; the proportion of students achieving Level 5 in 1999 was well above average. The proportion reaching Level 6 or above was also well above average. At Key Stage 4 the GCSE results were well above national average with 72.4% of students gaining grades A* to C. The proportion gaining grades A* to G was 99.3% of the entry. Girls achieved, on average, better grades than boys with 82.4% of girls and 62.8% of boys achieving grades A* - C.

54. The difference in achievement between boys and girls is an issue that needs to be addressed although both boys and girls achieve standards above the national average. The school is currently experimenting in Year 7 with teaching strategies designed to offset the divide between boys' and girls' attainment. These strategies will need continuous monitoring and evaluation in order to judge their effectiveness.

55. The mathematics department has shown some improvement since the last inspection in 1996. The last inspection reported some poor teaching especially of older and younger students. Some students were under achieving. These problems have largely been rectified and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen during this inspection.

56. Teaching in mathematics is at least sound and often good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good with no evident weaknesses. At both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. Where lessons are tightly focused students respond well and learning is good or very good. Lessons generally start with a question and answer session where confident students are keen to demonstrate their knowledge and less assured students are often drawn into discussion. In the few lessons where the focus is less tight students sometimes lose concentration. However, the attitudes of most students towards the subject are very good and are a major strength within the department. Behaviour in class is generally very good, whether students are working by themselves, in small groups or as a whole class. Sound classroom management and good teacher-student rapport means that students respond positively to instructions. However, in a small number of lessons students were not challenged enough and some unsatisfactory attitudes were tolerated, especially from low attaining students. The policy of integrating SEN students into mainstream mathematics lessons and supporting them with extra staff is successful. Progress made by these students is good and they are made to feel comfortable in the classroom. When these students are withdrawn from the classroom good progress is made in very small groups.

57. The standards of work produced by students are very good across the age range. Classwork is of a good standard at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and shows clear evidence of good progress. Homework is clearly timetabled but varies from class to class in the amount set. There are some excellent examples of Key Stage 4 coursework. Most students, notably high attaining students, show considerable confidence in their work. Good behavioural standards promoted by staff result in an impressively neat and tidy area. Students respect the environment in which they are taught; there is little evidence of graffiti either on desks or on exercise books. Students are polite when spoken to and respond with maturity. Steady progress has been made in improving standards since the last inspection. Across the curriculum standards in numeracy are good with particular strengths

in graph work and calculations in science and the ability to use and interpret statistics in geography.

58. The provision for mathematics is adequate with three 50 minute lessons per week at Key Stage 3 and four 50 minute lessons per week at Key Stage 4. This gives sufficient time for teachers to complete syllabuses in time for examinations at the end of the key stages and also allows students in Year 11 to complete two pieces of coursework for GCSE assessment. The management of the department is cautious but competent. The mathematics department is small, with four full time members and one senior member of staff who teaches the subject on a part-time basis. The mathematics department works together well as a unit. All staff teach the full range of age and ability. The handbook is clear and well written and there is a relevant development plan. The scheme of work is very cumbersome, difficult to access and needs to be simplified.

59. The monitoring of progress is carried out by means of internal tests, classwork and homework. Tests together with teacher recommendations are used to determine the setting procedures which work adequately and classes do not contain inappropriately placed students. The policy of keeping low attaining sets small contributes positively towards the progress of low attaining students.

60. Information technology is used by the department to help to deliver the mathematics curriculum. There are some almost obsolete Archimedes machines within the department that see occasional use and each classroom has a stand-alone personal computer. However, the most effective use of ICT occurs when classes make use of the general ICT facilities that the school offers. The mathematics department aims to teach a minimum of one topic per class per year, making use of spreadsheet facilities to illustrate various aspects of the subject including percentage change, iteration, trial and improvement methods and aspects of graph plotting. Access to the school's ICT facilities has been hampered by a high demand from other subject areas. Provision of better facilities in the future will remedy this problem. The department does not currently own a set of graphical calculators but there is an effective strategy to address this.

61. Accommodation within the mathematics department is adequate. There is a pleasing variety of students' work and other mathematical material displayed on classroom walls. There is a problem with some classroom walls being thin curtains so that noise from one classroom disturbs other classes. Teaching resources, especially at Key Stage 4, are unsatisfactory with some textbooks that are obsolete and in a poor state of repair. Teachers do well to make the best use of these resources but the books should be replaced. The department should refresh its resources with appropriate and sufficient textbooks as a priority supported by a number of home produced and shared work sheets.

62. The monitoring and evaluation of staff within the department is unsatisfactory. A variety of teaching styles are used by teachers and best classroom practice should be disseminated across the department. This would involve both the monitoring of staff by the head of department and observation of experienced teachers' classrooms by other staff.

SCIENCE

63. The teaching of science is good and in a substantial number of lessons it is very good especially at Key Stage 4. Teachers have a very good command of their subject and they plan well, sequencing ideas clearly. In the most effective lessons questioning is used

particularly well to challenge and stimulate and expectations of students are very high. Progress is checked regularly during lessons and students' self-esteem is raised by providing regular encouragement. Instructions and explanations are given very clearly and this has a strong influence on students' success in the classroom. Measuring acceleration or carrying out reactions with metals is done very successfully because of the clarity of teachers' instructions. In the small number of less successful lessons expectations of the students were low and teaching did not provide challenge. These lessons were largely teacher led and did not offer opportunities for students to plan or make decisions. Standards of marking are variable and do not appear to have improved since the last inspection.

64. In lessons learning is good at Key Stage 3 and in many lessons it is very good. It is very good at Key Stage 4. Students successfully learn difficult concepts at Key Stage 3 when they calculate acceleration from graphs of speed and time and at Key Stage 4 they can use their understanding of the reactivity of metals or food webs to identify patterns and use the patterns to make predictions. Practical skills are very good and investigations are carried out successfully. Students with special educational needs do very well. They can investigate the action of an enzyme. They achieve a commendably high level in the National Curriculum. On the small number of occasions on which learning is less effective this is related to undemanding teaching. Overall a large number of students achieve high standards in science.

65. At the end of Key Stage 3 students' achievements in lessons and in tests are well above the national average and close to those for similar schools. Between 1996 and 1999 results improved in line with the national trend. In GCSE examinations and in their lessons at Key Stage 4 both boys and girls do very well in all of the science subjects. Results are well above average; they are better than those of similar schools and significantly better than the average for the school.

66. Standards of numeracy and literacy are high. Students readily adopt a numerical approach to their work in science. They carry out calculations about use of energy and draw graphs carefully and make accurate interpretations of them. Students are very articulate and many write fluently and accurately. They can explain their scientific understanding and express their ideas very clearly. There are a small number of students whose written work is poor and often incomplete and there is a need to provide them with structured written tasks during lessons or for completion later. Students need more opportunities to read about science and both reading and writing need to be used more often to consolidate learning.

67. The attitude of students to their work and their behaviour is good and is frequently very good. They listen carefully and are highly committed to their work and this is often sustained for long periods. They adopt a critical attitude and want to know how or why things happen. During a demonstration using radioactive sources they questioned unexpected readings and showed a great deal of interest in methods of measuring and absorbing radiation. Levels of motivation are high and students' capacity for independent work is very good. They carry out practical work carefully and safely and listen to and cooperate with each other very effectively. A small number of students, usually boys, lack self discipline and sometimes behave poorly, shouting answers and behaving immaturely.

68. The curriculum is well planned and many students clearly gain from the opportunity provided for many of them to study the separate sciences. Planning makes good provision for students of different abilities and it contains clear guidance about teaching the ideas and concepts of science. Investigations are included in many of the units of work usually as a complete activity. Planning does not identify occasions when it is appropriate to carry out parts of investigations nor is ICT planned or used sufficiently in the curriculum. This has not improved since the last inspection and students do not benefit from the opportunities to learn more effectively that are offered by these strategies. There is a need for the department to ensure that whole school policies on monitoring student progress and the development of teaching are fully integrated.

69. Since the last inspection good progress has been made in raising standards and improving teaching. Teaching is less directive and students are less dependent on their teachers. The pace and challenge of many lessons is very good and investigative work becomes more demanding from Key Stage 3 to 4. The accommodation for science has improved greatly.

ART

70. Standards of attainment in art of an above average proportion of students meet or exceed national expectations. Students' attainment when they enter the school is slightly above average. They make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 3, standards are above average. There is developing confidence in working from direct observation as in one Year 8 lesson where students made observational drawings of the school environment and in another where they were building up a relief collage of a still life. Students use their knowledge and understanding of art from different cultures and times to inform and extend their practical work as, for example, in a Year 9 project when Japanese art and artefacts were used as a stimulus for printmaking. Recent work indicates good progress in the representation of three dimensional form. Materials and tools are used well and work is well mounted and presented. Students evaluate their own and artists' work but writing is sometimes superficial and spelling careless.

71. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are very good. The proportion of students attaining the higher grades A*-C at GCSE has been significantly above the national average over the past three years. Girls' attainment was significantly above the national average for girls in 1997 and 1998. The attainment of boys was significantly above the average for boys nationally in all three years and was close to the average for girls in the most recent year. The work of students at this key stage indicates an unusual maturity for their age and a high level of personal response to set themes as for instance in a Year 10 lesson where one student was combining studies of the use of colour and black and white photographs to produce a strong and individual visual statement on the First World War. Technical skills are well developed at this stage and students show confidence in working on a large scale often introducing three-dimensional or relief elements into their work.

72. At both key stages, behaviour is good. Students work sensibly and safely in the art rooms and show respect for each other and for their work. Most display enjoyment in lessons and are able to talk about their work with confidence and with increasing maturity at Key Stage 4.

73. Consistently good teaching is a strength of the department. It was never less than satisfactory in the lessons observed and good in most. The response of students to teaching within the department as evidenced by their work indicates that, over time, much of the teaching is very good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject and an enthusiasm which is very effectively communicated to students. Expectations are high and both course content and lessons very well planned. Good use is made of a variety of teaching methods as, for example, in a Year 8 lesson where there was an effective introduction to a new topic on Aboriginal art, good use of questioning and discussion, a short written exercise to consolidate understanding and use of some simple stories while students began their practical work to support understanding. Much of the teaching observed was individually targeted particularly with students in Years 10 and 11 who were continuing with on-going projects or preparing for their forthcoming examination. Such teaching was always well focused, showing a clear understanding of individual progress, good use of discussion to ensure that work was constantly evaluated and modified and sound technical advice. Student management and relationships are always good. Lessons are very well organised as evidenced by the efficient and ordered way in which whole classes use often messy materials and processes to produce three dimensional models. There is good use of resources and productive use of time to ensure that all students make progress and their interest is maintained throughout lessons.

74. Good teaching promotes good learning outcomes. Students develop sound skills in the use of drawing and painting media. They respond well to the increasing amount of three-dimensional activity in Key Stage 3 where there was good acquisition and consolidation of new techniques in all the lessons observed. Students in all years are encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding of the work of artists from different times and cultures to inform and extend their own practical work. In a Year 9 lesson, preparatory studies indicated good experimental observational drawing and investigation of form and movement well related to research into the work of Giacommetti. By the time they reach Key Stage 4, research skills are very well developed. These contribute to the increasingly personal and independent response of students, as in a Year 10 lesson, where the individual study of the work of such artists as Picasso and Samuel Palmer helped students to understand and interpret the way in which complex themes and emotions can be conveyed in their own paintings. Older students show a good understanding of their progress and the ability to modify work in the light of their own evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. All students gain good understanding of process from initial studies, through experimentation into final studies and review of outcomes. The amount of work produced in lessons and over time is high and pace of working is good. All students achieve well in the light of their prior attainment and the emphasis on a personal response enables both the most gifted and those with SEN to make good progress in relation to their very individual needs.

75. The art curriculum is broad and balanced at Key Stage 3 with an increasing variety of media and techniques being introduced in the current year. The range is more limited at Key Stage 4 and consists mainly of drawing and painting with some use of three-dimensional work. The department is now in a good position to extend this as new skills are acquired in Key Stage 3. Across both key stages, however, there is no use of ICT, a weakness which should be addressed through an improvement in resources and development of all teachers' skills. Students' personal development is well extended in all art lessons and in extra-curricular activities. They are encouraged to reflect on their own and others' beliefs and ideas, to consider moral values in both their working practice and as expressed through art, and to show respect and support for others. Knowledge and understanding of different cultural traditions are very well addressed in all art projects and through gallery visits.

76. The department has developed very good procedures to monitor performance and to assess students' attainment and progress. All work is mounted on completion and retained across each key stage. Together with regular assessment, this provides students and teachers with an easily accessible review of work covered and enables them to jointly evaluate progress over time and set targets for improvement. It also provides the department with an on-going record of curriculum content to inform future planning.

77. The head of department provides very good leadership and a clear educational direction for the subject. Collaboration is good across the department, new staff are well supported and have, in their turn, introduced a wider range of expertise which is already being used to good effect. Although there is regular informal monitoring of teaching and learning, this needs to be better structured to extend good practice. Development planning also needs to be reviewed to ensure that there is a clear focus on improving teaching and learning and that whole school targets are properly addressed as, for example, in promoting and extending literacy and ICT skills.

78. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment have improved at Key Stage 3 and been well maintained at Key Stage 4. The quality of teaching and learning has improved at both key stages and is now good. There is better integration of theory and practical activity. Although student and teacher assessment of work is very good, the department could still usefully extend opportunities for group evaluation of artistic outcomes.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

79. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 indicated attainment was above the national average. Girls achieve higher levels than boys. At Key Stage 4, GCSE results overall are below average. Girls achieve above average results in food technology, graphic products and automotive studies. They achieve results that are significantly above average in resistant materials and textiles. Boys' GCSE results are below average in food technology, graphics and automotive studies. They are a little above average in resistant materials.

80. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards of attainment overall are above average with some variation across each of the DT subjects. Attainment is very good in food technology where Year 7 students are capable of working to a recipe when making shortbread biscuits. Attainment is also well above average in resistant materials where students are competent in designing promotional clocks. They are able to plan their designs to be shaped and manufactured in acrylic plastic, for example a clock in the shape of the Millennium Dome. There is a planned ICT programme within the DT rotation system and standards are very good in computer control. Students are confident and co-operate well in groups when planning a sequence of commands to control a traffic light system. Attainment is good in graphic products where students analysed and developed designs based on cereal box graphics. They are able to balance colours and shapes using lettering styles. Attainment is average in textiles where resources limit the range of fabric printing that can take place. At Key Stage 4 standards of attainment overall are mainly above average. They are very good in food technology where students have a good work ethic and they prepare ingredients in advance of the lesson and plan their time efficiently. In a Year 11 class they are able to plan a recipe, evaluate the product and modify ingredients to improve flavour, texture and presentation. Standards are well above average in resistant materials where

Year 10 students designed a table light. Designs show flair and imagination and students are knowledgeable in the understanding of techniques such as forming wood into elegantly curved shapes to support their lights. In graphics the attainment of boys is average and girls' attainment is better, largely due to girls having better research techniques and a more positive attitude towards work. The quality of achievement by SEN students is very good in all lessons, particularly in food technology, where Year 11 students are confident and the quality of their work is good, with one student achieving above the national average. In automotive studies ten out of the twelve students are on the SEN register, yet they are still achieving results at GCSE in line with the national average.

81. At the time of the last inspection GCSE results were well above the national average and higher than those achieved within the department in 1999. Boys' results are now well below the national average in all DT subjects other than resistant materials. There is an improvement, particularly in food studies where standards are now very good and results are better than last year. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Permanent appointments of staff in food subjects have contributed to this improvement. At the last inspection a lack of challenge and the pace of some lessons was criticised. This has been addressed in the majority of lessons, although there is still a need to improve the pace of boys' work particularly in Key Stage 4 graphic products. There has been a major improvement in marking and assessment techniques since the previous report. This is now much improved and students are kept fully informed of their strengths, weaknesses and progress. Accommodation remains a serious weakness. Benches and furniture are old and dilapidated, graphics and resistant materials bases are badly disorganised and there are a number of health and safety concerns, for example dust extraction for the wood lathe in one of the resistant materials workshops and inadequate fume extraction in another. An excess of furniture in the workshop used for heat treatment processes results in combustible materials closely sited to the brazing hearths. The department has developed a positive development plan for curriculum improvements which is costed appropriately.

82. The standard of teaching is mainly good. Teachers are well qualified and employ a range of strategies to promote and encourage good learning skills. At Key Stage 3 good practice was observed in a Year 7 food technology lesson where the teacher used well-considered questioning techniques. Students were asked to explain how shortbread biscuits got their name. Questioning was also used to encourage students to be reflective about mixing techniques and what effect they have upon the quality of the finished product. These strategies improved students' attention to the lesson and provided a good focus for the lesson. Teaching develops good teamwork skills as in a Year 9 computer control lesson where students worked effectively in groups and in a Year 9 food technology lesson where students learned to share work areas and ovens safely. Marking and assessment procedures are effective and students have assessment sheets attached to their work folders. These are used to highlight students' strengths and weaknesses and guide students in improving the quality of their work. Assessment is a strength at Key Stage 4, where it is matched to GCSE examination grades. Teachers' comments and marking procedures are regularly updated and there is good oral assessment in most classes; for example, in a Year 11 food technology class the teacher wrote an assessment on every student during the course of the lesson and used this to identify targets for future improvement in discussion. Good relationships make a positive contribution to learning, teachers know the students well and use this knowledge when setting learning objectives. This is evident in automotive studies where students are set tasks in line with their abilities. The teacher is a car enthusiast and this has a positive and marked effect on students' attitudes towards the subject and their subsequent attainment in GCSE examinations. Teachers give freely of their time in supporting extra-curricular activities, such as the 'Pedal

Power' competition. There is insufficient technician support in both food and resistant materials.

GEOGRAPHY

83. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is well above the national expectation. When teachers assessed students' work in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 3, results indicated that students achieved levels well above the national average, and girls achieved higher levels than boys. Results in GCSE were well above the national average and show an improvement since 1997, particularly at the higher levels. At GCSE students achieve standards broadly in line with those in other subjects in the school. The department has a clear strategy to improve standards still further.

84. Students have a good knowledge of how landscapes are formed, what places are like, and they know the local area well. In one lesson, for example, students in Year 7 were using good knowledge of the plans for a major new residential development to contribute to a purposeful discussion of its likely effects on the local environment. Knowledge of geographical terms is good and the higher attaining students use them effectively in written and oral work. At Key Stage 4 students' knowledge of where places are is unsatisfactory. During the GCSE course students carry out an extended study of a subject of their choice, and use their very good understanding of geography to investigate a topical issue or answer a geographical question. They show very good understanding of the method of geographical enquiry, competently collect and analyse information, and draw appropriate conclusions.

85. Students have very good skills in extracting and using information from a wide range of resource material, including aerial photographs, textbooks and maps. They have good oral skills. In one lesson, for instance, students in Year 8 were studying the impact of tourism in Kenya. Following good oral presentations from all the students in groups, the class opened a general discussion to which the majority of students contributed. They show a good understanding of the topic, and explain their ideas fluently, clearly, confidently, with good use of basic geographical terms. Written work is of good quality and extended writing is well structured and contains few spelling errors. Students use statistics with confidence and can construct and interpret a wide range of graphs effectively.

86. The quality of teaching is good overall, and is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the local area, particularly at Key Stage 4, and provide clear, well-structured explanations, and up to date information. Lessons start briskly and proceed smoothly as they are always well prepared and organised. Very well planned and carefully structured lessons with a good variety of activities, often including paired or group work, proceed at a good pace, enabling students to make good progress. In one lesson, for example, students in Year 10 made very good progress in studying migration. Following a brisk start and a purposeful review of previous work, students worked in pairs to use their knowledge to analyse the population structure of four contrasting regions. They suggested the reasons for the movement of people which produced the patterns they described. After discussing their findings, the lesson continued at a good pace as the students studied a well chosen example of a personal experience of migration. They used good note taking skills to extend their understanding by extracting relevant information. They recorded the information on an imaginative diagram and a swift review effectively concluded the lesson.

87. Teachers' relationships with students are good creating a working atmosphere which allows students to work effectively. Students with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language, make good progress because work is well matched to their individual needs, and there is good support in the classroom. Higher attaining students lack a similar measure of individual support. Marking is up to date, consistent, and in line with departmental policy, but often lacks thorough comment on how the work might be improved in the future. Homework is set regularly and is purposeful.

88. Students learn well overall. They make good gains in acquiring knowledge and understanding when lessons are planned with a variety of activities, proceed at a good pace and students are expected to produce their best work. Students are attentive, listen carefully, and follow instructions accurately. They settle to work quickly and work steadily showing good perseverance with challenging pieces of work, and maintaining focus and concentration. The majority are confident and willing to answer and ask questions, and all are fully involved in the lesson.

89. Students have a very positive attitude to the subject and are interested in the work particularly at Key Stage 4. They take care to present their work neatly and maintain books and files in very good order. When asked to work in groups they co-operate effectively with each other, listen to the point of view of others, and reach joint conclusions amicably. Students are well behaved.

90. The scheme of work at both key stages is clear and well constructed, and meets statutory requirements. The use of ICT in the subject is sound and there is a well documented programme, which is not fully implemented due to difficulties of access to computers. A good programme of fieldwork provides effective support for GCSE coursework. Good parental involvement in accompanying fieldwork visits is valued by staff. Procedures for assessment and recording students' work are good, and are used to support individual students. Curriculum planning is generally satisfactory.

91. Leadership of the department is good. A clear direction is given to the subject, GCSE results are improving steadily, and day to day organisation is good. There is no formal monitoring of the work of the department. Staff are experienced and work effectively as a committed team. Accommodation for teaching the subject is sound although two classrooms used are some distance from the main teaching bases. The two main geography rooms are of good quality with good displays of students' work and activities which enhance the environment and provide a clear identity for the area. Resources are good. The department responded very well to the previous report, and is in a good position to make still further improvements.

HISTORY

92. Standards of both attainment and progress in history are good throughout the school and across the ability range. Students with special needs are progressing as well as others. Gifted students have good opportunities and progress well. At the key ages of fourteen and sixteen there are good standards, and clear improvement since the last inspection. This is clear both from the evidence of GCSE results and teacher assessments, and from observation of lessons. In 1998 and 1999 GCSE results were well above the national average in terms of grades A* to C. This was an improvement from 1997 and from the last inspection. Results for girls were outstanding. Although boys do well in relation to national standards, there is a significant gap between the performance of

boys and girls. This is also apparent in the 1999 teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3. The number of students reaching the higher levels of six and seven is above the national average, but boys are significantly behind girls.

93. In lessons students are challenged well and pushed to think clearly. In several lessons they were evaluating hypotheses and finding relevant evidence to support their judgement. In Year 9 lessons where students were preparing for a field trip to the Somme Battlefield the next week, the hypotheses related to the trauma of trench warfare and judgement on General Haig as a commander. They were working with photographs and maps, much primary and secondary written source material, and were handling historical artefacts such as helmets and gas-masks. Good resources are a feature of all lessons and stimulate some high quality work. Fieldwork is also a notable feature of studies in both key stages. Students have a chronological overview of history, and detailed knowledge and understanding of the periods relating to their 'studies in depth'. Some outstanding studies on the 'Defeat of the Spanish Armada' were seen in Year 8 work. There is imaginative and empathetic understanding too. Year 7 students were able to write with some appropriate insights on being 'Edgar the Housecarl' standing with King Harold at the Battle of Hastings.

94. Students preparing for GCSE provided some high quality work. Year 10 students had been to Winchester Cathedral the week before inspection. They were reviewing what they had learned and planning their local studies coursework. They have a sound chronological grasp of when the cathedral was built, an aesthetic appreciation of its architecture and of the Winchester Bible. Year 11 students conducted a debate on whether Queen Elizabeth I was a successful queen as a revision exercise. The standard was excellent in a number of ways. There was a level of detailed knowledge and understanding more appropriate to Post 16 studies. The students were very confident and fluent and proceedings were very well chaired. The students followed the arguments carefully and were able to offer relevant points of information including the views of an important historian. Both boys and girls participated on equal terms. This group demonstrated their very good progress across the two years of GCSE.

95. The behaviour and attitudes of students to their studies is a strength. In no lesson was progress held back by poor behaviour. Generally students listen well, take care with their work and are well motivated to succeed. They are confident orally and work sensibly and effectively in pairs or groups.

96. There are good standards in the GCSE humanities course. The last results were in 1998 and although numbers were small, most achieved a grade better than had been predicted. In lessons students progress well in relation to their abilities and their oral confidence in offering sustained answers is good.

97. There is a clear link between the good quality of the teaching in both history and humanities lessons and the improvement in learning since the last inspection. Most teaching is good, and the teaching that enabled the Year 11 debate was excellent. Much work has been done since the last inspection to improve teaching. Lessons are clearly focused on specific key elements of National Curriculum history. One Year 7 lesson was based on a picture of Hereward the Wake which was used well to teach basic extrapolation skills and to bring in aspects of the Norman Conquest. The level of challenge is appropriate in all lessons. Much work has gone into differentiation for different levels of ability and this is evident. Subject knowledge is very good, lessons are carefully planned and well organised. Attention is given to literacy skills and the specific words needed to communicate a topic effectively in writing were clearly taught - for example, 'rebellion', 'republic' and 'regal' were among those taught in a Year 8 lesson on Oliver Cromwell.

Fieldwork is a particular strength that enriches and enlivens the programme of study in all years and helps students to enjoy their history. Cross-curricular links are being developed well. Teachers have good knowledge of the examination board's requirements and students are well prepared in humanities. Resources are good in history and humanities. Books are of good quality, current and students may take them home. There are also well produced in-house resources and film material is used judiciously. ICT skills are used for particular units of work and students are encouraged to use their ICT skills in their work.

98. Leadership of the subject is good and there is evidence of much hard work to bring improvement in both teaching and learning. There is a strong team of teachers of history and humanities. Assessment schemes have developed well and are thorough. The use of data to analyse performance, monitor students' progress and to set targets should be developed. Attention should be given to the gender gap in performance in line with whole school initiatives. History is making a strong contribution to the moral and cultural development of the students.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

99. At the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessed National Curriculum levels are above the national average. Girls perform much better than the boys and attain a higher National Curriculum level overall. GCSE results have remained above the national average since the last inspection. Although boys' results were below average in 1999, girls' results remained significantly above average.

100. At Key Stage 3 standards of attainment are very good. Year 7 students are able to enter data into a spreadsheet and higher attaining students can use a formula to work out equations. The Key Stage 3 course provides a broad and challenging programme, including computer control. Year 9 students are confident in the use of Co-Co software and are able to compile a sequence of commands to control a traffic light system. Cross-curricular applications are less well developed and limited resourcing has restricted school based ICT. Statutory requirements are met but subjects should build upon the skills achieved in the discrete course. Year 7 students are able to work out square and cube numbers on a spreadsheet in mathematics and a number of students use word processing and graphic techniques in the presentation of project work. The DT department is responsible for the delivery of ICT at Key Stage 3 and also use ICT skills within the graphic products course. Year 9 students develop skills in computer graphics and can print out designs using a plotter.

101. At Key Stage 4, the GCSE information technology groups' standards of attainment are well above the national average. The revised option system has resulted in an increase in the number of students taking the course and an improvement in standards. In a Year 10 class, students have a good knowledge of Local Area Networks and Wide Area Networks and understand the difference between the systems. In Year 11, GCSE students are competent users of ICT, have good keyboard skills and are able to work independently, as in a class where they used Power Point software to present a sequence of graphic images in a project titled 'Too Hot to Handle'. SEN students are well integrated into classes and achieve very good standards, one SEN student was observed researching volcanoes for others in the group using the Internet.

102. Although statutory requirements are met and there is some use of ICT in all subjects, it is weak compared with other schools. There is some use in history, where students regularly word process their work and research projects using CD ROM and Internet facilities, but the lack of suitable equipment has meant that datalogging cannot take place in science. Very good use of ICT is observed in business studies, where students use Excel spreadsheets when constructing data related to a small business project. Students' folders show that many have access to computers at home and use them to produce work of a good standard.

103. There has been very good progress since the last inspection. Key Stage 3 students, insufficiently skilled to work independently at the last inspection, are now confident in their use of computers. They investigate alternatives and are capable of making choices. The quality of learning is now very good. The most significant improvement is in the quality of teaching in discrete ICT which is now very good.

104. The standard of teaching at Key Stage 3 is very good. Teachers are well qualified and provide a broad range of opportunities. Basic skills are well taught and result in students developing in confidence as they progress through the key stage. The course is taught by DT teachers through a module within its roundabout system. This arrangement limits time for DT and deprives students of the ICT co-ordinator during the foundation course. The more significant weakness is in a lack of regular use through cross-curricular applications, although a recent upgrading of equipment should resolve this problem. Teachers are provided with in-service during a lunchtime period organised by the ICT co-ordinator and are keen to develop their ICT skills. Where resources are available ICT is integrated within lessons and students' learning is improved, for example, in mathematics where Year 8 students learn how to determine formulae for percentage calculations using subject based computers. At Key Stage 4 the standard of teaching in GCSE information technology is mainly very good and sometimes outstanding. It is very good, for example, in a Year 11 class where students are taught how to manipulate downloaded and clip art images into a sequence. In one lesson, the introduction by the teacher was clear and succinct and there was a brief review of previous learning prior to the introduction of new learning. Students, including a group of SEN students, fully understood how to access information and change scale, colour and content of the graphic images to suit the purpose of the project. Students are highly motivated and receive good one to one support during the lesson. Assessment procedures are excellent and students are fully aware of how well they are progressing and how to improve their grades. The ICT co-ordinator is responsible for the delivery of business studies where teaching, as in a Year 10 class, was outstanding. The class was organised into teams to run a small bakery and set the task of baking and marketing cakes. Excellent questioning of the groups resulted in a challenging and rewarding lesson. Discussion was of high quality, pace was good and objectives, outlined at the beginning, were fully met. The ICT department has some ICT support which is of a good standard, but is mainly employed in processing the school's marking and assessment procedures. There is no full time technician support.

105. Recent government funding has resulted in the department acquiring suitably powerful and appropriate computers. These are already used effectively within the ICT department and there is need to re-locate the existing Archimedes computers to subject bases. There is, however, a lack of suitable scanners, digital cameras and Computer Aided Design and manufacturing equipment. A majority of subjects have identified ICT as a priority area for in-service development. However, the timetable commitment of the co-ordinator does not allow time to provide in class support for other teachers.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

106. By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of students are obtaining National Curriculum levels which are above average. Students with special educational needs attain at least expected levels but more frequently above. In both French and German a particular strength is oral work where pronunciation is generally accurate and students use common phrases fluently. In the classroom they use the foreign language to ask for equipment and to apologise for being late. Listening skills are also good so that teachers can use the foreign language for the larger part of every lesson. Written work is generally accurate and well presented. Students use dictionaries to support their learning and there is evidence of the use of a wide range of vocabulary and structures. Students understand grammar concepts and terms. In Year 9 the department is trialing teaching boys and girls in discrete groups. Both boys and girls like the arrangement and teachers note more active participation from the girls and good work application from the boys. By the end of Key Stage 4 students across the ability range make good progress and attainment is higher than national levels. Oral and listening skills are good. Students have good recall of vocabulary and structures to enable them to communicate easily in several everyday situations. There is much good written work in examination folios with evidence of extended writing and re-drafting skills.

107. In the 1999 GCSE examinations the percentage of students in both French and German with grades A*-C was well above national averages. In both languages both boys and girls achieved the highest percentage of good grades to date. With a high level of entry all students gained a grade E or better. All those students entered for both languages got a good grade. The results of both boys and girls compare well with most other subjects both in the school and nationally. These results repeat and are slightly better than the broad pattern of attainment over the past three years.

108. The teaching of languages is good and sometimes very good. Teachers have good language competence and challenge the students by using French and German almost exclusively in lessons. This is a major factor in the high attainment levels in speaking and listening skills. Lessons are well prepared to take account of students' abilities. Activities are well sequenced, there is good variety in presentation and teachers challenge by the pace of the lessons. Teachers have good strategies for prompt, purposeful starts to lessons. Expectations are clear in the demand for correct pronunciation and full-sentence answers, the insistence on dictionary use for unknown words and on occasion through differentiated homework. Homework is regularly set and marked, often with supportive comments in line with the department's ethos of praise and reward. However, opportunities are not taken to demand correction, ask for lengthier work from higher attaining students or to set targets. Relationships with students are good and are a major factor in the positive attitudes that students have to the subject.

109. Students' behaviour and attitudes are good and often very good. They arrive punctually to lessons, are properly equipped and settle quickly to work. Many students have bought their own dictionaries. Classroom expectations are clearly understood and accepted. Exercise books are well kept and presentation is neat. Lessons are typified by a good working atmosphere with students keeping on task throughout. Students of all ages

participate readily in oral work and co-operate well when working in pairs, offering support to each other. Relationships amongst students are good and mutually supportive.

110. Members of the department share a clear common purpose and work as a team. A notable feature of meetings is that concern for development takes equal place with routine organisational matters. The department is well led by a committed and energetic head of department who is very well supported by the two post holders. Documentation is good and the department development plan has clear targets. It includes the agreed need to develop the use of computer technology. Structured reading skills are underdeveloped but the issue is being addressed. Regular standardised assessment of students takes place and is built into the schemes of work to assess National Curriculum levels. Good records are kept. Assessment data is under-used to identify under achievement or for subject specific target setting. There is a thorough analysis of examination results which has resulted in a change of the written element to be used in the future. The subject has recognised status in the curriculum and almost all students study two languages at Key Stage 3. Annual exchanges with Germany and trips to France are well established. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained and there has been progress in improving student participation. The department has the staff strength and commitment to address these issues and sustain high standards.

MUSIC

111. All students taking GCSE music in 1999 achieved A* - C grades. This is well above the national average of 66.1% for all schools. Both boys and girls achieve a better result in music than the average results for all other subjects. Results in 1999 were better than in the previous two years and the average points score shows a rising trend. The average points score for boys is slightly but consistently better than girls over the last three years.

112. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is average overall. This is generally borne out by teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3. In Attainment Target 1, performing skills are average while those for composition are a little below average. The majority of students in all three years can perform music with reasonable success, maintaining a pulse and sense of ensemble when playing with others. Several students use their own instruments in lessons. Generally, composing skills at this stage are underdeveloped and there are several reasons for this. The fifty minute lesson, criticised at the last inspection, is still insufficient to develop these skills adequately, and carry them forward to the next lesson. Classes are too large for regular individual feedback on work although some progress has been made with the use of ICT. Although two computers have been purchased since the last inspection there is insufficient space for any more. More computers would allow students at this key stage to develop compositions of greater complexity by listening and amending pieces immediately. There is still a lack of space for small group work and this often means many students have to work in the main classroom. This does not enable sensitive treatment of timbre, volume and ensemble, and the combined sound can become stressful. In Attainment Target 2 listening and appraising skills are above average because they are rehearsed regularly as a class in every lesson, and students' listening is well focused by the teacher both before and during the task. Most listening tasks are challenging and are always related to the practical work that precedes or follows. Year 7 successfully recognize the variation techniques used in their listening tasks, and Year 8 recognize the timbres of Indian classical instruments. Year 9 students listen and respond

to recordings of Reggae, demonstrating a good level of knowledge about the style. In all years many use musical terminology correctly and confidently to describe their listening.

113. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is well above average. Some of the most able students musically, many of whom learn to play an instrument in school, opt to do the subject at this level. As a result performance is strong. Students in Years 10 and 11 write compositions that are extended pieces of music showing individuality. They use a good range of compositional techniques and styles and a few regularly use computers to aid composition. They receive regular and sound feedback. At the conclusion of each composition assignment they receive an excellent assessment cover sheet which provides realistic but challenging targets for future compositions. It enables them to become familiar with the grading criteria for the examination and gives them good knowledge about their own learning. Students find these extremely valuable and would benefit from similar assessment feedback for their performance. Listening skills are strong because they are rehearsed regularly and sound is constantly linked to appropriately written music and to its historical background.

114. Teaching is good overall and, as a result, learning is also good. At Key Stage 3 it is never less than satisfactory and at Key Stage 4 it has many very good features. Teachers have good understanding and knowledge of their subject which they pass on effectively to students. The broad and interesting curriculum is very well planned. It enables students to achieve productively using considerable mental and creative effort through the use of clear and challenging task and time targets, as in a Year 8 lesson on Indian music and a Year 9 lesson on Reggae. Teachers use methods that are well targeted at individual students' needs. These are especially good when the teacher structures the learning for low attaining students to enable them to achieve small and realistic but challenging tasks. Students are managed skilfully, lessons are orderly and students behave very well. Books are marked regularly and students' progress is well monitored. Teachers assess students' practical achievements at the end of each unit of work but there are few opportunities to reflect on work achieved in the lesson. As a result students at Key Stage 3 do not know what is required of them to complete work at the end of the key stage. Homework is regularly and appropriately set. Lessons are available in most instruments and in singing. Teaching is good in these lessons and enhances the provision for music considerably.

115. Attitudes to music are very good. Students are enthusiastic, interested and involved in the activities in the classroom and in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them. They behave very well throughout lessons, acting responsibly in groups and when handling and working with school instruments. They enjoy good relationships with their teacher whom they respect. Students also have great respect for each other.

116. Since the last inspection further improvements include a wider range of music from around the world in schemes of work. There are now more instruments available for use during the lessons and more recording facilities to record students' music making. Lack of time, large classes, lack of space for group work and for housing more computers are having a negative impact on standards at Key Stage 3, and have still to be satisfactorily addressed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. Overall standards of attainment are above national expected levels and students make satisfactory progress. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards are broadly average.

General levels of fitness are good although the range of skills seen is variable. For example, in a health related fitness (HRF) group, almost all girls showed clear understanding of the components of fitness and how to develop personal fitness levels to sustain them. In hockey skills are at expected levels although they are seriously affected by the poor quality grass surface. The range of attainment for boys is broader, although in swimming those in the more advanced group are capable of good technique in a range of strokes and all demonstrate considerable confidence in the pool. Standards in Key Stage 3 are highest where the work is well planned and the activities are well organised with clear learning objectives and an appropriate degree of challenge. Students respond positively and work well together in a constant effort to improve. In netball, in Year 8, tasks are well devised with the clear purpose of developing passing and moving skills. The girls know exactly what to do in order to improve and the pace of the activity is vigorous and challenging.

118. In most activities at the end of Key Stage 4 standards of attainment are above average. Levels of personal fitness are above average overall, skills in a range of games are well developed and both girls and boys in an aerobic exercise group were well able to follow the routines and rhythms devised for them by their peers. In GCSE classes work in folders is accurate and up to date in most cases. Over the last four years the examination results show an upward trend and the most recent were quite exceptional with 93% of candidates reaching higher grades, well above the school and national averages. The most able sports players do well beyond the school representing the district and the county and school teams have a good record of success in local competitions in a wide range of activities.

119. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, is often good and sometimes very good. The overall quality is good. Where teachers set clear and detailed learning objectives students know exactly what to do in order to make progress. Consequently when the objectives are met new targets can be set and progress can be closely monitored by the teachers or in some cases by partners. Good evidence of these qualities was seen in Year 8 and Year 9 swimming. This does not occur in all lessons and inconsistency of approach leads to some degree of variability in teaching standards. Occasionally insufficient attention is given to appropriately challenging tasks for all learners and this can lead to some disaffection. Overall the response of students is positive though attention should be given to the increasing numbers of students who do not participate as regularly as required.

120. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements and satisfactory arrangements for assessment are in place. A popular and successful GCSE course is offered in Key Stage 4. Overall the curriculum is games dominated although this is clearly a response that maximises the benefits of the specialist accommodation provided by the sports complex. The department's intentions to move forward by developing further the arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting are appropriate. More detailed learning objectives will give clearer information on progress for parents. The data collected will enable more informed development planning and provide some evaluation of teaching strengths. The head of department leads his team of teachers most effectively. Day-to-day organisation is good with sound well-documented plans and policies. The team of specialist teachers together with one or two non-specialists provide a wide and popular range of extra-curricular sports and games.

121. Since the last inspections improvements have been made. There is now no evidence of under-achievement within the department and overall standards of attainment are above average. The quality of teaching has been improved considerably although work is still needed to ensure challenge in all lessons. By giving more attention to establishing

detailed learning objectives, further improvement can still be made. The assessment arrangements are still developing within Key Stage 3 and this should be seen as an important development target for the department.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

122. This is a strong department working effectively within serious constraints that affect attainment. One person provides subject leadership and all the teaching for the subject, meeting around five hundred different students each week. The key issue of shortage of time for the subject has not been addressed since the last inspection and consequently statutory requirements for RE are still not met at Key Stage 4. There is also some shortage of time in Years 7 to 9. Nevertheless, with significantly less time than that recommended by the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus, standards at the age of fourteen are good, and there is good progress across the key stage. There is insufficient evidence to judge attainment at the end of Key Stage 4. There is no GCSE group at present although one has been run after school as a voluntary activity in recent years.

123. In the first three years students investigate and learn the salient features of Christianity and other world religions, particularly Judaism, Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism. Their learning is good. Orally students are fluent and can communicate their ideas well. Students with special needs progress as well as others and gifted students benefit from open ended tasks that allow them to extend their work. Students' learning is strong in relation to attainment target one "exploring and responding to human experience". This is closely related to spiritual and moral development and the teaching they receive makes strong provision for this and is a powerful contribution to their personal development. Students learn to be thoughtful, and to respect the beliefs and feelings of others who are different from themselves.

124. In a Year 9 lesson students learnt about 'Right Awareness', the final stage of the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism. This was imaginatively taught to allow them to consider their own awareness and aspirations for future life. At the end of the lesson they were able to complete the statement 'Today I became aware that...' in ways that showed good levels of perception and maturity. Their learning incorporates the use of ICT skills satisfactorily. Folders of work in the first three years provide ample evidence of good attainment in written work. Much attention has been given recently to assessment in terms of levels against the attainment targets of the local syllabus and this is an important improvement.

125. In Years 10 and 11 a unit of RE is included in the programme for PSHRE, but this falls far short of the locally agreed syllabus requirements for this age that students should follow an accredited course. Nevertheless in one lesson of the Year 11 RE module on 'Bereavement' seen during inspection week, some very worthwhile learning was taking place. The rationale for this module is that death is 'the final taboo' subject in our society, but because it is an inevitable part of life students should have some insight into coping with it. The lesson was an effective catalyst for opening up some of the 'ultimate questions' of life, a required theme from the Agreed Syllabus. Some film material prompted thought, and there was both useful discussion and reflection. The work is largely done through discussion because there is little time for formal writing.

126. In all the lessons seen students behaved well, listened well and worked with interest. They worked effectively together when paired or group activities were set up and they worked quietly when asked to think about a topic on their own. They have learnt that in

this subject, when music is played it is a time for quiet reflection and they respond very well to this.

127. The teaching of RE is very good and subject knowledge is a particular strength. Teaching includes a wealth of stories and anecdotal material to make learning points and enliven lessons. Lessons are planned and timed well. Management and relations with students are good. Imaginative and creative strategies are used to engage and involve students and to get them to relate what they learn to their own experience of life. In a Year 7 lesson two boys were busy preparing to present a parable of Jesus to the class in a modern way. In their version of the parable of the unjust steward, he had become a football club manager and God was the Football Association. All lessons were well resourced although there are few books in the department. The school library is also short of books for RE. An impressive collection of artefacts has been made a priority in the department and these are used effectively. Good quality in-house worksheets are produced and the Internet is used resourcefully for teaching materials. The curriculum is enriched by special cross- curricular events such as the annual 'Difference Day' which focuses on the Holocaust in conjunction with history and other departments. Some of the students' work following this day was displayed in a local synagogue.