

INSPECTION REPORT

KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104703

Headteacher: Mr J Smartt

Reporting inspector: B. A. Jones
18462

Dates of inspection: 19th – 23rd March 2001

Inspection number: 187134

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Childwall Road
Liverpool

Postcode: L15 6UZ

Telephone number: 0151 722 7496

Fax number: 0151 738 0259

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Max Steinberg OBE

Date of previous inspection: February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18462	B. Jones	Registered inspector		Information about the school. The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9132	J. Godfrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12658	M. R. Beardsley	Team inspector	English. Drama. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	
22977	S. Caldecott	Team inspector	Physical education.	
22695	R. Cardinal	Team inspector	History.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
9532	E. Charlesworth	Team inspector	Music.	
11838	D. Cronin	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages.	
19991	P. Devereux	Team inspector	Geography.	
21981	A. McDermott	Team inspector	Science.	
17868	E. Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art and design. Equal opportunities.	

15678	J. Radford	Team inspector	Religious education. Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	
2079	T. Slack	Team inspector	Design technology. Information and communication technology.	
10270	S. Teacher	Team inspector	Hebrew studies.	
8341	W. Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics.	

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services
15, The Birches
Bramhope
Leeds
LS16 9DP

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 11
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12 - 15
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	16 - 19
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	19 - 23
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	23 - 24
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	24 - 25
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25 - 28
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	29
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	30 - 34
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	35 - 64

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

King David High School is an 11-18 mixed school situated around three miles from Liverpool city centre. It has 596 pupils on roll, with significantly more girls than boys. There are 137 students in the sixth form. It is the only secondary Jewish Foundation School in the area and serves nearly all the Jewish pupils of secondary age in the Liverpool community. It draws in other Jewish pupils, in the main from the Wirral, Southport and Crosby areas. The non-Jewish pupils represent around 70 per cent of the school's population and come mainly from the school's surrounding areas of Childwall, Woolton, Gateacre and Aigburth. The school is popular and consistently over-subscribed. Up to 15 pupils each year are admitted on their musical potential and live in districts throughout the city. Pupils are drawn from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds and 6.1 per cent are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Around six per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage in learning English. Pupils entering the school are of the full range of ability. Levels of attainment on entry have risen in the past two years and are now above average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is nearly 19 per cent which is broadly in line with the national average and 0.4 per cent of pupils at the school have statements of special educational need which is well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

King David is a very effective school, which provides very good value for money. The leadership of the headteacher, senior staff and governing body is sound. They are very successful in creating a Jewish ethos, which enables all pupils to build a strong sense of their own identity and a tolerance and respect for the Jewish faith. The teaching is good and is effective in helping pupils to make very good progress and achieve standards that are well above average. The cost effectiveness of provision in the sixth form is good. The school is well organised and ensures a satisfactory level of care for its pupils.

What the school does well

1. Pupils and students make very good progress. They attain high standards in their work and examination results are well above average.
2. The school successfully promotes very good attitudes among pupils towards their work and the life of the school in general, which are reflected in high levels of attainment.
3. It creates an ethos characterised by a commitment from pupils to produce their best efforts in all aspects of their schoolwork.
4. The quality of teaching is good overall. A significant amount of the teaching is very good and some is excellent.
5. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils take responsibility very well, form very good relationships and behave very well.
6. There is a good curriculum for students in the sixth form that successfully meets their needs and aspirations.
7. The school successfully promotes very good links with parents. This encourages their positive contribution to pupils' learning at home and at school.

What could be improved

1. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school.
2. The quality of teaching and learning in music.
3. The school's systems for monitoring and evaluating its work.
4. The quality of annual reports of pupils' progress to parents.
5. The setting of targets for further improvement in Years 7 to 11.
6. Addressing areas in the school's work where statutory requirements are not fully met.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in February 1996, the overall level of improvement has been good and the school has good capacity and the commitment to improve further. The results and standards of pupils in Years 7 to 11 have been maintained at a level well above the national average. GCE A-level results have improved significantly and are well above the national average. The quality of teaching has improved. The school has made a satisfactory response to the main issues identified in the last report. However, developments to systematically monitor and evaluate the school's work are not yet fully established and the school still does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A*
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A	

Key

Very high compared to average A*

Well above average A

Above average B

Average C

Below average D

Well below average E

At the end of Year 9, pupils obtained results in the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests that were well above the national average and very high compared with those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The results have been maintained at a level consistently well above the national average. Current standards of work in Year 9 are broadly in line with results gained in the national tests at age 14. Pupils make very good progress through Years 7 to 9 and achieve very well in relation to their levels of attainment on entry to the school.

Pupils continue to make very good progress through Years 10 and 11. In the Year 2000 GCSE examinations, results were well above the national average and were in the top five per cent compared with those of similar schools. Present standards in Years 10 and 11

reflect these results and are well above average. The school is not complacent and works hard to maintain its good standards. However, the targets set by the school last year were not appropriate and not challenging enough in the context of GCSE performances in recent years. Students make very good progress in their GCE A-level courses. In 2000, their results were well above the national average, maintaining a similar high standard established over the past four years. Students taking vocational courses obtain results that compare very well with the national average in the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) award. Levels of attainment on GCE A-level courses are well above the national average in English, science, modern foreign languages, history and art and design. In mathematics, geography and business studies, standards are above average and in other subjects students' work is broadly in line with the average. Standards in GNVQ courses are above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are happy in school and show a good level of commitment to school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good generally and often excellent in lessons. This has a positive effect in producing an atmosphere where good learning takes place.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Levels are above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	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 quality of teaching overall is good and has improved since the previous inspection. In 74 per cent of the lessons observed, the teaching was good or better, in 38 per cent very good and in six per cent excellent. The teaching was satisfactory in a further 24 per cent of lessons. It was less than satisfactory in two lessons. The teaching in English and mathematics is good and in science very good. The overall quality of teaching is very good in art and design, history and ICT. The quality is good in all other subjects other than music in which it is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory.

Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and examination requirements. Teachers are usually well prepared and organised with clear objectives for lessons. They present good role models to their pupils and earn their respect. The relationships between pupils and teachers are good and are helped further by the positive attitudes and very good behaviour of pupils. This results in a good climate for learning.

Lessons generally have a clear direction that allows pupils to make very good progress in their learning, whatever their level of attainment. Teachers manage their classes well, using appropriate methods and organisation. They use the time available to them to good effect. Throughout the sixth form, the good quality of teaching is helped by setting students precise targets for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well in their different subjects. The school provides effectively for the needs of gifted and talented pupils, and teachers maintain high expectations of them. Where lessons are less successful, teachers rely too heavily on a very limited approach involving long explanations followed by written exercises. Where lessons are unsatisfactory, the teaching does not address the full programmes of study in the National Curriculum.

The high proportion of good teaching ensures that most pupils achieve very well as they progress through the school. The quality of pupils' learning is good. The well above average results they obtain at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13 reflect the students' own positive approach to their work and their response to the good teaching they receive.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced in Years 7 to 11. The school offers a good sixth form curriculum which meets the needs and aspirations of students. Not all statutory requirements are fully met in religious education, music and ICT and this is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. This reflects the good level of commitment of the school towards these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is effective in developing values and providing good guidance about behaviour and respect for others. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, for moral and cultural it is good and for social development it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils.	Satisfactory. The arrangements for child protection and the attention given to health and safety are satisfactory.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school is effective in forging very good links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior staff provide sound leadership. Most subject departments are managed well and there is a shared commitment amongst all staff to raise standards further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good level of knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and make a good contribution to the direction the school takes. However, not all statutory requirements are fully met in the curriculum and there are some health and safety issues that need to be addressed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's procedures for evaluating its performance are satisfactory overall but are inconsistent. There is good practice, but this needs to be identified and extended to all departments.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are satisfactory overall and are used effectively to support pupils' learning in most subjects. Spending is carefully and effectively controlled to ensure that the principles of best value are applied in the school's use of resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They appreciate the Jewish values the school promotes. • The standards achieved are generally high and their children make very good progress. • The school is well managed and led and that teaching is good. • They find the school approachable. • They agree that behaviour is good and that the school promotes very good attitudes and values. • They feel that their children develop into mature and responsible citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of a homework timetable makes the issuing of homework erratic and inconsistent. • Parents feel they get insufficient information about the progress of their children. • The range of activities outside lessons is too limited and some parents feel that there is too little emphasis on sports.

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments made. Inspectors found that the lack of a homework timetable makes the issuing of homework inconsistent. Inspectors agree that the information on pupils' progress is not shared well enough with parents in reports. The team found that the provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and there is a good range of extra-curricular sport available, particularly at lunch times and in the evenings.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils entering the school are of the full range of ability. The pupils currently in Years 7 and 8, however, attained results that were well above average in their National Curriculum tests taken in Year 6 in their primary schools. The results in such tests of the pupils currently in Years 9 onwards, on the other hand, were broadly in line with the national average.
2. At the end of Year 9, pupils obtained results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests that were well above the national average and very high compared with results obtained in schools deemed to be similar on the basis of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. In the same year, pupils' results in their GCSE examinations were well above the national average and very high compared with results in similar schools. GCE A-level results were well above the national average. All these results represent very good achievement by the pupils concerned in view of their average attainment on entering the school.
3. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for Year 9 pupils, the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 and above was well above average in all three core subjects, English, mathematics and science. In English, the proportion gaining level 6 was very high compared with the national average. In mathematics and science the proportions were above average. The average points score in all three subjects was also well above average and very high compared with results in similar schools. Boys' results were better than those of the girls in mathematics and science, but not significantly different in English. Pupils made very good progress through Years 7 to 9. Over the last five years, the trend in the school's results has been below the national trend, but the school has maintained results consistently well above the national average.
4. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, the average points score per pupil was well above average, and the results over the past five years have been consistently well above the national average. The trend in results has been broadly in line with the national trend. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C was well above average. The proportion gaining five or more grades A*-G was very high compared to the national average as was the proportion gaining one or more A*-G grades. When compared to those achieved in similar schools the results were very high. The school set targets for this group of pupils, but they were not appropriately challenging and were exceeded in each of the categories five or more A*-C, one or more A*-C and average points score per pupil. Year 11 pupils in 2000 made very good progress through Key Stage 4. The difference in average points score between boys and girls reflected the national difference. There was some variation in performance at GCSE between subjects. Pupils performed significantly better in English language and literature, mathematics, combined science (double award), history, ICT, and business studies. They performed significantly worse in combined science (single award) and design and technology.
5. In 2000, the average points score of students taking two or more GCE A-levels was well above the national average, maintaining a similar standard established over the past four years. Students made very good progress in their GCE A-level courses. The proportion of all students taking GCE A-levels who obtained a pass grade was 94 per cent and 52 per cent passed at grades A or B. Relatively strong subjects were Jewish studies,

history, art and design and French. The weakest subjects were economics, music and German. However, these results must be approached cautiously since there were small numbers of entries in individual subjects and the results fluctuate from year to year.

6. Courses are taken in the sixth form that lead to a GNVQ advanced level award in business studies. In 2000, of the five students following the course, three gained distinctions, one was awarded a merit and one a pass grade. Overall, the standards attained in the sixth form compare very well with the national average in GNVQ courses.
7. The standards of work in Key Stage 3, as observed during the inspection, are broadly in line with the past results gained in the national tests at age 14 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make very good progress through Years 7 to 9 and achieve very well in relation to their levels of attainment on entry to the school to attain standards that are well above average. Pupils also achieve very well and make very good progress in ICT, history and art and design. Pupils make good progress in most other subjects except in music and modern Hebrew in which progress is satisfactory and in French and German where the progress made by high and middle attaining pupils is unsatisfactory.
8. Pupils maintain very good levels of progress through to Year 11. Attainment is well above the national average at the age of 16 in English, mathematics, science, ICT, history and art and design. The work seen was above average in modern foreign languages, physical education, religious education and business studies. In geography, Hebrew and music, standards are broadly in line with the average. The standards observed in the inspection reflected the well above average GCSE results obtained in 2000. The school has made a good level of improvement since the previous inspection and the standards observed demonstrate that the school is not complacent and works hard to maintain its good standards.
9. Levels of attainment in GCE A-level courses are well above the national average in English, science, modern foreign languages, history and art and design. In mathematics, geography and business studies standards are above average and in other subjects, students' work is broadly in line with the average. Standards in GNVQ courses are above average.
10. Pupils with special educational needs progress at the same rate as all other pupils in their different subjects. They usually attain the standards which their teachers expect of them and some exceed their targets. For example, pupils coming into the school with standards of literacy which are well below average attain average and above average grades in English in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9. In 2000 the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-G was very high and this confirms the very good levels of achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
11. Standards of literacy are high and make a significant contribution to pupils' attainment in subjects such as history and geography, but there is an inconsistent approach to the development of literacy across all subjects. There is some good practice in the school and a strong feature of their oral skills is the way in which pupils use the technical language of the subjects confidently and accurately. They are encouraged to do so right from Year 7, for example in mathematics where key words are displayed in classrooms and on blackboards. In English, they use the terminology of literature, such as 'soliloquy', 'blank verse' and 'metaphor' with ease, and in design and technology Year 11 pupils discuss design concepts using a good range of technical vocabulary. Similarly in geography, most pupils of all ages have a good knowledge of technical terms and apply them precisely and cogently owing to the teachers' emphasis on developing appropriate

geographical language. Key words are on display in the geography classroom and, in their written work, pupils are encouraged to develop their extended writing skills. A strong emphasis on developing the use of vocabulary ensures that pupils use technical language appropriately and accurately. Standards of speaking and listening are above average. Pupils of all levels of attainment are confident and articulate speakers. They express their views clearly and cogently and they listen very well.

12. Reading standards are well above average. Pupils read, understand and analyse texts of increasing complexity as they mature. In religious education, pupils are encouraged to read aloud, but in some subjects, such as science, opportunities for developing this skill are missed. Pupils' understanding of what they read is reflected in the high quality written assignments they undertake, particularly amongst those taking GCSE and GCE A-level. There are many opportunities for pupils to write well-planned assignments, for example in history where pupils write about the Second World War, in extended studies in geography, or evaluations in design and technology. In mathematics, Year 11 pupils explain their ideas of problem solving very well. Pupils retrieve information from textbooks and from the Internet, and use it effectively in their writing, showing a good standard of reading and good study skills.
13. Overall, pupils' levels of development of numeracy skills are above average. In dealing with the everyday demands of numeracy the competence of pupils is good by the age of 16. There is no formal school numeracy policy, and most subjects do not yet plan well enough for developing basic numeracy skills, but pupils show above average levels of numeracy in their work in various subjects. Pupils make good sense of information presented numerically and graphically in geography. Spatial skills are applied well in art and design. Measuring skills are well developed and pupils are able to measure accurately in design and technology and science.
14. Overall, the work seen in the inspection confirms the very good progress made by pupils through Years 7 to 11. Students continue that level of progress into the sixth form and the work seen confirms the very good progress made by students taking GCE A-level courses as well as those following the new vocational courses.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their personal development are very good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is also very good. Attendance is above the national average and punctuality is satisfactory. These factors have a very positive impact on pupils' progress and achievement. Nearly all parents agree that their children like school.
16. Pupils have an enthusiasm for school and are very well motivated. They expect to work hard and concentrate very well on learning more and improving. They listen and respond very well to the challenges teachers give them and most are conscientious in completing both class work and homework. Pupils show increasingly responsible attitudes as they move up the school and by the time they reach the sixth form they have developed very good independent learning skills. Pupils show very good perseverance and enjoy practical work as well as academic pursuits. There is a good degree of participation in extra-curricular activities, especially within the Jewish community and in music and drama.
17. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations of staff and the positive behaviour policy. The vast majority of parents believe behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions in recent years, although there are usually some pupils in the twice-weekly detentions. Pupils are effectively taught to

know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils who have been identified as having behavioural difficulties are not easily identified in the school, because their behaviour is well managed and usually positive. Bullying is rare and is usually dealt with effectively.

18. Relationships across the school are very good and this contributes very well to the positive learning ethos. Pupils relate very well to each other and to staff. Sixth form students develop good and helpful relationships with Year 7 pupils when they join the school through the 'big brother / big sister' mentoring scheme. Pupils collaborate very well in pairs and groups in class and in extra-curricular activities. They are happy to share books and equipment. They listen well to each other and respect each other's contributions. Relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish pupils are very good and all pupils have a very good understanding of the values and feelings of others. In non-Jewish assemblies, pupils are encouraged to understand the significance of Jewish ceremonies and festivals.
19. Personal development is very good. Pupils respond very well to the trust that teachers put in them and to the increasing opportunities they have to take responsibility as they move up the school. Representatives from each class sit on the student council, where they discuss environmental issues and daily routines and use good initiative in organising fund-raising events. The sixth form chairman of this council attends governing body meetings. Students readily take responsibility for organising assemblies, raising money for the school's two charities (one Jewish and one non-Jewish), acting as sports captains and organising extra-curricular activities. A good proportion of pupils in Year 10 organise their own work experience placements. Jewish pupils organise an annual Shabbaton in a local synagogue to which the wider community is invited. They also take services in a local residential home for the elderly. By the time students reach the sixth form, they take on a wide range of responsibilities across the school and in the wider community. This includes a variety of prefect duties, reception duty, classroom support and running extra-curricular clubs for younger pupils. The school captains are very good representatives of the school. Students develop a mature and confident approach to life.
20. Pupils with special educational needs appreciate the help and support which they receive. They have very positive attitudes to their work and to school life in general and they behave very well.
21. Attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absence is below the national average. Attendance is good overall and very good in comparison with other schools in the city. Pupils and parents are very aware of the value of good attendance and very few pupils take holidays during term time. Punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils arrive promptly for the start of lessons, but there is sometimes little urgency for pupils to get to registration periods in the morning, especially when those sessions are extended and pupils have no planned work to complete.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching overall is good and results in good quality of learning overall. In 74 per cent of the lessons observed, the teaching was good or better, in 32 per cent of lessons very good and in six per cent excellent. The teaching was satisfactory in a further 24 per cent of lessons. It was unsatisfactory or poor in only two lessons. The teaching has improved overall since the previous inspection. There is less unsatisfactory teaching and a greater proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching. The impact made by good teaching is most noticeable in the success that pupils enjoy in public tests and examinations at all stages in Years 9, 11 and 13. Teachers have a very good

knowledge of their subjects, of the abilities of their pupils and of the requirements of examinations, and ensure a high level of success.

23. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good. It was at least satisfactory in nearly 100 per cent of lessons seen, good or better in 69 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 37 per cent. The incidence of good teaching increases through Years 7 and 8 and reaches 84 per cent in Year 9 as pupils accommodate the high expectations and demands made upon them. The overall quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good. Some 75 per cent of the teaching observed was good or better and 33 per cent very good or excellent. Across Years 7 to 11, nearly five per cent of teaching was excellent. The overall quality of teaching seen in the sixth form was good in 84 per cent of lessons. Very good teaching took place in 44 per cent of lessons, and in 12 per cent of the lessons seen, the teaching was excellent.
24. In Years 7 to 9, the overall quality of teaching is very good in science, art and design, history and ICT. The quality is good in all other subjects other than in music where it is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching follows the same broad pattern in Years 10 and 11, where the same subjects produce the very good provision, but there is no unsatisfactory teaching.
25. Across the whole age range, the teaching in science is very good overall and in English and mathematics it is good. The teaching of basic skills is good. In the taught course in ICT in Years 8 and 9, pupils attain high levels of skill, well above those expected for their age. In Years 10 and 11, on the full GCSE course and the short course on ICT, pupils again achieve very high standards as they respond to very good teaching. The teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory though inconsistent. The literacy policy has not yet been put into practice, and therefore the development of literacy skills varies from subject to subject. There is some good practice; members of staff from history, English and religious education have received specific literacy training, and this is having a positive impact on the development of literacy skills in those subjects. The teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory. In dealing with the everyday demands of numeracy the competence of pupils is good by the age of 16. Although there is no school numeracy policy, and most subjects do not yet plan well enough for developing basic numeracy skills, pupils show above average levels of numeracy in their work in subjects. Not enough attention has yet been given to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in Year 7 mathematics lessons.
26. Teachers have a good command of their subject and are usually well prepared and organised with clear objectives for lessons. They present good role models to their pupils and earn their respect. This results in a good climate for learning in classrooms. Pupils come to lessons expecting to work hard and they respond positively to their teachers' high expectations. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of a range of teaching strategies. These include clear explanations to introduce new knowledge and skills and interesting work to link these to work already covered. For example, in a Year 10 history lesson, pupils listened carefully to an interesting account about life on the home front during the Second World War. This exposition was followed by interesting work on computers in which pupils analysed the content and messages portrayed on posters of the time as they dealt with the place of propaganda during war time.
27. Where lessons are less successful, teachers rely too heavily on a very limited approach involving long explanations followed by written exercises. In these lessons it is testimony to the pupils' levels of motivation that they continue to make at least satisfactory progress. Occasionally the teaching does not take sufficient account of the full programmes of study in the National Curriculum, for example in music. Here some teaching left pupils

making poor progress in important areas of the music curriculum and their learning was unsatisfactory.

28. The quality of teachers' planning is good, both in the longer term and for individual lessons. This leads to lessons that have a clear direction and allow pupils to make good progress in their learning, whatever their level of attainment. In a Year 9 English class with middle attaining pupils, the teacher's planning was precise. Resources to be used and tasks set were planned for pupils with different needs within a group already set by ability. This proved to be very effective in ensuring that good progress was made by all. In this lesson on 'Macbeth', higher attainers coped confidently with symbolism and by the end of the lesson, lower attainers could choose appropriate quotations and use literary terms like 'couplets' confidently and accurately.
29. In many lessons, teachers share the aims of the lesson with the class. The pupils appreciate this approach and it serves to give a common purpose to the lesson. In a Year 11 science lesson, for example, the pupils were told where they should be by the end of a lesson on investigative techniques. As a result, they knew where the lesson was taking them and their learning was enhanced as they paid careful attention and were fully involved in how they might draw conclusions from an investigation. When the amount of progress made was reviewed at the end of the lesson, the pupils were keen to demonstrate that they had met their objectives.
30. Much of the teaching is very effective in preparing pupils to make the most of what they know when taking examinations and learning how to use material. In many instances the teachers present such work in an interesting way that captures the attention of pupils and involves them fully. For example, in a Year 13 business education lesson, the teacher presented the lesson using a computer program ('power point') to illustrate the work. The students, too, adopted the approach and their presentations for assessment were much enhanced.
31. Teachers' maintain high expectations of their pupils, in terms of both their behaviour in class and the quality of the work they produce. In a Year 9 art and design lesson for example, the teacher emphasised observation techniques in line drawing of subjects' faces. The pupils were genuinely surprised at the quality of the finished drawings. This came about because the teacher demanded close attention and good quality responses, i.e. the best work the pupils could do. The quality of teaching had some excellent features and the quality of pupils' learning was very good.
32. The relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and are further promoted by the positive attitudes that pupils bring to their lessons. Pupils' good behaviour enables teachers to adopt a variety of teaching approaches to make their lessons interesting. In combination these factors enable teachers to manage their classes well, using appropriate methods and organisation. They use the time available to them to good effect by using a variety of activities and a range of approaches best suited to the activities. For example, in a Year 10 lesson in ICT, the teacher set challenging tasks and allowed individual responses. As the teacher circulated, she was able to draw common points of learning for the whole class and offer timely help to individuals. Pupils learned from each other as well as from the teacher and the level of cooperation in the lesson was such that all pupils made very good progress.
33. The teachers in this relatively small school know their pupils well and utilise this knowledge to ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers are adept at using question and answer techniques well to consolidate pupils' knowledge, keep all

pupils involved and set challenges that stimulate pupils. They also use such techniques effectively to assess the progress being made during lessons and to check on how well homework has been tackled. The use of homework is generally good and is well planned. It is used mainly to set up further independent study, or to consolidate work covered in the classroom, and teachers' emphasis on homework encourages pupils towards a greater independence in their learning. However, the lack of a homework timetable makes the issuing of homework inconsistent and pupils find that demands made upon them are too great at times because of the lack of overall planning.

34. In the sixth form, on both GCE A-level courses and vocational courses, teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the examination requirements of the courses. The teachers also have very good subject knowledge and its impact on learning is evidenced by the higher than average achievements of sixth form students across all courses. For example, in a Year 13 mathematics lesson, the teacher demonstrated very good subject knowledge as students were led through the concepts of small angle approximations. The students varied in the rate at which they grasped the idea, but the teacher's ability to digress to use students' previous work helped them through and good progress was made. The lesson exemplified the use of good teaching techniques in which teachers provide a balance between giving students new ideas and challenging them to reach their own conclusions. Throughout the sixth form, the good quality of teaching is helped by setting students precise targets for improvement. In this process teachers make very effective use of assessment data from a number of sources to inform their planning and teaching. As a result, students know with a good degree of accuracy what is required of them in order to improve further and they find this encouraging and helpful. The impact of this very good practice has not been lost on the school and they are ready to identify the areas of best practice and extend it to pupils throughout the age range. They will be assisted in this process as the current development of ICT facilities makes the information more manageable and accessible.
35. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well in their different subjects. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their pupils' needs and adapt their teaching styles and learning materials effectively to enable their pupils to achieve successfully, particularly in the lower sets. The trust which exists between pupils and teachers and also the dedicated support from those parents and sixth formers who are voluntary helpers in the classroom have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, a Year 9 lower set in chemistry was supported to good effect by a volunteer parent with a professional knowledge of the subject.
36. The school provides effectively for the needs of gifted and talented pupils, and teachers have high expectations of them. Teachers clearly identify their needs and document them in individual education plans. The school sets challenging targets for pupils and systematically monitors and supports their progress so that they achieve their potential. The good teaching these pupils receive is supplemented by carefully planned extra-curricular work and experience that successfully extends and enhances the curriculum that they experience.
37. The high proportion of good teaching ensures that most pupils achieve very well as they progress through the school. The quality of learning is good and the well above average results they obtain at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13 reflect the pupils' own positive approach to their work and their response to the good teaching they receive.

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

38. The school provides a curriculum that has some good features including its distinct provision for Jewish pupils, a good range of courses for post-16 students and good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The many strengths far outweigh the few weaknesses. The dual aims of the school, to provide a curriculum for both Jewish and non-Jewish pupils, are very well reflected in the curriculum that is in place. The school's 'Beacon' status recognises the number of areas of good practice within its curricular provision. However, there are still some issues to address. The taught week is below recommendations and in some instances the time allocation to subjects causes difficulty in covering curriculum requirements. Statutory requirements are not fully met in ICT, religious education in the sixth form or in the provision for music, and this is unsatisfactory. The lack of adequate provision for ICT and religious education was referred to at the last inspection.
39. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is sufficiently broad and balanced curriculum overall. All of the subjects of the national curriculum are provided plus PSHE. There are some weaknesses however, mostly due to tight time constraints because the taught week is below the recommended time. Thus, the time allocations for design and technology, mathematics and English are below those usually provided in Key Stage 3. There is a lack of consistency in the cross-curricular teaching of ICT and insufficient provision in science. Provision for music is unsatisfactory in not offering progressive development in the skills of listening, performing and composing.
40. The school offers a good range of courses in Years 10 and 11, well matched to the needs and aspirations of pupils. Pupils can take either ten full GCSE courses or nine full courses plus two short courses. All Jewish pupils are given the opportunity to study modern Hebrew. Breadth and balance are further enhanced for all pupils through the provision of PSHE and all choose either history or geography. Science is available as either a single or double course. The business studies course is taken by those studying single science and is well matched to pupils' needs and enhances further the breadth and balance of the curriculum. Both short and full courses are available in ICT, but ICT experiences for pupils who do not choose one of the two GCSE courses are too limited. The time allocated to mathematics and English is below that usually provided.
41. The school offers a rich and varied post-16 curriculum. There is a good range of courses given the size of the school, with 22 subjects on offer. Students experience a valuable residential induction course and plans are well advanced to enrich this provision next year by the introduction of a course to develop students' study skills. Curriculum planning is good and the new advanced subsidiary courses are well established. The breadth of courses offered is enhanced by the inclusion of GCE A-levels in subjects which are not studied at GCSE. Vocational courses are limited to the business studies area. This course is popular, well matched to students' needs and successful in terms of examination results. There is a pilot course in key skills for some students this year and a course is planned for all students next year. The school is effective in ensuring that the combinations and numbers of courses taken are matched to individual needs. There are some omissions in the provision for students in the sixth form. No curriculum time is allocated to physical education, religious education is not available for non-Jewish students and there is only limited provision for PSHE.
42. The school has a clear policy for special educational needs and makes good provision for pupils who are in need of extra help. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils on the special needs register. Pupils are offered additional accreditation in modern foreign languages in Year 11, and the GNVQ courses in the sixth form provide good opportunities for success. Individual education plans and the additional guidance notes are effective in ensuring that pupils' particular needs are identified and catered for. Arrangements to

group pupils into sets of similar ability enable them to achieve well because work is carefully tailored to requirements and pupils benefit from using customised learning materials. The school makes good provision for its most able pupils. Under the Excellence in Cities scheme, funds and central organisations are used to very good effect to extend and enhance the opportunities available for gifted and talented pupils. The school has developed a good policy and documentation of a high standard to support the programmes on offer to these pupils.

43. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There are inter-house competitions in a wide variety of games as well as inter-school matches in major games. The under-16 six-a-side girls cricket team represented Merseyside schools very successfully. The school holds an annual swimming gala and a sports day. There is a thriving young enterprise group in which a high proportion of business studies students are involved. During the week of the inspection around 100 pupils were rehearsing for a production of 'HMS Pinafore'. There are regular musical concerts and the sixth form present an annual pantomime. The school was recently successful in winning 'On the Beat', an inter-school competition involving music, dance and drama on the theme of anti-racism. There is a good range of opportunities for Jewish pupils including an exchange visit to a school in Israel, a Hebrew club and a wide range of links with the local community. In music there are very good opportunities for instrumentalists. Other activities and clubs include theatre visits, public speaking competitions and opportunities to participate in a humanities club and lunchtime activities in art and design.
44. There is a satisfactory provision for health education, sex education and drug awareness through a programme of PSHE. The course is well planned and documented to support teachers in promoting PSHE. The teaching is always at least satisfactory and sometimes very good. Teachers who have special training teach some subjects, such as drug education. Sex education is dealt with sensitively within the Jewish ethos of the school. The school makes effective use of outside agencies to support careers education in particular. Work on citizenship is satisfactory, but is at an early stage of development.
45. Provision for work-related education, including careers education and guidance, is good. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. Effective careers education is provided through work in PSHE from Year 9 with the help of the Careers Education Service. This service provides individual impartial guidance to all pupils with extra support for those who require it. All Year 10 pupils receive two weeks of work experience. This is well prepared and organised to ensure that pupils benefit from the experience. Many pupils find their own very good placements through their good links with the community.
46. The school makes good use of links with the community to extend pupils' learning and personal development. Many pupils gain in personal development and experience by performing in concerts and productions for the local community. There is good community use of the swimming pool. There are very good links with the local, national and international Jewish community. Links with the community are used well to extend learning within the curriculum. For example, the modern foreign languages department organise regular visits to France and Germany and Jewish pupils attend a school in Israel as an extension to Hebrew studies. There are important links with the local Jewish Resource Centre. A wide variety of local business links is used well to help students with business studies; for example, a parent advises the Year 12 students who are involved in the Young Enterprise Scheme. Teacher placements in industry are used to best advantage. The wide variety of links is used well to support students' work experience

placements and the good careers programme. Good use is made of parental connections to organise work experience placements.

47. The school's relationships with partner institutions are good. It has very good relationships with the King David Primary School from which the largest proportion of its pupils come, but also makes a good effort to meet and get to know pupils coming from all other primary schools in the area. The good liaison, especially for pupils with special educational needs, helps Year 7 pupils to settle well into the school. There are some subject links with primary schools, but these are not well developed. Links with higher education are good and around 95 per cent of sixth formers go on to higher education. The school successfully hosts students for initial teacher training experience.
48. The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all and has a good equality of opportunity policy covering all the relevant aspects. The school meets the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act. Pupils with special educational needs and higher and lower attaining pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The only equal opportunities issues that need rectifying in subject areas are those in music and religious education. In music there are two separate schemes of work operating for two groups in two distinct rooms. This does not provide a good basis for lesson planning. There is religious education provision for Jewish students in the sixth form but no religious education for non-Jewish students. While there is very good provision for Jewish students to learn about their faith and culture there is no similar provision for non-Jewish students. The curriculum reflects cultural diversity for all and prepares pupils for life in a multi-ethnic society. Displays around the school reflect awareness of an ethnically diverse society and pupils are made aware of and are sensitive to the needs of others.
49. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Pupils with special educational needs have very good opportunities for personal development through activities which are designed to improve their social skills. These include pair and group work in lessons, dance and stage make-up sessions, courses in study skills and web-site building skills, as well as school productions and residential visits.
50. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The ethos of the school enables all pupils to develop an awareness of the importance of the spiritual dimension to life, and a respect for the Jewish faith. Assemblies and prayer meetings for Jewish pupils offer very good opportunities for spiritual development, as do the lessons in Jewish studies and modern Hebrew. Several areas of school life make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development. For example, pupils in a Year 11 geography lesson were made acutely aware of the immense power of natural forces as they watched a video showing the destructive impact of Hurricane Gilbert in the Caribbean. In art and design lessons pupils discover the spiritual values inherent in creativity and beauty, and pupils taking the course in world religions are able to develop their understanding of the manner in which religious belief shapes the routines of everyday life. However, some of the shortcomings identified in the last inspection report still remain. Elsewhere in the curriculum there are only limited opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness, and there is no provision for religious education for non-Jewish students in the sixth form. In non-Jewish and in whole-school assemblies pupils are not given enough opportunities for reflection on spiritual themes, and the school is still not providing a daily act of collective worship for all its pupils.
51. The school's provision for moral education is good. The Jewish ethos successfully fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect for truth and justice. The school covenant clearly states pupils' rights and responsibilities within the school. Classroom

rules are displayed prominently in each teaching area and pupils are very aware of the mechanisms of the behaviour policy. There is good planned provision for moral education across the curriculum and especially in PSHE, religious education and English, and moral messages are also reinforced in assemblies. Moral issues are rightly emphasised in the school's policy for sex education.

52. Provision for pupils' social education is very good. Pupils are frequently encouraged to work together in lessons and in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Sixth form students support younger ones and they also organise extra-curricular clubs such as drama for younger pupils and support some pupils with special educational needs. Older students provide very good role models for younger pupils through their leadership duties within the school and the wider community. Pupils are given increasing opportunities for social responsibility as they move up the school and they respond very well. There is a good variety of day and residential visits throughout the year for all pupils. These promote very effective social interaction and personal responsibility. All sixth formers attend an initial residential course to further develop their leadership and group skills. The school's good links with the community encourage pupils to take an active role themselves and develop an understanding of citizenship.
53. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. The school makes very good provision for Jewish pupils to experience and appreciate their own cultural traditions. They have extensive links with the wider Jewish community in Merseyside, as well as strong links with the state of Israel. For example, through the Yemin Orde Scheme, pupils in Year 9 have the opportunity to live in Israel for five months, thus gaining first-hand experience of the traditions and culture whilst continuing their education. The provision for non-Jewish pupils is satisfactory. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to visit museums, places of local interest such as the Slavery Exhibition, art galleries and theatres, thus broadening experience of their own culture. There are fewer opportunities for non-Jewish pupils to participate in foreign exchange visits, however, as reported in the previous inspection. There are some opportunities to study other cultures in subjects such as art and design and music, but there is no overall strategy to celebrate the diversity of cultures that exist both in the school and in society at large.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

54. The school provides a satisfactory level of care for pupils to promote their achievement. The tutorial system provides sound support and guidance, but some pupils state that they find it difficult to relate to form tutors. The teaching of PSHE by form tutors helps to develop their relationship with pupils, but morning registration is not used effectively. In this small school environment teachers know pupils well and formalised support systems are considered less necessary. Following the recent changes in pastoral support, pupils are not yet used to the new organisation.
55. Procedures for dealing with child protection issues are satisfactory. The designated teacher is well trained and information is disseminated to all staff. Procedures are well known, appropriate records are kept and there are sound relationships with outside support agencies. Insufficient progress has been made, however, since the last inspection on improving health and safety procedures. Satisfactory attention is given to the health and safety of pupils, but responsibilities for specific areas are unclear in the current health and safety policy. This policy is in the process of being updated. Good risk assessments are in place in some departments, but it is unsatisfactory that they are not done in other departments, such as science and boys' physical education. Satisfactory attention is given to the health and safety of pupils in lessons, but a number of weaknesses needed to be brought to the attention of the school. The school is

addressing most of these but some are not covered by a formal risk assessment, for example the current use of one shared entrance to the school by pupils and motor traffic. Recording of evacuation drills and minor accidents is unsatisfactory. First aid procedures are sound, but there is nowhere for sick or injured pupils to lie down and rest properly. School security arrangements are very good.

56. Induction procedures for Year 7 pupils are very good and pupils settle very well at school. Satisfactory support and guidance are offered through form tutors and the programme of PSHE, but the relationship between pupils and form tutors is not universally well developed and some pupils state that they find it difficult to relate to their form tutors. The heads of year and pastoral manager have overall responsibility for pastoral care. They maintain good contact with parents when appropriate. Good records are kept of pupils' personal development but there is no formal overview of academic progress. In a small school, teachers know pupils well and provide effective support for the vast majority of pupils.
57. The school has a good behaviour policy with clear guidelines on issuing rewards and sanctions. The pastoral manager monitors the use of sanctions and rewards very well. Pupils feel the system is fair, but there are inconsistencies between some staff in the use of sanctions. A few teachers do not use the assertive discipline policy effectively. The school has a sensible anti-bullying policy and awareness of bullying is raised in Year 7 PSHE lessons. There are very few recorded incidents of bullying, although a small number of pupils stated that reported incidents have not always been resolved quickly. Parents, on the other hand, stated their satisfaction with the school's arrangements.
58. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results and nationally standardised tests are used to build up a clear picture of pupils' attainment when they arrive at the school. They are used well to identify pupils with special educational needs and to place pupils into groups. Arrangements for measuring pupils' attainment are good in most subjects. They are very good in some, for example art and design and history. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is satisfactory. In some subjects, such as art and design, history, English and geography, it is used well to plan work for pupils. In others, such as modern foreign languages, science and music, little use is made of the data to plan work for pupils. The information provided is not used as well as it might be to plan teaching.
59. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. The school supplies information of good quality on the prior attainment of all pupils in a way that enables teachers to monitor effectively pupils' progress. Although some departments, for example those of English and art and design, use the available data effectively to set targets, this is not the case in most other subjects. Except in the sixth form, the available information is not being used well enough to set targets or review what is taught. In addition, the information on how well pupils are doing is not shared well enough with parents in reports.
60. The school monitors the performance of pupils with special educational needs very effectively. The systems for identifying pupils in need of extra help are very good and progress is carefully assessed through reports from staff and discussions with the pupils themselves. Although the coordinator for special educational needs and voluntary helpers provide support of good quality, the amount of such support has been very limited over recent years as a consequence of budgetary constraints. However, arrangements are in place for the appointment of a specialist teacher and a learning support assistant, thanks to an increase in funding through the social inclusion and literacy initiatives.

Liaison between the school and the local support services is well established and generally effective.

61. Registration procedures are effective and comply with legal requirements. The recording of attendance and punctuality is very good. The school promotes good attendance very effectively and a policy of following up absence on the second day ensures that pupils return to school quickly. Individual lesson registers are used to monitor internal truancy. The school has a very good relationship with the educational welfare service, which provides effective support for the small number of pupils with poor attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. The partnership between the school and parents is very good. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the Jewish values the school promotes. Most parents feel that the standards achieved are generally high and their children make very good progress. Parents think the school is well managed and led and that teaching is good. Most parents find the school approachable. They agree that behaviour is good, that the school promotes very good attitudes and values and that their children develop into mature and responsible citizens. Parents disagree about the level of homework given to pupils, but agree that the lack of a homework timetable makes the issuing of homework erratic and inconsistent. A significant number of parents feel they get insufficient information about the progress of their children. Inspectors agreed that information provided to parents about progress is unsatisfactory. Thirty-five per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that the range of activities outside lessons is too limited but inspectors found there are good opportunities for a range of activities outside of school. Several parents expressed concern about the decline in standards of music and some parents feel that there is too little emphasis on sports.
63. The school provides satisfactory information to parents in the form of letters and newsletters. The governing body's annual report to parents and the prospectus contain useful information for parents, but the prospectus omits information on pupils' destinations after they leave school. Information about pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Annual reports comply with legal requirements, but the quality of comments is variable. Grades are given for effort, attainment and behaviour but comments are brief and most do not state what pupils have learnt or suggest areas for improvement. There is too little opportunity for parents to follow up comments on reports at the end of the year. Consultation evenings are well supported by parents, but are rather haphazard with little opportunity to discuss progress in detail. Some parents request and are given interim reports on their children's progress, but this is not done routinely. Parents can track homework through pupil planners and this is satisfactory.
64. Parents' contributions to their children's learning and to the life of the school are very good. Parents are interested in their children's education and provide every means of support they can. The majority of the governing body are parents or past parents of children at the school. The Parents Association makes a very valuable contribution to the social and financial life of the school. Many parents supplement school resources such as books and dictionaries, and also provide their children with access to computers at home. Parents help pupils to find good work experience placements in Year 10. Some parents offer voluntary support in lessons, for example in design and technology, and science. One parent regularly offers useful guidance to the Year 12 Young Enterprise group. Parents enjoy attending school productions.
65. The school has a very good partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are generally keen to support their children, and the coordinator for

special educational needs is regularly in touch with parents to discuss and act upon their concerns. For example, when parents of children with specific learning difficulties arrange private tuition, she ensures that the provision made by the school is complementary to this support and not in conflict with it. Although parents are generally satisfied with the help their children receive, some parents feel that there is not enough support.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The leadership provided by the headteacher, senior staff and the governing body is sound and they ensure a clear vision regarding the direction in which the school is heading. They are very successful in creating a Jewish ethos. This enables all pupils to build up a strong sense of their own identity and a tolerance and respect for the Jewish faith, in line with the aims of the school. There is a common approach to maintaining an ethos in which pupils are expected to produce their best efforts. The ethos is also characterised by a commitment to ensure that pupils develop their talents and mature into responsible and independent adults. As a result, the school is popular with parents and is consistently over-subscribed. The school is well organised and ensures a satisfactory level of care for its pupils.
67. A good level of improvement has taken place since the previous inspection. The response to the previous inspection report has been positive and the school has made a satisfactory response to the main issues identified in that report. The continuing process of improvement is guided by a school development plan of good quality, which details appropriate priorities. The school has good levels of commitment to and capacity for further improvement. Satisfactory systems have been established to ensure sound managerial practices; meetings are held regularly at a number of levels and staff and pupils have the opportunity to contribute to the decisions made
68. The school is benefiting from developments nationally regarding the performance management of its staff. As a result, the role of the heads of department and heads of year are becoming more defined. For example, their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the school has in the recent past been largely unsatisfactory, but is currently improving and is now satisfactory overall. There is some good practice in these areas, but there is a lack of consistency across the school as a whole. However, the formal, systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is now being developed as the senior management group is expanded in terms of size, and its role is more formally acknowledged. The school is, as a result, in a better position to evaluate the impact on standards of initiatives taken and changes made. The school still needs to identify where good practice exists, however, and to extend that good practice to other areas. The approach taken by individual departments in documenting their work is inconsistent. As a result, schemes of work vary from very good to unsatisfactory, the approach taken to marking lacks rigour in some areas, and the use of homework is adversely affected by the lack of an agreed policy.
69. The targets set by the school last year were not appropriate and not challenging enough in the context of GCSE performances in recent years and this represents an area for improvement in terms of setting targets that are challenging and realistic. The school successfully creates a positive climate in which success is celebrated and pupils expect to work hard, but individual departments are not rigorous enough in setting targets for improvement. There are some good examples within the school of assessment information being used effectively to set targets, particularly in the sixth form. The school needs to extend this approach further in Years 7 to 11. The school has not been helped

by the lack of ICT facilities, but this is now a developing area, ready to be utilised more fully.

70. Governors make a good contribution to the life and work of the school. They are closely involved in the strategic management of the school and play an important part in the production of the school development plan. They make an effective contribution to making major decisions in the school, particularly in the areas of finance, personnel and accommodation. Their work in the development of the school's curriculum is an improving feature. They are in a good position to make informed judgements when holding the school to account for the educational standards achieved and the quality of education provided. Governors have a good level of understanding of the strengths of the school as well as the areas needing further improvement. There is some very good practice where governors are closely involved in the work of individual departments and are directly instrumental in raising standards. However, the governing body, while largely successful in ensuring that statutory requirements are met, does not fully ensure that all areas of the school's work fully comply with statutory requirements. Thus, not all statutory requirements are fully met relating to the provision of collective worship, religious education in the sixth form, music at Key Stage 3 and ICT in Years 10 and 11. Further, there are some health and safety issues that need to be addressed.
71. The school development plan is good and an effective working document. It helps to ensure a clear direction to the school's work and includes appropriate levels of detail in setting out how identified priorities are to be met. It provides an effective framework for evaluating the success of initiatives taken to improve the quality of education provided. The plan sets whole-school priorities and targets. All departments make a studied and formal contribution to the planning process that is effective in raising awareness of whole-school issues as well as focusing teachers on the role that they and their subjects have to play. The improvements in planning demonstrate a positive response to the previous inspection.
72. The process of financial planning is good. The budget is constructed carefully and the governing body is fully involved in the process and makes a valuable contribution to the decisions made. Spending is carefully controlled and is effective in ensuring that the principles of best value are applied in the school's use of resources. The governing body's finance committee has a very good awareness of the financial implications of meeting the planned priorities and it budgets accordingly. Financial administration is good and day-to-day accounting procedures are efficient. There is a regular programme of internal and external audit and the school responds positively to the auditor's reports. The school is administered effectively and daily routines operate unobtrusively.
73. Resources are satisfactory overall and are used effectively to support pupils' learning in most subjects. Resources for learning have improved since the last inspection, when a key issue in the report was to develop a planned programme for improved resource provision, especially for information technology and the library. There are good central facilities for the teaching of ICT and the overall ratio of computers to pupils has risen to match the national average. Resources are also good in history and art and design. However, there are still some shortages of books and equipment in science, physical education and music, and resources for design and technology are unsatisfactory. Plans are well in hand for developing the library into an independent learning centre which will have community use. The school's use of new technology is currently unsatisfactory. However, both hardware and software problems have been successfully addressed and the school is in a position to make significant improvements, for example in using assessment information about pupils to inform teachers' detailed planning.

74. The school is well staffed. A significant number of teachers are required to teach subjects outside their specialism but this is not having an adverse effect upon the standards achieved by the pupils. In total 43 teachers are in post, two of whom are part-time. They represent a good mixture of experienced longer serving teachers, recently appointed experienced staff and those more recently qualified. Very good arrangements are in place for the induction of new staff, including newly qualified teachers, who receive very good formal and informal support from the school. The continuous professional development of staff is suitably focused upon the priorities identified in the school and departmental development plans. A policy for performance management has recently been adopted and plans are now in place for staff training and implementation. The school is well served by the administrative staff, who provide effective support to school managers. Technical support is also good. Overall the staff are well qualified and trained and this makes a significant contribution to the good quality of teaching and the standards achieved by the pupils.
75. Accommodation is adequate. It is well managed and organised, clean and relatively free from graffiti. The recent refurbishment of the design and technology and art and design and craft areas has greatly improved accommodation in these subjects since the last inspection. There is now good provision for ICT, but it is not yet well used by all departments. The library is still in need of upgrading in order to enhance its importance as a central resource for learning. Its use for lessons restricts free access. Accommodation for mathematics and in one of the science laboratories is unsatisfactory. The gymnasium is well maintained and clean but the storage of chairs in the hall make it unsafe for some physical education activities. There is a good swimming pool, which is well used by the school and the local community. The sixth form block provides a good base for older students but is too small for the number of students.
76. The reception area is welcoming but accommodation for administration is limited. The school has plans to refurbish this area. There is no medical room. There is a shortage of storage space in religious education. The school has a satisfactory rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment. Display, especially in the corridors, is at present uninspiring and does little to enhance the learning environment. School security is very good.
77. The coordinator for special educational needs manages her responsibilities very well and gives very clear educational direction to the work in this area. She is strongly supported by the designated governor, who brings experience and commitment to her work. Resources in terms of learning materials and equipment are good, but in terms of the number of support staff they are unsatisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory at the present time because there is no base for learning support. However, a secure learning support area with an office and adequate storage has been included within the planned extensions to the school library. Statutory requirements in respect of pupils with statements of special educational need are met. The limited funds available for pupils with special educational needs are well used. The school has made satisfactory improvements in this aspect of its work since the previous inspection. The Code of Practice has now been implemented effectively throughout the school and individual education plans are now well coordinated and regularly monitored. There is now a specific policy for meeting the needs of high achieving pupils. Learning materials that meet pupils' individual needs are being used effectively in most subject departments.
78. The leadership and management of the school are very effective in maintaining established high standards. They ensure that pupils in Years 7 to 11 make very good progress in their achievements in relation to their prior attainment and that this rate of

progress is continued in the sixth form. The sixth form provision is cost-effective. Staff throughout the school are well deployed and resources are satisfactory. The amount of the school's income expended on staff costs and resources is in line with the average. Unit costs per pupil are above average. The specific grants allocated to the school are managed efficiently. The school gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

79. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. Improve the use of ICT throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that all subjects fully meet the National Curriculum requirement to use ICT;
 - improving the provision of ICT, so that it is available to all throughout the school;
 - completing the necessary training for all teachers so that they can use ICT skills when teaching their subjects.(Paras. 38, 156)
2. Improve the quality of teaching and learning in music by:
 - planning and teaching to schemes of work that ensure that the National Curriculum programmes of study are fully covered;
 - assessing pupils in relation to the attainment levels in the National Curriculum and using the information to guide teachers' planning.(Paras. 175, 180)
3. Improve the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by:
 - identifying the good practice that exists in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in some departments and extend this to all subject areas;
 - adopting more systematic and consistent approaches to documenting the work of subject departments.(Para. 68)
4. Improve the quality of the annual reports to parents and relate pupils' progress to National Curriculum levels of attainment.
(Para. 59)
5. Use the information available from assessing pupils' attainment to set targets for further improvement in Years 7 to 11.
(Para. 59)
6. Address areas in the school's work where statutory requirements are not fully met by:
 - providing more opportunities for teaching ICT to all pupils;
 - providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils;
 - providing opportunities for religious education for all students in the sixth form;
 - implementing fully the policy on health and safety.(Paras. 38, 50, 70, 156, 197)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	162
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	32	36	24	1	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y 7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	459	137
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	28	4

Special educational needs	Y 7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	86	5

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	38

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	35	55	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
<u>Numbers</u> of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	30	26	24
	Girls	48	47	45
	Total	78	73	69
<u>Percentage</u> of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	87 (94)	81 (84)	77 (77)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
<u>Percentage</u> of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	72 (70)	49 (63)	37 (38)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	33	26	21
	Girls	52	49	44
	Total	85	75	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	94 (97)	83 (89)	72 (86)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	78 (78)	55 (64)	43 (56)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2000	51	38	89

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	39	51	51
	Girls	36	38	38
	Total	75	89	89
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	84 (76)	100 (97)	100 (97)
	National	47 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	55
	National	38 (38)

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 pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/A
	National		

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	2000	29	35	64

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	19.7	21.9	20.9	4.8	3.8	4.1
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	5	100
	National		73.2

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	N/A
	National		76.5

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	7
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	444
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y 7 – Y 13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y 7 – Y 13

Total number of education support staff	6.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	161

Deployment of teachers: Y 7 – Y 13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.7
-----------------------------------------------------------	------

Average teaching group size: Y 7 – Y 13

Key Stage 3	24.1
Key Stage 4	20.2
Post - 16	16.8

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	1538789
Total expenditure	1556938
Expenditure per pupil	2766
Balance brought forward from previous year	-5755
Balance carried forward to next year	-23904

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	595
Number of questionnaires returned	122

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	37	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	43	4	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	51	18	4	0
The teaching is good.	38	53	5	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	43	21	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	38	7	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	27	52	18	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	41	4	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	44	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	39	20	15	5

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

ENGLISH

80. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds, the pupils' standards were very high in comparison with the national average. Standards were also very high in comparison with schools with pupils of similar backgrounds. The proportion of pupils gaining level six or above was in the top five per cent of similar schools. This represents excellent achievement, since these pupils entered the school with levels of attainment broadly in line with the national average. There was no difference between the performance of the boys and the girls, which is against the national trend. Pupils do better in English than in mathematics and science, and standards have been consistently well above the national average for the past four years. Since the last inspection, the rate of improvement has been slightly higher than the national trend.
81. The results of the GCSE examination in both English language and English literature were well above average, and the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades of A* and A in those examinations was very high. This represents very good achievement in relation to their National Curriculum test results two years ago. Pupils do significantly better in English and in literature than in most other subjects.
82. In the sixth form, results at GCE A-level in English literature were well above average in 2000. There has been a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection, with the 1999 results being exceptionally high, reflecting the nature of that cohort. The proportion of students gaining A-B grades has increased.
83. The quality of work seen during the inspection reflects these high levels of attainment. Pupils who have special educational needs also achieve as well as their peers in relation to their prior attainment, as confirmed by their successful performance in examinations at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
84. The standards of speaking and listening are above average throughout the school. Pupils of all levels of attainment are articulate and confident speakers. By the end of Year 9, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and, in discussion they listen to each other, responding thoughtfully and constructively. For instance, when discussing how to stage a scene in 'Macbeth', some lower attaining pupils clearly expressed original and practical ideas for the director's notes. In Year 11, some high attaining pupils explained very cogently what they had learned about other cultures from their reading of stories and poetry and the enrichment they had gained from a study of literature.
85. Standards of reading are well above average throughout the school. By the age of 14, pupils read a range of texts with understanding and insight. However, although pupils understand what they read very well, the skill of reading aloud is not so well developed. Reading tends to be rushed and lacking in expression. Nevertheless, they respond sensitively to the language that the writer uses and they are confident in using the technical language of literature when analysing a passage. For instance, when studying the soliloquy 'The Seven Ages of Man', higher attaining pupils could recognise the metaphor 'bubble reputation', and explain its meaning. Middle and lower attaining pupils could understand the symbolism of the apparitions in 'Macbeth'. By the age of 16, pupils reading more complex texts show a good ability to pick up inferences, and recognise and evaluate authors' techniques. For example, in an excellent analysis of Pyramus and Thisbe, a higher attaining pupil showed a clear understanding of Shakespeare's

techniques and purpose in his use of satire in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. In the sixth form, students achieve very well. They have very advanced analytical skills and form their own opinions about, and responses to, literature.

86. Standards of writing are well above average. Literary essays are particularly well developed. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a good grasp of the conventions of writing this kind of essay. For instance, in a study of how suspense, tension and a sense of horror are created in 'Macbeth', pupils use quotations aptly to support their comments. The work of higher and middle attaining pupils is accurate and fluent, and shows a wide vocabulary. The work of a small minority of pupils is just below average because of spelling and punctuation errors, but work is generally well presented. In Year 11, pupils produce work of high quality. The work of the higher attaining pupils is impressive in its maturity and the richness of the vocabulary used. In literary essays, pupils use quotations concisely to support analytical comments, and original writing is accurate and lively. Lower attaining pupils use complex sentence structures and vocabulary, their spelling and punctuation are about average, and work is usually well presented. A persuasive letter on animal testing was well argued, but it lacked paragraphs. In the sixth form, writing is of the highest order: confident, mature and perceptive.
87. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school. The English teachers are well informed of their needs, and support them well in the classroom. The good results that these pupils achieve in examinations are a testimony to the progress they have made.
88. The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. Because pupils respond well to the effective teaching, learning is also good and they achieve very well. Pupils show a good level of interest and pride in their work and their behaviour is very good. This not only reflects credit on the pupils, but also on the way teachers enthuse and motivate the pupils. A strength in the teaching is the very good subject knowledge that the teachers have, especially for teaching in the sixth form. This means that pupils and students are always stretched intellectually; they gain a breadth of knowledge about literature and are very well prepared for the examinations. Teachers always expect work of good quality, and take every opportunity to expand and develop pupils' vocabulary and understanding. For instance, in a lesson in Year 10 which focused on improving the opening of a piece of original writing, some well chosen examples led to a lively discussion on clichés and various writing strategies. Because teachers have high expectations, all pupils, including those who are gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, learn well. Teachers make this possible by modifying work, or by giving tasks that are sufficiently open-ended to allow pupils to work at their own levels. During lessons, teachers continually offer support to pupils whilst they are working. Gifted and talented pupils often have extension work available to them. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, the quality of the marking is inconsistent. At GCSE and A-level, marking is good. It is constructive and helpful; but this is not always the case lower down the school. Often, pupils have insufficient knowledge of how to improve their work, or how their work compares with national standards.
89. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They also show positive attitudes in their lessons and these good attitudes to learning make a very important contribution to pupils' achievement. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are also very good. The result is an ethos in lessons where pupils expect to work hard and teachers are easily able to encourage them to their best efforts. A good climate for learning is engendered and pupils benefit by making very good progress.

90. The department is well managed. The head of department provides good leadership to a team who are committed to improving standards. He has given excellent support to teachers who are not English specialists, which has ensured that standards have not been compromised. The work of pupils is monitored regularly, although the monitoring of teaching has not yet been formalised. Both the head of department and his staff have given extra time to examination classes out of lessons to mitigate the problem of too little curriculum time. This has led to improved results. However, the time given to English on the curriculum is insufficient to provide the breadth of curriculum that one usually finds. For instance, insufficient time is given to drama or to private, wider reading in Years 8 and 9 because of the time constraints. In Year 11, although examination results are very good, the effect of having English only twice a week is felt more keenly by lower attaining pupils who have difficulty in coping with the demands of both English language and English literature, and therefore are unable to be entered for both examinations.
91. Since the last inspection, the department has made good progress in those areas which are within their power to improve: attainment in examinations has continued to improve; opportunities for group discussions and for drama have been built into the curriculum, despite insufficient time; book stocks for wider reading have improved; there has been some improvement in accommodation.

Key Skills - Literacy

92. There is an inconsistent approach to the development of literacy across all subjects, although there is some good practice in the school. Nevertheless, standards of literacy are high and make a significant contribution to pupils' attainment in subjects such as history and geography. A strong feature of their oral skills is the way in which pupils use the technical language of the subjects confidently and accurately. They are encouraged to do so right from Year 7. For instance, in mathematics, key words are displayed in classrooms and on blackboards. In discussion of Oliver Cromwell in Ireland, Year 9 pupils talk in terms of its 'strategic value' to England, whilst in English, they use the terminology of literature, such as 'soliloquy', 'blank verse' and 'metaphor' with ease. In design and technology, Year 11 pupils discuss 'ergonomics' and 'anthropometrics' when re-designing handles on saucepans. In most subjects, pupils are given opportunities for developing their ideas through discussion, but in science these opportunities are missed. However, very good listening skills are in evidence in science in the written evaluations following an experiment in physics.
93. There are many opportunities for pupils to write well-planned assignments, whether a balanced argument in a history topic on the Second World War, an extended study in geography, or evaluations in design and technology. In mathematics, Year 11 pupils explain their ideas of problem solving very well. In history, pupils develop a range of writing skills, including personal responses, such as writing a letter home as a soldier in the First World War. Pupils retrieve information from textbooks and from the Internet, and use it effectively in their writing, showing a good standard of reading, and good study skills. In religious education, pupils are encouraged to read aloud, as are lower attaining pupils in mathematics, but in some subjects, such as science, opportunities for developing this skill are missed.

MATHEMATICS

94. In the Year 2000 national tests for 14 year olds, results were well above the national average. This represents very good achievement for these pupils as they progressed through Years 7 to 9. Results are well above average in comparison with those of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. These high standards have been maintained at this level for the last five years whilst national trends have been rising. Girls achieved significantly better than boys. Pupils' results in mathematics were similar to those in science but not as good as those in English.
95. In the Year 2000 GCSE mathematics examinations, the proportion of pupils passing at grade C or higher was well above the national average and reflects good achievement and progress through Years 10 and 11. The performance of girls was significantly better than that of boys. All pupils earned a grade and results in general were among the strongest in the school. Results continue to improve each year. In the 2000 GCE A-level examinations, results were above the national average. The number of students achieving A-B grades was slightly above the national average. Students perform well in mathematics compared with many other subjects in the school.
96. Standards as observed during the inspection mirror those of the 2000 examination results and are well above average throughout the school. The higher attaining pupils in Year 9 are working at National Curriculum levels 6 and 7 and have a good understanding of the shape of graphs for algebraic equations. In Year 7 they can recall facts about angles and can use them confidently to find angles in shapes. Year 8 pupils are able to use formulae to calculate areas of triangles and parallelograms. Pupils of average attainment are working at levels 5 and 6. They are able to convert fractions such as five eighths into decimals and use percentages confidently. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9, however, have difficulty with the concepts of averages and, in Year 8, have not yet developed a clear understanding of metric measures.
97. In Year 11, the higher attaining pupils are working towards targets of A* and A in the GCSE examinations. They have a good understanding of trigonometry and can use the cosine rule to find sides and angles in triangles. Average attaining pupils have a good understanding of the shape of graphs for algebraic equations. In Year 10, they have a very good understanding of the concepts of transformations. Lower attaining pupils cope well with numbers although they have difficulty with algebra. Their spatial awareness is not yet well developed though their data-handling skills are better. Overall numeracy levels are above average at the age of 16.
98. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers, who use appropriate tasks. Gifted and talented pupils are given activities that challenge them to apply their knowledge. As a result, all of these pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. Provision for them is good through the department's arrangements for setting pupils into groups of similar levels of attainment. Achievement in mathematics is very good across the age range as a result of good teaching and the good attitudes of pupils to their work. The rate of progress made by both boys and girls is not significantly different.
99. In the sixth form, students in the GCE A-level groups make good progress. Very good teaching together with a clear interest by students ensures that they build well upon previous knowledge. In Year 13 work in mechanics, students have a good understanding of motion and friction. In statistics, students can use probability distributions confidently to solve problems. In Year 12, students are beginning to

establish a good understanding of calculus, although algebraic skills are not yet developed well enough for some students.

100. The teaching in the department is good. It is very good in the sixth form. About two thirds of the teaching is good or very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The good teaching is reflected in good learning and is having a significant impact on improving standards by the end of Year 9 and improving GCSE results. The good knowledge of the subject which teachers have ensures that they are able to explain concepts and skills clearly and this leads to good learning. The planning of lessons is generally good and good links are made between lessons. Appropriate activities are usually provided to increase pupils' understanding. Teachers' expectations are high, which results in very good behaviour by pupils and well-presented work in books. Few books were seen in which the pupils' work was not well presented. From an early point in their school careers, pupils establish good learning habits
101. Teaching methods are usually appropriate, though too often the teaching is driven by the use of the textbook. As a result the pace of some lessons is slow. The questioning of pupils is usually good though it does not always explore well enough what pupils already know and understand about the topic covered. Teachers usually manage pupils well and ensure that they concentrate on their work and a good learning atmosphere is created in lessons. Homework is used effectively to build on what pupils have learned, though often it is not challenging enough. Teaching in the sixth form sets high expectations for students, which results in students being well motivated. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory, however. Their work is not marked frequently enough and few comments are provided in books to inform pupils about what they need to do to improve.
102. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. Pupils behave very well and usually concentrate well during lessons. They listen attentively while teachers are talking and are usually eager to contribute to discussions. Good relationships exist between teachers and pupils. Pupils are keen to learn and appear interested in their work. When asked to work together they share ideas well. As a result, pupils achieve well and make very good progress overall.
103. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The many strengths outweigh some weaknesses that exist. However, there are a number of areas where improvements need to be made. For example, although assessment procedures are satisfactory, better use can be made of available data to set targets for individual pupils, and marking is not consistent. The system for monitoring teaching in the department is not clear and, the department's handbook does not provide sufficient information about how the department works. Not enough emphasis is placed on using the textbooks as a resource to complement other sources, and opportunities for developing problem-solving skills and mental arithmetic skills need to be clearly identified. The quality of the reports is unsatisfactory. Not enough attention has yet been given to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in Year 7.
104. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved. Problem-solving skills are better. There is little evidence of underachievement in Years 10 and 11. However, the quality of marking has not improved nor has the monitoring of teaching and learning. Access to the use of computers to support learning is still difficult.

Key Skills: Numeracy

105. In dealing with the everyday demands of numeracy the competence of pupils is above average by the age of 16. Although there is no school numeracy policy, and most subjects do not plan well enough for developing basic numeracy skills, pupils show above average levels of numeracy in their work in subjects. In science, pupils are able to apply their skills well to measuring small weights and in GCE A-level biology students show high levels of accuracy when measuring the effects of surface area on enzymes. In design and technology, pupils use measurement effectively and accurately when cutting materials. Graphical skills are good. In geography and science, pupils are able to draw confidently a range of graphs. In design and technology they make good use of graphs to represent the results of surveys. Data-handling skills are good. In geography, pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good sense of information presented numerically and graphically. Spatial concepts are well developed. In art and design, pupils show a good understanding of enlargement and perspective.

SCIENCE

106. Standards in science are well above average. In 2000 at the end of Year 9, the pupils' average points score was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or higher was well above the national average as was the proportion of those achieving level 6 or above. The performance of pupils in comparison with that of pupils in similar schools was well above average. The level of performance over the last three years has always been above the national trend. At Key Stage 3 girls achieve at higher levels than boys. On entry to the school these pupils had average levels of attainment in science, so the raising of attainment to well above average by the end of Year 9 represents very good achievement and demonstrates very good progress. Performance in science is not as high as in English, but is broadly in line with attainment in mathematics.
107. At the end of Year 11, GCSE double award science results in 2000 were above the national average at grades A*-C and 100 per cent of entrants gained a grade between A* and G. In single award science, results for A*-C were above average and all entrants achieved a grade. Girls outperformed boys in double award science in terms of numbers of grades A*-C obtained. At GCE A-level, results in biology were above the national average as were results in physics whilst results in chemistry were below the national average. Results were in line with previous levels of achievement and in accord with predictions made of students' performances.
108. In work seen and lessons observed during inspection, levels of attainment mirror those shown by Year 9 National Curriculum tests, GCSE and GCE A-level results. Attainment overall throughout the school is well above average and very high standards are maintained. For example, a higher attaining pupil at Key Stage 3 planned and carried out very well an investigation for the release of carbon dioxide as rocks are treated with acid. All pupils' recording of experimental work was carried out to very high standards. In practical work pupils operated safe working procedures to produce samples of salts and recorded work accurately. A lower achieving pupil recognised bones and structures on a rabbit and a human skeleton picture in a book and used this knowledge to label a diagram of a human skeleton correctly. A few of these pupils could explain the functions of pectoral and pelvic girdles, but their work was not presented with the same high standards seen in other groups.
109. In Years 10 and 11, pupils use scientific knowledge and understanding to plan the use of appropriate strategies in investigation, taking into account the need to produce reliable evidence to justify a prediction. For example, they understood the need for fair

testing as they investigated the resistance of a wire as length increases, producing a very high level of work. A group of middle achieving pupils were able to investigate rates of action of enzymes on starch using iodine as an indicator. They successfully investigated the effect of different concentrations of enzyme and were able to suggest methods to find out about the effect of temperature on enzyme reaction rate. There is a good level of discussion in class, and standards of recording are high. A lower attaining group of pupils engaged in investigating resistance and found that the graph of voltage against current should be a straight line. Most obtained accurate results but about three quarters of the class still did not understand the meaning of the terms voltage and current. In the sixth form, students in a physics lesson demonstrated good understanding of electrical transformers and their standards of work in recording of investigations are very high.

110. Many pupils show evidence of an ability to reach the higher grades as they discuss their work, especially in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs make the same very good progress as other pupils in their set. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys or girls. Gifted pupils are adequately challenged at the levels appropriate to the highest grades.
111. The teaching overall is very good, but a greater proportion is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. A small proportion of the teaching observed in the sixth form was excellent. Features of the very good teaching include effective planning and preparation. Teachers' expectations of pupils are very high and this results in a very high degree of challenge in the best lessons which impacts very positively on learning. Very good management of pupils, strategies used in seating pupils in laboratories and positive disciplinary techniques are used well as positive aids to very good teaching and learning. Some good marking practices encourage pupils and help them to improve as does the use of effective homework. Ongoing assessment of very good quality is used to vary the pace of lessons to the benefit of pupils' learning. Some of the impact of very good teaching is reflected in the pupils' work rate, which is very often high. Pupils are often challenged by the tasks set and there is an increase in their independence in learning.
112. The rate of progress in learning is well above average throughout the age range. For example, at all stages pupils acquire, understand and confidently use new scientific language as they learn. Very good personal development takes place, confidence and self-esteem both grow as progress proceeds apace, and independence of thought emerges. Pupils make very good progress in a wide range of investigation skills, which lead to the study of real science. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is very good. Where teaching is not so effective pupils are noisy and take time to settle and there is inconsistent use of the discipline code. On occasion, activities are not very challenging nor have objectives been clearly shared with pupils.
113. Standards of behaviour are very good overall and attitudes are excellent in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are very lively and work in a very happy productive atmosphere, showing enjoyment of success and effective learning. A thoroughly academic atmosphere prevails in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form; pupils behave in a pleasant and relaxed manner but continue working very hard. Students in the sixth form are very attentive and think hard about their work.
114. The management of the department is satisfactory, but there are some weaknesses. There are no job descriptions to clearly define delegated responsibilities. The preparation of a science department handbook showing common areas of working is

required to increase effectiveness of the science team in improving standards, for example in preparation of coursework tasks. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not carried out formally. The curriculum does not fulfil the requirements for the teaching of ICT. However, overall there has been a satisfactory response to the issues from the last inspection. Assessment procedures have improved and pupils' progress is regularly reviewed to good effect; there was no evidence seen of underachievement during the inspection. Standards of teaching are now very good and standards overall are very good.

ART AND DESIGN

115. The attainment of pupils in art and design at the end of Year 9 is well above the national average. The results of teacher assessments in 2000 show that over 90 per cent of pupils are at or above the national expectation. These assessments compare favourably with those from similar schools. The number of pupils attaining A*-C in GCSE examination grades has been at or above 90 per cent over the past four years. This is well above the national average. Girls do better in art and design than boys. When compared with the results in the other subjects in school those in art and design are the highest. All pupils have gained at least a pass grade in the past four years. Attainment in GCE A-level has been above the national averages for A and B grades over the past three years. Results in 2000 were again well above average, three of the four students gaining a grade A. All students gained a pass grade. Results in the past three years have been at similarly high levels.
116. In work seen during the inspection, standards in art and design at the end of Year 9 were well above average and matched the teacher assessments. Pupils can observe closely and draw textured effects using light and shade to good effect. These studies enhance pupils' concepts of space. They experiment with direct observational drawings to understand the techniques and advantages of using observation only. They have effective lessons in the use of ICT for generating patterns and collage and for manipulating images in design; this work is also of a very good standard.
117. Standards at the end of Year 11 are very high and reflect the high standards achieved in the latest GCSE results. Pupils on the full and the short GCSE courses have very good drawing and painting skills. Work is particularly good in achieving tone and texture, and ranges from the bold and vibrant to the soft and subtle in the use of colour as appropriate for the ideas being presented. Pupils respond in a lively and creative manner to inspiration from research using a wide range of techniques and materials. Work in textiles and embroidery, collage, clay modelling and sculpture is impressive. There are exquisite compositions in pattern in the work of pupils in Year 10. Very good use is made of ICT for research and for manipulating images. Research is done in depth and contributes well to literacy skills.
118. Students in Years 12 and 13 are preparing for their final GCE A/S and A-level examinations. They respond to topics such as 'My Surroundings' and 'The Human Form in Movement' in imaginative ways that are highly individual. They research the work of the appropriate artists for information and for inspiration. This is done to very good depth. Responses are impressive in painting, collage, clay modelling and computer-aided design.
119. Pupils achieve very well overall, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where achievement is excellent. Pupils make very good progress throughout all years. They are taught the skills and techniques of drawing and painting formally and to a high level from Year 7

onwards and their work is consequently of a high quality. They are taught to examine the power and use of line and how to achieve texture and three-dimensional effects using light and shade. All pupils, including higher and lower attaining pupils, get individual support and attention in all lessons and all make very good progress. Many pupils on the special needs register have impressive standards in art and design.

120. The very high standards and pupils' high levels of achievement are directly related to very good and often excellent teaching. There are excellent features in almost all lessons. Teachers work together as a team, contributing jointly to the planning. They have very good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of art and design and are creative and highly imaginative. They present pupils with work that is lively and interesting and give the pupils good support by illustrations and demonstrations to show what can be achieved. They show pupils how to research topics in depth and encourage them to be analytical about what they have discovered. They are able to instil confidence in their pupils that enables them to experiment in imaginative ways. Teachers have very good class management skills and create a calm working atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate.
121. Behaviour is excellent and pupils show very positive attitudes towards their lessons in art and design. As a result there is invariably a very good climate for learning in the classroom. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with each other and with their teachers and this is a great help in their personal development. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
122. Leadership in the subject is very good. Documentation is very good and is well illustrated. Teachers evaluate their work and see how it can be developed. Very good records are kept. Pupils' work is continually assessed in almost all lessons and pupils are fully involved in their own assessments to good effect in improving their learning. The teachers are resourceful in generating a range of materials that can be used in art and design; these include textiles and wood. They maintain close links with the community and receive good support for the subject. The teachers have very good skills in the use of ICT and the subject has its own web-site. There has been a very positive response to the previous inspection and an improvement in the standard of pupils' work and in the quality of assessment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. At the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessments indicated that standards of attainment in 2000 for Year 9 pupils were broadly in line with the average in the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or above. In 2000, the proportion of pupils obtaining GCSE grades A*-C was well above the national average. Results in the course in food and graphic products were very high; in the course in resistant materials results were just above the national average. All the pupils entered achieved the pass grades A*-G, which is above the level of results achieved nationally. Overall the pupils achieved results in design and technology at levels just below those in their other examinations. The attainment of girls at grades A*-C is higher than that of the boys. Results in 1998 and 1999, were similar to those achieved in 2000. There were no entries for GCE A-level in 1999 or 2000.
124. Attainment at the age of 14, as observed during the inspection, is in line with the national average. This represents good progress as many pupils enter the school in Year 7 below the average, and in Years 7 to 9 pupils have only one double lesson for their design and technology studies, which is about half the usual time allocation in schools nationally. The majority of pupils have skills in making that are above the national average in a range of materials by the end of Year 9. For example, in a Year 9 resistant materials lesson, pupils making a moneybox for a young child had accurately constructed and assembled the box, ensuring that it was square. Graphical skills are sound for all pupils, but the girls' design skills are better developed than those of the boys, showing greater depth in their research and analysis. Higher attaining pupils have good levels of subject knowledge and understanding and their technical vocabulary is secure. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs have greater difficulty in designing and evaluating work. Their making skills are better developed.
125. Standards of work at the end of Year 11 are above average. The progress made by pupils of all levels of attainment is good, building effectively on the firm foundations laid in Years 7 to 9. Practical making in all materials continues to be the strongest element of the subject for the majority of pupils and is of good quality. Pupils handle tools and materials with care and precision. Subject knowledge and the technical vocabulary which underpins it are very good for middle and higher attaining pupils. For example, in a Year 10 food lesson, pupils were studying the 'cold chain' which delivers quality food from factory to table. Pupils demonstrated a very secure understanding of hazard analysis and critical control points in food production, its storage and transportation. Graphical communication skills are good. Design skills are well above average for the middle and higher attaining girls and the higher attaining boys. For the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, practical making continues to be better developed than these other areas of the subject. The rate of progress of girls and boys is not significantly different. Throughout the two key stages, higher attaining pupils and those with other special needs make good progress, in line with their peers.
126. In the sixth form, standards of work are broadly in line with the national averages. Progress from their GCSE courses has been at least satisfactory for the majority of pupils in further developing design, graphical, communication and making skills. Their subject specific knowledge and understanding are secure. For example in a Year 12 lesson, the pupils had undertaken a product analysis exercise. They indicated good levels of knowledge and skill in the way they developed a design brief and specification for the improvement of some household products, for example torches

and saucepans. The pupils identified the key design criteria and considered well aspects such as safety, ergonomics, materials and value for money.

127. Throughout the school, pupils handle tools, equipment, machines and materials with increasing confidence and skill, and work with due regard for safety and hygiene. Graphical communication skills are progressively developed and pupils use a range of drawing and projection methods to model, record and communicate their design ideas. Progress with design skills is very good for the higher attaining pupils, who undertake research, analyse, draw up specifications and evaluate with increasing depth and rigour. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment especially in making.
128. The quality of teaching is consistently good and is a strength of the department. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons effectively. In the lessons observed, the teachers used a range of methods and learning activities appropriate to the pupils' levels of attainment. For example, in a Year 7 food lesson, the pupils were designing and making a range of products for a children's party including hats, invitations and name labels based upon cartoon characters. The teacher was using her very good subject knowledge to give support of high quality to individual pupils, advising, questioning and setting high expectations. Explanations were effective in focusing the pupils' attention on the key points of the task and extending the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Good learning support materials and appropriate resources were provided, and the teacher had set extension tasks for the more able pupils. The lesson concluded with the setting of an appropriate homework. Such teaching approaches ensured that pupils worked hard and showed high levels of interest in the tasks set, leading to a high pace of learning with good productivity in lessons. Teachers give high levels of individual support to the pupils, often including accurate and informed feedback which makes an impression on the pupils, encourages them to value their efforts and raises their level of motivation. In some lessons the teachers shared the aims of the lessons with the pupils so that they were aware of what they should achieve by the end, but this was not a consistent practice. Rarely did the teachers review the progress made at the end of the lesson with the pupils, or set time targets for the completion of intermediate tasks, and this contributed to a loss of pace in some lessons.
129. The pupils have very positive attitudes to their work in design and technology. They listen very attentively to their teachers' explanations and respond readily to their questions. They concentrate well and are interested in the tasks set. Pupils respect the equipment and resources provided for their use. Classroom routines are well established and teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and ensure a very good working atmosphere in lessons. Relationships are very good and pupils collaborate very effectively when asked to work in pairs and groups.
130. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department gives a good lead and manages the department effectively. There is a clear direction for the further development of the subject and the development plan has appropriate priorities. The curriculum is monitored and amended when necessary to increase the level of challenge on pupils of all abilities. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum but the use of ICT needs to be further developed and more fully integrated into the schemes of work. The planning of the curriculum puts insufficient emphasis on the systematic development of design skills alongside those for making, and the tasks in Years 7 to 9 should be more varied in their length. The accommodation and facilities are good and displays of work celebrate achievement as well as set standards for all pupils to aspire to. Resources

for the subject are very low and the range and quantity of materials are restricted, and the department has to rely on donated materials to teach parts of the curriculum. This is having an impact on the quality of experiences the subject can offer the pupils and the standards of work achieved.

131. The department has made good progress since the last inspection and has addressed all the areas of concern. The quality of learning is now good in Years 7 to 9 and levels of attainment have been raised in all years. Graphical skills are at least satisfactory and often good for the majority of pupils. The quality of teaching is good across the department. All the accommodation has been significantly improved.

GEOGRAPHY

132. In 2000, teachers assessed the majority of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 as being above the national average. In the GCSE examination in 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C and A*-G grades was well above the national average and all achieved at least grade G. The proportion of pupils with A*-C grades in geography was below the average within the school. Girls' performance was better than boys and they all obtained at least a grade C. The results in 2000 were significantly higher than those in previous years and were well above those expected on the basis of pupils' end of Year 9 assessments. Overall, results have improved since the last inspection. There were no students undertaking the GCE A-level course last year.
133. Standards of pupils' work seen during the inspection were above average for pupils age 14, average for those age 16 and above what would be expected based on their earlier attainment. In the sixth form, standards are above average. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress through Years 7 to 11.
134. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. As they move from year to year, they systematically extend their geographical knowledge of places, develop their skills through planned research and fieldwork and are given regular opportunities to improve their understanding of how physical and human environments interact. They learn to conduct geographical enquiries with increasing independence as they get older and become more critical of the evidence they use and how they evaluate their own work. As a result, the quality of learning is good and by Year 11 it is very good. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils were able to explain what porous rocks were, which they had learnt previously, and how they influenced the flow of groundwater. In Year 9, pupils produced well-structured studies of a Mediterranean island, informed by extensive independent research. Pupils in Year 10 achieve high standards in their GCSE coursework, demonstrating very good decision-making skills in assessing the impact of the flooding on the human landscape. In Year 11, pupils build on their knowledge and understanding about places and make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are able to understand the abstract relationships between barometric pressure and wind velocity but they find it difficult to present their findings logically in writing. In Year 12, pupils interpret selected sources of data effectively, for example, when analysing the relationships between underlying geology and the varying gradients of a slope in order to draw valid conclusions.
135. By age 14, the majority of pupils show a good understanding of social and environmental issues in geography, such as the impact of economic change on the lives of people living in the Amazon basin and the resulting conflicts of interest. During Years 10 and 11, pupils improve their knowledge of social and environmental issues and develop a good understanding of how different geographical patterns might have developed in different places. In Year 12, pupils have a good knowledge of

how different social environments have been created, their associated effects on the local landscape and the different patterns and interactions that might occur within these environments.

136. The quality of teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. In the majority of lessons the teaching is good and in Years 10 and 11, it is now very good and is having a significant impact on pupils' progress. Particular strengths are teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject as shown by their preparation and the use of a wide range of examples and questions to extend the quality of pupils' learning. They have high expectations of what they want their pupils to know and be able to do which is evident in the pace of the lessons. They plan well, using a range of activities and resources, many of which they have produced themselves, to challenge and encourage pupils at all levels of attainment. In a Year 11 lesson, short video clips were shown and in the breaks the key points were reinforced by the teacher creating a sense of the fear and wonder at the destructive force of a hurricane that was felt by all the pupils. The pupils were led through a variety of activities at a brisk pace, using a wide range of resources that enabled them to learn in different ways as the teacher used different questioning techniques to check their understanding so that all were able to learn effectively. As a result, all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, quickly absorbed new knowledge and developed an understanding about how the physical environment can shape human activity.
137. Teachers manage the pupils well, creating a good working environment as a result of a good knowledge of the pupils as individuals and mutual respect. Pupils respond confidently and responsibly and, as a result, they learn well. The teaching methods allow pupils with special educational needs to contribute and learn effectively while higher attaining pupils are given opportunities to present more detailed explanations and justify their conclusions. There are effective methods for assessing pupils' attainment at Key Stage 4 and in Year 12, but in Years 7 to 9 marking is less consistent. Older pupils have a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses but pupils are less secure in Years 7 to 9. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning and provide opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, but is not set consistently and the feedback from teachers does not necessarily lead to a direct improvement in learning.
138. Throughout the school, attitudes to learning are at least good and sometimes very good. The lessons are purposeful and are made interesting by the teachers with the result that all the pupils, of all levels of attainment, contribute well to the lessons. They apply themselves well in lessons, the majority concentrate hard throughout and, as a result of the teachers' high expectations, they make good progress. The relationships between pupils and with their teachers are good. Pupils work well together, show confidence and maturity in how they go about their studies and have respect for the achievements of others. The geographical investigations undertaken by pupils of all ages are a strength, reflecting individual initiative, research and personal commitment.
139. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The department monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum well and, as a result, has a good view of what needs to be done to improve. Planning is good and, as a result of highly effective action, improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly. Standards have improved within a very short timescale and GCSE examination results that were well below the national average are now above. The subject has been re-established

in the sixth form and more pupils have opted to study it in Year 10 than previously. The subject is well placed to improve further.

HISTORY

140. Attainment throughout the age range is well above the national average. Pupils' very good literacy skills make a significant contribution to their attainment in the subject. Teacher assessments in Year 9 are high in relation to national figures. The proportion of both boys and girls gaining grades A*-C at GCSE is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-G is above the national average. The performance of both boys and girls is better in history than in most other subjects in the school. At GCE A-level, the proportion of pupils gaining A and B grades is very high in comparison with the national average and the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-G is above the national average. In the last three years the pass rate at GCE A-level has been 100 per cent with a high proportion of pupils gaining grade A in each year.
141. On the evidence of the inspection, attainment at the age of 14 is well above the level expected nationally. High literacy skills are a significant characteristic of pupils' attainment. All pupils are confident in using appropriate terminology like 'bombardment' and 'artillery' whilst discussing military tactics before the Battle of the Somme. Their use of language is impressive, as when one higher attaining pupil referred to England's interest in Ireland in terms of its 'strategic' value during a lesson on Oliver Cromwell in Ireland, and another explained the French origin and meaning of the word 'villain' during a lesson on the Black Death. All pupils, including lower attainers, wrote reasoned explanations of why so many young men volunteered to join the British army in 1914; one pupil with special educational needs contributed well to a class discussion on the link between peer pressure and joining the army. Pupils' written work has strengths in both detail and structure; for example a higher attaining pupil summarised the reign of King John and wrote a well-reasoned conclusion on whether or not the title 'worst king' was fair.
142. Attainment at the age of 16 is also well above the national average. Again, high literacy skills are evident. In a lesson on the use of propaganda in the Second World War pupils discussed the different levels of meaning in puns used in a poster about Churchill and Hitler. Pupils are appropriately critical in their use of sources. They look carefully at the origin of each source and consider why it was produced. Lower attainers, including pupils with special educational needs, identify the limitations in sources, for example a lack of statistical information. All pupils show good literacy skills in writing about different sources and assessing their relative importance. Higher attainers are skilled in producing balanced arguments, for example in writing about whether America was justified in dropping the atomic bomb on Japan. In their writing all pupils show a variety of skills, for example in explaining Chamberlain's view of appeasement and in writing letters home from the perspective of a soldier in the First World War.
143. Attainment in the sixth form is well above the national average and standards are very high amongst high attainers. From their previous work students recall in detail working conditions in factories and the provisions of the 1833 Factory Act and its limitations. They critically compare sources that give conflicting views of factory conditions. In their interpretation of sources they explain the meaning conveyed in key words and phrases such as living in 'pestilential streets' and experiencing conditions that would disgrace a 'West Indian plantation'. In work on the French Revolution pupils are confident in their use of terms such as 'autocracy' and 'bourgeoisie'; they

use language well to draw conclusions and accurately convey the significance of change, with one pupil describing local government reform in terms of 'decentralisation' and another describing the shift of power in terms of the 'sovereignty of the people'. The standards achieved in personal studies are very high. Some pupils pursue their own research interests. All display very good research skills in their use of a wide range of sources. Well-reasoned conclusions are of a very high standard, with literacy skills again in evidence; in one example a study of Parnell concludes with a comment that he was 'corrupted by pride and power and this debasement dictated his actions and thus his political demise'.

144. The teaching is very good and some is excellent. Its great strength is a consistency of approach across the age range. The approach used is very effective in terms of its impact on learning. Teachers' secure knowledge is the key factor in ensuring that achievement is very good across the age range. Pupils make very good progress in developing the key skills of enquiry, interpretation and evaluation, and organisation and communication. The high standard of class discussion at the start of lessons is a key feature in that it very effectively consolidates previous learning. Pupils are encouraged to recall previous work and are then questioned in detail to clarify and extend their knowledge. This approach is well matched to the needs of all pupils, including higher and lower attainers. The approach used does not rely on volunteers but engages all pupils. Contributions from pupils are well used and teachers pose further questions to consolidate and extend the knowledge of individuals and groups. Writing activities are well used to consolidate understanding. In one example pupils in Year 7 were questioned on their previous knowledge of the Black Death, and were then encouraged to speculate on the outcomes from the point of view of those surviving. Through a series of questions and answers pupils acquired new knowledge and gained a good understanding of how a smaller population benefited. In another example Year 8 pupils were questioned on different interpretations of the massacre at Drogheda. They gained a very good understanding of bias and of the objectives of Cromwell's actions. In Year 9 pupils were given a clear explanation of British tactics at the Battle of the Somme; following discussion they then explained in writing why the tactics used were ineffective.
145. A similar approach is used in Years 10 to 13 with an emphasis on examination requirements during both discussion and written activities. Model answers are frequently quoted to move pupils beyond the requirements of a basic answer so that they aim for maximum marks. In one example a combination of studying sources and discussion enabled pupils to understand clearly the different roles that women fulfilled in the two World Wars and so meet examination requirements relating to this topic. In two examples in Years 12 and 13 very good use was made of students' prior knowledge on factory conditions in the 19th century and on the French Revolution. In both lessons the topic was comprehensively reviewed during discussion. The method was particularly effective and pupils participated fully in the discussion and took notes throughout. Source materials are very well used to constantly remind pupils of the value in terms of marks of different responses. The secure knowledge which characterises the great majority of the teaching is complemented by a number of other features. These include: a strong emphasis on developing literacy skills to interpret sources; careful planning including revision for examinations; very high expectations; an emphasis on methodology to gain maximum marks; the exemplary management of class discussion to involve all pupils; the very good use of assessment during writing activities in class to challenge pupils to achieve more. In only a very small minority of lessons the teaching lacks the very high level of challenge described above.

146. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are consistently very good and often excellent. Pupils are interested in the subject and are keen to pose their own questions; in one example, an introductory lesson on the Black Death was characterised by a large number of questions from pupils. Standards of concentration are very good and this is evident throughout the age range. Writing tasks are often set in the middle of lessons to consolidate discussion and pupils respond by undertaking these tasks with silent concentration. A striking feature of pupils' attitudes is their capacity for independent study and this is particularly apparent in the sixth form where students research topics in detail.
147. Leadership of the department is very good. There is a uniformity of approach to planning and teaching that has a very positive impact on standards achieved. There is a clear focus on addressing underachievement to ensure that all pupils achieve well. The high standards reported at the last inspection have been sustained and the issues of developing ICT and resources have been addressed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

148. Teacher assessments of the pupils' work at the age of 14 in ICT indicate that levels of attainment are very high and well above the national average. Over the last two years, 1999 and 2000, the assessments show that almost all pupils achieved level 5, and more than three-quarters attained level 6 or above. In GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in 2000 was well above the national average in the full course and above average in the short course. All pupils entered achieved pass grades, which is also above the nationally expected level. In 1998 and 1999, the results were above those gained in 2000 at the higher grades A*-C but overall, pupils consistently achieve high standards in the subject. Boys and girls are attaining at similar levels. The results achieved by the pupils in ICT are broadly in line with the their achievements in other subjects. At present there is no GCE A-level course.
149. The ICT skills of pupils when they start their course in Year 8 are broadly average. Standards improve considerably and by the end of Year 9 are well above the average. Pupils understand and use very effectively the menus and toolbars of a range of software, which enables them to develop, modify, edit and refine their work. Keyboard skills improve rapidly and pupils develop a good understanding of audience for their work and presentations. For example in a Year 9 lesson, the pupils were creating a series of slides on the topic of 'Myself' using 'powerpoint' software. Pupils had to consider the use of colour, layout and language and were merging images and text. In addition they made good use of the animation facility in the software to add interest to their presentations.
150. These strengths are also very evident in the work of the pupils in Years 10 and 11. The majority of pupils, both boys and girls, have very good skills, knowledge and understanding, and standards are well above average. They build effectively on the work done in the earlier years on databases and spreadsheets, using formulae to make calculations, and creating graphs and charts from the results obtained. In their work for GCSE, pupils show increasing levels of independence in their use of software, and make informed and appropriate choices in its use. In a Year 11 class the pupils were undertaking a series of tasks related to their examination assignment, based on the running of a sub-aqua club. They used information from a variety of sources and produced a range of documents for different purposes. They evaluated their work and used annotations to indicate the areas where improvements could be made. In Year 12, students are studying for the newly introduced AS-level course. They were developing a 'user guide' and were importing screens from 'Access'

software into 'Word' in order to illustrate the text of the guide. They showed a strong sense of audience and they understood the need to have a consistent layout to their work as well as appropriate levels of language. Their standard of work was at least in line with course requirements and higher for some pupils.

151. The quality of learning and rate of progress are very good through the Years 8 and 9 and pupils achieve very well. They quickly acquire a wide range of skills and knowledge as well as confidence in using the computer and a range of software. They apply these to a variety of tasks and work with high levels of interest and concentration. This very good progress is maintained in Years 10 and 11 by the pupils following their examination course, as they develop and improve their skills, knowledge and understanding. They have a secure technical vocabulary, evaluate their work with increasing rigour and can present their work to suit the intended audience. Throughout the two key stages, higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by the teachers with appropriate teaching material, and they make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Progress in the sixth form is good for the majority of pupils. They continue to consolidate their learning, concentrate well and work productively when given the responsibility for developing their own work.
152. The quality of teaching is very good and is a strength of the department. All the teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are able to explain skills in using software. They set appropriate and challenging tasks to engage the pupils with the learning. For example, Year 8 pupils working in small groups were using 'Publisher' software very effectively to produce a page each for a magazine or newsletter. They were merging text and images, importing some by the use of a scanner, onto the pages which they had laid out for themselves. Lessons are planned well and meet the needs of pupils of all abilities, including very high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers have very precise lesson objectives but rarely do they share them with the pupils or undertake an end of lesson review of the progress made. Explanations are clear, and questioning is used well to review earlier learning. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Classroom management and organisation are very good and routines are well established. Very good individual support is given to pupils, tailored to meet their specific needs and often including feedback to aid progress.
153. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very good. They behave very well in class and cooperate very effectively with each other when asked to work in groups or pairs. They apply themselves well to the tasks set, are keen to learn and are interested and enthusiastic about the subject. They give very good attention to teachers' explanations and instructions, and respect the equipment and resources provided for their use. Pupils concentrate well and are keen to improve their work. Their listening skills are good and they are eager to respond to the teachers' questions. Relationships between the pupils and with their teachers are very good.
154. The recently appointed head of department is maintaining the clear educational direction for the subject established by her predecessor. The development plan has appropriate priorities and other departmental documentation is good. There is effective monitoring of the curriculum, but as yet no formal monitoring of teaching. The assessment of pupils' work is good and the system is manageable for the staff. Specialist accommodation is very good and the staff are well qualified. Resources in the specialist rooms are very good but further investment is needed in subjects across the curriculum if they are to use ICT skills to enhance pupils' learning. The

curriculum is very good, having breadth and challenge in all years, and in Years 8 and 9 having tasks that are aimed at specific levels of the National Curriculum.

155. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. All pupils have an ICT course in Years 8 and 9, GCSE course numbers have increased and levels of attainment are now high in Years 8 to 11 and broadly average in the sixth form. The number of computers has been significantly improved, assessment is good and throughout the school teaching is very good. This is a very positive picture. However, pupils' opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum, though improved, are still too limited in some subjects.

Key Skills: Information and communication technology

156. Pupils have a taught course in ICT in Years 8 and 9 and within these lessons attain high levels of skill, well above those expected for their age. In Years 10 and 11 the subject is offered as an option either as a full GCSE course or as a short course, and again pupils achieve very high standards. However, the pupils in Year 7, and those in Years 10 and 11, who do not opt to take a GCSE course, only have opportunities to use computers in subjects across the curriculum. Although a number of subjects are now making increased use of ICT skills to enhance the learning of the pupils, not all subjects are meeting fully the National Curriculum requirement to use the key skill of ICT. Where subjects are using computers, pupils are given opportunities to apply their skills in a range of contexts and use the Internet and CD-ROMs as research tools. History uses ICT to research, communicate and handle information in all years and in most topics. For example, in Year 7 they research the Doomsday Book for the Liverpool area, and in Year 9 propaganda from the Second World War. In Year 7 art and design, pupils used ICT to produce repeating patterns, and in other years used designs generated on the computer. In geography, as part of their GCSE course, pupils undertake a unit of work on flooding and have to produce a newspaper report of the Lynmouth Floods using desktop publishing software and Internet research. Other subjects which use the Internet include English, modern foreign languages, design and technology, religious education and art and design. At present the school has three computer rooms, one of which departments can book. More departmental based hardware is needed if the required level of cross-curricular use of ICT is to be achieved. The school has not yet completed the training of all staff to give them the skills to teach ICT through their own subjects.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH AND GERMAN

157. Teacher assessments for the end of Year 9, based on performance in French, were below the national expectation in 2000, and further below than in previous years. Work seen during the inspection suggests that teacher assessments were a little severe: pupils are working in line with expectations for their age, and unreported results for German were much better. Girls did substantially better than boys.
158. Results at GCSE for 2000 in French show that, at the age of 16, the number of pupils gaining A*-C grades was very high compared with the national average. It was above average for German. In 1999 the figures for the two languages were the reverse of those for 2000. This inconsistency is tied to varying numbers each year taking the individual languages. This affects the range of ability of entries and the subsequent results. In general, results are improving and are better than at the previous inspection. In both languages girls did much better than boys. About one quarter of

candidates gained A* or A grades, indicating good performance by gifted linguists. In both languages all pupils gained a grade in the range A*-G, a measure of the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11. Results at GCE A-level for the small numbers of entries covered the full range of grades, but about one third gained A grades. These results are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.

159. Current standards of 14 year olds are average, but the achievement of higher and middle attaining pupils is unsatisfactory, especially when compared with their achievements in other subjects. This is because the work set in the mixed ability groups in which these pupils are taught in Years 7 to 9 is not matched closely enough to their ability. All pupils do the same work. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress within these classes. By the end of Year 9, higher and middle attaining pupils begin to experiment with new tenses and more complex structures in their speaking and writing, but few apply these confidently or consistently. They recall vocabulary well enough, however, to identify key details in extracts they hear or read. Lower attaining pupils also manage to communicate and understand messages, but are more prone to errors, especially in their spelling. A key factor inhibiting pupils' progress at this stage, is the low time allocated to individual languages, which has an adverse effect on the amount of vocabulary pupils learn and on opportunities to broaden their learning experiences. For example, there is no time for personal reading. There has been little change in this respect since the previous inspection, when the same point was made.
160. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are placed in sets based on prior attainment. Standards are good and they make good progress as they tackle work which extends them. They rapidly increase their vocabulary and their knowledge of tenses and grammatical rules. This enables the vast majority to speak confidently and at length on topics prescribed for GCSE. Pronunciation, intonation and accuracy are good, sometimes very good. Pupils write longer descriptions, produce accounts of holidays, write job applications and discuss interesting topics, such as health and fitness. The content is good and the quality of language is mature. Comprehension skills are well developed: pupils understand the main points and the overall meaning in extended passages of spoken and written French and German. Lower attaining pupils in Year 11 have modified targets, as they follow a course leading to the accreditation of short language units. The standard of their work is above the requirements for these units.
161. In the sixth form, progress is very good. Students build rapidly on their achievements at GCSE. Through their study of a stimulating range of social issues and of literature, they rapidly augment their vocabulary and knowledge of structure. As a result they participate significantly in discussions in the foreign language, and write freely and largely accurately, for example about drugs, smoking, the environment, the influence of television, and characters in chosen literary texts. They develop some independence in their work, for instance by using the Internet to search for information, using French and German web-sites. Reading and listening skills are very well developed.
162. The quality of both teaching and learning is good overall. It is largely satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, better in Years 10 and 11, and consistently good to excellent in the sixth form. Despite some short-term deployment of non-specialists due to a slight shortage of specialists, there is no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 and in sixth form lessons is much more dynamic than in Years 7 to 9, where trusted routines are the order of the day. This is typified by the extent of use by teachers of the foreign

language to conduct lessons. In the lower school, teachers often use a lot of English, or translate the French and German they use, which diminishes its impact and lowers expectations. From Year 10 onwards much more effort is made to make French or German the language for all in the classroom. This promotes the acquisition of skills and knowledge and most pupils display confidence and maturity in their productive work, as they respond to good models and high expectations.

163. Teaching methods are somewhat unvaried in Years 7 to 9, but teachers all manage to find time for pupils to use the foreign language for themselves, usually in pair work. There is little time to expand into more ambitious activities, but teachers nonetheless fail to provide work which could accelerate the progress of higher attaining pupils at this stage. In Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, activities are more demanding and imaginative, having a positive impact on both attitudes and learning. Planning for individual lessons is generally good; time is used well and never wasted. In the best lessons there is a range of activities covering different skills, conducted at a brisk pace. In a Year 13 French lesson on urban unrest in Strasbourg, pupils were given a range of listening and reading comprehension tasks, engaged in discussion with the teacher, and worked in groups to agree on questions on the text to put to other groups. This was an excellent lesson in which pupils' factual and linguistic knowledge was advanced significantly. Pupils in a Year 9 German lesson on problems in family relationships took part in oral routines to consolidate new language, then did listening and reading tasks to test this knowledge. They then worked in pairs to practise the new language before doing a written version of their exchange – all in 35 minutes.
164. Teachers manage pupils well. They have confidence in them, so that pair and group work is a regular feature of lessons. Good relationships promote effective learning, especially in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. There are brief comments in the foreign language, plus a range of devices such as marks, letter grades and stamps. In Years 10 and 11 and especially in the sixth form, marking has a positive impact on learning as teachers add diagnostic and constructive comments, referenced to relevant examination criteria, and designed to support future learning. Homework is set as required. In Years 7 to 9 it complements classwork, but a clear opportunity to extend higher attaining pupils is rarely exploited. Elsewhere homework is an important factor in accelerating learning and extending pupils by setting demanding tasks, which frequently put the onus on them to manage their own learning. The increasing number of pupils taking languages in the sixth form reflects their satisfaction with the teaching they receive in Years 10 and 11.
165. Pupils are keen to learn foreign languages. Attitudes are nearly always very good. Pupils collaborate well in pair work and are sensitive to each other's values and beliefs. They appreciate good performance by classmates and are polite to adults. Behaviour is usually good. In only one lesson, in Year 8, was behaviour a little immature, so that lesson objectives were subverted. Pupils sustain concentration well, though there is some wavering towards the end of double lessons of 70 minutes in the lower school. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in the sixth form are mature and take responsibility for their learning.
166. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The head of department and the teacher in charge of German work hard to raise standards in the subject. They lead by example. The ethos of the department is to put pupils first. Consequently staff have comparatively little time to devote to monitoring work in the subject and to curriculum planning. Schemes of work are currently inadequate, for instance to support the teaching by a new member of the department. Issues such

as the under-performance of boys relative to girls are not addressed in curriculum planning. Outcomes are good in terms of progress towards good examination results, but these results, especially at the end of Year 9, could improve further if supportive planning and documentation were in place. Current staffing problems have been addressed, though class size in Years 7 to 9 adds to the problems of teaching these groups. The placement of sockets at the back of classrooms means that trailing extension leads create a possible danger. Though there has been improvement in standards at GCSE, and in the quality of teaching, some of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection remain. These include time provided for Years 7 to 9, the provision of reading opportunities below the sixth form, and the excessive use of English in some lessons. On balance, improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

MODERN HEBREW (IVRIT)

167. Teacher assessments for the end of Key Stage 3 in Ivrit were in line with the standards expected of pupils of similar ages. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, 71 per cent of pupils achieved grades in the range A*-C, in line with the average achieved in similar schools. There are no significant differences in the results of boys and girls. These results show a general trend of improvement over time and the school has maintained standards since the last inspection. All pupils gained a grade in the range A*- D, which indicates good progress especially by pupils with special educational needs. In relation to GCSE results in other subjects, Ivrit did not compare so favourably. At GCE A-level, one pupil achieved an A grade in 1999. There were no entries in the year 2000. One pupil is being entered for this year and is working at an above average standard.
168. Current standards of the 14 year olds are average. A small number of higher attaining pupils, one of whom is Israeli, are above average. Pupils have better speaking and listening skills than skills in reading and writing. When watching a video about clothes, a higher attaining group could discuss their school uniform using the correct vocabulary. They understand the use of feminine endings or dual plural endings. They know the position of the noun in relation to the adjective. The lower attaining group find the work more difficult and still do not read fluently without vowels. By Year 9 pupils have mastered an appropriate level of reading. Their handwriting skills are good, with clear well-formed letters, but much of the work in their books is copied and there is limited evidence of unaided or independent writing, particularly for the higher attainers.
169. The standards of work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 reflect the results in the GCSE examinations and are average overall. Pupils showed good comprehension of a video about an 'Invitation to a restaurant'. They were able to role-play a similar situation and engage in a simple conversation about food and drink. Not all the pupils speak in complete sentences. They often lack confidence in their own ability but they show good knowledge of a range of appropriate vocabulary.
170. A high attaining pupil in Year 11 (an Israeli pupil), can initiate and develop conversation and converse at normal speed about a 'complaint of lost property'. Average and lower attainers were keen to gain knowledge of the correct vocabulary to use in this situation and made a determined effort to learn the words and phrases. Although they experience more difficulty in using a range of tenses, interaction with their teacher demonstrated successful use of speaking and listening skills; their powers of comprehension are even better. Standards in reading and particularly in independent writing are less well developed.

171. Standards in the sixth form are above average. The student makes good use of her knowledge of Israel in both the content and style of written work. The work shows the use of personal ideas and opinions. Spelling and grammar are generally accurate. Writing skills are developed well. The student was unavailable during the inspection, so speaking and listening skills were not assessed.
172. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher has an obvious command of the subject and the lessons are well planned. The teacher makes consistent use of the target language, insists on high standards of pronunciation and grammatical accuracy and enjoys a good rapport with the pupils. He is fluent in both Ivrit and English and by intermingling both languages he constantly reinforces the words and phrases he wishes to teach. Such good teaching could be improved further through the use of a more stimulating range of teaching resources, the use of more visual aids and the benefit of ICT. The teacher's use of assessment is satisfactory overall. Pupils are given informal feedback and advice in lessons. The teacher sets homework and marks the pupils' work regularly. However, pupils are given too little guidance through written comments on how to improve their work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is limited and with the exception of some support from a volunteer governor who speaks Ivrit no other help is available. Assessment procedures are in place but results are not sufficiently analysed and individual targets are not set to help to raise standards, particularly in writing skills.
173. Attitudes of learners are very good in response both to the teaching of Ivrit and to the overall climate for learning in the school. Behaviour is very good and helps to create a good learning atmosphere in lessons.
174. The leadership and management of the subject area are satisfactory. There are limited opportunities to monitor both the teaching and the learning in this department. This, together with the use of ICT, is a priority for development. Governors have a clear vision of the role of Hebrew in the school's curriculum as a modern language both in its own right and also as the subject which underpins the very essence and ethos of the school as the language of Jewish learning and prayer. There are strong links with the land of Israel and some of the pupils benefit from a five-month trip with pupils from the Jewish Free School. Other pupils visit Israel regularly for holidays and family visits. This provides good motivation for the pupils to put their Hebrew language skills into practice.

MUSIC

175. There were no teacher assessments in music for the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000. The results in the GCSE examinations were above the national average but compared with their results in other subjects were broadly average. GCE A-level results in music are broadly in line with results in other subjects for the small number of entries. Across the key stages the performance of girls is better than that of the boys, which reflects the larger number of girls who learn a musical instrument.
176. The school selects 15 pupils each year for their musical ability and overall approximately one third of pupils have instrumental lessons. Pupils are then put into teaching groups according to their instrumental experience and follow separate schemes of work. By the time they reach Year 9, many pupils are working at a high level in instrumental playing but this is not reflected in other areas of their knowledge and understanding of music. Pupils do not demonstrate in listening and appraising and in composition that they fully understand how to use appropriate musical

vocabulary to describe their work, and standards are not high enough in these aspects. In a Year 9 class pupils used their own instruments to play a Raga and drone but their attempts at improvisation were stilted and they made no attempt to notate their work in order to refine and improve their ideas. Pupils following the alternative scheme of work have limited opportunities to develop their musical skills. The department does not keep audio records of pupils' work and it was not possible during the inspection to gauge how well these pupils achieve. There is no access to computers, which restricts pupils' opportunities to keep track of their own work and the progress they are making in composition.

177. At the age of 16 pupils' composition reflects the high standard of their instrumental playing. Access to computers with different composing packages greatly assists in the production of scores, which are often complex. Pupils take great care over presentation and show satisfactory levels of achievement. The hand-written scores show equal thoughtfulness in choice of instrumentation and an arrangement of 'Hey Jude' captured the essence of the song effectively. No Year 11 lessons took place during the period of the inspection and as no samples of pupils' ongoing work were available it was not possible to judge their broader understanding of music. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 have lessons on at least one instrument. Boys and girls are equally represented in the music option at Key Stage 4. There are no pupils with special educational needs.
178. Standards reached by students in the sixth form are broadly in line with the average and demonstrate satisfactory levels of achievement. They have a good grasp of harmony and are able to use this knowledge to analyse and re-create their own four-part exercises. In the one sample of work seen the student had worked hard on analysing and notating music set for detailed study, and essays based on this were of a high standard.
179. The quality of teaching overall is unsatisfactory although there are significant strengths within the teaching. Of the eight lessons seen, including one instrumental lesson, one was unsatisfactory, one was poor, one was good and the others were satisfactory. The schemes of work do not allow for imaginative planning which links listening, performing and composing, resulting in pupils spending too long on one activity and not having a rounded musical experience during the lesson. Singing is not built into the scheme of work or used in lessons either as a discrete music-making opportunity or as an aid to internalising sound and developing aural awareness. Homework is seldom used to allow pupils to continue their learning outside the classroom and to gain more independence. Time is not used well and lessons lack a sense of urgency to give pupils a challenge to complete work. Pupils' work is not rigorously assessed to link with National Curriculum levels or to help pupils to know how they can improve. Consequently pupils have very little awareness of how well they are performing. In Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, assessment is used better, but lessons are still not planned to help pupils make connections between the different areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs are not helped sufficiently through either lesson planning or choice of teaching materials in order to improve their progress and help them to learn better. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified but there is an over-reliance on what they achieve rather than producing lesson materials which will challenge them. In the sixth form the clarity with which concepts are explained through well-informed teaching is a significant, positive factor in pupils' learning.
180. The overall leadership of the department is unsatisfactory in that the demands of the revised National Curriculum to plan for ICT, singing and the assessment of a single

attainment target against levels have not been addressed. The provision for instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities is very good and is a strength of the department. The former is organised by a part-time administrator paid for out of lesson fees. However, there is no provision for the monitoring of the teaching of the 20 instrumentalists who come to the school every week. A demanding programme of concerts is given by the orchestra and ensembles and opportunities to participate exist for everyone. There is an extensive programme of extra-curricular music making which provides many good opportunities for all pupils to develop and excel in music. The school mounts an annual stage production which many pupils take part in. Standards reported at the previous inspection have not been maintained and improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

181. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9 indicated that standards of attainment in 2000 were above average in the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or above. The school does not offer physical education as a GCSE option.
182. In work seen during the inspection, standards in Years 7 to 9 were above the national average. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils have well-developed skills, an understanding of rules and the ability to select and apply the most appropriate skill for the situation encountered. In Year 8 netball, girls are able to pass and receive accurately and effectively and the majority have developed footwork skills above the average expectation for this age. In Year 7 football, boys are able to pass and receive accurately. The higher attainers can use skills effectively both in practices and in games. The majority of Year 9 boys and girls are able to maintain a rally with some degree of accuracy when playing badminton. The lower attainers have difficulty hitting the shuttlecock, whilst the higher attainers are able to use the smash effectively and can select appropriate shots for changing situations within a game.
183. Overall, pupils achieve well through both key stages. The timetabling of Year 10 and 11 prevented an extensive observation of these year groups. However, in the work seen, standards in Year 10 were above the national average. Pupils are able to measure heart rates with a fair degree of accuracy and the majority understand the concepts of aerobic fitness. Most are able to use formulae accurately to calculate their own heart rate and some higher attainers use more advanced methods to help in calculations of heart rate training zones. Pupils' literacy skills develop well in relation to the technical terminology of the subject. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning in Year 10. Across all age ranges pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the programme and make progress at the same rate as their peers.
184. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning are good. The teaching is well organised, well planned and contributes to the smooth running of lessons, which have pace and maintain pupils' interest. Very good strategies are in place for coping with poor weather and this ensures that pupils continue to learn well and receive good teaching. This was exemplified by the smooth adaptation which followed a Year 7 netball lesson being moved from outside to inside part way through the lesson. Opportunities for independent learning are provided through setting tasks that require pupils to investigate a number of approaches. This technique is used effectively to involve pupils in pair and group work and to help them to reflect on how they learn and become more efficient in their learning by doing so. This approach is not consistently used, however, and opportunities for pupils to benefit in this way are sometimes missed. Praise is used effectively and pupils are challenged very appropriately. Ongoing assessment is well used and contributes to the setting of good and appropriate tasks which are matched well to pupils' levels of attainment and ensure that they remain fully involved. For example, in a Year 9 badminton lesson, pupils eliminated from a tournament continued to play in a modified game. Group work is used well which motivates pupils who, when given the opportunity to work out their own solutions, do so imaginatively. For example, in a Year 7 netball lesson, pupils were encouraged to work out their own defensive strategies and responded with an effective range of solutions.
185. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning are satisfactory. The good subject knowledge of teachers is evident and lessons are well planned. There are clear

lesson objectives and a logical lesson structure, both of which contribute to pupils' acquisition and development of knowledge. Pupils make sound progress in their development of such knowledge, for example in their understanding of physiological concepts in health-related exercise. Questioning is used well to involve pupils fully and pupils respond well by concentrating, working hard and answering with enthusiasm. The teaching is sometimes too directed and results in missed opportunities for pupils to show initiative. Resources are used well to assist in the development of concepts; for example the use of stop-watches in a Year 10 health-related exercise lesson.

186. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils of all ages are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and they respond with enthusiasm to all tasks and in all learning contexts. This was exemplified by their very positive response in a netball lesson in very cold weather, in which they remained fully on task and very motivated, despite the conditions. This was due, in part, to the appropriateness of the tasks set and a very sensible policy on the uniform for physical education lessons. Behaviour is often excellent and pupils remain on task, leading to a very positive learning environment. Pupils work very effectively in groups, which contributes to pupils' social development. Pupils work together very fairly in these groups and have a clear sense of the need to play fairly and by the rules. Relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves are very good and help to ensure a very positive atmosphere in lessons. When pupils are set tasks they respond with enthusiasm, interest and imagination and this is a contributory factor in the progress they make. Generally, provision for non-participants is erratic. Pupils are sometimes left without meaningful tasks but, when they are challenged effectively, they respond with effort and work of good quality.
187. A sound programme of physical education is on offer to all pupils, although between Years 7 and 9 limited time is available for pupils to cover the programme of study for net games when compared to other games activities. Provision for sixth form physical education is unsatisfactory as it is not specifically timetabled and opportunities depend on the availability of staff and their goodwill. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities available, particularly at lunch times and in the evenings. Physical education staff are committed and caring. This is evident within their teaching and adds to the quality of the work of the departments. There is no overall head of the physical education department and, while each department is effectively run, there are differences in policies for boys and girls. Policies and some practices are less well developed for the boy's department than that of the girls. For example there is no risk assessment policy in place for the boy's department. There is currently no opportunity for sharing good practice and for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. The non-participant policy is unclear and is used inconsistently. Some gymnastic equipment such as benches, ropes and boxes is unsafe and, thus, unavailable. The gymnasium corridor floors and boy's changing room floors are unsafe.
188. Sound progress has been made since the last inspection. The teaching has clear aims and planning for progression, and assessment is used effectively. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are challenged with suitably demanding work. Sound development plans are in place but they still lack precision. Sixth form pupils have poor provision during curriculum time and the boy's changing rooms have not been refurbished.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

189. At the end of Year 9 the standards of attainment for non-Jewish pupils meet and exceed expectations. These pupils follow the programme of studies in world religions as set out in the Liverpool Agreed Syllabus. At the end of Year 11 all non-Jewish pupils take the long course examination in religious studies at GCSE. In 2000 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was above the national average. The results are not as good as pupils' results in other subjects but they compare well with results in similar schools. Girls did better than boys, but not significantly so, although girls tended to gain the higher grades. Standards have risen since the last inspection and reflect the good teaching throughout the school. In the sixth form there is no examination course in religious studies for non-Jewish pupils.
190. In the work seen during the inspection, most pupils attain above average standards at the end of Year 9. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity and Judaism and other major world religions. For example, in their oral responses during a lesson on celebration of Shabbat, pupils in a Year 9 class showed that they had a good grasp of the practical problems which people face when they live out their religious beliefs in the world of today. Pupils also understand the important role of symbolism in religious observances. For instance, Year 7 pupils can explain the symbolic significance of the different foods which form part of the Seder meal, and they use key religious terms accurately in speech and writing. Pupils have an above average knowledge of Jewish religious observances because of the ethos of the school, and they express this knowledge well in their written work, which is very neatly and attractively presented. Higher attainers write in considerable detail, taking great care with punctuation and spelling. Although much written work involves the reproducing of information from textbooks and worksheets, pupils of all levels of attainment write in a lively way when they are given the opportunity for original work.
191. By the end of Year 11, most pupils have a good knowledge of different religious and moral viewpoints on issues such as prejudice and discrimination and the sanctity of life. All the pupils in a Year 11 lesson were keen to offer examples of sexist behaviour during an animated discussion on discrimination. They were able to make accurate references to passages in the Bible, and they showed an informed awareness of biblical events in the examples they gave. Standards of written work are above average. Higher attainers use a wide range of resources in a selective way and they are adept at summing up different points of view. They write fluently in a readable style with a good command of grammar and spelling. Middle attainers write shorter answers but they express their personal opinions in a robust way. The writing of lower attainers is sometimes lacking in detail but the main points are clearly stated. Most pupils are confident users of ICT. They can access the Internet effectively for research and the majority of the coursework is presented using word processing.
192. Throughout Years 7 to 11, pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress and achieve well. Higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are usually well supported by the teacher with individual help, appropriate teaching material and extension work.
193. Attitudes to learning are very good and make a very important contribution to pupils' achievement. Pupils of all ages enjoy their lessons and are very well motivated. They respond readily to the teacher and in discussions they listen attentively to other people's points of view. Most pupils concentrate very well in lessons and settle to their tasks promptly. They read aloud with assurance and are very good independent learners. Behaviour in lessons is very good.

194. The quality of teaching also has a very positive impact on pupils' rate of progress. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In the majority of lessons the teaching is good, a small amount being very good and, on occasion, excellent. Although teachers are non-specialists they all have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and an enthusiasm for it which they pass on to their pupils. A strength of the teaching is the effective way in which teachers plan their lessons and manage their pupils. As a result, the lessons move forward purposefully, so that pupils benefit from a variety of activities which sustain their interest and develop their knowledge and literacy skills. For example, in a Year 7 class the teacher had prepared questions on the board before the lesson began so that after the opening question and answer session the pupils could start their written work immediately with the information fresh in their minds. Tasks included pair and group work as well as a practical activity in which the whole class gathered round the teacher to look at and talk about the different items in the Seder meal. The teacher had high expectations of behaviour so pupils moved around the room in a responsible way and no time was wasted in change of activity. By the end of the lesson pupils had made very good progress in understanding the symbolic significance of each component of the meal and could give clear explanations of their origin.
195. The strengths of the teaching far outweigh the weaknesses, but the latter occur where the aims are not sufficiently clear and so activities are only partially successful in furthering pupils' understanding. For example, where there is a lack of structure in oral work, pupils' responses are not as effective as they could be, and when pupils have too much writing to do, there are missed opportunities for discussion to clarify ideas. Sometimes teachers do not take pupils' prior learning sufficiently into consideration, so work is repeated and lessons do not build upon the knowledge which has already been acquired.
196. The subject is managed in a satisfactory way. The strength of the management is the clear leadership for the GCSE course. Teachers work well together. They have a good understanding of what pupils need to know, understand and do in order to achieve success in the examination, and marking is well coordinated. However, this team spirit is not as strong in Years 7, 8 and 9 because there is no coordinator for the programmes of study. In addition, although there is some permanence in the teaching, with two members of staff teaching the subject on a regular basis, the requirements of the timetable often control the selection of the other teachers. As a result there is a lack of overall continuity in the teaching, some classes are shared, and there is not enough uniformity in marking.
197. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The hard work of the head of department has ensured that programmes of study are well organised in Years 10 and 11 and meet statutory requirements in Years 7, 8 and 9. Standards in teaching and learning have risen, although there is still room for improvement. For example, younger pupils are not always able to take an active part in the lesson and they have too much copying out to do. Although resources have improved the arrangements for storage are still unsatisfactory. The monitoring of teaching is not carried out systematically. The main shortcoming is that the school is still not fulfilling its statutory obligation because it does not offer opportunities for religious education to non-Jewish pupils in the sixth form. Priorities for the future include exploring the possibility of offering a sixth form examination course in religious studies for non-Jewish pupils, improving the management of the subject in Years 7, 8 and 9, and raising attainment at GCSE so that it matches pupils' performance in other subjects.

BUSINESS STUDIES

198. In the 2000 GCSE examination in business studies for 16 year olds, the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades was well above the national average and the proportion achieving A*-G grades was above the national average. Girls gained relatively more higher grades than the boys, although entries were small. Results have been similar over a five-year period and pupils have performed well in comparison with other subjects taken. In the GNVQ advanced examination, results in 2000 were above the national average, with 60 per cent of pupils from a small entry gaining a distinction. In the previous year, nine out of the 15 students who were entered gained a merit and five gained a distinction. In the last two years there has been a 100 per cent pass rate. Current Year 13 pupils are following the GNVQ advanced course whilst those in Year 12 are following the vocational advanced level course.
199. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average and pupils make good progress. They make appropriate use of a wide range of appropriate terminology by, for example, describing the differences between primary, secondary and tertiary production. Pupils use techniques like break-even analysis accurately and apply the concept to case studies. They investigate local small businesses using appropriate techniques and draw conclusions on their performance in comparison with larger competitors. Lower attainers consider the different motives people have for working and draw reasoned conclusions about individuals' motives from case studies; higher attainers consider the same topic from a more theoretical standpoint including the idea of fulfilment, drawing appropriately on the work of theorists in the field like Maslow. The work seen of pupils in Years 12 and 13 is above average. They display a good understanding of terminology, including explaining the differences between limited and unlimited liability and between merger and takeover. They accurately identify problems in the workplace that have legal implications including unfair dismissal, discrimination, redundancy and health and safety. They consider the rights of employers in relation to issues that have human rights implications, including Internet use and drugs and alcohol abuse. In group-work presentations, the standard achieved is well above average. Pupils prepare and present good quality business plans for a variety of commercial enterprises. They work collaboratively to research complex tasks, they develop a range of information from a variety of sources and they present information in a clear and well-sequenced manner. Individual assignment work is of a similar standard with one pupil, for example, producing a very detailed analysis of a car company to support an investigation into the competitiveness of British industry.
200. The standard of teaching is good. The management of class discussion is particularly effective and pupils following both GCSE and post-16 courses are typically very well motivated. This high level of motivation is also apparent in group and individual assignments in terms of the range and depth of the work produced; pupils are given very clear guidance on how to plan and structure such work. The teaching is well planned to meet syllabus criteria and appropriately organised to provide a specialist focus, for example in the teaching of business law on the post-16 courses. The teaching is well matched to the needs of both higher and lower attainers, as shown by examination results in which both higher and lower attainers achieve well. In the great majority of lessons teachers show secure knowledge, although in a small number of cases knowledge is less secure. In one example there was a lack of clarity in the use of technical terms during a post-16 lesson, and in another example a clearer demonstration of how to apply an aspect of economic theory was required in a GCSE lesson. In most lessons pupils are fully engaged in discussion work although in some lessons they have insufficient opportunities to participate.

201. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They are highly motivated and interested and this is apparent on both GCSE and post-16 courses. Collaboration on post-16 courses to produce group-work assignments is excellent, with pupils specialising in different aspects and then bringing them together in group presentations. Individual effort is also apparent in the range and depth of both GCSE coursework and post-16 assignments.
202. The subject benefits from good leadership and management. Course organisation and planning are good; for example, a team of staff is appropriately deployed to cover the requirements of post-16 courses. Good links are maintained with a variety of local businesses to enhance the work of both GCSE and post-16 pupils.