

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DENE MAGNA SCHOOL**

Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115773

Headteacher: Mr Mark J Davies

Reporting inspector: Mr D P Cosway  
2734

Dates of inspection: 22 - 25 January 2001

Inspection number: 187772

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:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11 to 16 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Mitcheldean Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL17 0DU
Telephone number:	01594 542370
Fax number:	01594 544862
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Robert Sturman
Date of previous inspection:	24 April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2734	Paul Cosway	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements. How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9769	Margaret Morrisey	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Students' attitudes, values and personal developments. How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Community Links.
1709	Sandra Tweddell	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages. Year 11.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
4677	Valerie Banks	Team inspector	Geography. Equal opportunities.	
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	Religious education. Special educational needs.	
19135	Derek Ebbage	Team inspector	Mathematics.	
11672	Peter Harle	Team inspector	Music.	
8501	Paul Hartwright	Team inspector	Design and technology. Information technology.	
8185	Peter Kendall	Team inspector	Art.	
30338	Richard Lockley	Team inspector	Physical education.	
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science	
27983	Mary Sewell	Team inspector	English, drama, English as an additional language	
15372	Patricia Walker	Team inspector	History	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

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
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
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	
Students' 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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and students' achievements	
Students' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO STUDENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>KEY STAGE 4</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>29</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is smaller than most secondary schools, having 736 students: 382 boys and 354 girls, aged between 11 and 16. It is a technology college with a largely comprehensive intake, although there are grammar schools in Gloucester that take approximately ten per cent of the higher attaining students from the school's catchment area. The school serves a wide area, from the Forest of Dean to the River Severn. Approximately 40 per cent of the students come from the small town of Mitcheldean, the rest coming some distance from villages and hamlets. The intake is drawn from up to 27 small primary schools, though the majority is from seven neighbouring schools. This is not an advantaged area. Although relatively few parents apply for free school meals for their children, unemployment in the area is the second highest in the county and the level of social deprivation has qualified it for Rural Development Agency funding.

Almost all the students are white, although there is a very small proportion, below the average nationally, of travellers' children and students for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of students with statements of special educational needs is above average. On the register of special educational needs, there are 168 students. Of the 25 students with statements, just over half have moderate learning difficulties, several have emotional or behavioural problems and there are small numbers with dyslexia, autism and hearing impairment. The attainment of students on entry is about average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school. Students achieve very well. From average attainment on entry, attainment in both the Year 9 national tests and in GCSE examinations has been consistently above average over the last four years and well above average in a number of subjects. The quality of teaching is very good, overall, and as a result students learn very well, developing very good learning skills, learning to work independently and co-operatively. The leadership and management of the school are very good, providing clear direction and monitoring the work of the school very effectively. The school has very good links with the community and fulfils its role as a technology college very well, both for the benefit of its own students and the community. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Students achieve very well and attain standards above average, overall. Attainment is particularly high in mathematics, design and technology and modern foreign languages.
- Students develop very positive attitudes to school and they work very hard, realising the importance of study. Their behaviour is very good. These are significant factors in the academic progress they make.
- Relationships and students' personal development are very good; moral and social development are excellent.
- Teaching is very good overall, with much that is good and some excellent, and this leads to students developing very good learning skills. Teachers make exceptionally good use of information and communication technology to support learning.
- The leadership and management focus very successfully on the raising of attainment and this has led to good improvement and very good capacity for future improvement.
- The school gives parents very good information about their children's progress and has very positive links with the community.

#### **What could be improved**

- The proportion of students gaining high grades in GCSE examinations needs to be more consistent. It is very good in some subjects, such as the mathematics and technology subjects, but is not equally good across all areas of the curriculum.
- Literacy has been identified as a major development area. However, strategies need to be consistently adopted across the whole school in order improve the progress made by a significant minority of students.
- The accommodation for physical education, music and drama is unsatisfactory and this is restricting opportunities for students to succeed.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in April, 1996. School improvement has been good since then. Most of the Key Issues from the last report have been addressed and are no longer areas for concern. There has been particularly good progress in the development of systems for monitoring teaching in subject departments, which is now a strength of the school. The provision for religious education, which was unsatisfactory, is now meeting statutory requirements. The school has not been able to improve the facilities and accommodation for music, drama and indoor physical education since the criticism of them in the last report, but the facilities for art, previously unsatisfactory, are now good. The high quality of teaching and leadership in the school has been sustained, with an enhanced use of data to help to evaluate its performance. Links with parents remain very strong.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

At the end of Year 9, attainment in the national tests has been consistently above average overall for the last four years, although average compared with similar schools. In the year 2000 tests, attainment was close to the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science.

At the end of Year 11, the proportion of students who attained five or more GCSE passes at A\* - C was well above the national average, as were the proportions who attained five or more passes at A\* - G and who attained at least one GCSE pass at A\* - G. The overall performance at GCSE, measured by the students' average points score, was above the average nationally, as it has been for the past four years, and above that in similar schools. Girls attain better than boys at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE, but the difference is no greater than the difference nationally. The most successful subjects at GCSE in 2000 were design and technology, French, German and mathematics. The subjects that performed least well relative to all others in the school were art and design, drama, history and geography. Although the proportion of students passing history and geography with an A\* - C grade was below the proportion nationally, both drama and art and design attained a higher proportion of A\* - C grades than was attained in these subjects in the country as a whole.

The findings of the inspection reflect the 2000 results. Attainment is above the national average in almost every subject and, overall, students achieve well. It is particularly high for 16 year olds in mathematics, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and design and technology. It is relatively low in the humanities subjects, but rarely below average. The school has set an ambitious target of 63 per cent of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades between A\* and C, and is on target to achieve close to this by the end of this academic year.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; almost all students have very positive attitudes to the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; no instances of poor behaviour were seen and the very good behaviour of the very large majority of students helps to maintain a very good learning ethos.



Personal development and relationships	Very good; students relate very well to teachers and to one another. They develop independence and learn to work well and co-operatively with others.
Attendance	Well above average. Attendance levels are well above the national average, and the levels of unauthorised absence are well below average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very 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.*

At Year 9, teaching in English and science is good and in mathematics very good. At Year 11, teaching is very good in English and mathematics and good in science. Across the school, numeracy is taught well. Literacy teaching is satisfactory overall, but is inconsistent. The teaching meets the needs of all students well. There has been a strong and successful focus in the school over the past year on meeting the needs of boys in order to raise their attainment and motivation.

More than 45 per cent of teaching in the school is very good or excellent. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 98.5 per cent of lessons and good in around 40 per cent. Just over one per cent is unsatisfactory. Taking the school as a whole, it is very good across all year groups. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects and their use of modern computer technology to support their teaching are considerable strengths. Their planning of lessons and their management of students are also very strong. As a result, students are motivated, concentrate hard and work well to meet their teachers' very high expectations of them. In the few lessons that are less effective, the planning lacks detail and the pace of work is too slow.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the curriculum is broad and reasonably well balanced, with particularly good provision for teaching mathematics, science and technology, especially information and communication technology. The enrichment programme, offering a wide choice of additional subjects, ranging from driving skills to revision classes, provides good opportunities for students to broaden their education.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good: the school offers an inclusive education that meets the needs of all students well.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	The very few students with English as an additional language receive good and appropriate teaching and support.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: the provision for moral and social education is excellent. The provision for cultural education is good, with good, developing links with Third World countries. The provision for spiritual development, unsatisfactory at the time of the previous report, is now sound, although assemblies are rarely an act of collective worship and often lack a spiritual dimension.
How well the school cares for its students	Very well: this is a very caring school, supporting students' personal development very well.

The school works very well in partnership with parents to help them to support their children's learning. The quality of information about the progress that students are making and the sharing of targets with parents are particular areas of strength. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are met.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: very good leadership from the headteacher and senior managers is setting high expectations and ensuring that the school has a very clear direction for future development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well: governors are very involved in the work of the school, in deciding its future direction and in monitoring its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: a wide range of data and excellent review procedures ensure that the school is evaluating its own performance very thoroughly and using the information very well to guide improvement planning.
The strategic use of resources	Good: the teachers are deployed well and they make good use of the accommodation, even those areas that are sub-standard. Resources, and especially information and communication technology resources, are used very effectively indeed.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall, with good match of teachers to the needs of the timetable and very good resources for learning. There is a high ratio of computers in the school and classrooms are very well equipped. The accommodation is very good for many subjects and has improved significantly for art since the previous report, but it is unsatisfactory for indoor physical education, for music and for drama. The management of the school is particularly open, consultative and reflective. The leadership of subjects is generally strong, but not consistently so. The school seeks best value in its use of all of its funding and 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"> <li>• 98 per cent of parents agree that expectations are high, teaching is good and children make good progress;</li> <li>• Around 96 per cent agree that the school is managed well and their children like coming to the school;</li> <li>• 95 per cent of parents agree that they kept well informed about how their children are getting on and 91 per cent believe that the school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• 92 per cent agree that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 per cent of the parents who responded believe that the school does not give students the right amount of work to do at home;</li> <li>• 15 per cent think that the range of activities outside lessons is too narrow.</li> </ul>

Some parents are concerned about the amount of homework set. However, opinion is divided on whether this is too much or too little. The inspection team found that the level of homework given is generally appropriate and that it supports students in their learning. The range of extra-curricular activities is as good as in similar schools, but the school has the problem of large numbers of students having to travel relatively long distances by bus at the end of the school day.

The inspection team agreed with the positive comments from parents. Students make good progress at the school and teachers have high expectations of them. The quality of teaching is good across the school and the latest initiatives in reporting to parents are ensuring that they are very well informed about the progress their children are making against the targets the school has set. The leadership and

management of the school are areas of strength. The level of support given to the school by parents is particularly high.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and students' achievements**

1. Students generally achieve well at the school, entering with levels of attainment close to average and leaving with above average results at GCSE. In some subjects, especially in mathematics and technology, their attainment is well above the national average and in these areas, as could be expected in a school that is a technology college, they make particularly good progress.
2. The attainment of students on entry to the school is close to average overall, but the attainment profile of the intake is skewed downwards. This is because there is a selective system in Gloucestershire, offering places at grammar schools to primary school pupils at the end of Year 6. The effect of this is to cream off the highest attaining students from the comprehensive schools and this particular school loses the top ten per cent of its potential intake. There are, consequently, very few students in the school with a verbal reasoning quotient (VRQ) score of 115 or above, VRQ being the test of intelligence used in Gloucestershire for selection. Based on the outcome of these tests, the school's population has a higher proportion of average and below average students than would be expected in a fully comprehensive system. Analysis of the results of the end of Key Stage 2 national test (SATs) results for students who have entered the school, however, shows a more complex picture.
3. Over recent years, the proportion of students gaining the expected level in English and mathematics has been close to average. Less than average, however, have been attaining level 5 in these subjects, the grade that would indicate higher than average performance. In science, the proportion of students gaining at least level 4, the expected level for the end of Key Stage 2, has been consistently above average over the last four years. The proportion of students who are attaining level 5 has also been consistently above the national average. Overall, the indicators show that the school has an intake slightly below average in terms of literacy, numeracy and verbal reasoning skills, but with above average aptitudes for science.
4. Analysis of the school's results in terms of GCSE performance shows that students are achieving well overall during their time in the school and very well in certain subject areas. Attainment in design and technology, science, mathematics and German was particularly good in 2000. It was above the national average for these subjects and a higher proportion of students than is the case nationally attained A\* to B grades. Students taking French also achieved well, compared with their attainment in the other subjects they took. These subjects have sustained this high level of performance over time.
5. Attainment at the end of Year 9 in the national tests has been consistently above average overall for the last four years and has improved broadly in line with the national increase. In most other subjects, students attain at least in line with the average nationally.
6. Attainment has been similar to that in similar schools. Results in English have been consistently in line with the national average and in line with those in similar schools and were so in 2000. Attainment has been above or well above average in mathematics over the last four years and was above average in 2000. It was above that in similar schools. Attainment at the end of Year 9 in the national tests in science has been above average over recent years. It was above the national average in 2000 and in line with attainment in similar schools. From 1999 to 2000, the proportions of students who attained level 5 or above in all three subjects improved by significantly more than the national figures. In English, for example, the proportion nationally remained at 63 per cent, whereas 75 per cent of Dene Magna students attained level 5 or above, compared with 68 per cent in 1999. In mathematics and science, significantly more students than is the case nationally attain levels above the national expectation, attaining level 6 or above. The high attainers are extended particularly well in mathematics, where 53 per cent of students attained level 6 or above, compared with the national average of 42 per cent. Relatively few students attain level 6 at the end of the key stage in English, only 23 per cent of students compared with 28 per cent for the country as a whole. This reflects the low levels of literacy on entry to the school. The pupils that took the national Year 9 tests in 2000 were average, overall, in their attainment at

the end of Key Stage 2. Just over seventy per cent attained level 4 or above, but fewer than 13 per cent attained level 5; half the national average.

7. There are too few travellers' children and students with English as an additional language at the school to make comparisons in attainment statistically valid. However, there are small differences between the attainment of boys and that of girls. Taking the last four years' results, boys and girls overall have performed equally well, compared with boys' and girls' results across the country as a whole. In the 2000 tests, girls did slightly better than girls nationally in English and boys did slightly worse than boys nationally, based on average point score. Both boys and girls attained more highly than their peers across the country in mathematics, being approximately two terms ahead of the average fourteen year old. Boys and girls did equally well in science and were about a term ahead of the cohort nationally.
8. The findings of the inspection reflect the test results for 2000. Attainment is above average overall and pupils make good progress, achieving very well. Attainment is well above average in mathematics, very good in all aspects of the subject, and above average in English and science at the end of Year 9. In English, students are particularly adept at using information and communication technology skills to produce work of high quality. In science, students have good knowledge of all the areas they have studied.
9. Across the rest of the curriculum, attainment is above or well above average in many subjects. It is well above average in French and German, where students have a good range of vocabulary, in design and technology and information and communication technology. Attainment is above average in physical education and art. Attainment is average at the end of Year 9 in the humanities subjects - in geography, history and religious education.
10. At the end of Year 11, overall attainment is above the national average and shows satisfactory progress from attainment levels at the end of Year 9, which were also above average. The proportion of students who gain five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, 59 per cent, is well above the average nationally. Overall attainment, based on the average GCSE point score, is above that in similar schools. The proportions of the Year 11 cohort last year who attained five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to G and one or more passes at these grades were also well above the national average. However, there is significant variation between subjects and, in some subjects, differences between the performance of boys and girls.
11. Overall, girls have performed slightly better than boys in GCSE examinations over the past four years. The average point score for boys was just over three points above the average nationally, 38.6 as against 35.3. The average point score for girls was just over four points above the national average, 44.6 as against 40.4 nationally. The difference has been narrowing, however. In 2000, boys and girls performed almost equally well when compared with their peers nationally. The girls were four points above the average for girls and the boys just over four points above the national average for boys.
12. When subjects are compared against each other at GCSE, both boys and girls did particularly well in design and technology, French and mathematics and well in science and English literature. Their results were relatively poor in art, drama, geography and history. Girls also attained well in German and boys did relatively better than girls in design and technology and mathematics. The higher attaining girls under-performed in the arts and humanities subjects, where they gained very few A\* or A grades. Lower attaining boys under-performed in the same subject areas, gaining a far higher proportion of E grades than boys nationally, though the A\* to C pass rate was close to or above the national average for boys. There is a need for teachers in art and the humanities to have higher expectations of the higher attaining girls and to encourage in the lower attaining boys more positive attitudes, as well as helping them to improve their literacy standards.
13. The finding of the inspection is that levels of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science reflect the results of the GCSE examinations in 2000. Attainment in English is above average, students showing good reading and writing skills. In mathematics, attainment is well above average and students are skilled in all areas of the subject. Science attainment is above average. Students have good skills and knowledge in most aspects of science, but are not adept at taking careful and accurate measurements in experimental work.

14. Across the rest of the curriculum, attainment varies from average to well above average. Attainment is improving in history, and is now in line with the national average, as it is in geography and religious education. These subjects are producing lower levels of attainment than those elsewhere in the curriculum, however, and there is a need to improve students' skills and increase motivation if standards are to rise. Attainment is above average in physical education lessons overall in Year 11, but well above average for those students who take the subject to GCSE level. These students show outstanding knowledge of the technical aspects of physical education. There is high attainment in modern foreign languages. In French, students reach standards well above average and the work is of an equally high standard in German. Their knowledge of these languages is very good, although they are sometimes shy of speaking them. Attainment in art is above average, especially in drawing and the use of ICT for art. Attainment in ICT across the curriculum is a strength of the school. Standards are well above average at the ages of 14 and 16. Attainment in design and technology is very high amongst 16 year olds, with excellent making skills and design work.
15. Students make good progress. Almost all achieve a range of GCSE subjects at grades A\*-G. Many exceed their predicted grades in the GCSE examinations.

### **Students' attitudes, values and personal development**

16. The school has chosen to use the term students, not pupils. This is one example of the very good role models teachers provide that have a significant effect on students' attitudes. Attitudes throughout the school are very good and the ethos is one that encourages students to succeed. Students enjoy coming to school, are enthusiastic learners and have a real interest in their education. They are proud of the school and have a good working relationship, respect and affection for all the staff.
17. Attendance is well above the national average. There has been a gradual improvement over the last three years that is continuing. The majority of students arrive at school punctually. This allows the school day to begin on time in a calm atmosphere that prepares students well for the busy day ahead.
18. Behaviour is very good in lessons. The high quality of behaviour allows lessons to be taught in a very positive and industrious atmosphere that helps learning. Around the school, students are very sensible, well mannered and well behaved. When students are on work experience, representing the school or working as tour guides in school, the people they meet appreciate their good behaviour, good manners and positive attitudes. There have been eight fixed-term exclusions and one permanent exclusion in the last year, figures that compare favourably with those of similar schools.
19. Relationships between staff and students, and between students themselves, are of a high quality and create a supportive and caring atmosphere in which students feel secure and comfortable. The respect with which students treat their peers and staff is reciprocated by staff and contributes to the equal opportunities in the school. They respect one another's feelings and are supportive of each other in lessons. There was good evidence of this in a personal social education lesson, which was concerned with loss and bereavement. The students discussed this sensitive subject in a serious and supportive way, conscious of those who had suffered loss in the family. Relationships are best summed up with the words of a Year 10 student, who said, "We are all friends, not teachers and students".
20. Personal development is very good. Students respond well to the good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. There are many examples of students working in pairs and small groups to produce useful and interesting work after some good discussions. Students use the school library effectively to research work and complete homework tasks. As prefects, they take an active role in supporting the good behaviour in the school, alongside many other duties. In all areas of school there are good opportunities for students to develop and take initiative. For example, in physical education a group of Year 11 girls has formed a club and they are devising their own fitness plan. The Year 7 and Year 11 mentoring programme is very effective: Year 11 students give support and advice and Year 7 feel this is very helpful to them. The school council is very effective, giving students a forum from which they can make a contribution to the school and to other students. The councillors are very involved in this work and through their initiatives are making a definite contribution to school improvements. The last major project was the

construction of a garden of remembrance. They are now planning computer-driven news-screens for use in the school corridors. A unique area for personal development is provided through student interview panels. On all staff appointments there is a panel of students who hold a pre-interview and feed their views back to the main panel. One member of staff said he could testify that the questions were searching and that students were very sophisticated and professional in their manner.

21. The behaviour of students with special educational needs is excellent, including that of those who have behavioural difficulties when admitted to the school. Their attendance is good. Students with special educational needs are completely integrated into the activities enjoyed by the rest of the school and they have good opportunities for taking responsibility. They are particularly concerned, with the other students, with the Global Action Plan, which promotes responsibility for the environment. Students with special educational needs have the same good opportunities as the rest of the students to be a mentor or prefect. Those who have been poor readers, and have improved, delight in volunteering to help others by becoming a reading "buddy". Their personal development is good and is carefully monitored.

## **HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

22. The quality of teaching in the school overall is very good, with much good and excellent teaching. Just over 45 per cent of teaching in the school is very good or excellent. Just over one per cent is unsatisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory or better in slightly more than 98.5 per cent of lessons and good in around 40 per cent. Taking the school as a whole, it is very good across all year groups. Almost all teachers plan their lessons very effectively to take account of the varied needs of different groups of students, including the small numbers of travellers' children and students for whom English is an additional language. The teaching of numeracy is generally good across the school and as a result no students have problems with numeracy that affect their ability to achieve well in the subjects they study. Literacy is taught well in English and in some other subjects, such as physical education, there is good concern from the teachers for the teaching of the vocabulary and literacy skills that students need to succeed in their studies, but this is not done consistently across the school. There are too many examples, for example, of written work in which poor spelling and punctuation have not been marked as being incorrect. The result is that the good work being done in English is not reinforced consistently elsewhere and students' levels of literacy are suffering and affecting their levels of attainment.
23. There is excellent teaching in six per cent of lessons. It is characterised by very good subject knowledge that allows the teacher to take the students forward in their learning, extending and challenging their own knowledge and understanding. This is combined with excellent lesson planning, so that the students are building on what they have already learned and they are helped by the structure of the lesson to achieve well and so learn well. They take part in the lesson rather than sit and listen. Where teaching is excellent in the school, teachers are using an excellent variety of teaching methods, all appropriate to the lesson aims, that keep the students actively interested and involved. For example, in an excellent lesson in French taught to Year 9, the teacher had very high expectations of the students, insisting that they could and would speak in French. They responded very well, trying very hard to justify her belief in them. She had an excellent range of strategies to support and guide them and the very good relationships she has with them ensured that they had the confidence to try to succeed. Her own knowledge of the language was excellent and she was a good model for them to emulate. Similarly, in a physical education lesson for Year 9 students, the teacher had planned the lesson very well so that there was a range of activities in a coherent sequence that led the students towards meeting the lesson's aims and therefore achieving very well. There was excellent pace so that they learned quickly, making rapid progress. The teacher's own expertise meant that he was able to give excellent advice to individuals and use assessment to help them to improve.
24. There are many examples of very good teaching. Almost 34 per cent of teaching is very good - a high proportion. Such lessons feature very good relationships and management of students so that no time is wasted and they respond well to the work the teacher sets. An example from many in which all factors combined to make students work hard and concentrate in order to succeed is taken from an English lesson with Year 11 on 'An Inspector Calls'. The teacher had transferred her own enthusiasm for the text to the students so that they were eager to begin work and made rapid progress. She handled the questioning and discussion sessions skilfully so that

the students were challenged and stretched. This low attaining set achieved very well as a result, showing a sensitive and informed response to the play.

25. Good teaching was seen in just over 35 per cent of lessons. The school has worked hard on developing an effective teaching style across all subjects and the amount of good and very good teaching is proof that this has been effective. The principles of good practice that the school has identified and shared are evident in all lessons that feature good teaching. Lesson aims are shared with students at the beginning of every session so that students know exactly what they have to do and what is expected of them. They are regularly reminded of how much time they have to complete the tasks that have been set to keep them on task and working hard. The lesson aims are appropriate and the work is matched well to the needs and abilities of the students in the class. Relationships are good and discipline is strong, so that students are willing to work and are not distracted. In mathematics, where there are also many very good lessons, good teaching was observed of a Year 8 group working on angles and bearings. The teacher showed very good control and managed the lesson very well so that no time was wasted. The lesson proceeded at a good pace so students had to work hard and concentrate in order to keep up with the work. The teacher introduced the lesson well, so that they were clear what they had to do, and there was a strong emphasis on practical work, so that the students found things out for themselves. As a result, the work was meaningful and memorable. Towards the end of the lesson, the teacher went over the work with them, questioning them to ensure that the aims of the lesson had been met.
26. Where teaching is satisfactory, that is in about 12 per cent of lessons, many of the features of good teaching are present, but the pace of work is slower so that less is achieved. The work is not always appropriate to all the students in the class, so that not all are challenged or extended. As a result, there is a group that does not achieve well, either because they are repeating work they can already do or are attempting tasks too difficult for them. Nevertheless, relationships are almost always good and discipline is tight. The lessons have a good structure and are well prepared, with good use of resources - especially information and communication technology resources - to help students to understand the teaching points made. There are instances, however, when lessons are taught by teachers who have no qualification in the subject they are teaching. This happens because there are times when the school requires more teachers of, for example, art than there are on the staff and teachers from other subject disciplines have to help. These lessons are never unsatisfactory, but students are not always supported and challenged as effectively as they are when taught by subject specialists. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Where there is unsatisfactory teaching in the school, it is because the pace of learning is too slow and because of weaknesses in the planning of lessons. The students are not encouraged to work hard and too much attention is given to small groups at the expense of the rest.
27. The quality of teaching varies from subject to subject. Teaching is very good at both key stages in modern foreign languages, ICT, drama, physical education and mathematics, where teachers have high expectations and interact well with the students to ensure that they are concentrating and working hard. Their management of students is excellent. Teaching in English is good at Year 9 and very good at Year 11, well organised and well planned to ensure brisk, appropriate work so that students learn quickly. The teaching of design and technology is very good at Year 9 and good at Year 11 and the teachers very good use of resources helps the students to achieve well. Teaching is good at both key stages in history, music, geography, art and science. In these subjects, teaching is well planned and challenging in order to extend students and help them to make good progress in their learning. Good planning and lively teaching hold students' interest in the GCSE course in religious education, motivating them to work hard and succeed.
28. Students with special educational needs are taught well. Learning support assistants are particularly well trained and carefully briefed so as to make a positive difference to the attainment of these students in lessons. Students with special educational needs are interested in their lessons and determined to succeed. They respond to the good teaching they receive with commitment and hard work.

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



29. The curriculum is good at both key stages and gives students rich learning opportunities. Although the school is a technology college, and so offers a curriculum biased towards science and technology, it still goes to significant lengths to provide a broad curriculum. A strength in the curriculum is the flexibility of choice which allows students of different attainment to follow a course that is suitable for them. In Years 7 to 9, all students follow the National Curriculum and within this, they can choose to study two languages. In Years 10 and 11, all students take core subjects and choose a further two from a choice of humanities, arts and physical education. They can also take General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) examinations in information and communication technology and manufacturing. The Youth Award Scheme is available and as in Years 7 to 9, students can elect to study two languages and have a further choice within the sciences of double award science, single or triple sciences.
30. Subjects are given enough time apart from geography, art and music in Years 7 to 9 and, for those who do not take an examination, in religious education in Years 10 and 11. The time given here is lower than that given by most schools and is affecting attainment within the subjects.
31. The needs of students with different attainment are usually met successfully. Departments choose how to group students and most ensure that work is suitable for them. The school has developed an approach to the teaching of literacy. However, there is inconsistency within and between departments in, for example, correcting spellings of key words. Departments ensure that students apply their skills of numeracy. All departments teach information and communication technology and therefore all teachers are teachers of information and communication technology. This is a very successful approach.
32. A particular strength in the curriculum is the enrichment programme that takes place on Friday afternoons. Students are given a very wide choice of courses, from horse riding to babysitting. Year 7 students in the first two terms are given a course in basic skills of literacy and numeracy and students in Year 11 are given support in study skills to help them in their examinations, in addition to the enrichment programme.
33. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and they further enhance the curriculum. There is a wide range, covering sports, arts, science and other subject-related clubs. Students take part in competitive sports with other schools. Many students are involved in these activities.
34. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. All students follow a social education programme that is carefully planned and is taught well. The programme covers drugs and sex education, using the help of the school nurse and local doctors. Thoughtful preparation has gone into identifying which subjects teach citizenship and a draft document has been prepared for discussion by staff in February. It is planned to use this so that all departments are involved in teaching citizenship.
35. The careers programme is good. It is well planned and the strong links with the community are used to good effect when organising work experience in Year 10 and information about careers. The programme has traditionally started in Year 9, but this year is beginning in Year 8.
36. The contribution of the community to the work of the school is very good. There are links with local industry and sports clubs. Environmental work is taking place through a scheme run by the local authority. The school also lends equipment, such as laptop computers, to organisations within the community. The relationships with local primary and secondary schools and colleges are also very good. Members of staff attend joint in-service training sessions and there is a good programme of induction for students entering the school in Year 7. These links enhance the curriculum.
37. Students with special educational needs have a broad range of lessons in the basic skills. Those with particularly serious needs are withdrawn for five periods a week in Year 7. Their literacy is successfully improved so that they can learn more successfully in all their other lessons. Students with low skills in literacy have access to further basic skills teaching in a weekly enrichment programme. Paired reading and the use of a "reading buddy" to motivate students produces very good improvements in reading over short periods of time for the majority of students. Students with special educational needs also improve their basic skills, with the rest of Year 7, when they use an effective interactive computer programme to improve their spelling and

reading. They have detailed individual education plans that are of great help to teachers, enabling them to plan work for these students to help them to succeed.

38. There has been good improvement in the curriculum for all since the last inspection. There are now vocational courses for Years 10 and 11, but the time for religious education is still low in these years for students who do not take it as an examination subject.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education**

39. The unsatisfactory provision for the spiritual development of pupils was an issue at the last inspection. This has been remedied. An audit of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and social education was undertaken following the last inspection and action taken subsequently across the curriculum. A second audit is taking place at the moment to take account of the requirements for education in citizenship. Overall, the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in the school is very good, with strengths in drama, mathematics, music and science. The school's partnership with a school in Africa, and indirectly with its African partner school for street children, is used as a very powerful tool for the development of awareness of all these aspects in all students. The initiative includes fund raising for the African school and the good use of e-mail links makes the partnership real.
40. The spiritual element of pupils' learning, which is just satisfactory, is supported specifically in personal, social and health education and religious education. Students gain insight, through these subjects, into values and beliefs behind our own and other cultures. The religious education curriculum is built around the concepts of individuals, communities, societies and cultures. The drama curriculum is concerned with self-awareness and identity in a moral and social context. Group work in drama and music, and investigative work in history give opportunities for reflection and the making of judgements. In mathematics, good quality teaching inspires students, and there is very good use of technology to support this work. However, the school does not satisfy statutory requirements for the provision of an act of collective worship every day for all and there are few opportunities for reflection in assemblies.
41. Moral education is excellent. Students work and learn in a strongly community-based environment, where mutual responsibility and care are the norms. They are able to put the concepts of right and wrong into a social context and become aware of the impact of their actions – individual and corporate – on others. This is inevitably strongest in subjects such as personal, social and health education, religious education and drama, but this sense of right and wrong underlies the ethos of the whole school.
42. The social element of school life is very well developed and the provision is excellent. Students accept responsibility for their own actions, individually and in groups. They show initiative and value the school as a community. There are very good links with the Gloucester Hospital Palliative Care department, working with children after bereavement, which includes a residential weekend at a local centre. The Memorial Garden was made by a group of upper school students to give such children a place where they can remember loved ones in a positive way. Already very good opportunities in education for citizenship exist upon which the current review of such provision can build.
43. Many areas of the school's work, particularly in the arts and humanities, develop students' awareness of their own culture. Visits from artists in residence are a very strong feature, and often involve students from other schools, including primary schools. The development of an awareness of world cultures is based on the partnership with the African school, but many other world cultures are represented in various parts of the curriculum, including native American and Asian cultures. Students learn a great deal about living in a multi-cultural society particularly through drama, religious education and personal, social and health education and the overall provision for cultural development is good.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

44. The school provides very good care for its students' welfare and safety. All points for action from the last inspection have been satisfactorily addressed and the school provides a secure learning environment.
45. The school has a very good induction programme for Year 7 students. The process begins with Year 5 pupils in partnership with primary schools. This helps to ensure that students are confident and secure when they enter their upper school. Once at Dene Magna, they receive very good academic support and become very competent learners. The very good process for target setting helps them to succeed. In both lessons and student interviews with their tutors, they use the opportunities they are given well to discuss their targets and general progress.
46. The system for monitoring and supporting students' pastoral care is very good. Students are very confident there are people in school in whom they feel confident they can confide. They have a wide range of options - form tutors, heads of school, senior managers, the school nurse and the counsellor. There are regular meetings to discuss any problems raised by staff and these provide a very effective and confidential level of personal and academic support.
47. Students are well cared for if they are ill or otherwise distressed. Procedures to ensure health and safety are very good. In all areas, but especially in subject lessons such as science, design technology and physical education, this makes students very conscious of safety issues. It also contributes well to their personal development, helping them to learn to take responsibility for themselves. There is a regular pattern of fire drills and checks on equipment. For example, the fire bell is tested each day. There are very clear and well-known procedures and access for any student with a disability.
48. Child protection procedures are very good. There is a clear policy and a designated member of staff. The policy is well known to staff. Students are also given opportunities to develop an understanding of child protection in their personal, social and health education. When appropriate, the school works closely with outside agencies on all child protection issues.
49. The procedures for the monitoring of behaviour are very good and understood by parents and students, who believe these procedures are very fair. As a result, students are well behaved and this ensures that a good ethos for learning is maintained. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Information on absence is available in a form that is very clear and enables tutors to follow up quickly any student who is regularly not attending. Registers are monitored daily and a sheet identifying student absence is given to tutors. The system is well run and maintained and is having a positive impact on improving attendance. Overall, the school provides very good care and support for its students' welfare and safety.
50. The school has significantly improved its systems for assessing and monitoring performance and personal development. The monitoring of academic performance and personal development is very good and is making a positive contribution to the standards students are reaching. Procedures to assess students' attainment and progress are very good overall. All are assessed formally through standardised reading tests and by local authority tests to establish their attainment on entry. The system is good and is helping to raise students' achievement.
51. The school assessment policy sets out comprehensive guidance to departments on how regular assessment should be used to set targets for students. Examples of very good assessment procedures in art and design and technology provide the subject teachers with a good range of information about the attainment of each student, give accurate measures of students' progress and provide a clear picture. In a number of subjects, including mathematics and English, assessment is good.
52. The last inspection reported that assessment was not used well to inform planning. This is an area of improvement, although practice is not yet consistent across all departments. It is satisfactory, overall. In art, science, design and technology, music, mathematics, English, history and geography, it is beginning to be effectively used. Despite good quality individual education plans, the targets of students with special educational needs are not precise enough. They cannot be measured over the short term, and are monitored too infrequently for them to be a useful tool to improve performance. They are not routinely used to guide curricular planning.

Since the last OFSTED inspection the school has been challenged to make the marking of all students' work constructive and informative. Most teachers succeed in this, but again there is some way to go for it to be universally effective. All students are, however, aware of their grades and of the progress they have made. Clear target setting is the norm and there are good opportunities for self-evaluation. Students' progress in all subjects is now reported to parents every few weeks through an Assessment Profile. These are very informative and both students and parents take the opportunity to make comments on the profiles, which are then acted upon by staff and used to support the setting of students' future targets.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

53. Parents' views of the school are very positive. They are confident their children are making good progress and are pleased with the standards in the school. Parents feel very well informed; they are beginning to appreciate the new system of reporting using regular profile sheets. All are very confident that any concerns or suggestions will be listened to. They feel that the school creates a purposeful ethos, that manners and politeness matter and there is mutual respect between students and teachers. All of this is very much welcomed by parents and inspectors agree with their views.
54. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. The system for parental consultations has recently changed, so not all parents yet fully understand or appreciate the strength of the new regular students' achievement profile. Through the profiles, parents have an opportunity to discuss students' progress and this gives an opportunity for parents and students to be involved in the process of setting targets. Letters outlining students' commendations are sent through the post to parents and this gives real pleasure to parents and students, helping to motivate them to even greater efforts. The good student 'planners', in which work and homework are recorded, are another way in which parents see the work their children are doing. These provide another good opportunity for constructive dialogue between the school and home. A high proportion of parents attend the annual reviews of special educational needs students with statements, and the subsequent transitional reviews. Back to School evenings are organised for parents who want to know more about particular subjects and how students are being taught. The regular newsletters are informative, covering events, changes and developments. There is a useful booklet introducing Year 7 to the school, appreciated by students and parents. It is full of practical information to support the students' entry into the school. Parents attend a Year 9 options evening and a range of careers information time and meetings. The school is still retaining a tutor evening for parents to meet students' tutors and discuss their child's progress. This allows the partnership between home and school to develop further. The governors' annual report to parents is informative and meets legal requirements. The school prospectus is well presented, provides useful information for parents and students and complies fully with legal requirements.
55. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory and progressing well. Parents sign a home school agreement and through this fully accept they will support the aims and policies the school has in place. Parents contribute very positively through Parent Working Party Groups as and when appropriate. All parent governor positions are filled and governors make a useful and professional contribution to the school's management and development.
56. The Friends of the School are a small group who work hard to give support and provide social events and raise funds. They make a huge financial contribution to the school and have provided dining tables and seats, dance mats, equipment for 'reading buddies' scheme and support for the Duke of Edinburgh Award in the past. The school values the work of the association, who have identified the need to review the arrangements. The present group, who are very committed and who work extremely hard, need more manpower if they are to go forward to even greater things.

## **Community Links**

57. Very good links exist with the community, particularly with local industry, commerce and professions, mostly through the Education Business Partnership. These groups are very supportive of the school and instrumental in providing both good resources and manpower to support students' work across the curriculum. It is very clear in many areas that the benefits students are receiving from these partnerships are raising standards and attainment; particularly

so in the technology subjects. The Global Action Plan has been taken up by the school and has helped to strengthen links with the schools in Kenya and India. Visits have been made to both countries and students share environmental work through the Internet and letters. Students have excelled in their work for charity both personally and when including the whole school community. The sponsored walk, non-school uniform days and 'Readathon' have provided money to support Winston's Wish, Children with Leukaemia and the World Wild Life Fund.

58. Links with other schools are strong. There are curricular links with all Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in local primary schools, but particularly for the more able mathematicians. The school supports contributing schools with equipment and, when needed, shares transport. Good links exist with The Royal Forest of Dean College. A recent project included the students, with the college and local hotels, working together to provide a sponsored lunch for invited members of the community.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

59. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head and the senior and middle managers, are very good. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. All members of staff, and especially the senior team and heads of subject, monitor the school's performance very well indeed and this is an area of considerable strength. As a result of this analysis, effective action is taken to improve the work of the school. This has led to good progress since the time of the last report and the school is very well placed to improve in future. Resources are deployed well to improve the quality of education for the benefit of students and the school succeeds well in getting the best value from its use of its funds and resources. Levels of staffing are good and the school has very good resources, especially in technology. Some of the accommodation, such as that for art, is of a high quality and provides a very good environment for learning. Some accommodation is unsatisfactory. The rooms for music and drama are in a poor state of repair and not sufficiently soundproof. The indoor facilities for physical education are inadequate. These factors have an adverse affect on the range and quality of opportunities for students.
60. The new headteacher, along with the other senior managers, provides very clear direction for the work of the school. He is also providing continuity, building well on the work of the previous headteacher, whose work was also described as very good in the previous report. He has high expectations of both teachers and students. There is a strong focus on the further improvement of the already high examination results, while not losing sight of the importance of other aspects of school life, such as students' personal development. The school's priorities for development are very appropriate and include a focus on raising the attainment of boys. The action taken to meet these targets has been very effective and the results at both key stages in 2000 show a marked improvement in attainment by Year 11 boys from the levels gained by the 1999 cohort. This concern for development includes a high level of concern for social inclusion, in other words the school is committed to improving the quality of education for all students, irrespective of their background.
61. The new target the headteacher has set for the school, of 63 per cent of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at A\* to C, is an ambitious one, but the systems in the school, for setting targets for students based on their prior levels of attainment and tracking their progress, are so effective that the target is attainable. There is also a very good process for monitoring and evaluating teaching. This is successfully raising standards of teaching across the school and ensuring that lessons are planned and taught following similar principles in all departments - principles that are based on observed good and successful practice in the school. The process of management is very effective. It is open and consultative and leads to a very strong, shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. The school has three times been granted the Investor in People award because of its commitment to staff support and development. All major decisions, including the setting of the school improvement plan, are done through a widespread and open process of consultation. Governors are fully involved in helping to shape the direction of the school. Parents are consulted regularly and their views taken into account. The school regularly seeks the views of students. There is an active student council. When there are vacancies on the teaching staff, students interview those seeking posts at the school. In ninety per cent of cases, the first choice of the students is appointed and, judging by the high quality of teachers in the school, their opinions are to be trusted.

62. The aims and values of the school are reflected very well in all of its work. Because of the open and communicative systems of management and decision-making, there is a consistent approach throughout the school to ensuring that all behave courteously, take responsibility for their actions and value education. The decision to call children 'students', for example, reflects the importance in the school of study and independent learning.
63. Almost all those with delegated responsibilities, for a subject or for students' welfare, carry out their roles very effectively. The system of Total Quality Management that was adopted by the school approximately ten years ago ensures that work at all levels in the school is monitored and reviewed regularly, action points decided upon, targets set and reviewed. This results in a reflective and self-evaluative culture that has helped to ensure high standards of management. The school adopted a performance management policy before it was statutorily required to do so and is so committed to the principles of performance management that it applied and was accepted to be in the vanguard of the threshold assessment process. The school's strategies for appraisal and performance management are very good indeed.
64. The provision for special educational needs students is well co-ordinated. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that teachers follow the correct procedures and provides good support to students, parents and staff. Statutory requirements are fully met. There is a named governor, who has oversight of all students with special educational needs. Specific grants are used well to support the education of special educational needs students and additional funds are made available by the school, resulting in a good level of resourcing, overall.
65. The governing body carries out its responsibilities very well. It is very well organised and many of its members are highly qualified in their own professions. They bring very good management experience to their roles as governors. They are well informed, thorough in their monitoring of many aspects of the work of the school, including the budget, and have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are aware that the statutory requirement for an act of collective worship for all every day is not being met. Most governors are linked to subjects or areas of the curriculum. This allows them to monitor the curriculum, but this is not as well organised as the rest of the governors' work and is satisfactory rather than very good.

### **Staffing, accommodation and resources**

66. Overall, the teaching staff is well qualified and deployed to make best use of its expertise and ensure standards of teaching are maintained. However, in art, history and religious education some lessons are taught by non-specialists. In physical education there has been extensive use of supply teachers and there is only one male member of staff.
67. The provision for the continued professional development of all staff is very good and is linked to the School Improvement Plan and the Investor In People award.
68. There has been considerable rebuilding at the school and this has provided some excellent facilities. However there are several areas where accommodation is preventing higher standards being attained. Physical education has good provision for outdoor sports but indoor accommodation is inadequate, especially during poor weather. As a result, it is sometimes necessary to cancel lessons at short notice because there is nowhere suitable for them to take place. This is affecting the curriculum and standards in physical education and is depriving students of opportunities for healthy exercise to which they are entitled. Provision is also of a standard lower than that available in other schools, giving their students an unfair advantage in indoor sports. The ethos and standards achieved by the physical education department are commendable considering the accommodation and staffing difficulties under which they labour. The accommodation for music and drama is also poor, constraining the standard of work possible. The rooms have poor soundproofing, poor heating, inadequate blinds and no sound or lighting board. There are areas where classrooms are noisy in wind or rain and the recently refurbished science laboratories have inadequate and non-standard power points. There is a shortage of some specialist accommodation for design and technology.
69. The school buildings are completely accessible to students in wheelchairs. The buildings are fitted with ramps and automatic doors. A lift allows access to the first floor. There are toilets and showers for disabled students and a designated medical room in which therapies can be carried

out. There are effective links with outside agencies and the resources they supply for these students are used well.

70. The level of resourcing throughout the school is good. The quantity and quality of resources, including learning materials produced by the teaching staff, are high and contribute to the standards of education and the achievements of students. The range and the excellent use made of information and communication technology resources throughout the school are especially strong features. The library is well equipped and this too is well resourced with computers, with CD ROM and Internet facilities.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

71. In order to continue to improve and to raise levels of attainment and improve the quality of education in the school, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff, with the support of the local education authority, should:

- evaluate the successful strategies used by those departments that attain a relatively high proportion of A\* and A passes at GCSE and adapt them in other subject areas to raise the attainment of students so that it is more consistently high across the school (see paragraphs 1,4,6,9,10, 12, 14, 27);
- fully implement the literacy policy to raise the literacy levels of lower attaining students from the time they enter the school, in order to give them the skills they need to communicate successfully, in and out of school, in speech and writing (see paragraphs 1,4,6,9,10, 12, 14, 27);
- improve the accommodation in those areas of the school that fall below the generally high standards elsewhere. There are rooms that fall short of the standard of accommodation to which students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century ought to be entitled and which restrict students' opportunities to follow the full curriculum in physical education, music and drama (see paragraphs 59, 68, 179, 187, 201).

The governors are urged to include in their action plan the following areas for development, which the inspection team noted with concern but did not pick out as key issues. These are:

- the provision for spiritual development is underdeveloped (see paragraphs 40, 188, 195);
- the lack of an act of collective worship for all every day and the fact that most assemblies do not have a spiritual element (see paragraphs 40, 65).

## **KEY STAGE 4 – THE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS AGED 14 TO 16**

72. Provision for students in Years 10 and 11 is good and is continuing to develop as it is reviewed. All students follow a course of compulsory English, mathematics, design and technology, a modern foreign language, information and communication technology, social and religious education and physical education. They select two subjects from the humanities, arts and an examination course in physical education. Students can also choose to take both French and German. Two vocational courses are available, GNVQ manufacturing and information and communication technology. A Youth Award Certificate is also available. Within the sciences, students can choose to study double award science, triple and single science awards.
73. All students follow a course in personal, social and health education. This includes sex and drugs education. Guidance for future careers is good. Year 10 students take part in a week's work experience and, on their return, spend two days discussing their experiences before they return to the more formal setting of the classroom. In Year 11, students are offered the opportunity to find out about the different options that are available to them. This work is enhanced by the very good links with the community that give many good opportunities. An exciting initiative is the 'virtual reality sixth form'. A web site is being developed which will give students insight into different courses, including, it is hoped, the opportunity to see courses in action. The work currently involves three departments working with other schools and colleges.

74. The school has been aware that the options choice can restrict access to students who wish to follow certain routes. The choices have been broadened in an attempt to mitigate this, and will be further broadened in September 2001.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	154
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	38

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	40	40	13	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	736	
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	52	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	26	
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	170	

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	7.66

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.08

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

### Attainment at the end of Year 9

Number of registered students in final year of Year 9 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	75	74	149

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	50	61	58
	Girls	62	51	48
	Total	112	112	106
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (68)	75 (72)	71 (63)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (25)	53 (51)	36 (27)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	58	48
	Girls	60	55	52
	Total	104	113	100
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (72)	76 (78)	68 (74)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	25 (31)	66 (64)	62 (60)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

### Attainment at the end of Year 11

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	60	67	127

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	28	58	60
	Girls	47	66	66
	Total	75	124	126
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	59 (56)	98 (96)	99 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	43
	National	38.4

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

### **Ethnic background of students**

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	735
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### **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	8	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	36.9
Number of students per qualified teacher	19.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	419

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.9
---	------

#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 2	
Year 9	31.6
Year 11	26.5

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	2052456
Total expenditure	2064138
Expenditure per pupil	2871
Balance brought forward from previous year	116863
Balance carried forward to next year	105181

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	736
Number of questionnaires returned	137

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	55	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	49	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	49	2	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	51	15	1	1
The teaching is good.	42	56	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	35	4	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	33	4	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	25	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	44	7	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	50	46	1	3	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	46	5	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	43	14	1	10

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

### **ENGLISH**

75. Standards of attainment on entry are broadly in line with the national average, but improving steadily. The results in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 were in line with the national average and in line with similar schools. The trend over the last three years has gone up and is broadly in line with the national trend. At the end of Year 11 students' attainment in English is above the national average for both English and English literature. There is a difference between the attainment of boys and girls at both key stages, with girls out-performing boys particularly in Year 10 and Year 11. However, the boys still attain standards in line with boys nationally. At both key stages students with special educational needs are achieving highly and reach standards that are consistent with their peer group. In Year 11, virtually all students achieve very well, with most attaining grades in the A\* - G range at GCSE. Students with English as an additional language are also achieving highly.
76. By the end of Year 9, standards in speaking and listening are at least in line with national expectations and frequently better. An excellent example of how these skills are developed was in a Year 8 discussion on 'Soap Operas' where students successfully learned the difference between colloquialisms and 'slang' and how these features become appropriate media language. In a Year 7 lesson, on the poem 'The Hog', students confidently discussed the difference between 'alliteration' and 'assonance'. This helped them reaffirm previous learning and establish a basis for explaining orally the poet's use of language in this poem.
77. Standards in speaking and listening in Year 11 are well above national standards. In a Year 11 lesson on 'An Inspector Calls' the discussion helped students understand the significance of the symbolic nature of the characters. In a lesson on persuasive language some Year 11 students sensitively made critical and constructive criticisms of each other's debating skills, which helped them to develop their arguments further.
78. Standards in reading are broadly in line with national standards at the beginning of Year 9. However the national tests administered when students enter the school show that achievement in reading may be lower than the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 suggest. The English department has recently incorporated various reading strategies to help raise attainment in reading. The students read in silence at the beginning of every lesson and during tutorial time. There is also a 'Buddying Scheme', with Year 10 students supporting lower attaining Year 7 students to help improve their reading skills. The evidence of the inspection is that these strategies are already having an impact on improving both reading ability and motivation. However, these initiatives are not monitored with sufficient rigour to allow precise feedback to students on their progress that would maximise their effectiveness. Many students at this age read fluently, explore vocabulary and are able to refer to textual evidence to support a viewpoint. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on 'Macbeth' students were able to draw inferences from the script and decide on the personal qualities Macbeth had which made him ideal as a murderer's accomplice. This activity was supported by a well-constructed, structured reading guide.
79. By the end of Year 11 standards in reading are higher than national standards; students are reading with a good degree of perception and understanding. The best example of this was a Year 11 lesson on Ted Hughes's poem 'Warm and Cold' where students read the poem and transferred the images from the poet's words into pictures. Two lower attaining students in this group produced vibrant and interesting images that were the most effective in that lesson. This imaginative lesson demonstrated that readers of all ability could be helped to appreciate aesthetic experiences.
80. Students in both key stages use the library frequently and borrow books regularly. This further reading supports their research work in several subject areas. The use of individual reading programs on computers are also helping less experienced readers to build up vocabulary. In a very successful Year 7 lesson students combined the information technology programs with private reading to enhance their reading skills.

81. Standards in writing are average at the beginning of Year 7 but a wide range of writing opportunities helps students improve quickly. For example, Year 7 students had carefully constructed a website dedicated to "Treasure Island". In this lesson students redrafted their work to improve the quality of their writing making it appropriate for a real audience. Their communication skills were tested to the full and they rose to the challenge of laying out their webpage for an unlimited audience
82. Standards in writing at Year 11 are higher than average national standards. Presentation is often excellent which shows a high level of commitment to the subject. There is much evidence of students of all abilities drafting and redrafting their work and using information technology confidently as a tool for improving producing their final drafts. The best examples of this were in the students' anthologies of poems and short stories that were available on loan in the library. Students confidently write in a variety of styles for a real audience, as in a Year 10 poem where a student explores the idea of a lakeside on a summer's day in poetry:
- "The moss is springy on the sodden ground  
covering the churned earth beneath it.  
I gaze admiringly  
as the hushed, tranquil lake stretches in its slumber".*
83. Higher attaining students are providing creative pieces of writing of exceptionally high quality and are achieving the highest grades at GCSE. Some lower attaining students still find difficulty with accuracy in spelling and grammar and this frequently affects the clarity of their writing and hinders understanding. Despite these technical weaknesses students are producing imaginative pieces that clearly demonstrate an understanding of audience and purpose in their writing.
84. Teaching in Year 7 to Year 9 is good overall, with over 40 per cent of lessons either very good or excellent. Teaching in Year 11 is very good overall with 78 per cent of lessons very good or excellent. The high standards of teaching contribute substantially to the very high achievement of students. All teachers display very good subject knowledge, have high expectations of students and their planning is excellent. All teachers explain what they expect students to learn at the beginning of a lesson and return at the end of the lesson to check learning has taken place. In the more successful lessons students are drawn into taking an active part because tasks are well structured, as in a Year 10 lesson on 'Macbeth' where a writing prompt sheet enabled all students to learn.
85. Good questioning technique and feedback to students allows them to make very good gains in understanding. An excellent example was a Year 10 lesson on 'The Crucible' where the use of information technology and the interactive whiteboard helped students to take an active part in the lesson. Good pace, high expectations of students, stimulating and well-planned lessons and extended plenary sessions to consolidate learning are all features of the lessons where learning is very good. There were many examples of such teaching. Learning was less assured where time was not managed as effectively and the learning objectives were not kept in focus, as in a Year 7 lesson on poetic language where the focus of the lesson moved from the original planning. The students in these lessons were left unchallenged and unsure as to what the outcomes of the lesson should be. Therefore, little learning could take place.
86. The marking and assessing of students' work are patchy. Some teachers mark regularly to identify weaknesses. A more consistent approach to day-to-day marking needs to be established and further monitoring of the department's excellent assessment strategies needs to be implemented. This will help the good practice of sharing assessment with students and using assessment to influence the planning of lessons to take place uniformly across the department.
87. Students' attitudes are very good at both key stages and behaviour in the classroom is very good. Students respond in a mature manner in discussions and are enthusiastic about their work. They sustain concentration, have a business-like approach to their work and co-operate well with one another and their teachers. Indeed, warm relaxed relationships are a feature of most lessons. Students enjoy the subject and appreciate the work of their teachers.
88. The management of students with English as an additional language is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures the early identification of their needs. If these needs are

seen to be acute they are placed on the register of students with special educational needs and extra support is made available. At present there are only two students on the register.

89. Much has been done to remedy the issues in the last inspection report and progress has been good. Examination results are now analysed carefully, particularly with a view to boy's achievement. A particular focus has been the development of strategies designed to help boys to learn. The inspection evidence suggests that, although these strategies are already successful and are raising boys' attainment, there needs to be a more rigorous approach to monitoring their impact on learning. Targets are now set for all students to help them achieve the highest standards possible. Teachers use a variety of ways to help students with learning difficulties. The most effective of these is the use of personalised writing guides, easily available to students on the English department's computers. There is a clear commitment to raising levels of attainment even further and to improve the range of teaching strategies to help achieve this goal. The department has fully addressed the issue of poor resources, raised in the last report, and is now well provided with textbooks and multi-media equipment.
90. The department's leadership is excellent; clear vision and excellent planning enable an energetic and enthusiastic team to fulfil their role. The excellent leadership, together with the high level of staff commitment, provide a firm basis for success. This is a good department providing firm support for all the students.

### **Literacy**

91. Much has been done to improve literacy since the previous inspection report. Staff development has made teachers more understanding of all issues related to raising attainment in literacy. A whole-school action plan for literacy is in place and a whole-school policy for literacy has been developed by the staff, following a training session. Other initiatives for raising the standards of literacy include silent reading for the first few minutes of every English lesson and a "Buddying" partnership, with Year 10 students assisting Year 7 students who are finding difficulties with reading.
92. Dene Magna has also run a Summer School and has followed this through with literacy booster classes and the use of individual information technology programs for all Year 7 students. In addition to this, students add subject-specific technical words, which they learn for homework, to their personal planners.
93. Standards of reading at both key stages are in line with national standards across the curriculum. A particularly good example was in geography, where students read aloud to elicit understanding. There is already evidence that the silent reading strategies have had an impact on raising attainment, but these initiatives need further monitoring. In addition students use the library regularly and are able to read and comprehend, extract information and use referencing skills as well. Specialist vocabulary is taught in mathematics, physical education, English, science and geography. In drama, technical words, associated with practical work, help students express judgments about their work.
94. Standards of writing are above national standards at both key stages across the curriculum, with a satisfactory standard of accuracy in written work. The range of writing activities offered is good, demonstrating the students' awareness of audience and purpose for their writing. Good examples of writing guides were evident in English, drama and geography. There is some evidence of redrafting and manipulation of text. More opportunities for extended pieces of writing need to be offered in all subjects. The use of information and communication technology to enhance presentation is excellent; many carefully produced pieces of work demonstrate the students' commitment to this approach. However, handwriting is sometimes weak and some work is poorly marked, with some incorrect spelling of specialist subject words remaining uncorrected.
95. A firm foundation has been laid for the introduction of literacy teaching across the school. The school is well placed to develop even further by continued monitoring of its policy - in particular of its approaches to the teaching of reading.

## MATHEMATICS

96. Levels of attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 9 are well above national averages. In 2000, the percentage of students reaching level 5 or above was above the national average and the percentage reaching level 6 or above was well above the national average. When judged on average points scores, the results over the last four years have always been above or well above the national figures, and standards are increasing at a slightly faster rate than nationally. Boys performed better than girls last year. When the results are compared with schools that have a similar percentage of free school meals, the results are above national figures.
97. Students in Years 7 to 9 are extremely interested in their mathematics and are keen to make very good progress. Students of higher ability in Year 9 are confident in their knowledge of mathematical terms, and respond very well to short tests on using mathematical processes. They study rotation with great zeal, and construct accurate diagrams to find the centre of rotation. The students are quick to grasp new ideas, and keen to use their new knowledge to solve problems. Students of average ability, who have good number skills, understand ratios, and use unitary methods to calculate answers to practical problems. Their algebraic manipulation skills are good, and they can expand brackets and collect like terms with confidence. Students of higher ability in Year 8 appreciate the value of computers as a tool to assist in multiple calculations. They confidently establish a spreadsheet containing details of breakfast foods, which gives food value, protein content and amount eaten, and program the computer with mathematical formulae that calculate totals. Their command of the computer's tools is good. Middle ability students in Year 8 consider the angles used in bearings and practise outside with compasses and measuring instruments. Less able students enthusiastically practise number and money skills using money dominoes. This leads to written examples involving money calculations. In a Year 7 class, an investigation into the connection between the number of shapes and the number of lines in a chain of polygons helped students to make mathematical predictions for general cases. Other Year 7 students show good understanding in substituting numbers for letters and cracking codes. A computer program is well used as a stimulus for students to develop their English and mathematics skills. All students respond very well to their teachers and show great interest in their studies.
98. Results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations are well above national averages, and significantly better than the average of other subjects in the school. In 2000, 64 per cent of students gained grades A\*-C compared with the national average of 47 per cent. Results at grades A\*-G were average by national standards. These commendable results are due to the very high quality of teaching in the department, where extremely high expectations of students' performances are the norm.
99. Higher attaining students in Year 11 factorise quadratics and then extend their knowledge to solve quadratic equations, demonstrating how quickly they understand new work and link this to previous knowledge. Students work well collaboratively in small groups to discuss approaches and answers to problems; very mature attitudes to studying are seen. Students working towards average grades in GCSE examinations learn to construct perpendicular bisectors of a line and angle bisectors. Constructions are accurately and neatly completed and show good understanding of the processes involved. This work leads on to finding loci of points. In Year 10, higher ability students calculate areas of sectors, arc lengths and areas of segments of circles. One boy estimated the angle at the centre of the circle and quickly calculated the arc length mentally. Students are quick to grasp new ideas. Middle ability students log on to computers to plot families of straight lines, which help in their understanding of gradients and intercepts. Students write sentences to summarise their conclusions. Less able students understand types of correlation and identify lines of best fit. Throughout, students are very enthusiastic in their mathematical studies, are keen to learn and work in a very mature manner.
100. Progress by students is very good, leading to very good achievement overall. Students listen intently to their teachers at all times and respond well in question and answer sessions, although they are sometimes rather quiet. Students show great respect for their teachers and follow tasks specified by them. When written work is set, students start immediately, and are very committed workers. Students make very good progress in their learning because of the very high quality teaching that they enjoy, the extremely high expectations of them and their own concentration on their studies. Students with special educational needs make good progress because teachers are aware of their needs and set work which is appropriate to their abilities.



101. The overall quality of teaching is very good. The mathematics teachers are hardworking, exceptionally caring of students' welfare, delicate in their dealings with students, maintain very high levels of discipline in their classrooms, and organise lessons in which all students can achieve very high standards. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the mathematical needs of students are excellent. Their teaching of basic skills is sensibly considered and the warm up sessions at the beginning of lessons show imaginative approaches that stimulate students' learning. Teachers set extremely demanding standards, to which students are expected to strive. There is a very high expectation that homework will be completed on time and this brings a very good response from students. They push students' learning forward at a fast pace. Teachers interrupt tasks at appropriate times to develop new ideas. Control of students is excellent, and delicate and caring guidance is seen. Teachers take basic steps at a very appropriate pace for their groups and check on understanding regularly.
102. The use of new technologies in the teaching is exceptional. Teachers are confident when using PowerPoint and this tool is regularly used to introduce the main parts of lessons. It acts as a great stimulation to students, who have the privilege of appreciating real quality in the setting out of mathematical problems in an organised step-by-step progression. Teachers also use computers with their groups when they judge that learning can be enhanced. Marking is good, with some useful comments. Long-term assessment is clearly planned. Because of the very high quality of teaching, students concentrate on their work, are enthusiastic and make very good progress.
103. Students' attitudes in mathematics are very positive indeed. They show very good attitudes to studying and are mature in their approach to learning and solving problems. Students always follow the directions from the teacher, and there is never any disruption to other students' learning. Students are extremely polite, and listen to and value other students' comments. They are very supportive of each other.
104. The mathematics' department handbook contains detailed curriculum plans and guidance on procedures. A General Certificate of Secondary Education course in statistics is offered, which is taught by a lecturer from the Royal Forest of Dean College. To emphasise the school's technology college status and its links with the community, the head of department teaches A-level mathematics at the college. The United Kingdom Mathematical Challenge attracts many students, who have been successful at all levels. The department enjoys very positive links with parents; the recently introduced Mathematics Assessment Profile, which is sent to parents approximately every six weeks, has been successful in involving parents more in their children's learning.
105. The head of department gives extremely strong leadership in the philosophy, educational priorities, standards of discipline, relationships with students and strategic planning of mathematics. As a result, standards are increasing year on year and there has been very good improvement in the work of the department since the previous report. Monitoring and evaluation are priorities and performance management is firmly in place. The head of department continually seeks personal improvement in her role and has created a very strong team, which is extremely successful and develops many new ideas under her guidance and leadership. She is fully supported by very talented teachers, and there is a shared commitment to the improvement of mathematics standards in the school for the benefit of all students. This is a very strong curriculum area and the students are extremely well served.

## **Numeracy**

106. There is a school numeracy policy in place. Very good practice in improving basic number skills is seen at the beginning of mathematics lessons. There are a variety of approaches, some of which lead naturally into the main part of the lesson. Basic number skills are very well stressed, and calculators are only used when appropriate. Games, new equipment and computers are used to enhance students' learning.
107. In English, students use graphs well when investigating their own performance. Surveys and statistical information about sentence lengths and word frequencies form part of the course. Students in science show good use of number and can insert numbers into formulae. There are occasional weaknesses in identifying place value and in the use of units, but transference of

knowledge of basic rules is good. In modern languages, students complete surveys and produce bar charts and graphs. Students create repetitive patterns and tessellations in art, considering rotational symmetry, and using computers for some of their designs. In physical education, students take measurements and use percentages when identifying training zones and heart rates. Performance and line graphs are drawn. Students with special educational needs have good support and are well directed in their studies; basic rules are well covered and students' confidence in their use increases.

## SCIENCE

108. The attainment of students at intake from primary schools, though just below average in overall ability, is just above the national average for science. Over the last three years student attainment at Year 9 has risen in line with national trends and has been above the national average for all schools and in line with that of similar schools. The attainment of boys and girls is very similar. At GCSE level the attainment of students in 2000 was above national averages for A\* - C grades, following the pattern established over the last few years. All students gain an award in the A\* - G range. Boys gain more A\* or A grades than girls, but girls gain a higher percentage of A\* - C grades than boys. Compared with other subjects in the school, attainment in science is good. The school target of 70 per cent A\* - C in science in 2001 is realistic, based on reliable performance data.
109. At the end of Year 9 the standard of work is above average, overall. In Life Processes and Living Things, students can recall the characteristics of animal groupings and show above average knowledge. They have a clear understanding of food chains and food webs and associated scientific terminology. In Materials and their Properties, students have a clear understanding of solids, liquids and gases, melting and boiling points and particle theory. Able students have a good understanding of the rock cycle and the means of formation of igneous and sedimentary rocks. In Physical Processes, students can clearly explain the differences between series and parallel circuits and the implications of both for bulb brightness. They understand and can explain the terms reflection and refraction, that the correct term for a rainbow is a spectrum and list colours in the correct sequence. The work in students' books is of well presented: that of less able students is better than that observed typically in other schools.
110. In Year 11, students show good understanding of the human system of blood circulation. Higher attaining students clearly explain the terms genotype, phenotype, dominant and recessive in relation to work on genetics. Able students can readily explain the factors affecting the rate of a reaction, but less able students find difficulty in explaining the use and basic chemistry of the blast furnace. Students show good understanding of balanced equations using chemical formulae.
111. The standard of work of GCSE students is above average. There are weaknesses, however, in the presentation and quality of written work from some otherwise able candidates. The quality of work seen produced by less able candidates was better than that typically seen in some other schools, although marred by some literacy errors.
112. Students' investigatory work for GCSE is of an appropriate level and quality. However, some weaknesses were observed in the reading of instrumentation in practical work. Students showed good skills overall in the assembly and use of equipment.
113. The school needs to ensure that the standards of literacy in science are more rigorously applied. The numerical skills of students are satisfactory, but some students find difficulty in converting between joules and kilojoules. The department is making very good use of information and communication technology, although data-logging does not feature strongly at present.
114. Progress in science is good, leading to students achieving well. Students enter with above average scientific skills and improve on these to obtain above average results in the national tests at the end of Year 9. These are further consolidated in Year 11 to produce above average GCSE grades. Students with special educational needs also make good progress.
115. In 82 per cent of lessons, students' response is very good or excellent. Relationships between students and teachers are good. Homework is completed on time. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is

good overall; 11 per cent of teaching is very good, 44 per cent good and 45 per cent satisfactory. In Years 10 to 11, teaching is also good overall. There is a higher proportion of very good teaching, but there is also some that is unsatisfactory: 37.5 per cent is very good, 25 per cent good, 25 per cent satisfactory and 12.5 per cent unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good or very good, lessons start with good use of question and answer techniques to remind students of last lessons work or set the scene for the current lesson. Lessons are well planned and pupils managed well, so that they carry out practical work efficiently and learn more effectively. Pace of lessons is maintained and good use made of interactive display-boards to enhance learning. Lessons show a logical presentation of concepts and conclude with key points being highlighted. The weak aspects of teaching observed were hurried introductions, sometimes caused by students arriving late from lessons in other buildings, and false assumptions being made that students automatically grasp the work in hand, without really checking. Sometimes lesson time is not used to best effect; work being tackled in class that could have been more usefully completed at home.

116. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. All students have equal opportunities to study single, double and separate sciences. The curriculum is broadened through enrichment studies, clubs and inter-departmental activity days. Cultural and environmental aspects have been well developed by a joint Eco-schools Award with a school in Kenya. The department is building up and using a comprehensive set of data on student attainment that is used to good effect in monitoring progress and setting overall targets. There is a marking policy, but it is not followed consistently. There is opportunity for the department to co-ordinate marking strategies and requirements more effectively. Effective use could then be made of interim assessments to help students to progress by making them aware of what they need to do to improve, by means of short-term target setting.
117. The department is staffed with well-qualified teachers. It is led well by the head of department and is supported effectively by a very good technician and part-time technical staff. All share a strong commitment to future improvement. Since the last inspection, progress has been good. Monitoring of teaching has improved with good record keeping and feedback.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

118. Attainment in Year 9 is mainly above national expectations for the ages of the students. In Year 11, attainment is above average overall for the GCSE course. Attainment in art has improved in recent years and there has been very good improvement in the work of the department since the previous report. In the 1999 GCSE examination the percentage of A\* to C grades gained by students at the school was well below the percentage for similar schools nationally, with boys' results being particularly weak. In the 2000 GCSE art examination, the percentage of \*A to C grades gained by students in the school was level with the percentage for similar schools nationally, with boys doing better than boys, on average, nationally. All students achieve well in art and make good progress.
119. Strengths of attainment across all years are in drawing from observation, including portraiture and still life studies, and in colour and tonal work with various materials including paint and pastel. The good focus on developing drawing skills enhances the quality of image making in all other materials and processes. Work in clay is developing well. A particular strength is the good use of information and communication technology, for image making, for historical research, and as a teaching and presentation aid. Students are often inspired by the work of other artists and designers, with, for example, work seen informed by Picasso and Cubism, Pop art, Rembrandt, Indian, African and Aboriginal art. While the visual quality of their work is enriched by these influences, students' background knowledge about art history is sometimes less secure, and many students find critical discussion about art more difficult.
120. Teaching in both key stages is good overall, with some very good teaching seen. Teachers provide challenging tasks and provide the help needed by students to accomplish successful work. Lessons are well organised, with clear descriptions and expert demonstrations so that students understand what they need to do. Each lesson builds up subject knowledge and skills, so that students can practice and improve. A great deal of individually tailored teaching takes place, matched to the different abilities of students and taking account of their own ideas about expressive work. This is of special benefit to students with special educational needs in all year

groups, and accounts for the good range of individual responses to work set in the GCSE course. Improvements in planning work, tracking achievements and setting targets have played an effective part in raising attainment, particularly of boys.

121. Almost all students at all levels of ability respond well to the art teaching they receive. They enjoy art lessons and behaviour is good. Students are keen to succeed and they work hard. In spite of the short time available for art, a lot gets done.
122. Since the last OFSTED inspection, there has been very good improvement. Attainment has been raised in both key stages. The provision and use of information and communication technology and the new art studios are now major strengths. Improved teaching, management, planning and assessment methods are now in place and are clearly effective.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

123. As predicted at the time of the last inspection, results in design and technology have improved considerably so that they are now well above average in several subject areas. Effective management and teaching have resulted in students having a positive attitude to the subject so that achievement is high. The school's technology status has enabled the department to provide the equipment needed to cover all aspects of the curriculum and the department has made very good improvement since the last inspection.
124. Students' attainment on entering the school is near the national average. However, by the end of Year 9 the proportions of students achieving level 5 and above in the teacher assessment results for the year 2000 were well above the national average. This indicates a very good achievement, especially for girls, whose results are better than those for boys. The finding of the inspection is that attainment is currently well above average overall at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE. GCSE results for all technology subjects were above the national average in both the years 1999 and 2000. Girls again did much better than boys, but the gap was narrower than in 2000. These results show an improvement over the results for the years 1997 and 1998, which were near average overall. The results for graphics, textiles and electronics were well above average in the year 2000 and the results for food technology were above average. Although results for resistant materials were slightly below average in 2000, this represented a considerable achievement since the students entered the school. Recent GCSE design and technology results are above average when compared with results for other subjects in the same school. These results are high when compared with schools having a similar intake.
125. For students in Years 7, 8 and 9, all teaching is good or very good and it is very good overall. For example, in a textiles lesson, students were designing and making their own hats. They were all very busy, cutting and stitching either by hand or sewing machine. The teacher had encouraged the students to use their initiative and imagination in planning their work. Together with the students' positive attitudes and behaviour, this created a very good learning environment and led to above average attainment. For Years 10 and 11, nearly all teaching is at least satisfactory and most is good or very good. It is good overall. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject areas and use this knowledge to plan lessons effectively. Appropriately, some students are offered worksheets, giving extra help for drawing their designs. Lesson introductions are clear and concise, so that students are able to follow instructions well. In most cases, teachers carefully consider the time allocated to tasks when planning lessons. Technical resources are very well used throughout the department, although some extra tools would help when constructing electronic circuits. Teaching methods are generally appropriate and varied, so that students are able to concentrate for a double period. This was the case during an electronics lesson, where students were learning about logic gates and binary counters. Teachers challenge students by asking them to design systems to provide various types of control. They were able to construct the circuits and prove that their designs were correct. Organisation and management of the students are particularly effective, so that in most lessons activities continue at the same time. Expectations are high and teachers constantly seek to find ways of increasing achievement. They make exceptionally good use of information and communication technology for word processing, control and the presentation of their work. However, the use of spreadsheets to calculate quantities and costs could be increased. Marking and assessment at the end of projects are well developed. Records are kept of the National Curriculum levels achieved. However, some further brief assessments at the end of some lessons

could help concentration, pace and acquisition of knowledge. Regular homework forms an integral part of the learning process.

126. During Years 7, 8 and 9 learning is good or very good. Tasks are planned so that students develop skills, knowledge and understanding on a progressive basis. These topics followed the carefully prepared schemes of work. Students use wood, plastic, metal, fibreboard, textiles, food, pneumatics, electronics, and computer-aided design software. Although there is generally a basic structure or theme for a project, there is enough opportunity for students to use their imagination and create a unique product. During a lesson on computer-aided design and manufacture, unique design work had been prepared in students' folders showing that they have a good understanding of the design process. Students were able to explain the purpose of the various cutting machines. The professional appearance of the finished items gives considerable satisfaction and the manufactured items are taken home thus reinforcing the student-parent-teacher relationship. During Years 10 and 11, most learning is good or very good. Pace is maintained in most lessons and students are given every opportunity to complete their work on time. In resistant materials lessons, students continue to learn to express their ideas by drawing. Graphic skills develop progressively so that some coursework reaches a very high standard. Their skill when cutting and shaping materials is being developed effectively. Less able students learn much from their peers. During group work, students of all abilities are encouraged to work together. Lessons are structured so that more able students can enhance their projects and gain high grades with extra encouragement from the teacher.
127. Most students say that they enjoy the work in technology. They behave very well and co-operate with the teachers. They are able to concentrate well on most tasks. The positive relationships between teachers and students help their personal development and academic achievement. The students show respect for other people and work well together in groups. They show initiative and enjoy practical work, especially when manufactured items can be taken home, but a few students have too casual an attitude to homework.
128. A broad range of courses is provided: including food technology, systems and control, electronics, textiles, graphics, resistant materials and the GNVQ manufacturing modules. The projects chosen are well designed to be appropriate for the most able and for the least able students. In electronics lessons, students learn to solder components to make various circuits and to mount these in a vacuum-formed acrylic container. More able students are able to associate current flow with circuits that they investigate in science lessons. The technology rooms and equipment are available each day during lunch breaks, lunchtime and after school for students to continue work. Year 11 students have a technology day towards the end of their course work. This gives them sustained access to specialist equipment so that they can develop their projects to the highest possible standard. Health and safety requirements are fully addressed. The curriculum ensures equality of access for all students. Conservation and recycling are emphasised throughout the curriculum. The department also has a link with a school in Kenya.
129. The assessment process is well developed. Students are provided with self-assessment sheets. With guidance, they become aware of the National Curriculum levels they are achieving. The department monitors assessment information and progress through specific curricular targets. Teachers inform older students of their progress as they complete each task by means of useful graphs that show the marks needed to achieve the next grade. However, teachers could use assessment more frequently in some lessons as a means of increasing pace and concentration. They use the data obtained from the assessment procedures very well to predict technology grades and set targets for each individual student. Communication with parents has been increased now that assessment profiles are sent to parents at intervals of a few weeks. This includes digital photographs of the work accomplished. Each month one boy and one girl are chosen as 'Students of the Month'.

130. The co-ordinator provides comprehensive and enthusiastic guidance for the running of the department. The head of department and senior staff support teachers through monitoring to provide helpful guidance and to assist classroom practices. Documentation is well-organised and clearly describes the ethos and organisation of the department. Very effective use is made of new technology such as the digital camera, a computerised sewing-machine and computerised cutting machines.
131. The existing accommodation is modern, light and spacious. The school's technology status has enabled specialised equipment to be purchased so that the resources are very good. All members of staff are well qualified and able to meet the needs of the curriculum. They regularly attend courses to keep their skills up-to-date. Both technicians are well qualified and give valuable support to students.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

132. Standards in geography in lessons and in the work seen at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations. This is reflected in the teacher-assessed tests. Most students handle information from maps, photos and text competently. They often use information and communication technology for this purpose. They did so well, for example, when they researched and produced a useful fact file about Brazil. Investigations about soils and the formation of deserts show that higher attaining students, in particular, can suggest questions for testing and follow them through. Mid attaining students give less detailed explanations. Lower attaining students are not so good at explaining ideas and find it difficult to remember what they have learned previously. In Years 7 and 8, fieldwork helps them to develop their critical skills. Most have sound understanding of patterns and processes and their impact on life in different places. In work about Italy, for example, students could explain why the location and scenery of the Aosta Valley had made it such a popular tourist area. Most use technical terms correctly, because teachers give good attention to improving vocabulary and organising ideas. Average and above average students write well at length.
133. In 2000, students' attainment in GCSE examinations was average compared with all schools and slightly above average for similar schools. All students gained a grade. This was achieved in spite of recent staffing difficulties that are now resolved. Girls do much better than boys. Together with the school, the department is developing strategies to close the gap between the performance of boys and girls. Students do less well in geography than they do on average in the majority of their other subjects. Since the last inspection, the results have fluctuated at or near the average. The department has undertaken an analysis of examination performance to help to plan for improvement, but this needs to be done more rigorously to ensure that it is fully effective.
134. The inspection found that standards, by the end of Year 11, are in line with the national average. Students are achieving satisfactorily. They make sound progress in, for example, their knowledge of geographical areas and features and of countries. They show sound understanding of why heavy industry has declined in South Wales and about the effects of acid rain. Their practical skills have improved and they are more confident about devising questions to research. In coursework about Ross-on Wye, higher attaining students relate their practical work well to theory and soundly evaluate their findings. Average students are less evaluative and do not always fully link the practical work to their questions. Lower attaining students collate information well, but have gaps in their understanding.
135. Throughout, they use their numerical skills and information and communication technology effectively to support their work.
136. Students entering the school in Year 7 are below average in geography and some have difficulties with reading and writing. By the end of Year 9, they have achieved well, making good progress in relation to their prior achievement. This results from interesting activities, designed to make them think for themselves. Teachers place good emphasis on the improving of literacy skills (although the impact is sometimes lost when spelling mistakes are not corrected). The increasing use of assessment helps students to improve, as do their very positive attitudes to their work. However, the timetabled time for geography is below average and this reduces the potential to raise standards further.

137. By the end of Year 11, students make satisfactory progress because teachers build securely on what they have learned earlier. Students are clear about the progress they have made from their tests and assessments. They are not so clear about how they can improve, since some targets do not focus on particular areas of weakness. Some lessons are too long for below average students and the rate of progress falls as lessons proceed.
138. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress benefiting from classroom support and departmental efforts to match work to different abilities. Last year, they all gained a grade at GCSE. A few students in Year 7 make slower progress because they are withdrawn regularly from some geography lessons for literacy support.
139. Students come to lessons prepared to work hard. Most behave very well and enjoy geography, as shown by the number who choose to do it as an examination subject. While younger students respond confidently to oral questions, some older students lack the confidence to take part in extended discussion. Their commitment to and pride in their work are shown by well-presented homework and projects, often using information and communication technology, demonstrating the considerable time and care spent on them.
140. The quality of teaching is good overall. None of the lessons observed was unsatisfactory. It is most effective in Years 7 to 9, where the liveliest teaching is seen. Teachers are well organised so that students settle quickly in pleasant and well-resourced classrooms. Teachers vary their resources well to give variety and interest to the lessons. An electronic whiteboard is used particularly well for this purpose, providing a clear and interesting focus. Most lessons are planned to cater for students of all abilities and teachers make sure that students are clear about what they have to do. They use their knowledge well to raise students' understanding and give clear explanations. They place emphasis on students learning to think for themselves and involve them in the activities. In good lessons, students are set challenging but achievable tasks. In one Year 7 lesson, for example, students were set an assignment about the weather. Building successfully on what they had been taught about weather patterns, boys and girls worked well together in pairs, enthusiastically comparing ideas. As a result, they made good progress and produced plausible weather reports. In another Year 7 lesson, students made slower progress because students had not learned enough about weather patterns.
141. In some lessons, teachers do not intervene quickly enough when students find the work difficult or lose concentration when the pace is too leisurely. Homework is set regularly and supports classwork well. Marking is inconsistent. Some is very thorough with helpful suggestions of how to improve: some is more cursory and incomplete work is not followed up.
142. The management of the department is satisfactory. There is an informative handbook and good work programmes that meet statutory requirements and support new staff well. The absence of fieldwork in Year 9 limits the opportunity for students to develop critical skills in a relevant and practical manner. Grouping is appropriate for most students, but it is not always easy for students to move between sets when it is appropriate to do so. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained overall, work programmes have been completely revised and broadly satisfactory improvement has been made. The department needs to use the information that it has about both the examination results and the students more effectively to provide practical ideas for improving standards further and for helping individual students.

## **HISTORY**

143. Attainment in history at the end of Year 9, based on assessments carried out by teachers, is in line with the average nationally. Although the attainment of girls is higher than that of boys, the disparity is no greater than that found nationally. Current levels of attainment, based on a full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection, is also in line with the average seen nationally.
144. By the end of Year 9, students know and understand an appropriate range of historical facts and situations and most students have a satisfactory recall of these, using what they have already learned to help them with current work. For example, students were able to use their understanding of the causes of the Civil War to understand the distinction between long-term and short-term causes and effects. Higher attaining students have good recall of what they have

learned. Students produce written assignments of appropriate length and use a range of facts and details to support their ideas effectively. They organise these details efficiently in order to present a logical argument. All students, including lower attainers, write in a style which is easy to understand and conveys their ideas clearly. All students use a good range of methods of recording their knowledge and understanding, such as charts and diagrams. Most students begin to develop the challenging skill of evaluating the reliability of a range of historical source material. Students undertake independent research in order to enhance their understanding of their topics, but some students tend to copy from their sources of information or print out from the Internet indiscriminately, rather than make personal notes. Students across the attainment range understand that situations usually have more than one cause and are able to understand and evaluate a range of these. For example, students writing about the causes of the First World War were able to describe and categorise them in appropriate detail.

145. The previous inspection reported that attainment “meets or exceeds” national standards and this has been maintained.
146. At the end of Year 11, the percentage of students attaining grades A\*-C in 2000 was well below the national average, and represents a decrease since the previous year, when this percentage was also below the national average. All students who were entered for GCSE completed the course and obtained a grade in the range A\*-G, which is better than is seen nationally. There is a large disparity between the attainment of boys and girls, with the girls’ attainment being higher than girls’ attainment nationally and the attainment of boys being much lower than the average national attainment of boys. This disparity in attainment between girls and boys is significantly greater than is seen nationally. The causes of this overall low attainment in comparison with the national picture have been identified by the department and effective measures to remedy them are in place. Attainment seen during the course of the inspection was close to the national average, indicating improvement since last year.
147. By the end of Year 11, most students show satisfactory knowledge and understanding of a wide range of historical situations and are able to recall the details of these in order to use them to support their written answers. Across the range of attainment, students understand the importance of the use of historical sources in justifying their opinions and use these generally effectively. For example, students studying the United States economy between the wars were able to analyse contemporary car advertisements in order to understand the effect on the economy of the mass production of cars. Many students made perceptive comments. Students handle a range of information competently and efficiently and a particular strength is the way in which all students compile and arrange their notes in order to use them at a later stage as an effective aid to revision. Lower attaining students experience difficulty in using an appropriate amount of factual detail in their written answers and in focusing it on answering questions fully. All students are able to convey their ideas clearly and higher attaining students develop a mature style that is fluent and convincing.
148. Students in Year 9 work hard, showing good levels of concentration and achieve well in writing extended answers that demonstrate their ideas and understanding in increasing detail. Their achievement is good in understanding and remembering an increasing range of historical detail and in tracing a range of causes and effects of historical events. In Years 10 and 11, students put real effort into their work, especially in their preparation and note making and their achievement in producing written answers which meet examination requirements is good. Students develop successfully the ability to compare and evaluate a range of historical sources and show good achievement in this area of their work.
149. Teaching is good overall. All teaching seen was at least good and a quarter was very good. Teachers plan their lessons well, have clear objectives and offer a good range of activities and interesting resources. Most lessons have a brisk pace in order to ensure that all that is planned is covered and students respond to this by maintaining their interest and enthusiasm throughout each lesson. Teachers have generally high expectations of their students in terms of attitude, effort and attainment and students rise to this by working hard and showing a real desire to do well. Lesson planning is designed to include the needs of all students. Teachers make particularly good use of a range of well-designed “writing frames” designed to support students in developing their ability to produce written work that is of substantial length and contains an appropriate amount of detail. There is frequently a range of such frames to meet the needs of students at all levels of attainment. Because students feel supported, their achievement in this challenging area



is good. There are instances, however, where teachers miss the opportunity to provide a range of tasks and this results in there being an occasional lack of challenge for higher attaining students. Teachers provide a variety of activities and resources in order to maintain students' enthusiasm. For example, one teacher approached the background to the First World War through reflecting on poetry written by a local soldier and the students, clearly moved by this approach, made good progress in understanding contemporary attitudes to the war. This represents satisfactory progress in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.

150. The history department is well led by the teacher with responsibility for the subject. The causes of the declining attainment in GCSEs have been closely examined, clearly identified and effectively addressed. The areas identified as being previously weak (recall of facts, the ability to produce extended written answers and the use of historical sources) are now showing clear signs of improvement. The measures introduced to rectify these weaknesses are rigorously applied and monitored. There are good procedures in place to assess students' attainment on a regular basis in order to identify both potential and underachievement and additional support is given to students who need this. Effective use is made of a regular programme of historical visits in order to enhance students' learning experiences. The subject is led well, as it was reported to be in the previous inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

151. Since the last inspection students' attainment has continued to rise so that at least three quarters of the students are now attaining well above the national expectation at the ages of 14 and 16 and attainment is well above average overall at the end of Years 9 and 11. The school has made considerable progress in the provision of information and communication technology equipment to most subject areas and there has been a continued improvement in the competence of teachers when using computers and associated equipment. Information and communication technology schemes of work are now becoming established in most departmental areas. The use of it across the curriculum is exceptionally well developed and is designed to assist learning in each specific subject. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.
152. Years 7 students rapidly develop keyboard and mouse skills so that they are able to use the computers for a variety of purposes. During Years 7, 8 and 9, students use information and communication technology to develop their learning in a wide range of subjects. In particular they learn word processing, use of spreadsheets, graphs, sensing, data-logging, control and how to make effective presentations. They are familiar with Microsoft Word and Publisher for creating display pages and are able to explain the function of many of the icons on screen and to use them. The standards achieved are well above the national expectation by the end of Year 9, because of frequent use in many subject areas. In some subjects the students are encouraged to use e-mail and the Internet for communication and research. Some students use e-mail to send information between school and home. Students in Years 10 and 11 who study GNVQ information and communication technology and those who learn information and communication technology from their experiences in other subjects also have an attainment well above the national expectation. They are able to select software well to fulfil a particular purpose. They have however, acquired some of their knowledge at a later stage than the younger students and have less proficiency in their use of databases.
153. Teaching in all years is very good. A high proportion of teachers in the school have a very good knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology and its applications. Expectations are high and teaching methods very effective so that students learn rapidly. Teachers have developed a particular expertise in the use of the interactive white boards. Many lesson introductions are based on pre-prepared ('power point', computer images projected in a pre-arranged sequence) presentations. This results in very efficient teaching and use of time. Teachers from a wide variety of subject areas recognise the advantages of information and communication technology to assist teaching and learning in their subject. For example, in English, students use a range of text types and document styles to prepare presentations. Clip art and material downloaded from the Internet is often included and the final product is generally printed in colour. Specific interactive software made a study of "Treasure Island" particularly interesting. Many of the tasks are challenging but generally create interest so that students are very busy. Teachers are then able to concentrate on providing individual or group help. Information and communication technology teaching was very effective in most subject areas, and

also in literacy and numeracy sessions. Much of the work is displayed in classrooms and on notice boards around the school. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, students were very effectively being taught to associate the equation of a straight line with its graphical representation. The interactive whiteboard (a wall board that interacts with the display projected from the teacher's computer) with pre-prepared presentations was used to very good effect as an introduction and for continued explanation. The students were able to answer worksheet questions by entering data on their own computers and observing the resulting graph. Teachers ask students to assess their own progress in information and communication technology at regular intervals. This builds up a profile of skills as they are satisfactorily completed.

154. Learning is very good in most lessons. Year 7 students rapidly developed information and communication technology skills during a half-term induction course designed to teach basic computer use. This is a very effective learning situation, especially for those having little previous experience. Students quickly learn that information and communication technology can help them with their other subjects. The English and the language departments encourage work to be word processed, often as part of a drafting process. Some applications, such as writing an explanation of how to purchase rail tickets in German, demand intellectual effort. However, the stimulus of creating a near professional presentation provides excellent motivation so that students achieve well. They are competent when using the correction and presentation facilities. Science students learn that light sensors can be used to measure times, velocities and accelerations. In chemistry, students learn that pH sensors can be used to measure the speed of a reaction. Students quickly learn to use the Internet and e-mail and learn some of the social and moral issues involved. Pace is at its best when the computer provides regular feedback of progress to the student. Students regularly assess their own progress on a task list and relate this to National Curriculum levels. Less able students often get help from a learning support assistant or their peers so that they make very good progress. Those using computers for basic skills learning achieve well in literacy and numeracy lessons due to the regular feedback provided by the programmes. Those who are more able or more experienced, through home computer use, are given encouragement and opportunities to extend their work.
155. Students have a very positive attitude to using information and communication technology. This encourages good behaviour and co-operation, as was evident in a Year 11 geography lesson where behaviour was excellent. Relationships between teachers and students are very good, so that an effective and stimulating learning environment results. The use of e-mail and the Internet often leads to discussions of moral and social issues. The students show respect for their peers, teachers and other adults. They show initiative when creating designs and use their imagination when preparing presentations.
156. A wide range of information and communication technology topics has been identified and these are taught by most subject areas. They ensure that the applications are relevant to the needs of all students. Skills to be taught by English, maths, science, and technology have been identified for Years 7, 8 and 9. They cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. A self-assessment monitoring process is used to record skills as they are achieved. More regular testing for specific achievements during some lessons would be possible. Additional accreditation at the end of Year 9 would ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are addressed each year. Year 10 students have been able to choose the certificated GNVQ information and communication technology course. The information and communication technology rooms can be booked by the teachers during lesson times and are available during the lunch break and after school. They are supervised by learning support assistants during the lunch break. Computers are always available in the library.
157. The co-ordinating team has a clear and comprehensive vision of present and future developments for information and communication technology. The school's status as a technology college has ensured that the students' learning has benefited from the most up-to-date technology. The development of the subject in the school has been and still is given a high priority, so that the quality and quantity of the information and communication technology facilities are exceptionally good. A curriculum map has been devised to show the learning expected in each of the four principal subject areas. Appropriate targets have been developed for each department so that they use information and communication technology to increase learning in each subject area. This usage is centrally monitored.

158. The school has a very good ratio of students to computers. Two main information and communication technology rooms each have 32 computers, so even with larger classes no sharing is necessary. However, one of the rooms is too small for easy movement. There are half sets of computers in other departments and many individual ones in teaching rooms. A very clear diagram shows the location of the equipment and the extent of the network. Many interactive whiteboard located in departments are used well and encourage efficient teaching. A high proportion of staff is very competent in the use of information and communication technology and teachers are imaginative in its use. They are actively encouraged to develop their skills by additional training in-house and externally. There are three information and communication technology technicians with a wide range of skills. They are an essential part of the decision-making process.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

159. This is a very successful department. Students achieve highly and attainment is above average. This is because the leadership is very good, teachers are committed, work hard and have high expectations of their students, and the teaching is very good. It is a new department in that two staff joined in September 2000, one of whom is the head of department.
160. A higher proportion of students take French and German than nationally. In GCSE examinations in 2000, attainment was above average in French and well above average in German. Girls did well in French in comparison with the national average and boys attained in line with the national average, although they attained fewer higher grades than boys nationally. Girls also attained fewer A\* grades than nationally. In German, girls did exceptionally well in comparison with the national average and gained nearly three times the number of A\* grades than nationally. Until recently, German has been taken by higher attaining students, but the policy has changed to allow more students to take German in Years 7 and 8.
161. Fourteen year old students attained well above average results in the national tests in French. Boys' results were well above average in comparison with boys' results nationally, as were girls in comparison with girls' results.
162. The inspection found attainment to be similar to that of 2000, but boys' performance is improving. This is because the department has been looking at methods as to how to motivate them. Higher attaining students achieve highly because they are given demanding work that challenges them. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs achieve highly because the teaching is appropriate for their needs.
163. At both key stages, students listen carefully in order to imitate the very good accents of staff in the department and at Year 11, to improve their intonation. A few students need the support of repetition or visual clues. Many follow conversations about day-to-day life with good understanding and they are prepared to offer an opinion. By the end of Year 11, many students have very good German and French accents. Lower attaining students in French sometimes have anglicised accents, particularly when reading a text aloud. The vast majority of students do not have the confidence to use French or German when they ask questions or make comments in the classroom, despite the best endeavours of the staff. When prompted, however, they have the necessary skills.
164. In both French and German, students read magazines and other texts with good understanding. Higher and mid attaining students use the context of the piece to help them understand, and they use skills of deduction. Lower attaining students need more support from dictionaries and pictures and do not use the context to help. All students are proficient in using dictionaries, because staff expect them to be independent and to find out for themselves.
165. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining students write fluently and accurately and are confident to use the future, present and past tenses. One example of lively writing was a letter to a penfriend, written in German. Another student wrote a description of a visit to Guines and cleverly made it rhyme, using play on words of *Forêt de Guines* and *Forest of Dean*. Some mid attaining and many lower attaining students are inaccurate in their use of grammar, particularly in French. Work is generally well presented, as the staff expects high quality presentation.

166. Attitudes towards learning are extremely positive, as the teaching is highly motivating and this contributes to the high attainment. Relationships are very good and students are valued by staff. Many examples were observed of a student giving an answer that was not quite correct: teachers were quick to follow through the answer courteously before moving on to secure a correct answer. As a result, there is mutual respect and students are confident to try out ideas in a supportive environment. These features are prime factors in the very good learning environment within the department. Behaviour is very good as all staff use very good methods of gaining and maintaining attention. Students are polite and courteous to one another and to adults and listen with interest and respect to the contributions of others. They put in much intellectual effort, because this is expected by all teachers, and older students are prepared to ask questions. Boys and girls respond equally well. By the time they leave school, many students are mature and thoughtful young people who are aware of the needs of others.
167. Teaching of French and German is very good. In 60 per cent of lessons observed it was very good or better and, of this percentage, nearly a quarter was excellent. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subject, their accents are very good and these features are enhanced by the appointment of native speakers to the department. A key strength, consistent across the department, is the high expectations that staff have of their students, both in terms of work and behaviour. Students know that they must always give of their best. Year 8 students learning how to describe people's appearance in German were continually prompted to answer in a phrase when they answered in one or two words. This successfully extended their use of the foreign language. Another strength is the use of the foreign language in classrooms. All teachers use either French or German throughout the lesson, which gives students a good model for pronunciation and for learning and consolidates their knowledge of key phrases. Students in a Year 7 class who have been studying German for a term were proud of their skills in the language and eager to improve their accents. They were learning the vocabulary to do with houses and took part in a team game to reinforce the vocabulary. The entire lesson was conducted appropriately in German. Teachers try to encourage students to use the languages, but are not always successful, although students can do so when pressed. A very good idea that has been introduced is to pin key phrases and questions onto the wall and for students to paste them in their books as a source of reference.
168. All teachers share the aims of the lesson with the class so that they are clear about what they have to learn. In addition, all students know what they must do in order to achieve levels of the National Curriculum. These methods help students' learning, as they have a clear focus. Students spoke warmly of these methods that they find helpful. Students in a Year 8 class knew that they were learning about reflexive verbs in French that helped them to focus on the idea. At the end of the lesson, they were asked to look in their books to find out at which level of the National Curriculum they were working. This supported their learning, as they knew what they had to do to achieve success. Homework is used effectively to extend and consolidate learning within lessons.
169. Teachers plan lessons well and use time effectively, so that students remain motivated and learn effectively. Every teacher prepares a good range of varied activities and ensures that they move briskly through them. The activities are successfully planned to meet the needs of students of different attainment. There is often a wide range of attainment in the classes. All teachers ensure that extra activities are available to extend the learning of the higher attainers. Year 11 students learning French were highly motivated by a range of activities which included a video showing clips from different programmes on French television. They put much effort into their work and achieved highly on the exercise of classifying the category of the programme. In another Year 11 class, students taking the Youth Award revised the topic of going out. The excellent range of activities, coupled with high expectations of students' work and the very brisk pace of the lesson, led the students to achieve highly. Boys and girls were prepared to ask questions and a few were prepared to use French in discussion with a partner. In this lesson, as in others, there were excellent opportunities to develop skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The lesson was a double one and students remained motivated until the end because of the excellent planning.
170. The key feature of excellent lessons is the interaction that takes place between students and teacher and the encouragement for students to interact. In one example, a Year 9 French class, many of whom had difficulties in learning the language, were studying the topic of belonging to clubs and were introduced to *depuis* and *tous les*. The lesson began with students asking each

other which club they belonged to, then led into the class repeating phrases. A game followed in which students moved around the room, asking one another a question which they read from a card and the partner had to respond. This activity was videoed so that students would have the opportunity later to watch and reflect on their learning. In this lesson, every student was involved in speaking, listening and reading and not one moment of the lesson was lost. Students thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and they achieved very highly.

171. Learning support assistants support sensitively and unobtrusively, enabling students with special educational needs to participate in the lesson. In one example, students in Year 7 learning German used basic vocabulary about houses with confidence, because of the support they received. Teachers encourage students to take responsibility for their learning. A Year 8 French class was asked to suggest ways in which they could learn the reflexive verb for homework. Three suitable ideas were given by the students.
172. Very good progress has been made on the points for improvement from the last inspection. A very good system has been established for monitoring the work of the department, planning is effective and the learning needs of students of different attainment are successfully planned for.
173. The leadership of the department is excellent; the new head of department is successfully building on the work of her predecessor. A new approach to marking has been introduced and teachers are starting to use it. Targets are being set based on the wealth of excellent data in the department. There is a slight inconsistency across the department in how well the teachers encourage students to use the target language and extend answers. It is a department in which the staff is willing to reflect on their work and are constantly seeking ways to improve. This is one of the reasons for its success.

## MUSIC

174. GCSE results have been above the national average for grades A\* to C and the average point scores higher than the average nationally. They have been consistently so since 1997, with slight dips, as in 1998. The finding of the inspection is that attainment in Year 9 is currently above the national average and in Year 11 it is below the national average, because of an unusually low ability group in this cohort.
175. Already Year 10 students show promise of higher attainment levels. Skills seen included listening, performance and ensemble work. Year 7 students are already clearly linking their improvisation and composition work and its sound with its representation on paper. A Year 8 class working on Indian music showed great enthusiasm, and a group of boys composed and played an excellent piece that was full of vitality as well as satisfying the criteria set by the teacher. In one Year 9 class a group of four boys devised an effective piece with many musical features. A group of three girls were working on a piece using complex, overlapping melodic patterns. Students with special needs have full equality of access to the curriculum, and achieve well. Instrumental teaching is strong in the school, with a significant proportion of students receiving lessons. The school subsidises these lessons well and makes every effort to ensure equality of access to this extension of the curriculum. Extra-curricular provision in music is good, and growing. It includes vocal work in up to three parts and a Jazz Band, as well as a strong musical component in school productions (currently the musical version of *Animal Farm*). Those with special talent in music are catered for well.
176. Teaching is good in all classes. Learning is good in Years 7 to 10, but unsatisfactory at Year 11, because of learning difficulties in this cohort. Teaching is characterised by very good planning and preparation, where clear targets are set and shared with students, and where clear criteria for success are set. These factors, allied to very good relationships and good organisation and management, give students a secure learning environment. Good use is made of group work. Students collaborate well and learn very effectively in small groups. Teachers assess well and give good feedback in lessons. This always supports the development of students' skills. Teachers often refine targets to make them individual and very appropriate. As a result, students develop understanding of concepts and techniques. Teachers place a good emphasis on learning practical aspects of music, so that students gain new skills and apply them. There are good creative opportunities for students to make music, as performers or composers. The teaching of a Year 8 class showed the communication of the teacher's enthusiasm and passion for music. The

students responded with equal commitment and the subsequent high quality work demonstrated the extent of their learning.

177. Students' response is very good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Older students, seen involved with extra-curricular music and other activities, showed real commitment and enthusiasm. Deep concentration was evident, especially from a Year 7 class who had loud instrumental teaching going on in the rooms on either side. On the whole, students managed to concentrate and produce good work in spite of the difficulties. Students show responsibility in group work, acting responsibly, but with a sense of enjoyment and fun. They try out new ideas, evaluate their success and then use them in their compositions. Students are strongly supportive of one another. The Year 11 group is very aware of its own limitations, however, and this inhibits self-confidence and limits progress and learning.
178. The weaknesses in music at the last inspection were the coverage of world music in the curriculum and vocal music. Both these matters have been remedied. There has been good progress.
179. The curriculum fully satisfies National Curriculum requirements, but an assessment scheme involving levels of attainment has not been fully developed. Information and communication technology is a strong feature in music and is particularly strong for Years 10 and 11, where extensive use is made of music technology. Resources for this are very good. The accommodation for the subject is poor and this affects the attainment of students. Music is part of the creative arts faculty and management is good, balancing the common needs of all the arts and the discrete requirements of music. It includes support and professional development, as well as the monitoring of teaching.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

180. At the end of both Year 9 and Year 11, students attain standards in physical education that are above what is expected nationally.
181. Standards in GCSE theory work are well above national expectations and students' understanding and use of subject specific vocabulary relating to major muscle groups and principles of training are impressive. In planning their training programmes to improve fitness, students produce written work of a high standard and there are some good examples of the use of information and communication technology. For the last two years, GCSE results for higher grades have been above the national average and present cohorts are well on course to raise standards even higher. In GCSE practical work, many students achieve high standards. Year 11 girls are able to hold advanced balances and integrate them into sequences of movements on apparatus. Year 11 boys and girls have made good progress with basic tennis skills and the majority can execute backhand and forehand strokes, serve and volley. In core lessons at Year 11, lower attaining students and those with long-term injuries can devise, perform and evaluate a fitness programme tailored to their own specific needs. They also demonstrate a good understanding of safe practice while stretching and using weights. The previous inspection in 1996 judged girls' standards to be lower than those of the boys. This is no longer the case.
182. By the end of Year 9, boys, including those with special educational needs, are attaining high standards in gymnastics. They understand key terms and work creatively in pairs to devise sustained sequences of movements that include a range of high quality balances. In football, a group of lower attaining students can consistently move into space when not in possession in order to be able to receive the ball. They make good progress in being able to transfer these skills into the small-sided competitive situation. In gymnastics, Year 9 girls are able to demonstrate an understanding of the need for good quality body shape and tension in the flight phase of vaulting.
183. In all classes, teaching is very good overall. The vast majority of teaching, including that for GCSE work, is very good or excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure and evident in their planning, the quality of their demonstrations and their teaching techniques. Objectives are always made clear at the beginning of the lesson and are often linked to key vocabulary. Teachers make constant references to both throughout lessons and, by giving students ample opportunities to respond to questions, they effectively

support whole-school literacy development. Tasks set for students are varied and challenging and are paced and pitched to ensure that all, including students with special educational needs, are stimulated and motivated and so make good progress with skill development. The best examples are in gymnastics, netball and football.

184. Student/teacher relationships are excellent. Expectations of students and class management are of a very high standard. As a consequence, students concentrate, give of their best and work collaboratively and safely with each other. In order to raise standards even higher, teachers should make more extensive use of opportunities for students to analyse and evaluate their own work and that of others.
185. In all year groups, standards of behaviour are excellent. During the inspection, there were no instances of inappropriate behaviour. Students enjoy and value their physical education lessons. They respect their teachers and mutual courtesy is a strong feature of daily student/ teacher dialogue. Students are always appropriately dressed and equipped for their activities and the positive way they collaborate with each other enriches the learning experience. Taking part in physical activity outdoors in inclement weather, because of the limited indoor accommodation, does not affect students' enthusiasm for the subject. It is a testimony to teachers' high expectations and students' positive attitudes to physical education.
186. The head of department provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by the other members of his team. There is a clear sense of direction for the department, based on raising standards and high expectations, both in the core programme and GCSE. The high quality leadership is founded upon excellent student relationships, high personal teaching standards in all classes, including GCSE, and extensive involvement in the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Two major issues arising from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and there has been good improvement. Although at an early stage new schemes of work are now in place and there is now a comprehensive system for assessing students' attainment and progress at both key stages. This information is shared with students and parents. The department is fast becoming data rich and this has been well used to motivate students on the GCSE course where standards have also risen since the previous inspection. Documentation on individual students special educational needs and medical background is also used well, as are daily teaching records to assist in the monitoring of teaching. These have also helped to counter the effects of enforced staffing changes on the consistency and continuity of teaching.
187. Although outdoor facilities are good and have recently been enhanced by the addition of new tennis courts, there has not been any progress in terms of increasing indoor accommodation. This was a key issue in the previous inspection. Consequently, coverage of the curriculum occasionally suffers. The progress of the hardworking department, its significant contribution to the corporate life of the school and the learning experiences of its enthusiastic students would be greatly enhanced if funding could be found for improved accommodation. There are occasions when classes miss their physical education lessons because there is no accommodation available and this affects their achievements over time.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

188. Students make sound progress through Years 7 to 9 and achieve satisfactorily. Those following the GCSE course in Year 11 make good progress and achieve well. Students following the core religious education curriculum in Years 10 and 11 make good gains in knowledge and understanding in lessons, but only satisfactory progress and achievement over time, because not enough lesson time is allocated to the subject.
189. By the end of Year 9, students identify the five key beliefs of Islam and realise how they are interdependent. They have studied Judaism and understand the symbolic use of the mezuzah and schema. In their study of Sikhism, they appreciate how Sikhs see God in the forces of nature. Students' knowledge of religion is stronger than their learning from religion at this key stage. Although extended empathetic writing is a strong feature of their attainment, students' evaluative skills are weak. In Years 10 and 11, all students take fortnightly core lessons, including those studying the subject for GCSE. In a core lesson in Year 10, students reflected on the use of corporal punishment as they watched video clips showing atheist and Christian viewpoints on its

use. In discussion, they were able to distinguish violent acts to promote morality, from criminal violence. They made impassioned and articulate contributions to debate as they reached personal conclusions on the ethical use of violence in today's society.

190. In a GCSE lesson in Year 10, students reflected on Christian love as shown within the family. They discussed the rôles played by their own family members and began to understand some of the virtues of the traditional nuclear family. They were able to list the differences between an upbringing in a Christian family and one where no such beliefs existed. In a Year 11 lesson, students confidently researched the Hajj and explored, intellectually, the concept of a true pilgrimage as an inward journey. They also considered the ethics of euthanasia, and expressed their ideas fluently to the class.
191. Students' attainment overall is broadly average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. In the examination course in Year 11, attainment is good because students are well taught and there is plenty of time to study the subject. In the GCSE examination in 1999, the proportion of students gaining A\*-C grades was well above the national average. No students were entered in 2,000 but 18 are to be entered this year. The work observed during the inspection demonstrated that the proportion of these students achieving A\*- C grades will again approach former levels.
192. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in all lessons in Years 10 and 11. This is because the specialist teacher teaches most of the lessons to the latter year groups. Learning objectives in all lessons are explicit, so that students are left in no doubt as to what they must learn. Lessons are well planned, so as to include recapitulation of previous work and there are useful plenary sessions to consolidate learning. Lively anecdotal delivery holds students' attention and explains important concepts in an arresting and accessible form. This promotes concentration and facilitates learning. A generally good level of questioning in the classroom elicits a lively oral response from students, who delight in contributing to proceedings. In pair and small group work, students show good skills of oral co-operation. Resources used in lessons, such as well-chosen extracts from textbooks and religious artefacts, help students to learn. In one lesson, however, which dealt with natural forces, opportunities were missed to present students with examples of paintings and music to illustrate the power of the elements and so contribute to students' cultural development. In another lesson in Year 7, the pace was too slow and expectation low because the teacher had not confident command of the material.
193. Students are obedient and interested in the lessons. They are capable of concentration for long periods. They join in willingly and co-operate well in group work and whole-class lessons. Students readily undertake independent research and independent empathetic writing on religious themes in poetry or prose. Assessment procedures are in accordance with school policy and particularly thorough and helpful to students in Year 11.
194. The subject makes a good, planned contribution to students' spiritual development. It gives them ample opportunities to reflect on their own and one another's experiences and so develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. Students' cultural development is well addressed by the systematic study of Christianity and a range of world religions and cultures. The subject is well co-ordinated, with good subject-specific training for all teachers involved in the subject. This is a strong and effective feature of management. Teaching is effectively monitored within the humanities department.
195. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory level of improvement. The time allocation for Year 7 has been increased and is now satisfactory. Provision for Years 8 and 9, however, has not improved. A successful GCSE course has now been introduced and 42 students now study the subject at Year 11. For them the time allocation is generous. For all other students at Year 11, the inadequate curricular provision of 50 minutes per fortnight adversely affects attainment and does not allow them to build on the good standard of empathetic writing that is a strong feature of attainment at Year 9. The specialist teacher now teaches more religious education classes than was formerly the case and teaching has improved. Tasks in lessons are now well matched to students' abilities. Resources for the subject have improved for both students and teachers and are now good.

## **DRAMA**



196. Standards in drama overall are good. Most students are able to work in small groups to develop improvisations. Students in Year 9 are able to explore ideas and create small performances. The best example of these features was seen in a Year 7 lesson, where the students created a 'still and quiet atmosphere full of apprehension and tension' intended as a foreboding of the arrival of the albatross in 'The Ancient Mariner'. Students also use drama to explore ideas and develop characterisation as in a Year 9 lesson where characters were questioned by their classmates to explore their attitudes and feelings. This led to the development of realistic, improvised drama.
197. In Years 10 and 11, students gain not only an understanding of the dramatic process through participation, but are also the ability to explore wider social issues. A Year 11 lesson on "Blood Brothers" enabled students to empathise with the young characters in the play who overcome a social class divide. In this group lower attaining students gave excellent cameo performances that produced convincing depictions of two young people from different social backgrounds, sealing their friendship in blood.
198. Most students are achieving above average standards in practical drama in all years. However there is a weakness in written work. More regular use of a drama notebook throughout all of Years 7 to 9 will assist in the development of critical writing skills, which are necessary for the written component of GCSE drama. Many strategies for the improvement of written work are already in place. These include carefully produced guidance for writing and prompt sheets. The skill of note-taking needs systematic application from Year 7 in order to raise standards at the end of Year 11.
199. The quality of teaching in drama overall is very good. The excellent schemes of work lead to lessons that develop learning in logical and sequential steps. The teacher is producing positive responses from students that result in the production of refreshingly lively pieces of work. Feedback to students, following assessment by the teacher, is very good. However, students need to be more involved in assessing their own performances in order to develop their skills and confidence even further.
200. The subject is led by an enthusiastic drama teacher, who is managing the subject well. The handbook, which has been developed by all the performing arts team, has clearly defined schemes of work that are useful for part-time and non-specialist teachers. Inspection evidence indicates that this planning is reflected in the day-to-day organisation of lessons and is helping to raise standards.
201. The accommodation for drama is inadequate. Although every effort has been made to enhance the teaching areas with bright and cheerful displays, the rooms remain damp and cold. The acoustics are poor and the lack of sound and lighting equipment restricts the development of the subject to its full potential.