

INSPECTION REPORT

RASTRICK HIGH SCHOOL

Rastrick

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107576

Headteacher: Mrs. H. M. Lennie

Reporting inspector: Ted Wheatley
10013

Dates of inspection: 19th – 23rd March 2001

Inspection number: 187819

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Field Top Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D. Nortcliffe

Date of previous inspection: 15th April 1996

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2919	Phillip Armitage	Team inspector	Mathematics	
2740	Betty Barratt	Team inspector	History Provision for students in the sixth form	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20019	Tony Bell	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
15940	Norman Godfrey	Team inspector	Art and design	
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
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2893	John Manning	Team inspector	English	
2473	Allan Nicholl	Team inspector	Design and technology	
23569	Daphne Nicholl	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
12118	Allan Paver	Team inspector	Geography Equality of opportunity Provision for students in Key Stage 4	
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22985	Jackie Sparkes	Team inspector	Science	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rastrick High School has 1,437 pupils and students; there are 1,232 pupils in Years 7 to 11 and 205 students in the sixth form. Numbers in the sixth form have increased in recent years and the school is much larger than other secondary schools. Pupils and students come from a mixture of local authority and private housing. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, but only one of these is in the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average and the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is broadly average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Pupils are predominantly from white United Kingdom backgrounds, and about ten per cent are from Pakistani, Indian and Black Caribbean families. A small number are from European countries.

Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, although the proportion of pupils obtaining the higher levels in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in primary schools was below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some very good features. The school provides a good quality of education and standards are rising. The quality of teaching is good and is improving; the headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership and a very clear indication of how the school can further improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils and students achieve well and standards have risen at GCSE in recent years.
- The headteacher provides very good direction for the school to improve.
- Governors play a significant rôle in shaping the development of the school.
- The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils' and students' attitudes to work are good. Relationships throughout the school and the level of initiative and responsibility taken by pupils and students are very good.
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for moral development is very good.
- Pupils are given good advice for careers and continuing education.

What could be improved

- Standards in modern foreign languages.
- The monitoring of teaching and sharing of good practice.
- The curriculum, to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- Provision of time for information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 3.

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. Since then standards achieved by pupils in the school have risen and the quality of teaching has improved. The school has made good progress in tackling the issues raised by the inspection at that time. The quality of personal and social education has improved considerably, although there has been insufficient training for form tutors. There has been continued improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, a child protection policy is in place and the school has continued successfully its efforts to raise standards in most subjects. However, it still does not meet statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 2000, results were above the national average overall. They were above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Results were average compared with similar schools, although they were above average for science, average for English and below average for mathematics. Results have declined a little over recent years, against the national trend. Inspection evidence reflects these results overall, although standards in mathematics are above average. In other subjects, standards are in line with expectations for 14 year olds, and they exceed expectations in history and music. Attainment is below expectations in modern foreign languages. Overall, pupils' achievements are good with the exception of modern foreign languages where they are unsatisfactory.

In the GCSE examinations in 2000, 53 per cent of pupils obtained five or more A*-C grades, which is above average and well above average for similar schools. These results were close to the school's targets, which were realistic for pupils in the year. Results are improving in line with the national trend. Ninety-six per cent of pupils obtained one A*-G grade at GCSE, which matched the school's target. The best results were in science, dance and ICT and worst in modern foreign languages and business studies. Pupils achieve well overall and very well in science, music, drama, dance and sociology. Achievement is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages.

Once they have taken GCSE examinations a significant number of pupils continue their education at sixth form colleges in the area.

In the sixth form, standards are broadly average, and with a significant proportion of students performing well. Standards are above average in English, sciences, art and design, music, psychology, sociology and dance and well above average in drama. They are average in design and technology, geography, history, physical education, religious education and economics. There are only a few students taking mathematics and modern foreign languages, and standards are high overall. In the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses, standards are good. Students achieve well overall, and in drama their progress is excellent.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to school are good. Pupils and students are positive and enthusiastic in their approach to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Around school pupils and students behave with consideration and care for each other and the buildings.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships exist throughout the school and pupils and students respond very well to opportunities for personal development and to show initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is good and there is very little unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. In 25 per cent of lessons teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. It is good in 53 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 21 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in 1 per cent of lessons. There is more very good teaching in the sixth form than elsewhere. Teaching is very good overall in English, though better in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. It is good overall in mathematics and better at Key Stage 3 and the sixth form. In science teaching is good overall, rarely less than good and sometimes very good. The best teaching is challenging, with work well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, and this is a significant factor in the standards obtained in science. The clear focus on raising standards is apparent in the quality of teaching seen in many subjects. This is having a positive effect on the quality of learning throughout the school, which in most subjects is good. Pupils learn well and acquire good understanding, knowledge and skills in most subjects. Teachers manage pupils well, establishing good relationships in lessons, which encourages pupils to have good attitudes to learning. On occasion, the pace of lessons is slow. In the few unsatisfactory lessons seen, mainly in modern foreign languages, teachers' expectations were not high enough and work did not challenge pupils.

The teaching of literacy is good across the school. Teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall; the whole-school policy is not yet fully implemented.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form it is satisfactory. Pupils can study a good range of courses leading to GCSE and GCE A-level respectively, but courses are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of all. Work related and vocational education in particular is not fully developed to meet these needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good and the support provided by teachers and learning assistants is generally good, although there are some inconsistencies.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good overall, with close monitoring of pupils to ensure that they receive the support they require.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall and for the spiritual and cultural development of pupils, is very good. There are many opportunities provided for pupils' and students' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures to promote good behaviour are effective and there is an good pastoral system. The amount of assessment information available is impressive, although the use of available information to monitor pupils' progress and plan teaching is inconsistent.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents' views of the school are generally satisfactory; they feel that the quality of education is good and that the school takes good care of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The expertise and experience of staff are well suited to the needs of the school. The school is well lead and managed and the headteacher provides very clear direction for how the school should improve in order to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors provide a high level of support for the school. They are knowledgeable of the school's strengths and areas for development and have a significant involvement in the school's strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall and senior management is working hard to develop the school's procedures to evaluate and improve performance. Methods to observe and share effective teaching methods are inconsistent.
The strategic use of resources	Accommodation is good and improving and overall, resources for learning are satisfactory. The school makes good use of its financial resources; it identifies needs through development planning, and plans expenditure carefully.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like coming to school.• Children make good progress and the school has high expectations of them.• The school deals with parents' concerns well.• The school helps children become mature and responsible.• The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents are concerned about the amount of homework.• Parents feel that they are not kept sufficiently well informed about how their children are getting on in school.• Some parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them.

Overall inspectors agreed with strengths identified by parents. They found that generally the quality and amount of homework is good, that reports are informative and are sent home regularly, and that the school works hard to ensure that communications with homes are effective.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, although the proportion of higher-attaining pupils is below average. Attainment on entry has fluctuated over recent years.

2. In the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 2000, results were broadly average. The proportions of pupils obtaining the expected or higher levels in English and mathematics were average overall while in science they were above average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in science was well above average, in English it was above average and in mathematics it was average. Compared with similar schools, results were average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science. Over recent years standards have fallen against improving standards nationally, broadly reflecting variations between year groups.

3. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades was above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The proportion obtaining five or more A*-G grades was below average. However, over recent years the school's results have improved in line with national trends, and, compared with similar schools, the 2000 results show that pupils performed well above average. Against national averages, pupils performed best in double-award science and ICT, and worst in business studies, French and German. Within the school, the best results were obtained in science, ICT, dance, drama, art and design. Pupils performed worst in child development, business studies, French and German. In broad terms, pupils achieved above what was reasonably expected based on what they achieved in the Key Stage 3 national tests they took in 1998. However, performance in mathematics was a little below what was expected, English was a little above and science was well above. The school's GCSE targets for 2000 were realistic and were achieved.

4. Results in the A-level examinations in 2000 were below average. The average points scored by students taking two or more A or AS-levels was below average, although over the last three years the school's results have been close to the national average. The average points score of students taking one or more A or AS levels was broadly average. In sciences, results were above average.

5. In several subjects there too few candidates to make valid comparisons with national averages. The school loses a significant proportion of potential sixth form students to local sixth form colleges, which has a limiting effect on group sizes for several courses it provides.

6. The standards achieved in end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations are reflected in the standards of work seen during the inspection. Attainment is broadly above average by the time pupils are 14. Standards in English are in line with the national average and a significant proportion of pupils have speaking and listening, reading and writing skills that are above average. In mathematics and science, standards are above average overall, and in science a significant proportion of pupils perform at well above average levels, in particular in the levels of understanding that they show. In history and music standards exceed expectations. In art and design, design and technology, geography, ICT, physical education, religious education and drama standards of work are broadly in line with what is expected. Standards fall below expectations in modern foreign languages. Overall, pupils achieve well, largely reflecting the good progress they make from the time they

enter the school. In most subjects achievement is good, and in geography, ICT and physical education achievement is satisfactory. In modern foreign languages achievement is unsatisfactory.

7. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is above average overall. In English and science, standards are above average, and for a significant proportion of pupils in science it is well above average. In mathematics, attainment is broadly average, variable basic number skills pulling standards down a little. Attainment in art and design, history, ICT, music and drama are above average, and it is well above average in dance. In design and technology, geography, physical education, and religious education standards are broadly average, and in modern foreign languages and business studies attainment is below average. Pupils' achievements over Years 10 and 11 are good overall. Achievement in English is good and in mathematics is satisfactory and good for some pupils, although insecure number skills slow down the progress for some. In science, achievement is very good, the result of challenging teaching and work carefully matched to the needs of all pupils. In design and technology, history, ICT and religious education pupils achieve well and in music, drama and dance they achieve very well. They make satisfactory progress in art and design, geography, physical education and business studies. Achievement is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages, mainly because work is not always sufficiently challenging.

8. In the sixth form, standards are broadly average, but with a significant proportion of students performing well. Standards of work seen are above average in English language, English literature, mathematics, sciences, art and design, music, psychology, sociology, and dance. They are average in design and technology, geography, history, physical education, religious education and economics. Standards are well above average in drama, and in the very small groups in mathematics and modern foreign languages. Achievement is good overall in sixth form courses; it is excellent in drama and satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, geography, physical education, religious education and economics. Standards are above average in VCE and GNVQ courses.

9. Literacy standards are satisfactory overall and good in many subjects. In science pupils write well in a variety of styles including limericks to help them learn key facts. In history there is a strong focus on the use of language associated with the different historical periods to show how times change. In music and drama pupils think critically, using technical terminology, and in art and design, pupils use mature vocabulary in the critical studies element. In design and technology, some pupils lack a breadth of vocabulary and this shows in their project work, despite teachers displaying key words in the classrooms.

10. Numeracy across the school currently lacks direction and purpose although the department has a policy in place and is planning some in-service activity in the near future. Unusually, good numeracy work was evident in English/Media Studies, in addition to those subjects where it is normally found.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Work is usually tailored to the needs and skills of pupils and the good relationships in lessons means that these pupils are confident to work hard and make a good attempt at the tasks they are given. Their progress is particularly good in science and music. The effective use of ICT in English leads to pupils developing competency in keyboard skills, creating story lines based on novels they read and improving their reading skills. Gifted and talented pupils are identified

in most subjects and work is generally well planned to ensure that they are suitably challenged. Higher attaining pupils usually achieve well.

12. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make progress similar to that of other pupils. Very few are at the early stages of English language acquisition, and those that are make very good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They are keen to come and take part in the range of activities that it offers. For example, outside of lesson times, the library and information technology rooms are full of pupils working purposefully. Pupils respond very well to such opportunities in school to work independently. They contribute enthusiastically in lessons and listen to each other, as was seen, for example, in a Year 7 religious education lesson. These pupils were very keen to learn and most pupils brought in masks that they had made for homework. Attitudes are particularly good among students in the sixth form. In a Year 13 ICT lesson, the students were very well motivated and showed excellent independent learning skills.

14. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good for the majority of pupils. They are lively and sociable but can be trusted to be sensible. Where there is unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons, it is usually where immature boys have less experienced teachers. However, such behaviour is more likely to be silly than unpleasant, but it does disrupt learning, for example in modern foreign languages. The level of unacceptable behaviour and bullying is low and is "name-calling" rather than physical. Pupils from ethnic minority groups are well integrated and take part in lessons confidently. The school does not often have to exclude pupils.

15. Pupils relate very well to each other and to teachers. It is rare for them to be disrespectful. Most pupils behave thoughtfully towards each other and they co-operate well in lessons. They work well together in pair work in languages and show very good ability to work together in larger groups. This was seen, for example, in a Year 10 drama lesson where rôle play was used to explore character. They enjoy taking responsibility for things, such as, helping to run the library sessions. At the individual level, too, pupils show initiative. For example, a Year 11 pupil with an interest in music therapy has organised weekly lessons for pupils with special educational needs. By the time students reach the sixth form they have become very mature and responsible. In drama and media studies, for example, in Years 12 and 13, they were sensitive in their support for others when evaluating their projects, making suggestions for improvement that were honest and helpful.

16. Attendance is good and there is only a very low level of unauthorised absence. Pupils have a good level of attendance in all years. In Year 11 in particular, it is evident that pupils appreciate the importance of attending regularly in order to obtain good grades in examinations. Pupils are sometimes late to lessons, but this is often due to the size of the school site and the time it takes to move between buildings.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory or better in 99 per cent of lessons. In 53 per cent of all lessons teaching is good and in 25 per cent it is very good and occasionally excellent. In the sixth form the picture is a little better; 36 per cent of teaching is very good and excellent and 53 per cent is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the sixth form. Teaching has improved since the last inspection.

18. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science teaching is good overall. In English, teaching is very good and it is better in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form than lower down the school. Teachers use a wide range of resources very effectively, and this has a positive impact on pupils' involvement in lessons and their good achievement. In mathematics, teaching is good. Lessons are planned with a variety of activities, and questioning is used effectively to challenge individual pupils. In science teaching is consistently good with much very good teaching. Work is challenging and very well matched to the needs of pupils and as a consequence learning is good.

19. Teachers' knowledge of their own subjects is good and this has a significant effect on the quality of learning. In history, for example, the skilful use of the teacher's knowledge leads to pupils and students learning well and acquiring high levels of competence in questioning and researching into historical sources. Lessons are planned well, often with objectives for lessons shared with pupils, so that they have an understanding of the direction of their own learning. Planning relates closely to schemes of work, so that pupils are prepared well for the demands of examination courses. In design and technology lessons, for example, planning includes the necessary skills for pupils to acquire the practical competencies they need. Teachers' expectations are generally high with tasks well matched to pupils' abilities and designed to challenge them. The highest attaining pupils are identified in all subjects, and generally work is well matched to their needs. Pupils respond well to the challenges presented and this is particularly evident in science, where achievement is often very good. Teachers' knowledge of personal, social and health education issues is less secure, especially at Key Stage 3, although it is good at Key Stage 4. This is mainly because class tutors at Key Stage 3 have not had sufficient training to help them acquire the necessary knowledge. This was an issue at the last inspection and it has not yet been addressed for staff at Key Stage 3, although it has at Key Stage 4.

20. Teaching methods are good overall. For example, in modern foreign languages where teachers conduct lessons in the target language, pupils learn to speak confidently and competently; Where the target language is not used regularly, pupils do not acquire the language skills they are capable of. Most lessons show a good range of tasks designed to develop pupils' and students' knowledge, understanding and skills. There are often opportunities for pupils to find out for themselves, helping them to become independent learners. Teachers use a wide range of resources well, providing interest and motivation for the great majority of pupils. The pace of lessons is usually good, although for some pupils long lessons mean loss of concentration, in spite of interesting and varied tasks.

21. Homework is given regularly and used well by most teachers to support pupils' learning. In art and design, for example, homework often consists of individual research leading to increased skills in independent learning, and in modern foreign languages it reinforces work done in class. The quality of marking is good and consistently, throughout the school, there is useful guidance and support for pupils to improve their work further.

22. Teachers manage pupils well and generally maintain good working relationships and behaviour in lessons. Pupils respond well, taking on challenging tasks confidently because teachers give encouragement and praise. On rare occasions, teachers do not establish a good working atmosphere and pupils' learning is unsatisfactory.

23. Literacy is taught well overall. The teaching builds on the work done in the primary phase and many subjects have a specific focus on reading and writing in Key Stage 3, although the whole school literacy policy is not yet established. Science teachers encourage a variety of writing styles to help pupils learn key facts. In history, music, drama and art and design, teachers introduce, and expect pupils to use, the correct terminology and vocabulary in their writing and speech. This has a positive effect in helping pupils express their knowledge and understanding well. In design and technology, teachers display key words and terms, to extend pupils' limited technical vocabulary. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall, although the whole school policy is not yet established. Nevertheless, there is some good work taking place in English, media studies, as well as in science and geography.

24. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught in all age groups. The quality of teaching has a significant impact on the standard of learning. Teaching is consistently effective in music and science, where work is planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The special needs co-ordinator and the learning support assistants have good knowledge of the pupils' difficulties and have effective methods to deal with them, ensuring that pupils make good progress towards their targets. They are good at teaching basic skills, especially reading and spelling. This is well supported through the paired reading and the 'Better Reading' programmes. Support staff are well matched to the pupils they support and they have effective communications with staff in individual subjects, so that work is well planned to meet the needs of pupils.

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

25. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Throughout their time in school all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad range of learning experiences. At Key Stage 3, both the breadth and relevance of the curriculum are good. In addition to all of the subjects of the National Curriculum, pupils in Years 7 to 9 follow courses in drama and personal, social and health education. There are opportunities for pupils to follow courses in German or Spanish, in addition to French, At Key Stage 4, whilst the breadth of subjects continues to be good, the relevance of courses to meet all pupils' interests and aptitudes is less strong. This is particularly true for pupils whose achievement may not be well supported by academic courses, and who do not follow a full range of GCSE courses. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have access to a very wide range of subjects, including GCSE courses in the National Curriculum subjects, religious education, drama, dance, media studies, sociology and business studies; and a foundation level course leading to the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in IT and Manufacturing. The school also provides a range of Certificate of Achievement courses, including leisure and tourism, and the National Skills Profile. The breadth of the curriculum is further enriched by careers education, child development and complementary courses, including the Asdan Youth Award. In Year 11, pupils who are judged to require additional support in preparation for training and employment, and at risk to becoming disaffected with the conventional school curriculum, are offered a modified curriculum with an increased emphasis on vocational and social education. This programme has proved very effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and in helping them to succeed. The good breadth of courses has grown in response to need. However, it lacks coherence. While the school has reacted well to pupils' needs, aptitudes and interests, it has not planned the curriculum sufficiently carefully to ensure that clear

pathways of learning are available to promote good achievement by pupils of all levels of attainment.

26. In the sixth form, the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Students are offered a wide range of courses leading to GCE AS qualifications in Year 12, and to GCE A-level in Year 13. However, the range of vocational courses available is limited to GNVQ Advanced Level courses in ICT and business studies, and an intermediate GNVQ in business studies. This is an inadequate response to the wide range of students' abilities and aptitudes. Statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education Post-16 are met only in part.

27. There are some timetabling difficulties, which have a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. For example, at Key Stage 3, the timetabling of ICT in rotation with drama, restricts the time available for the subject and hinders achievement. In addition, there is no thorough monitoring of what aspects of ICT are taught in which subjects, thus making it difficult to make best use of the time available. At Key Stage 4, full access to the statutory provision for religious education is restricted by being timetabled against other subjects.

28. The new senior management team of the school is fully aware of the shortcomings in the curriculum especially at Key Stage 4 and Post-16. Priority is being given to the review of the curriculum as a whole in the current school development plan.

29. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good. There is an annual activities week designed imaginatively to enrich and extend pupils' learning experiences through a wide range of clearly focused visits and activities, and which is supported by Post-16 students. It is also significantly enriched by the very good range of learning experiences in clubs and out-of-lesson activities many of which, and especially those in music and the Duke of Edinburgh Award, are of exceptionally high quality. In music, the range of activities is particularly impressive, including choirs, bands, ensembles, and composition and recording activities. Pupils also have access to a good range of sports and games, and to many subject specific clubs such as those in ICT, art and design and geography. Field work also plays a central role in the study of many subjects. For example, in history there are visits to France and Belgium and the regular contribution of a local historian. In religious education, there are visits to churches and cathedrals. In geography pupils visit Snowdonia and York. In design and technology pupils participate in the Jaguar design award. There are many other trips, such as skiing in Austria and regular study visits to France and Germany.

30. Learning also benefits from the productive links with partner schools as reflected in the shared activities with primary schools in literacy, ICT and art and design. It is also well supported by the good links the school enjoys with the community both local and further afield. The good local links are particularly well illustrated by the valuable support provided for learning by the Trustees of Rastrick Grammar School, and by a number of employers and agencies especially for work related education. The links further afield are well fostered through the Comenius Project, which promotes links with schools in Europe and the USA. Video conferencing enriches these links significantly.

31. The school is in the early stages of agreeing a literacy policy and developments are satisfactory. The good links with local primary schools have resulted in many teachers being made aware of recent developments in the national literacy strategy. There is not, as yet, tight co-ordination of the teaching of key skills across the curriculum but individual departments have started to highlight important language requirements in their subjects. A whole school numeracy policy is not established, although within mathematics teaching a policy is in place. As with English, there is no coordination of the teaching of numeracy skills throughout the school, but several departments have established work that is resulting in effective teaching of numeracy.

32. The quality of personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall and good in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 4 pupils follow a comprehensive programme of short courses each lasting approximately seven weeks. These programmes are taught effectively by a small team of teachers. The programmes are designed to raise awareness to sex education, drugs, careers guidance and first aid. At Key Stage 3, the programme is detailed, but teaching is less secure, because form tutors, all of whom are involved, have not had sufficient training to improve their own expertise.

33. Provision for careers education is good, and has improved since the last inspection. In Year 9, pupils receive detailed careers information and advice leading up to their Key Stage 4 options. This continues in Years 10 and 11 with careers work in the social education course, and work experience at the end of Year 10. Advice in the sixth form is detailed with a high level of involvement by sixth form staff, heads of departments, head of careers and the careers service. The careers library is very well resourced and is used extensively by pupils and students.

34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. The learning support management team work well together to ensure appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs and this ensures that pupils have support for their emotional, physical, behavioural or learning needs. The governors with a brief for special needs play an active part in supporting the department. Staff have copies of individual education plans for pupils they teach. The use of these plans is occasionally ineffective because they are insufficiently adapted to the needs of the pupil in a particular lesson. Nevertheless, all pupils on the special educational needs register are well supported across subjects and have full access to the whole curriculum. For example, pupils in wheel chairs take an active part in physical education lessons. Provision is good for pupils up to 16 years of age. The Rastrick Alternative Routes to Education (RARE) project is particularly effective at attracting back into school pupils who have had particular behaviour or attendance problems. This provides an appropriate active course which pupils enjoy. A measure of its success is the high attendance and appropriate certificates of achievement for all pupils. The system of link teachers within subject areas supports good communication with the special needs co-ordinator and the learning support management team. However, access to sixth form courses is difficult for some students with special educational needs.

35. The school has a small proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language and provides a good level of support. There is also effective support for pupils' cultural development.

36. The provision made by the school for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection and many subjects now make a good contribution to these areas of personal development.

37. The provision for spiritual development is good. Very good opportunities are provided in religious education, history and geography for pupils to discuss a range of different beliefs and values. Art, music and drama in particular effectively enable pupils to express their feelings through a variety of media. All Year 8 pupils are involved in a 'Sikhism Day' where a visit is made to a Gurdwara and pupils are given an excellent feel of what it means to be a Sikh. In a number of subject areas, opportunities for reflection and development of a sense of awe and wonder are being missed.

38. School assemblies follow well-planned themes related to moral and social issues. Local clergy are regularly used to provide a good variety of leaders of assemblies, but pupils

are under-used in the planning and taking of assemblies. Meditation themes are being planned for future form tutor time but these times are currently under-developed in terms of spiritual input. The school is not currently meeting statutory requirements for collective worship.

39. The provision the school makes for the moral development of pupils is very good. There is a clear code of conduct that is enforced effectively across the school. Environmental issues are discussed effectively in geography and religious education, whilst issues such as violence, the lessons to be learned from the holocaust and prejudice are dealt with sensitively in English, history and other subjects. Staff provide pupils with good role models and pupils respond with good behaviour and a developing attitude of respect for others.

40. Social development is very good. Most subjects offer pupils good opportunities to work together effectively in groups and pairs. Music, religious education, English and drama make significant contributions to the social development of pupils through offering excellent opportunities for playing and composing music, writing and devising plays and a wide variety of discussion topics, where pupils effectively learn to listen to and respect one another's values and beliefs. There is a wide range of good extra-curricular activities, including the availability of the art and design facilities on Monday to Thursday evenings for pupils. The RARE group very successfully contributes to pupils' social development by engaging in 'team-building days' and a variety of good quality activities designed to support and sustain pupils' social development.

41. The provision made by the school for the cultural development of pupils is good. The study of major world religions; the wide range of opportunities to experience music from Java, Czech Republic, Russia covering 'spirituals', 'blues', 'ragtime' as well as traditional and classical music all widen pupils cultural horizons. Video-conferencing with a North Carolina school and experiencing the work of a variety of artists from differing cultures provide a richness of experience for pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school supports pupils well. Its stated aim is "Working together for individual success". Staff do work well together to provide the support and guidance that pupils need and parents feel that their children are happy at school.

43. The school has good procedures for looking after the health and welfare of pupils and now has a child protection policy, which it did not at the last inspection. All teachers have received training in child protection issues and there are regular opportunities to up-date this training. Proper attention is paid to first aid throughout the school and the site is regularly checked for potential hazards. Pupils are well supervised around the site both outside and in the buildings. Arrangements for taking pupils on educational visits are well thought out to ensure pupils' safety.

44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Registration procedures are very efficient enabling clerical staff to check up on absences on the first day very promptly, and for any concerns over attendance to be brought up at weekly meetings with the educational social worker. The school has introduced a reward system for good attendance that helps to reinforce the importance it places on this. Care is taken to print out promptly a daily register for pupils in Years 7 to 11, so that the presence of these pupils on site is clearly known and they can be accounted for.

45. Behaviour is well monitored and sanctions are used well to deal with behaviour which is unacceptable. This includes permanent exclusion if necessary, although this is rare. Pupils are encouraged to work hard and behave well and are rewarded with credits which can be saved and used to buy things from the stationery shop or the canteen, this is particularly appreciated by the younger pupils. Parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.

46. Pupils are well supported and monitored by the pastoral staff in their personal development. Any who have problems, for example, in completing homework are encouraged to spend sessions after school in a homework club. Pastoral support is offered by a local minister in a weekly "Time to Talk" session. Some pupils have benefited from one-to-one mentoring with members of the local community. The sessions are very well run, giving pupils very good support for their homework and research. Pupils are helped at all stages of their education to make the transition from one stage to another, not just when they join the school, but also as they move from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 and then again into the sixth form. Special transition days are arranged so that they can become familiar with their new circumstances.

47. Assessment is satisfactory overall and has improved since the time of the last inspection. There is good monitoring of pupils' academic progress by senior management. Good systems have been established for assessing pupils' attainment when they join the school. Similar tests used in Years 8 and 9 allow the school to measure the progress made by pupils. The results from these tests are used to predict how well pupils are likely to perform in the GCSE examinations. Information is collected from teachers' assessments, including their judgement of pupils' effort in their subject, and school examinations. Assessment is analysed well by gender and the school has made a good start on monitoring the attainment of pupils from ethnic minority groups. This wealth of information is made available to heads of subject departments. The assessment coordinator presents the data in a variety of forms to pinpoint areas of underachievement. However, this information is not yet used effectively by all departments. Where it is used well, for example, in science and history, pupils' results are improving. Heads of year and form tutors receive this information for pupils in their groups, but are generally not using it to monitor pupils' attainment and progress.

48. The school has established systems to monitor the work of those pupils in Year 11 who are underachieving. The day-to-day responsibility for this rests with subject teachers. The effectiveness varies greatly between teachers and departments. At best it is excellent: pupils are given extra individual lessons after school and are confident of raising their grades in GCSE. In some cases, teachers are not providing sufficient support for the pupils they have identified to help them attain higher grades.

49. All departments meet the requirements to report on pupils' attainment using National Curriculum levels at the age of 14. These assessments are generally accurate except in design and technology where they are too generous. Most departments make satisfactory use of assessment information to guide their planning. It is well used in science, art and design and history. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, following the school's assessment

policy so that pupils understand what the marks mean. There is some good practice in explaining to pupils what they could do to improve their work, but this is not yet well done in all subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents are satisfied overall with the school and are supportive over much of what it is doing for their children. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and those who answered the questionnaire did express some concerns about the school. What concerned them most was the lack of information about progress. There was some feeling that the school does not work closely with them also. The amount of homework that is set was another area of dissatisfaction.

51. The quality of information that the school sends out to parents is good. All the formal documents, such as the prospectus, the annual governors' report that has just been issued and pupils' annual reports contain all that they should. Newsletters are very regular, informative and interesting to read. Some parents expressed concern at the timing of meetings. However, the school's calendar shows that meetings are well timed in the middle of the school year and that reports to parents are sent out in the week before the meeting. The school has piloted a Year 11 tutor review day which was very popular and had a better attendance than the traditional parents' evening. Parents of younger pupils are informed that they can contact senior staff at any time if they wish to talk about their children, but the school makes very little use of the pupil planner as a less formal means of communication between school and home. Some departments keep parents informed directly about pupils' progress and about requirements for projects.

52. Parents support the school well in various ways that contribute to their children's learning. Some are very supportive of music in the school and have raised funds to buy instruments for pupils. They also help to run musical events and provide refreshments, shared coaching with staff in rugby and football, support exhibitions of pupils' work in the art and design department, which helps to raise their self-esteem. Others take advantage of the training offered by the school to keep up with their children in computer skills. All parents sign the home school agreement as their children enter school in Year 7 and only occasionally do parents have to be reminded of this commitment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The leadership and management of the school are good and the headteacher provides very clear direction for the work the school needs to do to further improve. The headteacher, while having been in the school for several years, has been in her present post for less than one year. The present senior management team was formed at the beginning of the term in which the inspection took place. However, in that time it has taken positive steps to establish a management structure in which each senior team member has responsibility for monitoring and supporting the work of a small number of subjects. Delegation of responsibilities is good and staff with management responsibilities, for example, the pastoral system, finance, the curriculum, special needs and heads of department, generally carry out their work effectively.

54. The governing body carries out its responsibilities very well. Governors know the school well and provide a high level of support for the headteacher and staff. They review policies and monitor the work of the school through a wide range of reports and documents prepared for them. They monitor the school development plan and ensure that financial planning is closely linked to it. Governors fulfil their statutory obligations, with the exception of collective worship and the teaching of religious education in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Policies for whole school approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy are prepared and the timescales for introducing them are agreed.

55. The school's monitoring of its own development is satisfactory overall and the development plan provides very clear priorities for further improvement. For example, the school is aware of the need to improve the curriculum and has a plan of action worked out to do this. The school is effective in monitoring and evaluating its performance with regard to whole school issues but monitoring at departmental level is inconsistent. The observation and evaluation of teaching, and constructive feedback and support are not well-established means to improve teaching. This is evident, for example, in the varying effectiveness of teaching in modern foreign languages. Good practice seen, in all departments, including heads of department and other staff monitoring teachers' planning, pupils' work and marking, and also sharing moderation of work within subjects. In some departments, for example, science, the use of examination and other assessment information is effective in guiding teachers' planning and providing targets for pupils and students but this practice is not widespread. The newly established line management organisation provides a good structure in which to develop a coherent approach to sharing the strengths seen throughout the school.

56. Finances are well managed with a sharp realism to the fact that returning to local authority control from being grant-maintained, and losing the status of technology college have resulted in reduction in funding overall. The final tranche of technology made in the financial year 2000/2001 has provided a cushion for the financial shortfall associated with loss of technology college status but grants from central government have needed to be used to support the base budget of the school. The school's manager provides accurate information for the senior management team and governors and governors plan spending cautiously. Financial planning takes into account projected income for future years and recognises the need to reduce spending to this limit. The last audit report, in 1999, confirmed the school's good financial management systems. The school's administration costs less than in many schools and is efficient. It makes very good use of available modern technology, with a terminal in every classroom and office.

57. The school receives extra financial support from the Trustees of Rastrick Grammar School. The trust has provided substantial funding over several years, for example, for the Trustees' Library and a contribution to the cost of the all-weather sports surface.

58. The overall quality of the school's accommodation is good. Since the last inspection there have been improvements to the buildings. These include a new drama studio, an eight-classroom block, an additional laboratory, a specialist room for ICT and rooms dedicated to vocational education. There is appropriate provision of specialist rooms and in some subjects such as English, science, ICT and design and technology this is good. It is particularly good in drama and music. The accommodation provided for mathematics is unsatisfactory because there are insufficient specialist rooms to serve the needs of the subject. Building work is currently proceeding to create four general-purpose classrooms and two specialist ICT rooms. This will allow for a small expansion of the facilities and the removal of a block of four temporary rooms. The site is well maintained and provides a pleasant environment that contributes effectively to the school's positive ethos for learning.

59. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff are well

matched to the demands of the curriculum. There are currently difficulties in music and mathematics, due to teacher absences, which the school is managing well. The school has a good range of administrative and support staff who are heavily involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, as well as work within school. For example, the librarian is involved in the development of study skills courses for sixth form students.

60. The school has good induction programmes for new staff and for newly qualified teachers. The programme includes support for all new staff and a full programme of mentoring and training for all newly qualified teachers. The awareness of the school that the staff are their most valuable resource is reflected in the achievement of the Investors in People Award. Staff development is closely linked to the identified needs of the school through the school improvement plan and performance management. In-service training provision is good and is generally effective in promoting good teaching and learning. Performance management targets have been completed for all staff and the first cycle of formal observation of teachers is nearing completion.

61. Resources in the school are satisfactory, and the school recognises the need for some spending in this area. There are good resources in science, English and art and design and very good resources in music. Good resources in these areas help teachers to extend pupils' learning experiences. There has been a significant improvement in resources for ICT. Computers are well used by classes and individual pupils, as well as for developing and reviewing individual education programmes for pupils with special educational needs. There are deficiencies in resources in geography, where some texts are in need of replacement. The library is well equipped and stocked and is well used, particularly at break and lunchtime.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The school's development plan shows a high level of awareness of the issues that need to be addressed, and the newly formed senior team have added their initial evaluations to that plan as well. Consequently, the school is well positioned to continue its improvement. What the school needs to do now is:

- (1) Raise standards in modern foreign languages by:
 - setting work which challenges pupils, (Paragraphs: 7, 20, 154, 155, 157, 158)
 - establishing high standards of behaviour, (Paragraphs: 14, 22)
 - improving the pace of lessons, (Paragraph: 20)
 - sharing good teaching skills identified in the department. (Paragraphs: 20, 162, 164)

- (2) Improve the procedures to observe and evaluate teaching so that:
 - existing good school procedures become the foundation for a common system of lesson observation within departments,
 - effective teaching methods are recognised and discussed between teachers. (Paragraph: 55)

- (3) Improve the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 4 and students in the sixth form for whom GCSE or A/AS courses are not the most suitable by ensuring:
 - there is a wide range of vocational courses, (Paragraphs: 63, 70)
 - their timetables provide them with a well planned coherent experience. (Paragraphs: 28, 71)

- (4) Improve provision for ICT at Key Stage 3 by:
 - monitoring what ICT is provided within individual subjects so that there is detailed information on pupils' experiences, (Paragraphs: 27, 151)
 - ensuring that the time allocated to ICT teaching is sufficient to fully cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. (Paragraphs: 27, 144)

Minor issues the school should also consider:

- Establishing the school's numeracy policy in all subjects. (Paragraphs: 10, 23, 31)
- Ensuring that provision for religious education in the sixth form meets statutory requirements. (Paragraphs: 27, 188)
- Ensure that all staff are confident in using assessment information to guide their planning and target setting for pupils. (Paragraphs: 47, 49)
- Provide training for Key Stage 3 form tutors to deliver the elements of the personal, social and health education course they are responsible for. (Paragraphs: 19, 32)
- Ensure that provision for collective worship meets statutory requirements. (Paragraphs: 38, 54)

PROVISION FOR STUDENTS IN THE SIXTH FORM

63. Provision is satisfactory overall, and for many students is good. There is a wide range of courses leading to GCE AS courses in Year 12, and to GCE A-level in Year 13. The wide range arises from the school's aim to recruit appropriate numbers of students through matching subjects to their interests, but it results in many small teaching groups. Vocational courses are limited to GNVQ Advanced Level courses in information technology and business in Years 12 and 13, and a course in business at Intermediate Level in Year 12. The school is aware of the shortcomings of both the small teaching groups at GCE AS/Advanced level, and in the breadth of vocational courses. Priority is given to the review of the Post-16 curriculum in the current school development plan. Planning for the development needed is well advanced and soundly based on good knowledge of current developments in Post-16 courses and qualifications.

64. A significant proportion of pupils go on to local colleges after completing GCSE examinations. The students who remain at the school achieve well in comparison with their prior attainment at GCSE. Teaching is good overall and occasionally it is excellent, especially in GNVQ lessons. Teachers' subject expertise, high expectations and knowledge of course and examination requirements are good and skilfully shared with their students, helping them to learn and succeed in external examinations and qualifications. Generally there are many opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills, although on occasion there is too much direction by the teacher. In the GNVQ courses independent learning skills along with self-evaluation and problem solving are promoted well.

65. Students' positive attitudes, good motivation and high levels of commitment enable them to learn well.

66. There is a well-planned and clearly focused provision for personal and social education. This is wide ranging and includes a well structured programme of careers and higher education, enrichment activities enabling students to participate in a good range of sports, recreation, voluntary work and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, a particular strength of the school. There are further shared activities with a neighbouring secondary school. Students' personal development also benefits from their involvement in working with younger pupils in the school annual activities week, and in Year 12, from the General Studies course which is a compulsory element of the curriculum of all students

67. Students' academic and personal progress is closely monitored and supported by the their personal tutors. Tutors have a key role in building a positive relationship with their students based on trust and confidence, and in helping students to set targets for improvement.

68. Work in the sixth form is very well led and managed. The newly appointed head of the sixth form provides a well-focused direction for development. In the short time since her appointment, she has initiated improvements in the tutorial support and guidance for students, and systems for monitoring and target setting. Plans to improve the enrichment opportunities and for increasing recruitment to the sixth form are at an early stage, but form a very sound basis for growth. The provision for vocational education is well directed by the GNVQ co-ordinator. There is a good grasp of changes in national provision, the need to recruit and retain students and the need for target setting to achieve high standards. Planning to meet these changes is well advanced.

69. The sixth form accommodation provides a good teaching and social environment which encourages good learning and the development of mature and responsible attitudes. The ethos is relaxed and yet purposeful. Students have good access to up-to-date ICT facilities and to an appropriate range of books and other resources to support their learning. There is no specific sixth form library, but resources held in the main school library are satisfactory.

PROVISION FOR PUPILS IN KEY STAGE 4

70. The breadth of provision in Key Stage 4 is good overall although it does not meet the needs of a small proportion of pupils for whom academic courses are not suited. The range of GCSE subjects is good and includes drama, dance, media studies, sociology and business studies. Within personal, social and health education and social studies pupils also receive a comprehensive careers guidance course, supported well by work experience and careers advice. There is one foundation level GNVQ course in IT and Manufacturing, not sufficient, as recognised by the school, to meet the needs of some pupils. In addition child care and the Asdan Youth Award are offered. In Year 11, for pupils who show signs of becoming disaffected in the academic curriculum, courses are provided which have an increased emphasis on social education and basic skills. They have been very effective in raising pupils' self esteem and maintaining their attendance at school.

71. The good breadth of courses has grown in response to need but lacks an overall coherence in ensuring clear planned pathways for learning, designed to promote good achievement by pupils of all levels of attainment. However, timetabling causes some problems. For example, a significant proportion of pupils do not follow a religious education course at Key Stage 4 because it is timetabled against other subjects in the option system.

72. Learning facilities are good. Pupils have ready access to the well-equipped library. This includes use of computers before and after school, at lunchtime and break, and to support careers work they wish to explore further. There is a wide range of extra classes to assist pupils with their revision for GCSE examinations, and teachers give freely of their time to help pupils. Parents appreciate this level of support and guidance.

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

73. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is good. The learning support management team works well together to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. The good provision ensures that pupils have the appropriate support for their emotional, physical, behavioural or learning needs and that they make good progress. The named governors attached to the special needs department play an active part in supporting the department.

74. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well in all age groups and this has a significant impact on the standard of learning. In music and science, work is particularly well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The special needs coordinator and the learning support assistants have good knowledge of pupils' difficulties and have effective methods to deal with them, ensuring that pupils make good progress towards their targets. The learning support manager is effective in coordinating support staff and ensuring that they are well matched to the pupils they support and to subject areas. The link teachers in each department and the attachment of learning support assistants to specific subjects support this good level of provision. The special educational needs Code of Practice is fully implemented. Clear progress towards individual targets is seen in all pupil reviews. Teachers are well aware of the Code of Practice and have copies of individual education plans for pupils they teach. The use of these plans is occasionally ineffective because they are

insufficiently adapted to the needs of the pupil in a particular lesson.

75. All pupils on the special educational needs register are well supported across subjects and have full access to the whole curriculum. Provision is good up to 16 years, but access to sixth form courses is difficult for some students with special educational needs. There is good provision to support the development of basic skills, in particular through additional reading activities and through use of the computers in the library area. The RARE project is particularly effective at attracting back into school pupils who have had particular behaviour or attendance problems. The high attendance and frequent awarding of certificates of achievement for all pupils are measures of the success of the approach. Subject links with the special needs staff management team are effective. Teachers are very much aware of pupils' general needs and respond to them in a positive and caring way. The school provides a safe and secure environment.

76. Information derived from age-related reading writing and numeracy tests provides evidence which helps staff produce individual education plans. However, assessment is not used consistently as part of a short-term target-setting strategy in order to measure attainment and progress and give pupils incentives to learn. Improvements are being made to the quality of and access to individual education plans. It is planned that all staff will have access to up-to-date information on individual attainment and progress across all subjects.

77. Progress made since the last report is good. The department now has its own effective management structure, link staff in all departments and new systems to produce individual education plans.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	223
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	65

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	22	53	21	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 pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1232	205
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	158	N/A

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	30	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	191	3

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	103

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	114	124	238

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	67	79	80
	Girls	86	81	77
	Total	153	160	157
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	65 (77)	68 (67)	67 (64)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	36 (32)	35 (41)	39 (28)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	67	77	82
	Girls	99	85	91
	Total	166	162	173
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (72)	68 (65)	73 (71)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (41)	41 (36)	41 (33)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	121	98	219

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	61	104	114
	Girls	56	92	96
	Total	117	196	210
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	53 (52)	89 (89)	96 (93)
	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	41
	National	38.4

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	23
	National	N/A

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	37	45	82

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	10.3	15.5	13.5 (15.7)	2.5	2.3	2.5 (3.6)
National	17.7	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	39
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	45
Pakistani	48
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	4
White	1,298
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	37	0
Other minority ethnic groups	3	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	88.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	671

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26.2
Key Stage 4	21.1

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	3 689 639
Total expenditure	3 718 688
Expenditure per pupil	2 606
Balance brought forward from previous year	184 863
Balance carried forward to next year	155 814

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1437
Number of questionnaires returned	205

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	51	5	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	48	4	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	50	12	3	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	48	18	5	1
The teaching is good.	33	51	3	1	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	48	22	8	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	38	5	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	25	47	16	6	6
The school is well led and managed.	37	47	4	1	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	50	5	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	45	4	2	10

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting held for parents before the inspection, parents expressed their overall satisfaction with the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided and the care the school provided for pupils. Inspection evidence broadly supports these views. A few parents expressed concern about some bullying incidents, but the inspection found that the school deals well with all incidents.

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

ENGLISH

78. The attainment of pupils entering the school at age 11 is broadly average, taking all aspects of English into account. By the time they reach the age of 14, most pupils attain at least the expected level and a large proportion gain the higher levels, above the national average. Results over time have fluctuated at Key Stage 3 but are always at or above expectations. In GCSE examinations, the pattern of results is unusual also and has risen and fallen in alternate years in English Language with no obvious explanation apart from the differing attainment levels of pupils in the year group. The proportion of A* - C grades was in line with the national average in the year 2000 but showed that pupils had made very good progress since their Key Stage 3 test results two years earlier. Boys performed particularly well and were above the average for boys nationally. Girls' results were lower than the national figure for girls. Results in GCSE English literature were good, given that almost the whole year group was entered. Results matched the national average. The entry to A-level English is rising since the school introduced the language syllabus. Results in recent years have been satisfactory, close to the national figure at all grade levels.

79. Standards seen in lessons provide a more consistent picture. At Key Stage 3, pupils are making good progress and most are securely at average levels of attainment. A significant proportion of pupils are working at the higher levels in speaking and listening and in reading. Performance in writing is nearer the average.

80. The achievement of pupils at Key Stage 3 is good overall. In mixed ability groups, achievement varies according to the work provided by teachers, but it is usually good, broadly matching their ability, and providing stimulus and challenge. For instance, in their studies on Shakespeare, different props are given to groups who then have to relate them to relevant scenes in the play; they do this well. The teacher used a mixture of direct questions to pupils with special educational needs and more open-ended prompts to higher-attaining pupils to ensure that they understood the significance of the articles. The follow-up writing was structured to allow pupils to develop ideas at a suitable level. In lessons where the work is less carefully planned some pupils become restless and a little distracted. As a result their learning is not as rapid.

81. In other aspects of English in Key Stage 3 there are lively discussions on a range of texts such as "Beowulf" and "Skellig" which shows that pupils enjoy working out the derivation of unusual words. In one exchange the teacher constantly pushed pupils towards a precise answer: "*What's a bolster? Look at what it was used for. What other words do we have in English for this?*" Several lessons were characterised by a high level of demand on pupils to think before they spoke. Boys showed a real exuberance in oral work, occasionally a little unrestrained, so they needed this discipline. Reading is generally above average. Younger pupils make a fairly narrow choice of authors but teachers introduce them to a wider range as they get older, including a fair number of non-fiction texts. Pupils with special educational needs read well with support from adults and reading partners. They make good use of information technology also to improve their reading and writing skills.

82. In writing at Key Stage 3, standards are average. Pupils provide lively descriptions of people they admire showing good control of paragraphs. Presentation is neat and teachers provide good models through their attractive wall-displays of pupils' work. For example, a class study of a novel had led to the writing of very effectively illustrated project booklets using word processors. Some short stories are given added conviction and depth by realistic dialogue and well-described action. The spelling, despite some vagaries creeping into work,

is generally satisfactory and pupils structure and sequence their work well with paragraphs.

83. At Key Stage 4, pupils continue to make good progress and by the time they reach the age of 16 a high number achieve well. Their attainment is above average overall. Pupils with special educational needs work hard and follow relevant courses which motivate them. Those on the Certificate of Achievement course produce good work on word processors. For example, in the space of a lesson one boy created very creditable personal response to "Of Mice and Men" which revealed a sound knowledge of the story. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress orally. In some lessons they take a major part in discussions and show a good knowledge of English. One boy was able to articulate in clear terms the meaning of "objectivity" while a number of native English speakers looked puzzled. Pupils read well and are helped to discover a range of authors and genres through the wider reading course of GCSE. Poetry lessons generate a lot of lively discussion, fuelled by the teacher's enthusiasm, and result in good understanding of quite complex imagery, such as in "To His Coy Mistress". Given a steer by the teacher, pupils are able to draw modern comparisons which bring the meaning of the original closer to them.

84. In their writing, pupils develop a good style of answering literature essays, though they sometimes fail to make enough use of quotations to support their opinions. In creative writing they are prepared to use moving images such as, "*Like the Nile my love runs deep*" to add weight to their love poems. Over time most pupils make good progress in English and the large number who take the literature examination in addition to English achieve well.

85. The introduction of media studies is proving popular. Pupils show a good understanding of how the various media represent images and construct ideas. Some pupils use spread-sheets and graphs competently to illustrate the results of their surveys on the popularity of newspapers, thereby consolidating their numeracy and information technology skills. The media assignments in English are also particularly well taught and this is a strong feature of the subject.

86. In the sixth form, students have a good choice of English options. The take up of media studies and English language is high. Lessons are characterised by a high level of animated discussions. Teachers use resources to good effect. For example, in a lesson examining the relationship between language and gender, the teacher subtly switched between the visual in the video extract and the transcript to show how word and gesture convey meaning. Students soon were able to understand the relationships, and they generated brisk pace in the lesson as they proffered alternative views, learning from each other. A similar discussion occurred in a media studies lesson where dialect was being explored. The pace in literature lessons is more measured but the same level of debate goes on. In their written work, students show good standards apart from a tendency by some to make fairly basic spelling errors of simple words. Standards of attainment are at least in line with course requirements and often above.

87. The quality of teaching is good overall. In one in eight lessons it is very good or occasionally excellent and in seven out of ten lessons it is good. It is more consistently good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Pupils are often stimulated by the teacher's good use of resources and by the energetic pace set in many lessons. There is some unevenness in the pace of a small number of lessons. Those that work best include the regular setting of time deadlines to ensure that pupils know the high expectations of them. More monitoring of classroom work would resolve these inconsistencies between classes. The marking is a very good feature of the teaching. Teachers pose searching questions to help pupils think about how to improve their writing. Reports on progress indicate their strengths and weaknesses and set clear targets to pupils and students. The large team of teachers contains a wealth of expertise, and a good blend of experience and new ideas, and this has a

positive effect on the enthusiasm for learning seen among pupils and students. Planning is good but the sharing of successful methods, though evident in some aspects, is not yet common. Pupils enjoy coming to English lessons because they enjoy the positive learning climate established in the classroom. Most work hard as a result.

88. The management of the subject is very good. The new head of department has started to introduce more rigorous systems for analysing the performance and progress of pupils of all attainment levels. There are also moves to help pupils to understand more clearly what they need to do to raise their levels of attainment in both key stages. Since the last inspection the most notable improvement has been to involve sixth form students more actively in their own learning. Other improvements are in the quality of teaching, and standards have kept pace with the national rising trend.

MATHEMATICS

89. In the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum assessments in 2000, attainment was broadly average, and below that of the previous year. The proportion of pupils obtaining the higher levels was below average. Results were below those of both English and science, with little variation between boys and girls. Compared with similar schools, results were below average. Standards have fluctuated in recent years. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, results were broadly in line with the national average. Comparisons with similar schools however, show the school in a weak position, with the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* - C significantly below average. The proportion of pupils obtaining the higher grades A* - B falls well below both national levels and those of similar schools. GCSE results for mathematics in the school are weaker than those for both English and science. By the time pupils are in the sixth form, achievement is broadly in line with national averages, but the small size of the cohort makes detailed analysis meaningless.

90. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' attainment is slightly above national average by the age of 14, with a significant number of pupils attaining very well. The higher-attaining pupils can, for example, apply the definition of a locus to generate them for a range of shapes and do so with precision. Pupils of average attainment dealt effectively with early lessons on Pythagoras's theorem and others used isometric projections efficiently. Lower attainers were observed using the ICT facility to good effect while adding fractions and decimals. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well, sometimes very well, particularly when helped in lessons by support staff who help to reinforce the correct use of mathematical terms. These pupils could, for example, calculate the area of irregular polygons. In none of the work seen was there a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

91. By the time pupils are 16, attainment is broadly in line with national averages, but with a wide spread. A smaller than normal proportion of pupils attain higher than the average standard. Higher-attaining pupils, while working on the relationship between surface area and volume for regular shapes, can identify important general rules from specific examples. Pupils of average attainment cope well with problems relating to similar triangles, using direct and indirect proportion to determine unknowns, even when the relationship is not obvious. Pupils of lower attainment convert raw data first into frequency tables and then into block graphs. Pupils with special educational needs deal effectively with improper fractions, breaking the process into smaller, manageable steps. Again, there was no obvious gender difference in relation to attainment overall.

92. By the time students are about half way through the sixth form, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. In dealing with complex situations in statistics, students recognise the non-cumulative nature of the examples and that, having determined variance, know its relationship to standard deviation. Pupils nearing the end of their course worked

confidently with hyperbolic trigonometric function and their integration and differentiation. Standards overall are in line with GCE A-level expectations.

93. Teaching is good overall and a strength of the school. It is stronger in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form than at Key Stage 4. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. At Key Stage 3, 35 per cent of teaching is good with a further 17 per cent very good. At Key Stage 4, half of teaching is good, the remainder satisfactory. In the sixth form, teaching is at least good with nearly a half very good and sometimes excellent. The best teaching provides a well-planned sequence of activities and good use of resources, other than the blackboard. Throughout the school, most teachers know the pupils by name and so can target their interventions and questions. Teachers' expectations are high and relationships are good. This latter factor particularly, helps in dealing with older, truculent pupils. Teachers' plans are invariably followed with some rigour so that learning is promoted effectively by good basic teaching skills and subject knowledge

94. Pupils' and students' learning is good overall. At Key Stage 3, it is at least satisfactory and is often good. In about an eighth of lessons it was very good. At Key Stage 4, learning was satisfactory or better in the great majority of lessons and was good in over one third; in one lesson it was unsatisfactory. In the sixth form, the quality of learning is at least good and sometimes very good. In the best lessons, a high pace of work, coupled with a variety in the range of materials used, keeps pupils on task and well motivated. When learning is unsatisfactory, poor behaviour deflects the teacher from the task, allowing the pace of work to fall and boys, particularly, to lose concentration. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, even when without support, as in some of the higher-attaining groups. No clear gender differences were observed at either key stage. Throughout the school, but particularly at Key Stage 4, pupils' learning is supported by their use of calculators. When these are not available or allowed, pupils' lack of competency with basic number operations became apparent. At Key Stage 3, some lessons were observed applying the National Numeracy approach where mental arithmetic skills are paramount. In these classes, learning was effective. At Key Stage 4, pupils relied on calculators to an excessive degree.

95. The management of the department is satisfactory overall but is suffering from the absence of the head of department and second in department. The work of the department covers all attainment targets and determined efforts are being made to improve the quality of learning, for example, by increased use of ICT facilities, including a suite of machines in the department itself. The department is currently suffering from a period of staffing instability which reduces its overall efficiency as well as its ability to make adjustments in light of its own good monitoring information.

96. Since the last inspection, improvements in attainment at Key Stage 3 are a direct result of the increasing use of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is now beginning to affect Year 8. This is evidenced by the good range of teaching methods observed and an

increasing use of a 'quick fire' mental arithmetic start to many lessons. The level of mathematical knowledge of the staff has also improved.

SCIENCE

97. Pupils' attainment in science is broadly average on entry to the school. In 2000, the results in National Curriculum tests for Year 9 pupils were above average and better than in English and mathematics. A significant proportion of pupils obtained the higher levels. Compared with similar schools in 2000, results were broadly average, although they were better at the higher levels. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils achieving A* - C grades was well above national average and better than in other subjects. The achievement of boys was slightly higher than that of girls. The overall science results at A-level and AS level were above average with little difference noted between the various sciences, including psychology. Over recent years the trend in results has been upwards in end of Key Stage 3 tests, GCSE and A-level, at a faster rate than that seen nationally.

98. Inspection evidence shows that by the age of 14 attainment is above average overall. High-attaining pupils can describe the functions of various body organs accurately and explain the process of respiration in some detail. Average pupils describe various types of forces accurately and explain the effects of forces on motion competently. Investigation skills are good and pupils make good progress in developing them across the key stage. Pupils express their ideas well, because key words and important terminology are displayed in prominent places. Overall, pupils of all abilities and those who have English as an additional language achieve well in all aspects of the subject.

99. By the time they are 16, pupils' attainment is above average overall with a significant minority performing well above average. Most pupils can define velocity, speed and acceleration and can plot velocity/time graphs accurately. Higher-attaining pupils explain the role of enzymes in digestion and the optimum conditions for enzymes to work at with correct scientific language, and show a well-above-average understanding. Lower-attaining pupils struggle a little with the scientific language, but nevertheless show a sound understanding about the effects of different forces. Investigational skills are generally good, and have developed well from Key Stage 3. Pupils plan investigations for their GCSE coursework well. Written work is well presented and the majority of pupils express their knowledge and understanding in writing well – a skill that is taught well within the department. Numeracy skills are good and pupils use scientific calculations, graph work and data handling exercises well. Pupils achieve very well and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well.

100. In the sixth form, standards are broadly average with a significant proportion of students performing at above average levels. Biology students competently explain ecological sampling techniques, whilst physics students solve problems using the formula derived from Millikan's experiment. Chemistry students can explain the properties of amines and students studying psychology can discuss obsessive compulsive disorders. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and for those for whom English is a second language is similar to that of other students.

101. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils during lessons is good at Key Stages 3 and 4, and sixth form students have a mature attitude to their studies and are highly motivated. Pupils listen attentively when required and are willing to answer questions, making valuable contributions to discussion sessions. Most of them remain on task when doing written work, and during practical sessions they listen carefully to instructions and work co-operatively together. Many are willing to take responsibility for various aspects of the work and help in

distribution and collection of apparatus. They pay attention to safety issues such as the wearing of goggles and handle chemicals and apparatus safely. Pupils take a pride in their written work, paying attention to presentation, producing neat handwriting, and accurately drawn graphs, tables of data and diagrams. The well displayed key vocabulary around the department support pupils' efforts in their writing. Most pupils are well motivated, enjoy science and find it interesting.

102. The good standards of teaching seen during the last inspection have been maintained. Teaching is good in eight out of ten lessons and very good in about one in eight lessons. In one in twelve lessons it is satisfactory, and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Eight per cent is satisfactory and none is unsatisfactory. The very good teaching was seen at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Lessons are well organised, teachers are enthusiastic and display a good subject knowledge, delivering lessons with confidence, so that explanations are clear and accurate, which helps pupils' understanding. One of the strengths of the teaching is the good classroom management and positive relationships which are established in most lessons. There is a friendly rapport between teachers and pupils, but good discipline, thus leading to a good learning environment in which pupils and students are keen to learn. Most lessons have a good pace, thereby preventing boredom and are challenging with, thorough questioning to establish understanding. At the beginning of lessons, objectives are clearly stated so that pupils are fully aware of what they are to learn and the reviews at the ends of lessons help consolidate learning. Work is carefully matched to pupils' learning needs in all lessons. In the new Key Stage 3 published scheme which is now being used with Year 7 pupils, there is an additional textbook for the less able and for the other years there are additional worksheets which have been produced in the departmental schemes of work, for both lower- and higher-attaining pupils. Good use is made of support staff, so that students with disabilities are given equal access to the curriculum. In all key stages, there is an emphasis on developing thinking and investigative skills, with the aim of improving practical assessment grades at GCSE and A and AS levels. Homework is set on a regular basis according to school policy and is usually used to reinforce work covered in lessons. The departmental policy to mark and return homework the following lesson is effective because it provides immediate feedback to pupils. Books and folders are marked regularly and annotated with constructive criticism and guidance, and also praise where it is deserved, and encouragement to motivate pupils. Marking includes an indication of National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3 or GCSE grades at Key Stage 4. The schemes of work at Key Stages 3 and 4 have assessment tests which are used regularly and the results are shared with pupils so that they know what level they are working at, or what grade they are likely to achieve. Targets are set in both key stages which encourages pupils to work harder. In the sixth form, past examination questions from modular test papers are used to indicate progress to students.

103. Management of the department is good. There is strong leadership and a good team ethos, with all staff committed to maintaining the good standards of achievement seen in recent years. The efficient monitoring and evaluation of pupil performance, and record keeping are contributory factors to these achievements. Teaching is not systematically observed and evaluated. The deployment of staff with their various specialisms is carefully considered in response to the needs of different groups of pupils. The technical staff provide good support and resources and accommodation are adequate although some lessons need to be taught outside of a laboratory. The newly equipped ICT laboratory is an asset to the department and has already shown itself to be effective in motivating pupils in their investigative work. Use of ICT is planned into work so that pupils develop their computer skills well. The attractive displays of pupils' work around the department help to provide a pleasant working environment conducive to learning.

ART AND DESIGN

104. In end of Key Stage 3 teachers' assessments in 2000, attainment was broadly in line with national expectations. In the GCSE results in 2000, the attainment of pupils was broadly average, but with few pupils obtaining A*-C grades, but all obtaining A*-G grades. In 1998 and 1999 attainment was above the national average. In the three years from 1998 the attainment of girls has been better than that of the boys. The style and demands of the course together with a requirement for research skills and sustained effort over a long period of time could prove a disadvantage to some pupils. A-level results in 2000 were slightly above average, showing an improvement on 1999 examination results.

105. By the time pupils are 14, attainment is broadly as expected, reflecting teachers' assessments. However, a significant proportion of pupils produce work of a high standard. Pupils experience a wide variety of creative experiences and as a consequence the majority of pupils show an interest in their work. By the end of Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils draw and paint well and have an appreciation for the use of colour, line and tone. Some sound three-dimensional work is also created using clay, cardboard and a variety of fabrics. In addition, some pupils demonstrate good research skills when completing homework assignments. Pupils are willing to discuss their work and a significant proportion show pride in their achievements, which is a reflection of the quality of teaching and learning. When attainment is below national expectations it is usually found in Year 9 classes with some disaffected pupils for whom the subject has little attraction. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress.

106. By the time they are 16, attainment is average overall, but with some pupils performing very well. The majority handle drawing instruments competently and show sound understanding of the effects they are trying to create. Research skills are good and are often practised as part of homework. Pupils sculpt using a wide range of materials and are competent in silk painting, drawing, painting and ceramics and a significant number produce work of a high standard. The majority of pupils make sound progress. The highest attainers, pupil with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

107. In the sixth form standards are broadly average, with a few students performing at high levels. Students demonstrate good research skills in planning their assignments and writing their individual critical studies. A wide variety of materials and techniques are available to them and therefore knowledge, skills and understanding of creative processes and the handling of materials is well developed.

108. Throughout the school the majority of pupils are articulate and many can understand and use technical language when discussing their work. Course work provides evidence of reasonably good research skills in the form of written extracts and annotations. Some very impressive personal studies have been created by pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form using computers.

109. The attitude of the pupils is varied but is good overall. The majority of pupils show a good level of interest. A minority find sustained concentration, problem solving, extrapolation and an understanding of aesthetics difficult. These problems are more common with low-achieving boys in Key Stage 3. The attitude of students in the sixth form ranges from good to excellent. Relationships between pupils and towards the teachers are good. Pupils are more than willing to share materials and ideas and are willing to assist in the distribution and collection of equipment in lessons.

110. Teaching is good overall and varies between satisfactory and excellent. It is good in about half of lessons, very good or occasionally excellent in a little less than half of lessons, and never less than satisfactory. The best lessons are challenging and well planned in order to provide all pupils with opportunities to progress and to attain levels of achievement commensurate with their abilities and aspirations. Pupils with special educational needs are well served through sensitive teaching. Classroom organisation and management is very effective in providing good learning opportunities for all levels of ability. The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are very good providing a pleasant atmosphere in the lessons. Regular references are made to the work of significant artists and cultures in order to raise creative and visual appreciation and awareness. All classrooms within the department contain excellent displays relating to the work of significant artists or cultures which provide an opportunity for pupils to learn and appreciate the wider aspects of art and design education. Assessment is particularly effective as an influence on future curriculum development and lesson planning. Assessment includes a certain amount of pupil self-assessment and therefore when questioned the pupils were well aware of teacher expectations and their own strengths and weaknesses. Work is marked at periodic intervals usually linked to the completion of a project.

111. The management of the department is very effective in promoting high standards in lessons and giving clear direction to the art and design teachers. The teachers work as an effective team. The quality of the work of the pupils on display in the art and design department and around the school is very good promoting high standards and interest in the subject and celebrating achievement. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

112. The last inspection drew attention to the fact that the range of activities was restricted by a lack of resources for printing and for the further development of studies of art and design and artists. Levels of consumable stock are sufficient for need but resources for books and other artefacts for research purposes are limited. This situation is still present. Teachers are using their own personal books in lessons. The department should consider the further development of opportunities for pupils to experience computer applications in art and design. In addition the attainment of boys in Key Stage 4, although not of major significance, would benefit from evaluation in order to develop strategies which would allow the GCSE examination grades to be more in line with those achieved by girls. The quality of the furniture in the art and design rooms is poor and in need of replacement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Pupils' attainment at the age of 14, as judged by teachers' assessments in 2000, is above the national average. This was also the case in 1999 where the results were higher. Overall, teachers' assessments indicate that attainment has been rising over the last four years. As observed during the inspection, attainment is in line with the national average, indicating that teachers have been assessing pupils' work too generously. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with low levels of practical skills. They make good progress and achieve in line with their potential. By the time they reach the end of Year 9 they are able to cut, shape and join so that they can make a range of articles in different materials including cloth, wood, plastic and metal. They also have sound knowledge of the essential nutritional value of foods and can cook simple dishes. They have a simple understanding of electronics. They understand the process of design and have been introduced to the basic techniques of drawing so they can communicate their design ideas. The highest-attaining pupils produce articles of good quality and express their ideas clearly. Lower attaining pupils can all make items of an acceptable quality but they find it difficult to communicate the design process and their ideas clearly.

114. The results of the GCSE examination for 2000 were below the national average and pupils did less well than in other subjects. Overall, these results have been improving during the last four years. During the inspection, attainment was judged to be in line with the national average. Pupils have benefited from changes to the curriculum and, as a result, have made good progress in Years 10 and 11. They all have an understanding of the designing and making process. They can specify a design brief and develop and express their ideas in a way that results in good quality finished products. Pupils of all levels of attainment manufacture items to a good standard. The highest-attaining pupils produce very high quality portfolios to underpin their designs and to evaluate their work. Almost all pupils are able to produce appropriate supporting materials to indicate how they have achieved their final design. The lowest-attaining pupils are not able to provide detailed evidence to indicate how they have planned and evaluated their design.

115. A small group of pupils are following a course in GNVQ manufacturing. In 2000 the results from this course were in line with the national average for GCSE. During the inspection the attainment of these pupils was at a similar level. These pupils are making good progress and achieving well.

116. At A-level numbers are small and make comparisons with national averages unreliable. However, in 1999 the results were above the national average for both A-B grades and in terms of students passing the examination. In 2000 the proportion of students gaining the higher grades fell but the proportion obtaining pass grades rose. The work of students in Year 13 indicates standards that are at the national average. The highest-attaining students have well developed design ideas that are elegantly expressed, and are designing and making products of very high quality. Lower-attaining students have well presented portfolios but these do not explore the development of their designs in such depth or communicate their thinking so well. The work of all students seen during the inspection currently matches the requirements of the course.

117. Teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory, and this leads to mainly good learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to use this effectively to ensure that pupils avoid mistakes that are commonly made and thus produce good quality finished items. They have very good classroom control and high expectations. Pupils respond by working effectively in lessons, making good intellectual and creative efforts. For example, in a textiles lesson, in Year 9, pupils worked hard to design and make a tie that would be worn later in the week by the teacher of their choice. While they are at work, pupils are monitored well and they work at a good pace. The teaching methods employed are well chosen and pupils show good levels of interest, concentrate well and develop increasing levels of independence as they move through the school. Homework is used very effectively both to ensure that pupils are well prepared in advance of activities and to reinforce work begun in lessons. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils with special educational needs and their difficulties with learning. These pupils are well supported in lessons and they make good progress. In practical lessons, the differences in pupils' attainment are well catered for. This is not always the case in lessons that involve pupils in writing about the subject. On these occasions, the differences in pupils' attainment are allowed to slow the pace of lessons so that the higher-attaining pupils waste time and are not sufficiently challenged. Marking is variable in quality. At its best it is encouraging and provides a commentary that shows pupils how to improve their work. This is not, however, the practice of most teachers, which has an impact on attainment.

118. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is broad and enables pupils to develop a wide range of skills in different materials. In Years 10 and 11, pupils can opt for a range of courses that lead to the award of a full or short-course GCSE. The scope of this programme places additional demands on teachers in terms of planning and marking at a range of levels and

thus has some negative impact on overall attainment. The processes the department uses for assessment of pupils' National Curriculum levels at age 14 are not accurate enough and this leads to some pupils being awarded higher levels than are warranted. Although some aspects of leadership are good, overall, leadership and management are only satisfactory, because there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and its impact on pupils' attainment. Data is not used rigorously enough to predict results and analyse the effects of teaching. Resources for learning and the quality of the rooms and workshops are very good and this has positive impact on pupils' learning.

119. Since the last inspection there have been changes to the curriculum and to the teaching scheme as well as improvements in the quality of resources. These are gradually having a positive impact on standards, which are rising over time.

GEOGRAPHY

120. By the age of 14 attainment, as judged by teachers' National Curriculum assessments, matches the national average. At GCSE in 2000 results were broadly average and better than in 1999, although they were lower than at the last inspection. Results were affected by pupils with low prior attainment being entered for the examination and by some pupils who did not complete course work and were therefore not entered for the examination. A Certificate of Attainment in Travel and Tourism has been introduced in 2001, to provide an alternative course for some lower attaining pupils. At A-level, standards have fluctuated over recent years, but were broadly average in 2000.

121. Inspection evidence shows that attainment is in line with expectations by the time pupils are 14. Pupils have a sound understanding of the factors associated with species of animals becoming extinct, and the effects of human use of resources and efforts at conservation. Map reading skills are satisfactory overall, and higher-attaining pupils extract information about land features from maps with a high degree of competence. Overall, progress by all pupils is satisfactory.

122. By the age of 16 attainment is average. Most pupils, for example, have a sound understanding of how material eroded from one part of a coast can be deposited on another part of coast and thus protect it from erosion. The higher-attaining pupils show a good understanding of the decisions that have to be made locally to protect one area, and the impact that will have on the second coastal area. At AS and A-level, attainment and progress are satisfactory because it is broadly in line with the prior attainment of the students who meet the requirements of the examination board. The progress made by most pupils is good, although lower-attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress.

123. Teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. It is good in the sixth form and in Years 10 and 11; it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Overall, teaching is good in nearly a half of lessons and satisfactory in the rest. The great strength of the department is that teachers have good subject knowledge and manage and explain their materials well so that pupils, in their turn, have a good knowledge of their subject. The organisation of fieldwork is good so that basic skills learned on the school grounds in microclimatic research, and at Skipton and York before the age of fourteen underpin good GCSE and A-level course work.

124. Other key skills are not so well considered. There is some good practice in the development and use of literacy and numeracy, but this is not guided by a coherent policy or worked into the schemes of work. The demands of GCSE and A-level examinations mean that the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills are better at these stages. ICT is used well, both in class work and also in homework, although there is insufficient access to ICT facilities to make the most out of this aspect of the department's work. Consequently, though the

department now has a satellite weather station it is not in use and there is insufficient geography software in school to support a full ICT programme. The practice of giving useful web sites to support homework is good.

125. Planning of lessons is sound, but lack of learning objectives and identified assessment opportunities in schemes of work, particularly for younger pupils, means that over time the planned sequence of work is not secure. Nevertheless, individual lessons are well planned. Materials are well prepared in advance and freely available so that pupils' learning can flow smoothly, leading to generally positive attitudes by pupils. There is however, much sharing of textbooks, mostly, but not only in lessons for younger pupils, and this slows progress for some.

126. Teaching methods are sound overall, although there is a tendency for some teachers to talk for too long at the beginning of lessons so that some pupils lose interest. Some teachers talk whilst the pupils are reading or writing and disrupt the quiet times when pupils are engrossed in their learning. Teachers make good use of visual resources, in particular overhead projectors and to a lesser extent, video material. The use of video provided a strong visual stimulation for pupils studying tourism, for example.

127. There is insufficient planned opportunity for pupils to find out for themselves and to develop skills of independent learning at all stages, but noticeably at Key Stage 3. Some tasks here are unchallenging so that pupils have insufficient opportunity to answer questions or to solve problems. There is, too, the tendency to move the whole class along at the same pace so that the quicker learners are held back. On occasion, dictation of notes in the sixth form occupies too much time and does not help students think for themselves. Where open-ended tasks are provided, then pupils work successfully at their own level and pace.

128. There is generous support for all examination candidates, both in terms of additional revision sessions and in well-organised revision booklets, through which experienced teachers pour out the benefit of their examinations experience. The style of teaching and learning benefits those with high prior attainment at GCSE. It produces satisfactory attainment and progress at A-level.

129. Marking is sound overall, and in the examination courses is thorough, giving clear guidance to pupils to improve their work. Comments in the lower school offer praise but do not always show how to improve and marking is sometimes light.

130. The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory overall. Discussion and sharing of good practice is a regular feature of departmental meetings. However, teaching is not observed and evaluated on a systematic basis. There are insufficient classrooms for teaching geography and some teaching takes place at a distance from the department and in unsuitable rooms. The head of department has no administrative base in the faculty area and frequently teaches away from his team. Resources for younger pupils are unsatisfactory because there are insufficient books and paper-backed books are beginning to disintegrate. Examination and assessment information are readily available to the department, but there is no thorough analysis of it to identify areas for development or to set targets for pupils.

131. The department plays a very lively part in the cultural development of its pupils. An energetic geography club meets weekly and has recently visited Cadbury's Chocolate World, and Paris. There are well-developed plans to spend a residential week at the Earth Sciences Centre at Doncaster. Another member of staff organises cooperation with schools in France, Germany Greece and Italy through the Comenius organisation and uses video conferencing to facilitate promising multi-cultural exchanges with a school in North Carolina, in the USA.

HISTORY

132. In the National Curriculum teachers' assessments in 2000, attainment of pupils exceeded expectations, and this is confirmed by inspection evidence. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, standards were also above average and have remained so over the last three years. GCE A-level results in 2000 were in line with the national average, as is the work of students currently in Year 13.

133. Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 3 in relation to their attainment on entry to the school which is broadly in line with standards expected for pupils of their age. They also achieve well at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form in comparison with the standards they reached at the beginning of Key Stage 4, and in the GCSE examinations respectively. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls but higher-attaining pupils tend to make better progress than average and lower attaining pupils, especially at Key Stage 4.

134. At Key Stage 3 pupils acquire good historical knowledge, understanding and skills which they use increasingly effectively in their work. Most, and especially higher attaining pupils, demonstrate a good grasp of key issues and an ability to make links in analysing evidence, in forming judgements, and in providing explanations. They learn to carry out detailed research and produce project work of very high quality. Their work is better because their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are well developed. By the time they reach Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils especially, have very good knowledge and understanding which they use to good effect in their learning. Historical skills of investigation, interpretation, empathy and the ability to think chronologically develop well. Pupils' judgements of the reliability of sources are good and often perceptive GCSE course work is well structured and detailed. In the case of higher-attaining pupils answers are full and well balanced. The written work of average and lower-attaining pupils is usually factually accurate, but answers are often less analytical and more descriptive.

135. Sixth form students have sound knowledge and understanding. Their essays are well structured but many are too brief, with answers to questions not being full enough. Higher-attaining students produce more detail but this is often descriptive rather than analytical. Work is factually accurate and reflects good understanding, but there are weaknesses in sustaining a clear focus on the question, clear and supported explanation, discussion and convincing argument. Many students tend to lack confidence as independent learners. Their contributions in lessons are often very brief although their knowledge and understanding of the topic being studied is good.

136. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their learning needs are well known and met by clear teaching and well-adapted materials. They are also helped to learn by the good learning ethos in lessons and by the support of their peers. The support of classroom assistants is very effective in helping them to make good progress to meet specific targets, for example those on their individual education plans, and to improve their literacy skills.

137. Pupils' good levels of motivation and interest together with the good relationships and behaviour in lessons, are major factors in promoting achievement. Achievement is also very strongly promoted by the good quality of the teaching.

138. Pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding of the topics being studied as a result of the skilful sharing of the teachers' good subject knowledge. Their interest is sustained and their knowledge enriched in many lessons by good narrative, and their understanding is deepened by clear explanation. For example, pupils in a Year 8 lesson were helped to grasp the complexities of the causes of the English Civil War by the teacher's very clear presentation and explanation. Detailed planning and clear learning objectives ensures a clear focus in all lessons.

139. Teaching is good overall. In nearly half of lessons it is very good and in other is it mostly good and never less than satisfactory. Teaching is very effective in promoting historical skills and in enabling pupils to work accurately as historians. Pupils' learning is very well consolidated and reinforced by good guidance, structures and systems for revision. In all lessons a good pace of learning is sustained through a variety of well-planned and timed activities. There is however a tendency in many for learning to be over directed by the teacher, with too few opportunities for pupils to learn through discussion and to take the lead in their learning. This is sometimes a feature of sixth form teaching where exposition is of a high quality but there is too tight a control of learning by the teacher. This results in learning of a higher order being impeded by insufficient opportunities for students to initiate, compare historical view points and make a lively contribution to, discussion, argument and the proposal of hypotheses.

140. In most lessons pupils' learning is very well supported by the very good challenge and match of the work to their learning requirements and by effective individual guidance. For instance, pupils of all levels of attainment in a Year 10 lesson made very good progress in learning about Hitler's consolidation of power as a result of probing questioning which challenged them to develop their ideas, and good individual guidance which helped them to understand difficult complex concepts. However, in some mixed ability classes where the spread of attainment is very wide, work is less well matched to the learning requirements of all pupils and as a consequence the learning of some is slower. This was evident, for instance, in a Year 8 lesson on the execution of Charles I, where a minority of lower attaining pupils became restless and inattentive because they found the work too difficult, whilst the rest of the class worked hard and made good progress.

141. Pupils' progress is monitored effectively through the regular and thorough marking of their work which includes clear guidance for improvement. Pupils' research skills are supported very well through project work and homework tasks, which are carefully planned as an integral part of the learning.

142. Standards and the quality of work in history benefit from the very good leadership and management of the head of department who provides vision and very clear direction. The department is close knit, very hard working and strongly committed to continued improvement. Teachers are well supported and procedures for the review and development of work are systematic and thorough. Assessment of pupils' progress is rigorous and

outcomes are used very effectively in the on-going review of achievement and provision. Procedures for the monitoring of the quality of teaching are less well developed.

143. Pupils' learning benefits from a well planned and wide ranging curriculum which is kept under continuous review in terms of its effectiveness in supporting learning, and which is significantly enriched by opportunities for pupils to visit sites of enquiry. Pupils' study of local history benefits greatly from the guidance of a local historian in residence. Resources are well chosen and used very effectively to promote learning, but the restricted access to computers limits the use of ICT. The main history rooms provide a stimulating environment for the study of history, but the siting of some rooms in different parts of the school places considerable stress on the department especially in the effective use of resources. This problem was also identified at the time of the last inspection. In other respects however, good progress has been made since the last inspection especially in sustaining high standards of attainment and provision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144. In 2000, the National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicated standards at the national average, with good improvement since the last inspection, particularly over the last two years. The assessments accurately reflect pupils' achievements in communicating and handling information, modelling, measurement and control and the applications and effects of ICT in society. Current standards in Year 9 work are in line with the national average, due to new equipment and good, specialist teaching. However, limited lesson time restricts the pace of progress over time of the majority of pupils.

145. Pupils' GCSE results in 2000 at the end of Year 11 were well above the national average for all comprehensive schools and the school average. Results in full and short GCSE courses show an upward trend since the last inspection. All GNVQ part one pupils completed the ICT course successfully, which was well above the national average. In Year 11 ICT GNVQ, current pupils attain in line with national expectations, and most pupils on all courses extend their work on home computers or at lunchtimes in the popular school club. Standards for the GCSE short course and the National Skills Profile reflected pupils' attainment levels on entering the course. Most pupils make good progress over time and many make very good progress.

146. In the sixth form, computer studies is an increasingly popular A-level subject, and attainment in the Year 12 and 13 lessons seen is in line with national expectations. Module results to date are promising. All Year 12 pupils have the opportunity to obtain key skills qualifications in ICT through their A-level General Studies course, which is supported by additional workshop lessons, and achievement seen is satisfactory, although there are as yet no national standards. Pupils completing the Advanced level GNVQ course obtained a 100 per cent pass rate, with one distinction and five merits. This is well above average. On the new AVCE (advanced vocational certificate of education) single/double award course, pupils are making good progress in lessons.

147. The majority of pupils become competent users of a variety of software packages. In Years 7 and 8 lessons, several software applications are used, including spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing and control. In a very good Year 9 lesson pupils worked in groups to produce attractive *Power Point* slides for a theme park, and developed very good team-working skills. Year 10 pupils explored the many uses of sensors to control environmental conditions. In a very good GCSE lesson, Year 11 pupils confidently entered and refined text in their coursework projects, and designed good database systems for businesses. Most pupils modify their work in the light of others' opinions.

148. Although statutory requirements for ICT are not yet fully met in several curriculum subjects other than specific ICT in Years 10 and 11, most subjects plan ways of using ICT to improve learning, particularly GNVQ business studies. In mathematics, design and technology, and science computer suites are well used. In science lessons data-logging equipment is used effectively by pupils to measure acceleration due to force with the use of light gates. In a good Year 8 technology lesson pupils used *Pro Desktop* to design plastic shapes and CD card holders, and cut out shapes using a computer linked to a milling machine. Music and art and design are making increasingly good use of new software. Access to computers during lessons is difficult for some subjects such as science and geography. Major improvements to rooms and equipment are due to be completed shortly, so that pupils can improve their competence. All teaching staff have had recent ICT training. During the inspection some lessons using computers were seen in business studies (GNVQ), mathematics and technology, art and design and the RARE learning support programme. Unfortunately, the well-equipped language laboratory was out of action because of technical problems. In business studies coursework, GCSE pupils produce well-presented graphs of their customer surveys. In several subject lessons, pupils make good use of the internet for research. Most pupils word-process well, particularly in English for essays, and explore careers possibilities using KUDOS, which analyses their strengths and weaknesses. The specific ICT lessons in Years 7 to 11 consolidate pupils' basic ICT skills and provide a sound basis for applying them in other subjects. Pupils use equipment safely. The majority of students now demonstrate good achievement in ICT lessons.

149. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good in all years because work generally matches their ability and tasks are practical. Pupils concentrate well on their tasks, cooperate very well with each other and their teachers, and behave sensibly. They are aware of the progress they make, in all years, due to the very good assessment systems used by teachers, who help pupils make good progress in developing good independent study skills. This is helped in Years 7 to 9 by pupils' keeping a regular diary to assess their own progress. In the new key skills course in Year 12, pupils work at their own pace to develop skills of researching university choices. Many pupils make good use of the supervised computer club, at lunchtimes and before and after school, to research through the improved internet connections. Most pupils now have home computers.

150. Overall, teaching observed in lessons was very good in all years. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils, and encourage positive attitudes to learning through their own enthusiasm. Teachers plan lessons well, set clear objectives, and review previous work. Their very good subject knowledge helps them explain topics clearly. Teachers support individual pupils very effectively, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, who are frequently given extra tasks. Teachers question pupils skilfully to make sure they understand software packages, and in the lessons encourage pupils to explore software possibilities. In a good mathematics lesson in Year 7, for example, the teacher helped pupils to extend spread-sheets learned in specific ICT lessons to add fractions and decimals, and to explore number bonds. In an excellent art and design lesson, Year 10 pupils were helped to gain a greater awareness of spatial relationships when they were challenged to import computer-generated drawings into text files. The pace of learning for the majority of pupils in lessons seen is good but pupils' progress in the large Year 7, 8 and 9 classes is lessened because of gaps between lessons. Students' learning on the recently-introduced A-level computer studies course is rapid, helped by the teacher's very good subject knowledge and challenging tasks for students. In all lessons, homework is set when required to plan class-work tasks or research ideas, but sometimes opportunities to research topical issues in ICT are missed.

151. Teachers assess and monitor students' attainment and progress very effectively. In GCSE and GNVQ classes in Years 10-13, assessment methods meet external requirements

very well. Teachers encourage pupils to take more responsibility for assessing their own ICT progress in specific ICT lessons, but pupils' tracking of their ICT progress in other subjects is limited. In Years 7, 8 and 9, courses are well structured to meet National Curriculum programmes of study, with specialist teachers well deployed,

152. Overall improvement of ICT since the last inspection is very good, with improved teaching and the recent installation of extensive new equipment with internet access. The number of computers available to pupils overall is well above average. This had led to greatly improved standards in GCSE and GNVQ examinations. The department is very well managed by an experienced teacher, who maintains a positive, co-operative ethos with the support of a good systems manager, technician, and committed team of teachers. Monitoring of the work of pupils is extremely good, based on computerised data, which is regularly updated. Future strategic plans are both realistic and well costed. Accommodation overall is good, although access to ICT rooms for other curriculum subjects during lesson time is still difficult because of discrete ICT and GNVQ business studies use. A good selection of software is available, and there are good links with industry. The department is a training centre for the community. With the further planned upgrading, the ICT department is very well placed to support further improvements in the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

153. Half of the pupils in each year group study French throughout the school. Until recently half of each year group studied German. Spanish has recently been introduced as an alternative first modern language. In Years 7 and 8, equal numbers of pupils learn German and Spanish. A small number of pupils study Spanish to GCSE level.

Attainment in each language

French

154. In 2000, pupils' attainment in French at the age of 14, as judged by teachers' assessments, was below the national average. Work seen in pupils' books and in lessons observed during the inspection indicate that standards remain below average. This is largely because the teaching scheme is insufficiently detailed. It is written at two levels to take account of pupils' attainment. However, it is presented only in outline and relies too much on individual teachers' interpretation of how to use materials in the department's textbooks. It does not chart how pupils will develop in terms of the use of an increasing complexity of the language to appropriate National Curriculum levels. Thus, it does not ensure that enough pupils reach Level 4. Nor does it allow access to Level 5 by teaching pupils to use a range of tenses effectively. Higher-attaining pupils have a thorough grasp of the structures and grammar that have been taught. Average and lower-attaining pupils have learned new vocabulary but continue to use it at a basic level. Overall, pupils are given too few opportunities for extended writing.

155. In 2000, GCSE results were below average and pupils' performance in the speaking part of the examination was particularly weak. In previous years, pupils' grades in French were around the national average. Pupils' results are significantly lower in French than in their other subjects. Boys' results were lower than those of girls, but by less than the national difference. Teachers' estimates of grades for pupils in the present Year 11 show some improvement on the previous year, but overall they remain below average. This was borne out during the inspection. Higher attaining pupils have a very good grasp of the grammar and vocabulary needed for higher grades, but the work of average-attaining pupils has weaknesses and shows a lack of systematic teaching to address the demands of the examination. In addition, pupils have insufficient materials from which to revise thoroughly for it. By contrast, the group of lowest attaining pupils has been well prepared by their teacher and, although achieving below average, is achieving at a higher level than might be expected, given their prior attainment.

156. In 2000 a small group of students were entered for A-level. Their results were broadly in line with their prior attainment. In the present Year 13 the one student who is studying French is reaching high levels of attainment in all areas of work. This is due to a combination of the student's excellent attitude to work and good teaching.

German

157. In 2000, attainment was below average for pupils at age 14, and work seen during the inspection shows that this is still the case. The reasons for this are allied to the teaching scheme in the same way as detailed above for French. In many cases, as in French, pupils study a range of topics, but their progress in terms of the levels of the National Curriculum is limited. In addition, pupils of all levels of attainment are given too few opportunities to practise extended writing. In the current Year 9, they do not have access to Level 5. The department has realised this and an amended teaching scheme has been introduced in Year 8 which ensures that past and future tenses are covered early enough.

158. In recent years, pupils' attainment in the GCSE examination has been around the national average. Pupils' results dipped significantly in 2000 to below the national average. They were lower than in other subjects. Boys' results were lower than girls' by more than the national difference. Teachers' estimates of pupils' grades, and their work seen during the inspection show that standards in the present Year 11 are also below average. Overall, standards are lower in German than in French. This is because the pupils in the half of the year group which studies German generally began with lower levels of attainment. Few pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the grammar and vocabulary needed to gain higher grades in the examination and many have less positive attitudes to learning. As in French, pupils have no systematically organised materials from which to revise for the examination.

Spanish

159. Attainment in Spanish in Years 7 and 8 is broadly similar to that in French and German. Here, too, there are inadequacies in the teaching scheme, which limit pupils' progress.

160. Spanish is offered as a second foreign language at GCSE level. Only 4 pupils have chosen to follow the course. Their attainment is broadly in line with what would be expected given their levels of attainment in their first language and the fact that they have studied Spanish for a shorter time.

All languages

161. Teaching in modern languages is satisfactory overall. In about one third of lessons teaching is good, and in about a quarter it is very good. Teaching is unsatisfactory in about one in ten lessons. Teaching is better for Years 7 to 9 than for older pupils. There is more very good teaching in French than in German, and it is with the highest and lowest attaining groups rather than with average-attaining pupils.

162. All teachers have a good command of the languages they teach, providing a good model for pupils to imitate and resulting in good accents for many pupils. In some lessons, the foreign language is not used sufficiently by teachers and so important opportunities for pupils to hear the language are missed. In all lessons pupils are given insufficient encouragement to use the language themselves. In most lessons teachers provide appropriate challenge for pupils and they respond well to this. Teachers appreciate the difficulties that pupils with special educational needs have. In the main, these pupils make progress in line with others in their class. In the best lessons with lower attaining pupils, the level of challenge was high but the support given by the teacher encouraged pupils to give of their best. Where teaching with these groups was less successful, too much was expected of pupils and they were given too little guidance and support. Learning was much less successful as a result. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, it was, at times, unchallenging and the teacher's expectations were not high enough.

163. In general, the teaching methods used are good and ensure that pupils play a full part, enjoy the lesson and make good gains in learning. In some lessons where teaching and learning are less successful, there is an over-reliance on English and sometimes pupils spend too long copying when the objective of the lesson is to improve their speaking. Pupils' behaviour and teachers' classroom management are mostly good. Where teaching was unsatisfactory the teacher did not insist on high enough standards of behaviour. Time and resources are usually used well, but in some lessons the pace is rather slow and pupils begin to lose interest. Some teachers produce very good resources to improve pupils' learning but at present there is no system to ensure that these are shared effectively across the department. Pupils' work is marked regularly and they understand the mark scheme well. Some teachers give good advice to pupils on how to improve their work, but this practice is not sufficiently widespread. Homework is used well to extend and practise the work begun in lessons.

164. Management of the department is unsatisfactory. Whilst all teachers in the department work hard, there is no shared view on how best to improve pupils' levels of attainment. The planning of individual lessons is almost always sound, but, as explained above, the overall planning of the curriculum has important shortcomings. There is at present no monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work, and thus an important opportunity to share good practice and give support where there are weaknesses is missed. The department is not using data on pupils' attainment to set targets and to monitor the effects of teaching. Because of problems with the software, the new language laboratory is not yet used to its potential to raise pupils' attainment.

165. There has been very limited improvement in the work of the department since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have fallen. Although some good teaching of speaking was observed during the inspection, this skill is not taught equally successfully by all teachers and pupils generally gained their lowest marks in the GCSE speaking paper in both French and German. The department is beginning to build up more materials for pupils to practise extended reading, but further development is needed. The arrangements for pupils to study a second foreign language are under review. They were said to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, and this is still the case.

MUSIC

166. The most recent end of Key Stage 3 assessments show that attainment is a little above the national average. Standards gained in the GCSE examinations have been consistently much higher than the national average in recent years. A-level results were broadly average. Inspection evidence matches National Curriculum and public examination results.

167. By the age of 14, pupils have a secure knowledge of basic music literacy, and this is reinforced by the excellent system of addressing new key specialist words in every lesson, as part of the departmental literacy policy. Pupils compose very successfully, using a wide variety of scales and keys. They are able to add a range of major and minor chords to melodies they have created. Both traditional and graphic notation is used accurately for composition. Pupils perform well and make good progress on keyboards because from the outset they are expected to use the correct fingering: this ensures fluent performances as they become more advanced. The department has very carefully thought through strategies for dealing with pupils of varying abilities. As a result, most pupils can use both right and left hands together in a highly coordinated way when using keyboards. More able pupils cope well with quite complicated rhythms in the performances they present. The quality of singing is good, and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils have a pleasant, round tone, and they can sing in two, and often three parts, with confidence and accuracy. Close attention to vocal technique maintains a good quality of singing.

168. By the time pupils are 16, their attainment is well above average. Standards of practical performance in Years 10 and 11 are good. Standards of sight-reading and score reading are of a very high order. Compositions are most imaginative: advanced harmonic techniques are used, and the styles used are always appropriate to the instruments or voices for which they are written. Score analysis is accurate. Pupils have a very secure knowledge of historic and stylistic development, and they make perceptive comments about the music they listen to, ranging from medieval to Twentieth Century music.

169. The two students in Year 12 and the one student in Year 13 have advanced standards of practical performance. Standards of aural perception and harmony writing are very good. Compositions display considerable individual and imaginative ideas. All students have a thorough grounding in stylistic analysis and display considerable skill when commenting upon music they have heard.

170. The quality of teaching is very good. In three-quarters of lessons teaching is very good; in one in eight lessons it is good and in the other eighth, in the sixth form, it is excellent. As a result, the quality of learning is good, and very good in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject. They also have a thorough knowledge of the ability and potential of each pupil, and set carefully prepared tasks in practical work. Teaching methods used are good. Programmes of study have been developed over a number of years to ensure that pupils systematically acquire the skills to compose, perform and appraise music. Teachers' expectations are high and challenging tasks, linked to the National Curriculum or examination syllabus are built into every lesson, and give clear targets to be achieved. In one lesson observed, there were twelve different activities taking place, all at different levels, which were enabling talented pupils, those with special needs pupils, and all levels in between, to make significant progress. Individual target setting contributes to the very good progress made by examination pupils. Performances of work produced in lessons are expected as an on-going activity through all practical work: this keeps pupils focused, as they might be chosen to perform. Teachers have a high expectation of codes of conduct in the music suite. They often have to work hard, though successfully, to contain a few

potentially disruptive boys in some classes. Assessment procedures are very good overall and excellent in the sixth form. Pupils know exactly what levels they are working towards in each lesson and there is a systematic evaluation of whether targets are being achieved. Teaching on examination courses is of a high quality and is always challenging. The resource materials, produced by the department for developing pupils' music skills and awareness across all key stages, are exemplary.

171. Pupils' attitudes are never less than good and by the sixth form they are excellent, and this is also reflected in the commitment to extra-curriculum activities. At Key Stage 3, pupils enjoy singing and working on the keyboards. A few of the less able pupils find the long lessons rather difficult to sustain concentration, though teachers try to address this problem by including the correct amount of varied activity in each lesson. Key Stage 4 pupils are totally committed to their studies, and are determined to do well. For example, one on her own initiative prepared, organised and took an extra-curriculum music activity once a week for younger pupils with special needs. The students in the sixth form demonstrate a remarkable maturity and poise in the approach they take to their music studies.

172. There have been improvements to the structure of the music suite since the last inspection. There are now suitable practice rooms for ensemble work. The department has identified ICT for development: further minor structural alterations to the area, in order to create a small music technology room, would help towards facilitating this plan.

173. The department has had staffing problems for an extended period, not least during the week of inspection. The department is very well managed and the deputy director of music is to be congratulated on keeping everything going, and to maintaining high standards. Permanent and visiting instrumental and vocal teachers, work very hard together to produce extra-curriculum activities of high quality, which extend the horizons of the many very fine young musicians in the school. The quality of activities observed during the inspection was of a high standard by any comparison. String players rehearsing a Haydn quartet, the junior and senior choirs beautifully and energetically singing ethnic songs in their native language, including Serbian, the jazz band vamping "Ain't Misbehaving" with a great sense of style, and the Woodwind Ensemble, Kinder Band and Brass Consort all rehearsing and performing with a fine sense of ensemble, illustrate the reason why the music department is held in high esteem in the school and the community. Means of further developing links with contributory schools could be explored to extend instrumental tuition. The present system restricts numbers opting for music in Year 10, and this subsequently influences the numbers opting in the sixth form.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

174. The school does not follow a GCSE examination course in physical education and attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 for those following the core course, is average when compared with the nationally expected standards. Numbers taking the A-level course fluctuate but, in 2000, results were below the national average.

175. By the age of 14, pupils have a good understanding of the safety aspects associated with the various pieces of equipment used in the subject. They fully understand the reasons for a warm up, are able to carry out their own warm up and lead a warm up session for others. In gymnastics they can plan and carry out sequences of movements, including balance and flight and also understand the changing dynamics when involving a partner. They have a sound range of ball-control skills that they use in a range of small efficient games. Those seen during the inspection included hockey, netball, soccer and volleyball. By the age of 16, the pupils are able to play games using greater technical skill and with greater tactical awareness. They are also learning to transfer skills to new activities, such as

badminton, table tennis and aerobics, which they may continue to use as recreational activities when they leave school. During both key stages, pupils plan activities and also evaluate the performance of their peers, they do this with increasing confidence. Some pupils plan a fitness training programme and understand how their improved fitness can be measured accurately by speed and weights used. Their understanding of using a measurement of pulse rate recovery, as a fitness indicator is weaker, and not all understand the different effect on cardio-vascular systems and strength of different fitness exercises and different pieces of fitness equipment. Little advanced level work was seen during the time of the inspection but scrutiny of work indicates standards are broadly average.

176. Levels of attainment have improved since the last inspection when they were reported as 'some being satisfactory and some unsatisfactory'. They are now in line with national expectations and, especially at Key Stage 3, there are indications that they are continuing to rise. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys or of different groups of pupils. The positive attitudes of the pupils to the subject aid learning, the pupils come ready to participate, as seen even in the inclement weather of the inspection week. The good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff give a secure environment in which new skills can be attempted, and skills previously learnt can be consolidated. This good relationship was seen in a gymnastics lesson when physically handicapped pupils were fully involved and spontaneous applause followed their demonstration of how they had achieved the task set.

177. The teaching of physical education is good overall, with three-quarters of the lessons seen being good and with no unsatisfactory teaching being seen. There is no significant difference in the key stages. Strengths in teaching are the structured planning to allow a balance of time between introducing a new activity and time to practice it, the use of the correct technical terminology and the use of pupils in demonstrations as well as in peer coaching and evaluation. Weaker aspects in teaching are the inconsistent involvement of those not participating; the development of the speaking skills of pupils; a shortage of ideas to enables weaker pupils to raise their attainment levels; and, at times, a slow start to the lesson when a high proportion of it is spent changing.

178. The physical education curriculum provided fulfils the requirements of the national curriculum requirements, although it is heavily biased towards games. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good with activities on offer at lunchtimes and after school. These activities are available for all pupils, so that those of all abilities can develop their skill further. The school also has a number of teams so that pupils' showing a higher level of skill can experience competitive game situations. Outdoor activities, trips and holidays are available for the pupils and these broaden the experience of the pupils. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is popular within the school, with currently over fifty pupils taking part, eight of whom are taking their Gold Award. The department takes account of the literacy needs of pupils by encouraging the correct use of technical terminology, but discussions within lessons are not organised well enough to ensure there is full involvement by all pupils. Some pupils have used ICT in producing a *Power Point* presentation but such uses of ICT are not identified in the schemes of work, so there is no guarantee that all will have the same experience.

179. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory; roles and responsibilities are not clear. There is little monitoring and evaluation of teaching. The department is piloting a new assessment scheme that incorporates the new national curriculum levels for physical education. At present there are no formal means to feedback the results of assessments to pupils so that they know what standards they achieve, or what they need to do to improve. Assessment information is not consistently passed on to new staff, which limits the effectiveness of lesson planning, although individual teachers use their own assessments to plan future lessons.

180. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Attainment and teaching have improved, planning is better and there are more opportunities for pupils' to work independently. However, there has been insufficient development in the management of the subject and the use of assessment information.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

181. A small group of pupils took the full GCSE examinations in 1999 and 2000. Results in both years were below the national average. In both 1999 and 2000 the school entered pupils for the GCSE short course for which are no national comparisons. In both years, results met or exceeded the schools expectations. Six pupils took A-level religious studies examinations in 2000 and their attainment was below average.

182. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average but, by the time pupils are 14, their attainment is average in relation to the levels expected. Their knowledge and understanding of Christianity is sound. They know the main beliefs associated with Christianity and can identify the main events in the life of Jesus correctly. However, their understanding of what it means to be a Christian is below that expected. Their knowledge and understanding of Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism is average but they are apt to confuse the teachings of one religion with another from time to time. Pupils' skills of investigation and interpretation are satisfactory. They read one text and draw out the main points included in it but they have difficulty in successfully analysing two or more pieces of information and drawing conclusions from them.

183. By the time pupils are 16 attainment is broadly average. The attainment of those on the GCSE full course is above average and of pupils on the short course is average. A significantly large proportion of pupils are withdrawn by their parents from religious education to take other subjects.

184. Only three students take A-level religious studies and their attainment varies from above average to well below average. Those above average have very good analytical and interpretative skills.

185. Standards at Key Stages 3 and 4 have not changed since the last inspection; there were no A-level courses at that time.

186. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good. They are keen to learn and work well together. They respect one another's views and, although sometimes chatty, work at a good pace. Their written work is mostly tidy and well presented.

187. Teaching is good overall and almost half is very good. Teachers have good questioning skills and pupils' knowledge and understanding benefits from the level of discussion that takes place in lessons, and they make good, steady progress across Years 7 to 11. Teachers explain and demonstrate well to enable pupils to understand what they are learning and to see its relevance to every-day life. A very good example of this was

with a Year 7 group where pupils used masks and 'spoke' for the animals which are in danger of extinction. This gave pupils real insight into the seriousness of what is happening in the natural world. The teaching of basic skills is good and teachers emphasise unfamiliar words so that pupils can use religious terminology meaningfully. Good management of pupils means that little time is lost and progress is maintained at a steady rate. There is a sense of fun in learning and so pupils are keen to respond and extend their knowledge and develop their skills. In a small number of lessons teachers are tentative in their use of artefacts, with the result that the significance of these is lost on pupils. On occasions, teachers do not insist on complete attention to what is being said and consequently some pupils waste time because tasks are unclear. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress because tasks are adapted and explained so that they understand what is required and are able to complete tasks successfully.

188. Since the last inspection the department has made good progress. Time allocation at Key Stage 4 is now adequate and there are two A-level groups taking religious studies. However, other students do not follow a course in religious education, and this is a statutory omission. Work for special educational needs pupils is now carefully prepared, and is a strong feature of the department. The accommodation for religious education remains poor and restricts opportunities to use activities that require some extra space, but this problem will be remedied when new classrooms become available soon. The unsatisfactory structure of the timetable in Years 10 and 11 enables parents to withdraw pupils to do other GCSE courses. This means that whilst attainment has risen from below average in Year 7 to average at the end of Year 9, attainment overall in GCSE examinations remains below average due to the reduced number of pupils that end up taking the course. The new head of department has been in place since January and is already making a significant difference to standards in Years 7 to 9 by reviewing what is being taught and introducing a more practical approach to teaching.

DRAMA

189. The high standards in drama, reported in the last inspection, have been sustained. It still figures as a popular subject at GCSE and A-level, with attainment above the national averages in both examinations. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve very well in the subject, gaining a great deal of confidence in speaking and listening.

190. At Key Stage 3 standards are above expectations. Pupils learn well about the basic skills of self-discipline and team-work, and the subject makes a valuable contribution to their social and personal development. Most pupils quickly learn how to listen, how to use space and how to use their voice and bodies in drama. They are particularly attentive at observing others at work and their comments about performances are both sensitive and helpful.

191. Pupils opting for drama in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form show a good commitment to the subject and often rehearse in their own time. They are prepared to take risks in their learning in order to explore a variety of new techniques. They do this because of the very secure learning climate established in the drama studios by the very knowledgeable teachers.

192. In Key Stage 4, standards are above average. Pupils improvise well and switch roles without breaking the continuity of a performance. They think well 'on their feet', reinterpret fresh situations, and show a good awareness of their audience and the other actors. Pupils make big improvements both in lessons and over the duration of the course. The teaching forces them to think for themselves and places high demands on them to be imaginative in what they plan, and to look beyond the obvious response.

193. There is a very professional approach to drama in the sixth form. Some of the work is outstanding and overall standards are very high. Students are very focused in their performances, use the space very well and help each other with good observations and suggestions. This was seen in the following exchange in a lesson: *"It was better as a compilation of monologues than isolated acts...we reacted to each other- it added to the realism...I can still feel the adrenaline flowing."* To which the teacher asked: *"How do we recreate the intensity time after time?"* Students show a determination to do their best, and very sympathetic yet demanding teaching gives them the support to achieve high standards in good accommodation and with good facilities.

194. Overall, teaching is good and often very good. Teachers set challenging tasks, encouraging a high level of involvement and effort from pupils. The subject is well managed, although there is no systematic observation and evaluation of teaching.

DANCE

195. Pupils, mainly girls, opt for dance in Key Stage 4 but there is no course for them in Key Stage 3. Results at GCSE in 2000 were above the national average and this represents good achievement. The small number of entrants at A-level were also successful.

196. The present Key Stage 4 pupils show a conscientious approach to the subject and work well in groups. The teacher is a good practitioner and demonstrates key points with clarity. She helps the pupils to make good progress in lessons, giving them the scope to practise and helpful guidelines to help them evaluate their own performance. The girls collaborate well in the planning stage and their focus on tasks is good. The performance aspect is at an early stage but the girls are aware of what is needed to polish their techniques. Standards are above average overall.

197. The mixed A-level group have made good progress and, encouraged by skilful teaching, they are clear about how to improve. Students show good balance and poise in their dance routines and the ability to interpret scores accurately. Some lack confidence but, supported by positive teaching, they make progress in lessons. Standards are in line with course requirements. Teaching is good and provides demanding work of pupils; pupils rise to the challenge and have very positive attitudes to the subjects.

BUSINESS STUDIES

198. Business studies is a popular GCSE option at Key Stage 4 and many pupils progress to A-level GCE economics and business studies (combined) and GNVQ business courses at intermediate and advanced level in the sixth form. Student numbers on the new AVCE (Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education) course are double the number on previous advanced GNVQ courses, due to the higher status given to AVCE courses under the new national curriculum arrangements from September 2000.

199. Attainment of pupils on the GCSE business studies and economics combined course in 2000 was below national and the school average for boys and girls. Although the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C has changed little since the last inspection, reflecting the large proportion of lower-attaining boys in classes, the proportion gaining at least a grade G has improved. The majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily according to their attainment on entry to GCSE and teachers have tried various ways to improve the grades of borderline pupils, including increased target setting and extra lunchtime lessons. Boys find it difficult to complete coursework assignments and pupils do not have access to computers in all lessons.

200. In 2000, students on the A-level economics and business studies combined GCE course attained below average results, although the small number of entrants makes national comparisons unreliable. Results reflect levels of attainment on entry to the course. In all classes most pupils are boys, and the department is making efforts to attract more girls.

201. GNVQ Business results were very good with 100 per cent pass rate on both advanced and intermediate courses. This is well above the national average for all schools. Over a half of all pupils achieved merit and distinction grades. Their progress from GCSE was very good.

202. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons seen are good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth form. Pupils are interested in their tasks, concentrate well, particularly in the sixth form, and carry out individual research for GCSE, GNVQ/AVCE and A-level outside school to produce coursework. Most pupils use ICT well to present their coursework, although work is often spoilt by uncorrected spelling and punctuation errors, and GCSE pupils' use of ICT is variable because of limited class access to computers. GNVQ and economics pupils investigate topics from the internet and make good use of information from their part-time jobs. Pupils collaborate exceptionally well with each other in class when working in pairs or groups. Girls' Year 11 GCSE class notebooks are usually better organised than boys'. In their coursework projects, the majority of boys and girls in Years 10 to 13 produce well-presented reports, making good use of ICT to word process reports and draw well-labelled graphs to analyse consumer surveys. By the end of Year 11, most pupils understand break-even charts but do not draw graphs from spreadsheets or use business databases. However, the new Year 10 schemes of work has business databases integrated into the course. Pupils' bibliographies sometimes lack depth, and, except in GNVQ classes, the majority of pupils depend on teachers to provide resources such as newspaper articles and books and make insufficient use of industrial visits.

203. A-level pupils have a sound understanding of economic concepts. In a very good lesson seen, Year 12 pupils developed a good critical awareness of the effects of new technology on marketing processes, having completed externally-presented coursework on competitive advantage in the retail industry, in which they used their part-time jobs for information. Achievement in lessons in relation to previous knowledge is good reflecting very good, challenging teaching.

204. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and is good overall. Teaching in the small number of GCSE lessons seen during the inspection is satisfactory, with several good features. In all lessons seen, teachers were knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and in the best lessons, helped pupils make good progress by applying concepts in practical tasks, rather than encouraging textbook copying. Teachers ensure tasks are well matched to pupils' varying abilities, including for pupils with special educational needs. Numeracy skills are particularly well taught. GCSE pupils' understanding of business finance is less secure at this level although, in AVCE and GNVQ lessons pupils use spreadsheets well to solve business problems such as cash flow. Teachers use a good variety of resources and encourage all pupils to research on the school's good internet facilities. Lessons usually have a clear focus so that pupils know exactly what to do, and teachers check that pupils understand the tasks set, helping individuals with problems very well in sixth form lessons seen. Teachers set homework regularly and mark coursework well to meet examining board criteria, so that most pupils are aware of the GCSE or GCE grade level at which they are working. In the best GNVQ practice, teachers give pupils constructive written targets to help them improve.

205. Lessons are well staffed by qualified teachers, most of whom are experienced. The business studies department is well led by a newly appointed co-ordinator who in her

strategic planning focuses well on improving pupils' learning. Links with local business and industry are developing well. GNVQ pupils run the school bank successfully, supported by a visiting bank manager. Accommodation is just satisfactory for GCSE lessons, but access to computers is difficult during lessons, and this affects standards, particularly for boys' coursework. Sixth form accommodation and computer resources are very good. With planned upgrading of base rooms, the department has a very good capacity to make further improvements. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection.

SOCIOLOGY

206. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, attainment was well above the national average and pupils frequently achieve their best results in the subject. Many more girls than boys opt for the subject at the age of 14, when the numbers choosing the subject are fewer than for other humanities subjects.

207. Standards are good both in Year 11 and in the sixth form. Standards are consistently above the national average at Key Stage 4. Lively discussion encourages pupils to question their own stereotyped thinking about the social status of men and women, often with amusement. In the sixth form, students achieve high standards as they think through what they see in a video about the growth of cults and engage in a sharp, rapid learning dialogue with their teacher. Standards at A-level are good as most students at least meet and more frequently better their predicted grade to add value to their prior attainment. The success of the subject at GCSE level attracts some weaker candidates to A-level; AS Level provides an effective bridge to a higher standard for them. The students enjoy their learning and a number of students follow the subject to degree level.

208. Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning because pupils understand the relevance of issues examined to their own lives. Teaching is well organised and delivered at a good pace and with clear guidance for pupils on how to structure their written work. Where teaching is satisfactory it does not have the same sparkle to liven the learning. Teachers work closely as an effective team and although there is no formal observation, teachers often work together within the same lessons, so there is shared planning.