

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHAVINGTON HIGH SCHOOL**

Shavington, Crewe

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111420

Headteacher: Robert Knight

Reporting inspector: Alan Haigh  
2630

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 187894

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rope Lane Shavington Crewe Cheshire
Postcode:	CW2 5DH
Telephone number:	(01270) 662111
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Robert J Charlton
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2630	Alan Haigh	Registered inspector		Results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13448	Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4749	Martin Ash	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
3758	Tony Barringer	Team inspector	English	
2491	Doug Beaumont	Team inspector	Design and technology	
11190	Winifred Burke	Team inspector	Art	
2628	Jim Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
8873	Charlotte Evers	Team inspector	History Equal opportunities	
12470	Brian Greasley	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	
20172	Arthur Harvey	Team inspector	Religious education	
2555	Gerry Price	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
20767	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music	
3937	John Seed	Team inspector	Science	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is an average sized Community comprehensive school educating 965 boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years. It opened in 1958 as a secondary modern school and was reorganised in 1977 as a comprehensive school. It has grown steadily in recent years and is now oversubscribed. It is located in the village of Shavington, between Crewe and Nantwich, a part of the Cheshire Local Education Authority. Seven per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is below the national average. More than 99 per cent of pupils are from white ethnic families. None speak English as an additional language. Eleven per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register; this is below average. The school makes special provision for 10 visually impaired pupils. Almost three per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs and this figure is in line with the national averages. The attainment of pupils entering the school is above average and has improved in recent years. The socio-economic circumstances of the area from which the majority of pupils are drawn are above average.

The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school is participating in a national Key Stage 3 Pilot project on literacy and numeracy.

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

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education with many strong features. Although standards are above the national average, they are not as good as they should be. The overall quality of teaching is good. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff are satisfactory. The school provides sound value for money.

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

- Standards in science at Key Stage 3 are well above average and the recent national test results in science taken by 14-year-olds were well above average.
- The GCSE results in maths, design and technology, history and music in 2000 were well above the national average and standards of work of 16-year-olds observed in music were well above average.
- The overall good quality of teaching is especially effective in motivating and challenging higher attaining pupils.
- The educational provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with visual impairment, is strong and makes a significant contribution to the school's high level of success in A\*-G results in the GCSE examinations.
- The school provides a rich and varied range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in music.

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

- Pupils did not do as well in GCSE English and modern foreign languages in 2000 as they did in their other subjects and the modern foreign language results were below the national average.
- Many pupils of average ability achieve standards that are too low because of low expectations.
- A significant proportion of teachers tolerate too low standards of work and behaviour.
- The leadership and management are not strong enough in giving clear direction for improvement and the development planning is not supporting school improvement.
- The inadequacies in accommodation adversely affect standards in art, drama, design and technology, music and physical education; facilities for dining are also inadequate.

*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 May 1996. Standards attained by 14-year-olds in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have remained above average over recent years but have not improved. The GCSE results have also remained above average, but have shown no upward trend. The quality of teaching is better than it was. There has been an improvement in the school's systems of reviewing its work. Pupils' work is assessed much better now. There is much more information and communication technology equipment and its use has improved in several subjects. Pupils are more aware of the

contributions of a range of cultures to learning, but there has been too little progress in this area. The school now makes more use of community facilities in broadening the curriculum.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	D

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

The results in the national tests taken in 2000 by 14-year-olds were above the national average in English and mathematics and well above it in science. The results in English and science were an improvement on those for 1999, but the mathematics results were better in 1999 than in 2000. When compared with similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals) in 2000, the English and mathematics results were in line with the national average and the science results were above it. The small differences between boys' and girls' results in recent years are similar to the national differences. Results for 14-year-olds have been above average in recent years, but there is no upward trend, whereas, nationally, there is an upward trend. Standards in most subjects are better than those of 14-year-olds, nationally. They are well above average in science.

The GCSE results for boys and for girls, measured by their average points scores, were above the national average in 2000 and this has been the case in all recent years. They were, however, not as good as the results in similar schools. Unlike the national picture, there is no upward trend in GCSE results. The proportions of pupils achieving GCSE grades G or better are well above average and better than those in similar schools. The best results are in mathematics, design and technology, music and physical education. Pupils do not do as well in GCSE English and modern foreign languages as they do in their other subjects. The 53 per cent obtaining five or more GCSE A\*-Cs was three per cent short of the 2000 target and the average points score fell a little short of the school's target. Standards are well above average for 16-year-olds in mathematics and music. Much of the other work seen was of above-average standard. The majority of pupils achieve appropriately in most subjects, but many pupils of average ability, especially in Years 9 and 11, underachieve, in part, because some teaching is not challenging.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory, overall; in more than a third of the lessons they were very good. The higher attainers work hard. Most pupils are polite and friendly. A minority have unsatisfactory attitudes to work and are inattentive in lessons. Some middle ability pupils, often boys in Year 9 and above, do not work hard enough.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Much is very good. It is satisfactory overall, but there is a significant amount of silly behaviour in and out of lessons. Pupils are sometimes inconsiderate of others and movement around school is sometimes noisy and lacking in control.
Personal development and relationships	These are good, overall. Most pupils get on well together and respect their teachers. The vast majority consider others. The immaturity of some pupils detracts from an otherwise good picture. The social development of pupils with special educational needs is strong.



Attendance	This is good, with the rate of unauthorised absence being low.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	good	good

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

The quality of teaching and learning was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of all lessons and good or better in about 70 per cent. Twenty per cent were very good or excellent and four per cent unsatisfactory. The teaching of English and science was good, overall, with almost half the lessons in these subjects being very good or better and none being unsatisfactory. That in mathematics was good, with 14 to 16 year olds and satisfactory with 11 to 14 year olds and one lesson was unsatisfactory. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. The teaching and learning of information and communication technology by non-specialists is sometimes unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. A significant minority of teachers have too low expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, this being particularly evident with the middle sets of older pupils. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs, including those who are visually impaired, is very effective and the school meets the needs of most pupils well. Those with learning difficulties and the most able make the best progress. Pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge is good but understanding is often less secure. Their intellectual, physical and creative efforts are good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good, overall, and all statutory requirements, except some relating to design and technology and collective worship, are met. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good. The strategies for teaching literacy are particularly effective. There are no vocational courses.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is a strength of the school. There is very good provision for visually impaired pupils and physically handicapped pupils. All pupils are fully integrated into all aspects of school. Pupils have full access to all the curriculum and most are successful in eight GCSE subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is satisfactory, overall. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. There is a good range of school visits and the induction arrangements for new pupils are especially successful. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, with areas for improvement.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils. The pastoral system is good and pupils' academic performance is monitored well.

The school works well with parents and provides documentation of good quality for them. Staff are very approachable and responsive to parental enquiries. Reports are informative and include targets for pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is satisfactory. Senior staff work very hard with a commitment to improvement. This, however, is not articulated clearly enough. Senior management is not yet giving a sufficiently strong lead in raising academic standards and levels of behaviour. Departmental leadership is mostly good; that in mathematics and design and technology is unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are supportive of change, but do not play a strong enough role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory with monitoring of teaching developing soundly, resulting in many successful lessons. Strategies for improving behaviour are being developed and senior staff have a realistic grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	This is satisfactory, with funding directed appropriately at achieving the school's aims. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum. Accommodation is inadequate, adversely affecting standards in art, drama, design and technology, music and physical education. Dining facilities are poor. There are sufficient resources for learning. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school expects its pupils to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>They feel comfortable approaching school with questions or problems.</li> <li>Their children like school.</li> <li>They consider that their children progress well.</li> <li>The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of homework is not right.</li> <li>They are not well enough informed about how well their child is getting on.</li> <li>The school does not work closely enough with them.</li> <li>The range of activities outside lessons is too narrow.</li> <li>Behaviour in school is not good enough.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree in the main with the positive views that the parents expressed. Inspectors consider, however, that the amount of homework is about right. Parents are well informed of their children's progress and the school works closely with parents. There is a good range of extra curricular activities. Pupils' behaviour, in a minority of lessons and around school, is often not good enough.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Most pupils arriving at the school have attained standards that are in line with or are above the national average. The results in the national tests taken in 2000 by 14-year-olds were above the national average in English and mathematics and well above it in science. The results in English and science were an improvement on those for 1999, but the mathematics results were better in 1999 than in 2000. When compared with similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals) in 2000, the English and mathematics results were in line with the national average and the science results were above it.
2. Results, overall, for 14-year-olds have been above average in recent years, but there is no upward trend, whereas, nationally, there is an upward trend. The small differences between boys' and girls' results at the age of 14 in recent years are similar to the national differences. Girls did not do well enough in English in their national tests and their results fell below the national results for girls in both 1999 and 2000.
3. The teachers assess standards of pupils at the age of 14. They found that standards in 2000 were well above the national average in English, mathematics, science, history, modern foreign languages and physical education and above average in geography. They rated standards in art, design and technology, information and communication technology and music as average.
4. Standards observed in most subjects are better than those of 14-year-olds nationally. They are well above average in science and most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their work. They are above average in English, mathematics, geography and history. Pupils speak clearly and fluently in English lessons and present extended pieces of written work well. Their number and algebra skills are strong. Their good research skills and knowledge of the location of places show through in geography. Extended writing and research skills are also strengths in history. Standards are at least as good as the national standards in all other subjects. Pupils' life drawing, printmaking and three-dimensional skills are strong in art. Pupils show their creative talents in food studies. They work confidently on computers in information and communication technology lessons without excessive help and have a good grasp of spreadsheets. Their dance skills are particularly well developed. Pupils are good at extracting information from book, videos and worksheets in religious education lessons.
5. Pupils' understanding and application of mathematics are not strong by the age of 14. Their use of sketchbooks in art could be better. Pupils' designing and making skills in resistant materials are relatively weak and many pupils rely too much on the teachers in this aspect of design and technology. Pupils' skills in control technology are below average. Some written work is presented carelessly in modern foreign languages and pupils do not check it carefully enough. Musical composition is an area in need of improvement. Pupils are not good enough at basketball and gymnastics by the age of 14. They are sometimes reluctant to express informed opinions orally in religious education.
6. The GCSE results for boys and for girls, measured by their average points scores, were above the national average in 2000 and this has been the case in all recent years. They were not as good as the results of pupils in similar schools. However, most pupils study eight subjects at GCSE, whereas in many schools pupils study nine. This partly explains why pupils' average total GCSE points score is below that of schools with similar pupils. Unlike the national picture, however, there is no upward trend in GCSE results. The proportions of pupils achieving GCSE grades G or better are well above average and better than those in similar schools.
7. The GCSE results in 2000 were significantly above the national average in design and technology, mathematics, music and statistics. They were above average in geography, history, information

and communication technology, physical education and religious education. Average results were obtained in art, science, English language and literature. Results in French and German were below average. The best results are in mathematics, design and technology and physical education. Pupils do not do as well in GCSE English and modern foreign languages as they do in their other subjects. Girls did particularly well in art; boys and girls did especially well in design and technology, history and mathematics. Boys' results in art and English literature were not good enough.

8. The school sets realistic academic targets for its pupils. The 53 per cent obtaining five or more GCSE A\*-Cs was three per cent short of the 2000 target and the average points score fell 0.4 points short of the 40.5 points target. Standards are well above average for 16-year-olds in mathematics and music. Much of the other work seen was of above-average standard and the majority of pupils achieve appropriately in most subjects although many pupils of average ability, especially in Years 9 and 11, underachieve, in part because the teaching is sometimes not challenging.
9. The standards in work of the 16-year-olds observed and inspected were, overall, above average. Most pupils achieve in line with what might be expected when their prior attainment is considered. There are, however, significant exceptions. Middle-ability pupils, often boys, achieve less well than they should in English and science because of poor concentration and insufficient effort. This shows in coursework and classwork of poorer quality than would be expected. This element of indifference to learning results in some widespread underachievement for a significant minority of middle-ability pupils. The most able, including the gifted and talented pupils, progress well and the least able do likewise. Pupils develop good examination techniques in mathematics. Pupils' fieldwork and enquiry skills are not good enough in geography, although individual research is a strength of work in history. Many understand the written texts well in modern foreign languages and standards in both French and German are rising. The musicians perform with confidence both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
10. The overall progress of pupils with special educational needs, including those with visual impairment, is good. This reflects the situation at the time of the previous inspection. A significant number of these pupils achieve a high level of success in GCSE examinations with several pupils gaining A or B grades in more than two subjects. The rate of progress of all pupils with special educational needs is good in most subjects. In history, for example, pupils with special educational needs have a basic understanding of the past, can write at length and make good gains in knowledge and understanding as they move through the school.
11. Such progress is due to the good quality of the teaching and use of individual education plans, the effective work of the support teachers and outside agencies and the knowledge and commitment of the staff of the special educational needs department and the resource base for the visually impaired. This support is well focused on both the academic and personal development of individual pupils, who are fully integrated into the work and life of the school. The good progress of pupils with visual impairment is also the result of good forward planning by the staff of the resource base and the thoughtful provision of materials and resources, including computers, to support pupils in their work in lessons.
12. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. Standard English is used widely and most present arguments clearly and articulately in a wide range of subjects. Reading is of an above average standard and reading aloud is done particularly confidently. Pupils mostly write carefully. There is good note-taking in English, personal and social education and the GCSE physical education course. Pupils' numeracy skills are a little better than average.

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

13. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, are well behaved and take up opportunities to develop their personal and social skills with enthusiasm. A significant minority of pupils, particularly in Year 9 to 11, are less enthusiastic about school and refuse to conform to expected standards of behaviour. Relationships and attendance are good.

14. Most pupils have high levels of interest in their work. They listen attentively, concentrate well and respond with lively enthusiasm in lessons. They are well motivated, eager to learn and anxious to do well. Work is carefully presented and they are clearly proud of their achievements. Through their involvement in the wide range of extra curricular activities, as well as their keenness to attend extra classes after school, they demonstrate their commitment to learning and their desire to succeed.
15. In contrast, a few pupils show little interest in schoolwork. They have limited concentration, are prone to bouts of silliness in class, can be giddy and immature and show little enthusiasm for learning. Some pupils respond acceptably to the teacher during lessons, but are passive participants, lacking any spark of urgency or enjoyment. In particular, middle attaining boys sometimes show little interest in schoolwork and have to be pushed to become involved in lessons. The poor response of some pupils in lessons, which includes calling out, fiddling with books and equipment and constant irrelevant interruptions, is too readily tolerated by a minority of staff.
16. Pupils' behaviour is usually satisfactory and often good or better, but there are too many examples of poor behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. Attitudes and behaviour are a little better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. In most lessons, pupils behave very well. They listen carefully and respond willingly to questions. Younger pupils are motivated by the school's merit system and are anxious to avoid sanctions. All understand the school's code of conduct, but some choose to ignore it. This minority group are undeterred by the prospect of detention or removal of privileges and seem bent on causing disruption to themselves and their classmates. In the corridors, dining hall and outside in the school grounds there are frequent examples of noisy, boisterous, inconsiderate behaviour, which is not always checked strongly enough by staff. Some pupils show a complete disregard for the school's environment and the health and comfort of others by dropping large amounts of litter, mainly when eating packed lunches in the hall.
17. The number of exclusions, both fixed term and permanent, is below average for a school of this size and type. Some pupils, including those who have been excluded from other schools, exhibit unacceptable behaviour. Consultation takes place with external bodies, such as the Multi-Agency Support Team, in an attempt to provide individual support for these pupils, which will avoid the ultimate sanction of exclusion. However, when any pupils fail to respond to all other forms of disciplinary action, or when a single, serious incident has occurred, there is no alternative to exclusion. In these cases, proper procedures are followed and the school makes appropriate arrangements for pupils to be monitored when they return.
18. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and adults are good. There is no evidence of oppressive, sexist or racist behaviour. In lessons, pupils generally work well together in pairs or groups, co-operating on their activities and spurring each other on to greater efforts. For example, Year 11 girls working in pairs in the fitness suite encouraged and helped each other with constructive suggestions. When others are expressing opinions or presenting their work to the class, they listen politely and respectfully. Most pupils are courteous and friendly and they clearly get on well together. A minority of pupils have not yet learned to respect the feelings of others. Their immature attitudes and behaviour spoil both work and leisure for other pupils, most of whom object strongly to their conduct. There are some instances of bullying, but both pupils and parents agree that the school handles these swiftly and effectively.
19. Pupils take particularly good care of those with visual or physical impairment, giving practical assistance where it is needed and making sure that the pupils with special educational needs are welcomed and fully integrated into the life of the school. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work, are keen, and work hard. Only a small minority move 'off task' for short periods and require the teacher's intervention.
20. Most pupils respond well to the opportunities that exist for them to develop in confidence and maturity. Older pupils volunteer to be prefects, who take on regular duties of helping staff with daily tasks, as well as helping at discos for the lower school and organising activities for fund raising events such as the recent 'stay-awake'. Others act as librarians, help at parents' evenings or look

after the new pupils in Year 7. Through the paired reading scheme pupil volunteers are happy and proud to help those who need extra support in reading.

21. The attendance figures, which are well above those found in similar schools, show that most pupils enjoy coming to school. Unauthorised absence is below the national average and is caused by a very small number of persistent non-attenders who are receiving support from the Education Welfare Service.

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

22. The quality of teaching is good in all years. It was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of all lessons and good or better in 71 per cent. Twenty per cent were very good or excellent and four per cent unsatisfactory. All the teaching at Key Stage 4 was satisfactory. The teaching was very good or better in more than a quarter of all lessons in Year 9, but a larger proportion of teaching in that year was only satisfactory than in any other year. Many teachers enjoy much success with higher-attaining pupils.
23. The teaching of English and science was good, overall, with almost half the lessons in these subjects being very good or better and none being unsatisfactory. That in mathematics was good with 14 to 16 year olds and satisfactory with 11 to 14 year olds; one lesson was unsatisfactory. Literacy and numeracy are taught well.
24. A very good drama lesson with pupils in Year 7 benefited from a relaxed but purposeful and disciplined learning environment. Much good learning ensued. A Year 10 English lesson, with lower-attaining pupils studying *Of Mice and Men* was excellent because of the teacher's lively reading, firm control and detailed knowledge of the text. Planning ensured that all pupils' needs were being met.
25. A Year 7 mathematics lesson, again with lower attaining pupils, benefited from a range of strong features. Detailed record keeping and the deployment of a learning support assistant complemented the teacher's ability in raising standards and securing excellent working habits. A Year 11 statistics lesson was highly organised and conducted at a brisk pace; the high expectations resulted in a good response from pupils.
26. The teacher's high expectations of standards of work and behaviour in a Year 9 science lesson with high-attaining pupils resulted in exemplary behaviour and learning. Pupils settled quickly and the wide range of tasks was successful in keeping pupils busy for 60 minutes.
27. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. A Year 8 history lesson on the Spanish Armada benefited from these features with very clear aims and quick-fire questioning, keeping pupils interested and involved throughout. A dance lesson with the same year group had clear targets, supported by the teacher's competent demonstrations. The attentive pupils progressed well, showing excellent attitudes in response to the very good teaching.
28. An after-school life-drawing class for gifted and talented pupils from Years 7 to 10 and for some parents and other adults succeeded because of meticulous planning and the calm and purposeful teaching. Very high standards were achieved, linked to skilled teaching and high expectations. Planning, praise and pace were central to the success of a Year 9 German lesson. The needs of all pupils were addressed and the positive relations between teacher and pupils motivated those present to reach high standards.
29. Much of the specialist teaching of information and communication technology was of a good standard. The teaching of information and communication technology by non-specialists, temporary and supply teachers is sometimes mediocre and occasionally unsatisfactory. In a Year 7 lesson on spreadsheets, the teacher's approach was too relaxed, with pupils' inattention being tolerated; the teacher's knowledge of the material was insufficient to ensure that pupils made progress. In another information and communication technology lesson, linked to a geography project on tourism, the Year 8 pupils were managed well, but the teacher's limited subject knowledge held back progress. A similar Year 8 lesson, linking geography and information and communication

technology, was very successful because of the specialist teacher's thorough knowledge and successful planning.

30. The quality of teaching of personal and social education was at least satisfactory, most lessons being good with pupils learning successfully about a wide range of relevant topics. The best teaching was in Year 10 where pupils were made aware of different methods of borrowing money. The teacher used discussion appropriately. In Year 11, pupils were introduced to basic first aid and resuscitation. The teacher made good use of a video to illustrate methods employed. Class management was good. In a Year 7 lesson, the librarian gave pupils clear information and ensured that pupils understood how books are classified.
31. A significant minority of teachers have too low expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, this being particularly evident with the middle sets of older pupils. A Year 10 English lesson demonstrated the teacher's good grasp of the poetry being taught. However, the teacher did not check the pupils' unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour; he tolerated some inappropriate comments from a minority of boys. The teacher of a Year 10 art class, which was working on an art-deco transport task, met with too little success in motivating some uninterested boys. Their progress was insufficiently monitored, learning was slow and attainment was too low.
32. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils, including those with visual impairment, are fully integrated into the work in all subject areas. The information provided by the special educational needs department for teachers is very comprehensive and appropriate. Teachers make good use of this and the individual education plans when preparing lessons and make clear provision for any potential difficulties that may arise. They have a thorough knowledge of the variety of strategies available to match the work to the needs of individual pupils. For example, they make provision in practical lessons for a pupil in a wheelchair, provide effectively adapted worksheets to enable pupils to structure lengthy pieces of writing and use appropriate language during discussions. Such planning results in pupils being fully involved in oral and written work and encourages them to work independently of the teacher.
33. Support for pupils with special educational needs by the support assistants from the special educational needs department and the resource base for the visually impaired is sufficient and of good quality. This support is managed effectively, often through a well-planned and effective partnership with the class teacher. Additional support for pupils with visual impairment, including enlarged worksheets, laptop computers and large screens for work with computers, is very well organised by the staff working in the resource base for visually impaired pupils. The quality of the support and the skill of the teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs learn well. They work hard, at a good pace, and generally maintain concentration throughout.
34. Pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge is good, but understanding is often less secure. Their intellectual, physical and creative efforts are good.

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

35. The school offers a good curriculum, which provides its pupils with a broad and balanced education. At Key Stage 3, all pupils have access to the full basic curriculum and this is enhanced by the inclusion of lessons in personal and social education and in drama. At Key Stage 4, in addition to English, mathematics, science, design and technology, a modern foreign language, physical education, personal and social education and religious education, pupils choose two optional subjects rather than the three offered by some schools. However, by providing for most pupils to take eight rather than nine GCSEs, the school creates a little more space for them to take advantage of the rich and varied range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. These are a particular strength of the school, involve a large number of pupils and make a considerable contribution to their all-round education.
36. Since the school was last inspected, weaknesses identified in respect of the time for teaching music, art, drama and religious education have been remedied. Time allocations over Years 7 to 9

are sufficient for each subject to cover the required programmes of study. Similarly, in Years 10 and 11, there is adequate time to cover the relevant examination syllabuses. The last inspection report expressed concern that lessons in some subjects were inappropriately spaced across the fortnightly timetable and this problem has been largely resolved. However, the structure of this year's timetable has a number of weaknesses that are unhelpful to pupils' learning. This is particularly true in Key Stage 3, where teaching groups for music and drama are arranged according to attainment in other subjects. These arrangements are solely because of a timetabling convenience. The school recognises that this is unsatisfactory and is already taking steps to ensure that next year's timetable is better.

37. In most cases, the school meets the requirements for coverage of National Curriculum programmes of study and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education, but there are two notable exceptions. In design and technology insufficient attention is given to opportunities for pupils to study structures, mechanisms, systems and control. In physical education, there has been no improvement since the last inspection in boys' and girls' access to all activities, despite the present teaching staff having the necessary expertise to ensure that all have the same width of curriculum.
38. At Key Stage 4, pupils have a free choice of two option subjects. As at the time of the last inspection, guidance given to pupils encourages pupils to study a balanced curriculum. The school respects the considered choices of pupils and their parents and allows appropriate flexibility when a pupil has a clear rationale for omitting study of a humanities or an arts subject. The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides a relevant education for the vast majority of pupils and is enhanced by the provision of approved certificate courses for the few pupils who cannot cope with the demands of a GCSE examination. Nevertheless, the school recognises that there are some pupils who would benefit from a more vocationally orientated programme in Key Stage 4. It has been cautious in establishing this provision due to financial and staffing considerations, but is now actively considering the introduction of some GNVQ courses in partnership with a local college of further education.
39. Provision for developing pupils' literacy skills throughout the curriculum is a strength of the school. Effective strategies exist in most subjects. Appropriate emphasis is given to the correct use of technical language in subjects such as science and mathematics. Higher order skills, such as researching from various sources and note taking, are well developed in several subjects, notably history. The only weakness is the arrangement for withdrawal of some low-attaining pupils from lessons for 20-minute sessions of intensive literacy work. While the sessions are usually beneficial to the pupils concerned, the disruption caused to their learning in the lessons from which they are withdrawn causes these pupils fresh difficulties.
40. All pupils with special educational needs, including those with visual impairment always work in lessons with other pupils. Additional support for those with specific needs is provided outside lesson time. This arrangement which is implemented by staff effectively ensures that all pupils have full access to all aspects of the National Curriculum and other areas of study. All pupils with special educational needs and visual impairment are encouraged to take the GCSE examinations and the record of their success is good. Where this is not appropriate, alternative accreditation is available in half of the subjects taught. If required, there is special provision for pupils with visual impairment to take the examination.
41. The individual education plans fully reflect the requirements of the statements of special educational need and the requirements of the pupils with visual impairment. All targets are discussed with the pupils, ensuring clarity and understanding. The subject teachers set targets. This sometimes leads to a proliferation of targets and some confusion. Additional support for pupils, through a paired reading scheme in form tutor and registration time, is very successful. Senior pupils, who have undergone training, support pupils with reading difficulties effectively in a series of activities organised by the teacher. Arrangements for individual tuition are well focused, of good quality and are well organised to minimise disruption to the subject curriculum.
42. Personal and social education is taught for one period each week. In Years 7 and 8 it is taught by form tutors and in Years 9 to 11 by a number of teachers during a three-week cycle. A range of



cross-curricular themes, including sex education and an awareness of drugs, is included. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The programme lacks continuity over the three-week period and its quality is not monitored.

43. Careers education and guidance takes place prior to work experience, which is for two weeks in the summer term in Year 10. The school is successful in placing all pupils on work experience and benefits from the support of the local Training Enterprise Council. Pupils have access to a small, well-organised careers library and a range of computer software, which is networked throughout the school. The local careers adviser gives very valuable support to the school and makes a positive contribution to lessons. Options evenings take place in Years 9 and 11, which assist pupils and their parents in their choice of option courses for the next stage of their education. Parents and pupils report that they are pleased with this support.
44. The school's provision for the spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. Although the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, and, therefore, does not meet its statutory obligation, there are some strengths in the overall provision. All pupils attend one collective act of worship each week. During the inspection, the main focus of assemblies was Christian. In assemblies observed, there was a clear moral theme with good cultural and spiritual content, which offered pupils a quality experience. In art, English, history, modern foreign languages and religious education pupils learn about a variety of beliefs and values and explore human emotions. They are alerted to the non-material dimension of human beings and how beliefs and values inter-relate with behaviour, as in a Year 11 lesson where values expressed by a character in a video, which led to racist behaviour, provoked thoughtful discussion among pupils. Some subjects miss opportunities to contribute to pupils' spiritual development.
45. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Teachers help pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong behaviour. The school's aims, code of conduct, anti-bullying statement and system of rewards and sanctions are prominently displayed in classrooms and provide clear guidelines for positive behaviour. In several subjects pupils have opportunities to explore the moral aspects of such themes as the care of the environment, the giving of aid to developing countries, child labour and slavery, fascism, war, abortion, the behaviour of the boys in *Lord of the Flies*, the use of drugs and sexual relationships. Some departments could do more to alert pupils to moral questions.
46. The provision for pupils' social development is good. All subjects offer pupils opportunities to develop basic social skills. The school's pastoral arrangements contribute well to this. The majority of pupils, accordingly, co-operate sensibly in class, on visits and in musical, dramatic and sporting activities. Pupils assist their disabled and visually impaired peers. They have opportunities for taking responsibility such as acting as prefects or assistant librarians, participating in a year council, helping with paired reading, organising discos for the lower school, sharing in the induction programme for new pupils and carrying out various duties during parents' evenings. Some pupils participated in Holocaust Day at a local college. Many pupils engage in activities to raise money for charities such as Dogs for the Disabled, Christian Aid or a school in Uganda. In history, personal and social education and religious education, pupils learn about family life and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
47. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. In art, geography, history, physical education, personal and social education and religious education and in a range of extra-curricular activities, such as music and sports clubs, pupils learn about British culture past and present. They gain first hand experience of European cultures by visits to France and Germany. The history department's visit to Ypres moved pupils and made a memorable impression on them. Pupils have participated in skiing and various activity holidays in Wales. Pupils have benefited by the visit of a percussionist and the Manchester Actors Company to perform and work with pupils in school. Visits to theatres, museums, art galleries and cultural and historical venues are a feature of the curriculum. Pupils learn about Aborigines, Indians of the Amazonian rain forest, Chinese and African music, the work of some black poets and the food, fashions, customs and beliefs in six world religions. However, pupils are not made sufficiently aware of the multi-cultural nature of British society, a criticism made in the last inspection. The school does too little to increase pupils'

appreciation of ethnic minority cultures by, for example, extending the successful Hindu Day to include other cultures and by extending the programme of visits to include a gurdwara, mosque or mandir.

48. Although the school has not made any conscious moves to involve the local community in school life since the last inspection, there are some positive links that have an impact on pupils' learning. The careers programme benefits extensively from the assistance of local industry, whose representatives take part in the annual Careers Conference, undertake mock interviews, provide speakers and work experience places. Similar links exist with the local college of further education and sixth form college, whose staff ensure that pupils of the school are given the assistance they need to make informed choices about their future. Local companies have also provided sponsorship for the recent 'stay-awake' event. Within the personal and social education programme, speakers from the health service, the police and the YMCA provide pupils with food for thought about a range of issues that will affect their lives.
49. Because community groups use the sports hall and other parts of the school in the evening and at weekends, pupils are able to work alongside adults in a range of sporting and cultural activities, including the very successful life drawing class and the local pantomime. Through these, pupils learn personal and social skills and develop interests to enhance their enjoyment of life after school. Pupils make their own contribution to the wider community by their fund raising efforts for national charities, sometimes with the local Rotary Club. They help to raise the profile of the school by taking part in the annual Shavington May Day festival and giving musical performances in a local church at Christmas.
50. Relationships with the feeder primary schools are very strong. A well-organised programme of visits and meetings ensures that prospective pupils and their parents know what the high school has to offer. There is a particularly successful residential visit for all new pupils, who engage in a week of educational activities. This helps them to form new relationships with both fellow pupils and teachers and eases the transition from the primary sector. Curricular links are beginning to develop, especially in the areas of information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy, where staff share expertise and work towards real continuity of educational provision.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

51. The well-organised pastoral system ensures that pupils are well cared for. Tutors remain with their pupils throughout the school and the pupils report that they are pleased with the help and support received. Heads of Year support tutors and they play a key role in the system. Pupils meet their tutors on four mornings in the week for twenty minutes, but this time is used with varying degrees of effectiveness. Some teachers do not check homework diaries or ensure that parents sign them.
52. Pupils' academic progress is monitored through an efficient mentoring system and this is a major improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have individual review sessions with their tutors and agree learning targets with them. Subject teachers are made aware of the targets and individual pupils are given support to achieve them. Parents are also made aware of the targets and this arrangement improves the strong home links that exist. A record of pupils' achievement begins in Year 7 and this is formalised at Key Stage 4.
53. The headteacher has a good knowledge of the vast majority of pupils. He meets all pupils in Year 7 to ensure that they are settling into the school. He knows most pupils by name and meets upwards of 500 pupils per year individually when issuing reward certificates.
54. The pastoral support provided for pupils with special educational needs, including those with visual impairment, is excellent. Almost all of these pupils make significant gains in their personal and social development and so can focus more effectively on their studies and make good progress. This is due to the hard work and skilful intervention of the staff and appropriate support being provided when it is needed.

55. Pupils are made aware of the school's code of conduct. There are procedures for the monitoring of behaviour and a range of rewards and sanctions supports these. These procedures are, however, not effective enough. A significant minority of teachers tolerate unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils report that bullying occurs in the school, but they are pleased with the school's response in dealing with reported incidents. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are sound. Those for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good.
56. Procedures for child protection are good and the support from the Social Services is very good. There is a clear statement on health and safety and the school follows the local education authority's guidelines. Risk assessment is not fully in place for design and technology and science and a few issues of concern were reported to the headteacher. The pond and greenhouse areas which were a concern in the previous inspection have now been made safe.
57. The monitoring of academic performance and reporting procedures were identified as weaknesses in the 1996 report. Good work by the assessment, recording and reporting committee has led to new whole school monitoring systems being introduced across the school. These are very effective. Assessment information is appropriately linked to the whole school target setting processes, using school and local education authority data on pupils' ability profiles. Thorough collation of data by the senior managers enables form tutors and heads of department to have comprehensive information on current attainment levels, set alongside each individual pupil's ability profile. Good progress is also being made in extending monitoring systems into Key Stage 3 and in using Key Stage 2 and 3 standard assessment data as a baseline for judging progress as pupils move through the school.
58. There is currently no whole school marking policy and this is a weakness. Assessment within subjects and amongst teachers is inconsistent. Although satisfactory overall, too little use is made of assessment data to inform lesson and curriculum planning and so ensure that work is always closely matched to individual needs.
59. The initial identification and assessment of the requirements of pupils with special educational needs are good, due to the close relationships which are maintained with the contributory primary schools. The arrangements for the introduction of pupils with visual impairment to the school are very good. A sound baseline for assessing progress is established and there is further assessment when it is deemed to be necessary. The pupils with special educational needs participate in the same assessment system, as all pupils as they are fully included in the work of subject departments and the process is adapted to their needs. For instance, arrangements made for pupils with visual impairment include enlarging the examination papers and providing readers if required.
60. Records of pupils with special educational needs are well maintained and up to date information is used effectively to review and monitor the progress of individual pupils. The quality of the information provided for the annual review of statements is good and appropriate arrangements are made for all key members of staff to make a contribution. Each support assistant working with pupils maintains a diary to monitor the work of pupils on a daily basis and this ensures that key staff are informed of a pupil's progress. The approach adopted of fully integrating pupils with special educational needs, including those with visual impairment, into the life and work of the school is very effective.

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

61. The school works well in partnership with parents. Most are very happy with what is offered and with their children's achievements, but some are critical of a number of aspects of the school.
62. Of those parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and the relatively small number who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, most agree that the school is approachable and responsive and that pupils are expected to work hard. They believe that pupils enjoy coming to school and are making good progress. Pastoral systems meet with much parental approval, with

particular praise for the way the school deals with sensitive issues and the practical support given to pupils with special educational needs.

63. Some parents feel that the school has high expectations of pupils, but many think that there is insufficient challenge for middle ability or the more able. Generally parents think that behaviour is good, although some are concerned about instances of poor behaviour, including bullying and an apparent disregard for the school's environment, characterised by excessive litter. There are mixed views on homework and many parents are unhappy with the information they receive about pupils progress. A number do not feel that the school works closely with them and are dissatisfied with the range of extra-curricular activities offered.
64. The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents, but finds some of the criticisms unjustified. The school works hard to ensure that parents are involved in all stages of the education process and provides good information about both personal and academic development. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities and the few instances of bullying that occur are handled swiftly and effectively by staff. Concerns about the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils and about litter in and around the school have some substance.
65. Most teachers follow the agreed homework timetable, which sets appropriate amounts of homework for each year group. Pupils themselves feel that, on the whole, the amounts of homework set are about right.
66. The school provides a good range of information for parents, both written and oral. Its quality varies. The prospectus and handbook for parents cover administrative and practical issues, referring parents to policy documents for more details. They give appropriate information, but the length of the handbook detracts from its effectiveness in communicating the main points to parents. The governors' annual report to parents also suffers from including too much detail and irrelevant content. Individual letters to parents, however, are short and to the point. Parents are sent a review document half way through the year, which summarises progress to date and includes targets that pupils have agreed in consultation with their teachers. These are a very useful interim check.
67. At annual parents' evenings, staff are available to discuss pupils' progress on an individual basis and the school makes concerted efforts to contact those parents who do not come. Heads of Year, form tutors and special educational needs staff make sure that parents are aware of and involved in any decisions affecting their sons or daughters. School reports give good information about the curriculum and most teachers give a detailed account of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, together with targets for future improvement.
68. Some parents work in close collaboration with the school. The homework diary system is designed to be used by parents as a means of communication with teachers, and many parents do take the opportunity to use them in this way. If any anxieties are expressed via the diary system, form tutors follow them up. Parents' evenings and other organised events are usually well attended and there is always good support for activities in which the pupils themselves take part, such as music and drama productions.
69. Those parents who are contacted by pastoral staff because of problems related to behaviour or academic progress almost always support whatever action the school decides to take. The department for pupils with special educational needs maintains good links with parents who regularly attend annual review meetings. There is a termly meeting of the successful parents support group through which parents are kept informed of the latest developments in the school, for example in the use of computers, support for dyslexia, and how they may support the pupils from home. These are well attended and greatly appreciated. Parents of the visually impaired pupils are invited to attend a useful termly meeting to review progress.
70. An active Shavington School Association organises fund raising and social events which enable the school to purchase additional equipment for pupils, as well as promoting the image of the school within the local community.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

71. All members of the senior management team have been at the school for at least ten years. The headteacher has been in post for only three years, having been deputy head at the school prior to that. The present structure of the senior management team followed his appointment. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, overall, having some strong features, many sound features and some in need of improvement.
72. Management of the school is secure and caring. All senior staff are clear about their responsibilities and discharge them conscientiously, displaying much professionalism, openness and approachability. The school's aims, which concentrate on equality of opportunity within the curriculum, are met well. The aims focus insufficiently on the need to raise standards of attainment and behaviour.
73. The leadership of the school is satisfactory. Senior staff work very hard with a commitment to improvement. This, however, is not articulated clearly enough and the educational direction of the school is not sharp enough. Senior management is not yet giving a sufficiently strong lead in raising academic standards and levels of behaviour. The mentoring of Year 11 pupils is helping raise standards of attainment and there is a working party examining ways of improving pupils' behaviour.
74. The school development plan is unsatisfactory. It is not directed strongly enough at school improvement. Its four broad categories are appropriate, but there is little about how standards of attainment will be raised and how unsatisfactory behaviour will be improved. The plan lacks essential detail such as what needs doing, who is responsible and how it will be known if outcomes are satisfactory. Much departmental planning also lacks precision and rigour.
75. Departmental leadership and management are mostly good. Leadership and management in mathematics and design and technology are unsatisfactory. This is because there is insufficient clarity about how to improve work and standards in both subjects. The management of physical education is unsatisfactory, with too little progress in that department since the last inspection.
76. The governors are well informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have a good understanding of these. Several are regular visitors to school; the chair of governors meets the headteacher every other week. Governors are conscientious and are largely supportive of change, but do not play a strong enough role in shaping the direction of the school. Their monitoring role has increased recently.
77. The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, with two exceptions. They do not ensure that the statutory requirement with regard to collective acts of worship is met. They also have not ensured that the design and technology curriculum fulfils all the requirements of the National Curriculum.
78. The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory with monitoring of teaching developing soundly, resulting in some support and guidance for teachers and much very good teaching. Strategies for improving behaviour are being developed and senior staff have a realistic grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
79. The arrangements for supporting the pupils with special educational needs and those with visual impairment are very good and fully meet all statutory requirements. Leadership of the special educational needs department is very effective. The department has a clear sense of direction and is well organised with a good policy, a well structured and appropriate development plan and records which are maintained up to date. There is a full and committed focus on the needs of the individual pupil.
80. Regular monitoring of the work of the special educational needs department takes place through the diaries maintained by the support assistants, meetings and informal discussions, but it is not systematic. The resource base to support the visually impaired pupils and the staff who work to support these pupils in the classroom is funded by the local education authority. Leadership and

management of this base are excellent. There is a clear sense of direction in this work and the administration and organisation are outstanding. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory and the funding for pupils is spent wisely.

81. The school makes good use of available funding, relating expenditure to defined educational priorities and monitoring its spending carefully. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily and the school provides sound value for money.
82. Income and expenditure are similar to that usually found in schools of this size and type, and the budget is managed prudently. Priorities for departmental development are agreed with the headteacher and governors, concentrating on staffing to meet the needs of the curriculum. The school tries to make small improvements to the teaching environment each year. The governing body, under the guidance of its own finance committee, monitors spending to make sure that targets are properly met.
83. Specific grants are spent appropriately on staffing to support pupils with special educational needs and on staff development in line with the school's priorities. Good use is made of the small pupil retention grant to pay for specialist help for pupils with behavioural difficulties. In addition, funds raised by the Shavington School Association supplement the available budget and are used to purchase additional equipment for pupils.
84. Routine financial control and school administration are efficient and effective. The governing body benefits from the school's registrar's detailed knowledge. She is also a governor, and provides good support and information for the finance committee. The few minor recommendations of the most recent audit report are now in place.
85. New technology is used competently for day-to-day office procedures and the school now uses computers effectively for reviewing pupils' progress, but has yet to explore the possible uses of technological aids for more complex analyses of educational data.
86. The principles of best value are applied in relation to the purchase of supplies and services; for example, the school has made sensible decisions about the relative merits of employing cleaning staff directly and buying in catering services. School meals are particularly good value for money. Governors compare the school's performance with others nationally and some consultation takes place with staff and parents.
87. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. There has been an influx of new teachers since the last inspection improving the balance of both gender and experience. There is much talent and expertise among the new staff. The pupil to teacher ratio is less favourable than that in most secondary schools; the proportion of time teachers spend teaching is similar to the average for schools of this size.
88. The match between qualifications and subjects taught is generally good, but there is a small amount of non-specialist teaching of information technology, by temporary teachers, that adversely affects standards. There is a competent full time librarian and enough technical support except in art. The amount of support for pupils with special educational needs is adequate. The support assistants are effectively deployed and provide high quality support. The teaching load of the special needs coordinator is too great and she does not have enough time in school to attend to the large amount of administration required. The clerical and administration staff provide effective support for the day-to-day running of the school.
89. The professional development needs of the staff are identified appropriately and largely met. Much training takes place on closure days addressing whole school, departmental and individual needs. Recent training days considered strategies for improving teaching and the development of literacy skills; the benefits of both are now being witnessed. A performance management policy has been agreed with the staff and most teachers have already been observed teaching. There is a comprehensive programme of induction for newly qualified teachers. They appreciate the very effective support. The trainee teachers from institutions of higher education are well supported and they are introducing fresh ideas and approaches.

90. There has been some improvement in the range and quality of accommodation since the time of the last inspection. Some of the science accommodation has been upgraded and some spaces have been altered to provide additional classrooms. However, some of this has been at the expense of pupils' social areas. The English accommodation has been refurbished. There has been a programme of carpeting corridors and classrooms. The tennis courts have been resurfaced.
91. The library provides very good quality accommodation and it is a pleasant and welcoming study area. Provision for pupils in wheelchairs is good. Although there is no access to the upper floors of the school, arrangements have been made for subjects to have at least one ground floor room to allow access for pupils with physical disabilities. The school has used contrasting coloured paintwork to help the pupils with visual impairment negotiate the corridors and staircases. There is toilet provision for pupils with disabilities.
92. There remains, however, much unsatisfactory accommodation. There is insufficient accommodation for science, despite the installation of water and electricity supplies to a mobile classroom, because the other mobile room, which was a properly equipped laboratory, is out of action due to the effects of bad weather and some vandalism. There is insufficient accommodation for art and the workshop space for design and technology is poor. Drama is taught in unsuitable conditions in classrooms, because there is no drama studio. The accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory. The changing rooms are inadequate in size and there is no gymnasium, necessitating the teaching of gymnastics in the sports hall, which is an inappropriate space. The joint-use sports hall is, however, a good facility. There are insufficient music practice rooms. Many of the corridors and staircases are narrow and become over-crowded at the change of lessons.
93. The site is generally tidy and efficient cleaning keeps the exterior relatively free from litter. However, pupils do not dispose of litter properly in the dining area at lunchtime, and the area is left in a very poor condition.
94. The funding of resources for learning is above average. There are sufficient resources for learning, overall. The library is a very well managed facility that is widely used, especially by pupils at Key Stage 3. Provision of books is in line with national recommendations. The library offers a wide range of other learning resources. Special collections of books have been formed to encourage wider reading by boys and girls. The provision of equipment for information and communication technology matches the national average. Four separate suites of computers make adequate central provision. Equipment is up-to-date.
95. There are adequate resources in the majority of subjects, but there are shortages of books in English, science and, at Key Stage 3, in history. Provision for information and communication technology is inadequate in science and that available is not used in art. Sketchbooks are lacking in art. In mathematics, graphical calculators are required and there is a shortage of computer software in modern foreign languages.

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

96. In order to improve the quality of education provided, the governing body and senior staff should now:
- i. raise standards in English and modern foreign languages at GCSE by better examination preparation, higher expectations and closer monitoring of the quality of teaching (see paragraphs 7, 98, 183);
  - ii. ensure that pupils of average ability, particularly boys, work harder, especially from Year 9 onwards, by monitoring their progress more closely and improving their attitudes to learning (See paragraphs 8, 15, 103, 117, 126);

- iii. ensure that all teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour match those of the majority of teachers by removing any tolerance of silly and disruptive actions in lessons and around the school (See paragraphs 31, 104, 118, 128, 146);
- iv. Ensure that senior staff and governors give a stronger lead in raising standards of work and behaviour by:
  - (a) rewriting the aims to reflect clearly the school's wish to raise academic standards and improve pupils' behaviour (see paragraphs 72, 73);
  - (b) adopting school development plans and strategies to enable the revised aims to be met (see paragraphs 74);
  - (c) improving much of the departmental development planning to support whole-school aims (see paragraphs 74, 121, 147, 158, 169, 208);
- v. improve the quality of accommodation so that standards of work in art, drama, design and technology, music and PE are not held back (See paragraphs 92, 111, 140, 147, 200, 209); and
- vi. ensure that all pupils attend a daily act of collective worship and that the curriculum for design and technology includes all the National Curriculum requirements (see paragraphs 44, 77, 147).



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	169
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	72

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4.8	15.6	50.3	25.7	3.0	0.6	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
Number of pupils on the school's roll	965
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	65

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	27
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	107

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	8.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	99	105	204

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	72	75	74
	Girls	83	75	76
	Total	155	150	150
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (76)	74 (69)	74 (59)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	31 (19)	55 (47)	45 (31)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	68	77	71
	Girls	91	77	68
	Total	159	154	139
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	78 (67)	75 (75)	68 (57)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (28)	52 (48)	41 (32)
	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	97	74	171

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	46	93	96
	Girls	45	72	74
	Total	91	165	170
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	53 (54)	96 (97)	99 (100)
	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	School	40.1 (40.7)

per pupil	National	38.4 (38.0)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	958
Any other minority ethnic group	2

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	27	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	51.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	204

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.9
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	24.9
Key Stage 4	23.3

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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Total income	2,036,863
Total expenditure	2,018,604
Expenditure per pupil	2,318
Balance brought forward from previous year	69,175
Balance carried forward to next year	87,434

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	950
Number of questionnaires returned	188

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	58	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	57	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	13	70	10	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	57	17	5	1
The teaching is good.	23	66	6	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	52	17	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	41	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	43	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	20	52	19	2	6
The school is well led and managed.	27	62	6	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	62	5	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	47	14	3	6

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

### ENGLISH

97. In National Curriculum tests taken by 14-year-olds in 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving at least levels 5 and 6 was above the national average. Pupils' average points score was above average, with boys' results being further above the national average for boys than girls' were above the national average for girls. This differs from the national pattern in the subject. With pupils' general standards of literacy on entry above average, standards are maintained by the end of Key Stage 3. Test results match those of pupils in other schools with a similar proportion of free school meals. Pupils' overall standard of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is higher than that found nationally; pupils achieve appropriate standards when their prior attainment is considered. Pupils with special educational needs progress very well. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress.
98. In the GCSE for English language and English literature, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\*-C was close to the national average. Girls did better than boys, but both were close to their respective national averages. Pupils did less well in language and in literature than they did in the majority of other subjects in school. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils do not maintain their above-average attainment on entry and that at the end of Key Stage 3. English literature results were below the national average at the time of the last inspection; they are now in line with it. The general standard of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with what is expected for 16-year-olds and their achievement is in line with what might be expected. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The gifted and talented progress well.
99. The majority of pupils throughout the school listen attentively and work sensibly and productively in pairs and small groups. The overall quality of speech at both key stages is better than that found nationally, but there are marked variations in standards. This reflects a significant improvement upon the findings in the last report. Pupils generally answer questions clearly and fluently. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils use the spoken form of standard English. During a 'hot-seating' exercise in Year 8, high attaining pupils asked thoughtful and relevant questions of classmates who were assuming the role of characters in the play. The quality of group presentations varies greatly, with the majority communicating clearly and fluently. A minority of pupils fail to speak audibly. Pupils regularly read aloud and most do so articulately, giving sense and character to words. This is another clear sign of improvement since the last inspection. When talking to adults, pupils are courteous and confident.
100. Attainment in reading is in line with that found nationally. The general standard of reading comprehension throughout the school is average and enables pupils to understand and enjoy a wide range of literary and non-literary texts. All pupils in Years 7 to 10 spend fifteen minutes every Friday in private reading and some English lessons begin with silent reading. By the end of Key Stage 4, high attaining pupils reach a mature level of literary appreciation shown, for example, by a class in Year 11 in their detailed discussion of the plot, characters and major themes in *An Inspector Calls*. All pupils in Year 7 are taught how to use the very good school library and many regularly borrow books. The other learning resources of the library are also used well.
101. The overall standard of written work by the end of Key Stage 3 is above that seen in most schools. Writing is, in the main, carefully presented and pupils draft their work effectively to improve its accuracy, often using word processing to assist them. By the end of Key Stage 4, the quality of written work is in line with that found nationally. Throughout both key stages, pupils write for a range of audiences and purposes, with some especially good work in media assignments. Low attaining pupils in Year 9, for example, gained much in their understanding of *Macbeth* by designing a front page for a tabloid newspaper covering happenings in the early scenes of the play. An outstanding feature of written work from pupils of all levels of attainment throughout the school is the amount of extended writing produced.

102. Although low attaining pupils make frequent mistakes with sentence structure, spelling and expression of ideas, they write with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. High attaining pupils in Year 11 produce assignments which are imaginative in content, skilfully crafted, fluently expressed and technically accurate. Much attractive writing is on display in classrooms with some particularly lively poetry. High attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 make useful and accurate notes. In some lessons, effective use is being made of short starter sessions to improve pupils' knowledge of language. These are a successful element in the national Key Stage 3 pilot project in literacy.
103. Most pupils throughout the school are well motivated and eager to learn. There is, however, a small minority of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 who appear disaffected and whose attitude adversely affects the pace and quality of their own learning and that of others. Relationships in the classroom are generally positive. Pupils work well together in small groups, especially during drama lessons. They show patience and tolerance of the views of others. The great majority of pupils are pleasant and articulate.
104. The quality of teaching is good, overall. At Key Stage 3, it is always good and is very good in over half the lessons. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is always satisfactory and is good in the majority of lessons. There is some excellent teaching at both key stages. Teachers' knowledge of their subject is good and lessons are very thoroughly planned and prepared. A wide range of teaching approaches is used, involving an imaginative mixture of language activities that stimulate pupils' interest. Teachers ask challenging questions and encourage a high standard of oral work. Tasks are skilfully matched to pupils' level of attainment, especially in mixed ability classes in Year 7. One such lesson was deliberately planned to allow the teacher to pay particular attention to a small group of children with special educational needs. This good practice indicates clear progress since the last inspection. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace with clear targets for completion of tasks. In almost all lessons relationships are positive and mutually respectful. Pupils' work is marked consistently and conscientiously, with much useful diagnosis of errors and constructive comment. Occasionally, teachers tolerate inappropriate behaviour.
105. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school is taking part in a pilot project in literacy at Key Stage 3 that builds on work done in primary schools as part of the established national policy. In the first term of the pilot scheme aspects have already been successfully integrated into existing schemes of work. One element of the project involves work with pupils who are working at a below average level 3 in the National Curriculum. These pupils are withdrawn from classes for twenty-minute periods and this disrupts their work in the subjects affected. Pupils are encountering difficulty in succeeding, in the limited time available, with the level of tasks presented. Much valuable progress, however, is being made with the project, overall. Members of the department share a clear sense of identity and purpose and the subject is well managed.
106. In most other subjects across the curriculum the general standard of listening skills is above that found nationally. Groupwork is good in food technology with pupils using talk as a positive way of learning. In physical education at Key Stage 3 ideas are discussed as an aid to understanding. There is proper emphasis upon the precise use of vocabulary and appropriate terminology in science. The quality of speech in all subjects is above the national expectation.
107. The great majority of pupils read well enough to enable them to understand textbooks and other materials and overall standards are at least as good as those in most schools. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud in geography. They read for research and to extend their knowledge in both geography and history. The very well managed library is important in the development of pupils' reading. The careers section is particularly well used by older pupils.
108. Presentation of written work is above average in history, physical education and personal and social education. Pupils produce extended writing in science, history and in the GCSE course in physical education. Much good use is made of word processing throughout the school. The overall standard of language across the curriculum is higher than that in most schools.

## **DRAMA**

109. Pupils' standard of attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with that found nationally. A class of high attaining pupils in Year 9 produced work of a consistently high standard. Their studio discipline was very good and they demonstrated effective control of body language, facial expression and gesture. Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils work well together in pairs and small groups. They work quickly and maintain concentration well. Standards of presentation vary but most groups communicate clearly and fluently. Pupils are confident in the use of a wide range of drama techniques.
110. The first group that has opted to follow the GCSE course in drama is in its second term in Year 10. This very well motivated class is achieving a standard of work in line with what is expected for their age. Pupils enjoy the subject and are committed to it.
111. The quality of teaching is always good or very good and, on occasion, excellent. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and they all create a very good working relationship with pupils. Schemes of work are thorough and relevant. The subject is very well managed and led. Much drama is taught in classrooms that are inadequate as spaces for drama. Even the stage is far from ideal and it is not always available. This important and popular subject requires appropriate accommodation.

## **MATHEMATICS**

112. Results in the National Curriculum tests taken by 14-year-olds in 2000 were above average, but the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 or better is less than in similar schools. The GCSE results in 2000 were significantly above the national average and compared favourably with those of similar schools. Well over half of pupils achieved a grade C or better and virtually all those entered obtained a graded result. Generally, pupils do better in mathematics than in their other GCSE subjects. Nevertheless, only three pupils achieved an A\* grade. This is partly accounted for by the previous policy of entering some pupils early for GCSE that has meant that they have had insufficient time to study the syllabus in depth. Those entered early for mathematics have taken GCSE statistics in Year 11 and achieved good results.
113. In Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is above average and the vast majority achieve standards commensurate with the prior attainment. The highest attaining pupils make rapid progress. For instance, top set pupils in Year 9 cope confidently with calculating surface areas of solids. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, also make considerable strides in their learning of basic mathematical ideas, with one Year 7 class building effectively upon their knowledge of multiples to identify the prime numbers up to 100.
114. Current standards in Year 11 are well above average and many pupils achieve higher standards than might be expected. Higher attaining pupils show good skills in manipulating algebraic expressions and cope well with more complex work in trigonometry. The quality of work in Year 10 is also good, with the standards currently being achieved by those in the top set suggesting that they are capable of high grades next year. Middle and lower attaining pupils are also achieving well, although a minority in some classes allow their negative attitude towards mathematics to limit the standard of their work. Pupils with special educational needs progress very well. The gifted and talented make sound progress.
115. The standards of numeracy across the curriculum are a little above average. Pupils of all ages generally apply basic mathematical skills and knowledge successfully in subjects such as science and geography. Graphical and arithmetic skills are also effectively reinforced in several other subjects. However, higher order skills such as analysis of problems, generalisation and proof are less well developed than the acquisition of knowledge and routine skills in the subject. This is because they are given less emphasis in the mathematics teaching that pupils receive.
116. Standards in Key Stage 4 have improved since the last inspection, but the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 or better in Key Stage 3 has remained static in recent years. The school's

involvement in the National Numeracy Strategy Key Stage 3 pilot is intended to improve achievement at Key Stage 3. It is too early to judge the success of this, but initial signs are that it is enhancing pupils' mental arithmetic skills.

117. The substantial majority of pupils work steadily in mathematics lessons and conscientiously complete the tasks they are set. There is a minority of pupils, mostly in the middle ability range, whose attitude towards mathematics is less positive. Some of these pupils do too little work and what they do is poorly presented. Their immature behaviour adversely affects their learning, and occasionally the learning of other pupils nearby. Often the higher attaining classes show a voracious appetite for work and so acquire good levels of skills and knowledge. When given the opportunity, they show a similar capacity for understanding and application of what they are learning. The lowest attaining pupils also respond positively to the well-structured course and good quality teaching they receive. Their confidence and self-esteem improve as well as their mathematical achievement.
118. As at the time of the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching is good. In almost every lesson, strengths outweigh any weaknesses and, in more than a quarter, teaching is very good or excellent. GCSE classes benefit from the experience of staff teaching them, particularly their good knowledge of examination requirements. This is a key factor in the good examination results that pupils achieve. Lesson planning is thorough, explanations are clear, appropriate homework is set regularly and marking of pupils' work is mostly helpful in clarifying any misunderstanding. One Year 7 lesson was unsatisfactory because silly behaviour, arising through work that was not hard enough, was not challenged.
119. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a particular strength and this enables them to achieve well. In Key Stage 3, the high attaining and low attaining sets are taught well, but the teaching of middle sets, although satisfactory, sometimes lacks sparkle. The school's involvement in the pilot of the Key Stage 3 National Numeracy Strategy is bringing fresh ideas to the teaching of the subject and some staff are successful in their use of new resources. All are giving greater emphasis to mental calculations. However, there is a tendency for practice of tables and other number facts to be over-emphasised at the expense of teaching strategies for mental arithmetic.
120. All aspects of the National Curriculum are covered in the schemes of work for mathematics. Considerable autonomy is given to individual teachers to determine how they will tackle the topics to be covered with their classes. This results in sets of overlapping ability covering topics in a different order, thus limiting the scope for staff to share ideas on teaching strategies and for pupils to change sets. There is insufficient guidance on priorities and pacing of the work beyond a target level at which they should work. Advice on teaching approaches is too sketchy and not sharply enough focused on specific elements of the schemes of work. In the case of GCSE classes, staff knowledge of syllabus requirements mostly overcomes these weaknesses, but improved schemes of work are needed to ensure greater consistency, for instance, in teaching the use and application of mathematics. The initial work on this, which was begun prior to the inspection, needs to proceed with increased urgency.
121. There are thoughtful and sound aspects to the leadership and management of the department but they are unsatisfactory, overall. Several weaknesses adversely affect the quality of pupils' education particularly at Key Stage 3. Monitoring and evaluation of the work in mathematics is not yet sufficiently rigorous. As a result, priorities for future developments are not supported by an accurate analysis of strengths and areas for development. Consequently, the development plan is simply an over-long list of proposed activities without any clarity about responsibilities, resource implications, time-scales or the intended outcomes for pupils. Nevertheless, mathematics teachers share a genuine commitment to helping pupils to benefit from their mathematics education and to achieve well. It is their individual hard work and skill as teachers that enables pupils to get good examination results. There is a need to build upon these qualities by a more rigorous analysis of strengths and weaknesses in mathematics and better planning for improvements in the subject.



## SCIENCE

122. Pupils attain standards that are well above average by the end of Year 9 and above by the end of Year 11. There is some underachievement by some average-ability pupils, mainly older boys. The results obtained in the national tests for 14-year-olds in 2000 were well above the national average and above those of similar schools, with no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Since 1996, the results have been significantly above the national averages. The GCSE results in double science in 2000 were in line with the national averages, but below those of similar schools. Girls performed significantly better than boys and did so in 1999 and 1998.
123. The results in 2000 were not as good as those of the last two years and the proportion of those gaining the highest grades was well below the national figures. The small number of pupils taking the three separate sciences all gained at least a grade C, but none gained the highest grade. These pupils did not have any extra timetabled lessons and attended sessions after school. This is testimony to the commitment of both pupils and teachers. Overall the proportion of pupils gaining at least a grade C in a science GCSE in 2000 was in line with national averages. As a result of the long-term absence of the former head of department during the past two years, pupils have many changes of teachers, including some on temporary contracts. This has had an adverse effect on pupils' performance.
124. Pupils enter the school with above-average attainment levels and make good progress. By the end of Year 9, they have a very good knowledge and secure understanding of the subject matter. Higher attaining Year 9 pupils accurately describe the behaviour of particles in solids, liquids and gases and balance chemical equations. Most have a good knowledge of the digestive process and lower attainers interpret circuit diagrams correctly and accurately describe differences in series and parallel circuits.
125. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to make good progress. In one lesson, Year 11 pupils applied their understanding very well when confidently giving clear oral presentations on the distribution of electricity. Higher attainers in Year 11 explained how reaction rates are affected by various factors. A group of Year 11 lower attainers carried out an investigation, ensured that it was a fair test and calculated averages from their measurements. By the end of the lesson, some were making accurate interpretations and evaluations. Skills required in practical work are above average throughout. Pupils take much care in using correct terminology and standards of presentation are generally good. Information technology skills are well developed.
126. Most pupils have positive attitudes to work. They listen carefully and concentrate well on what they have to do. Younger pupils, particularly, show high levels of interest and enthusiasm. They respond willingly and confidently. However, there is a small number of average attaining pupils, mainly older boys, who are poorly motivated, do not listen and indulge in silly, immature behaviour in lessons. When in groups, pupils cooperate well, discuss sensibly and work safely and productively. In one lesson, pupils were particularly helpful to a boy in a wheelchair taking care to ensure that he was fully involved.
127. Since the last inspection, attainment levels in the national tests for 14-year-olds have improved, but the GCSE results have declined. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching; marking is better and much more use is made of assessment data. The behaviour of a minority of pupils has deteriorated. Increased use is being made of information technology, but there is not enough equipment within the department to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to gain 'hands on' experience. Some laboratories have been refurbished, but two are inadequate. New ones are to be built to serve present needs.
128. The quality of teaching is good, overall. It is always at least satisfactory and very good or excellent in almost one half of lessons. Teachers know their subject well and make it comprehensible to pupils of all levels of attainment. Some teachers ensure a prompt start to lessons by giving a quick test to focus pupils or by relating relevant personal experiences to capture interest. They successfully promote the development of pupils' literacy skills. One teacher introduces a new key word to Year 7 pupils in each lesson. Teachers know pupils very well and most have high

expectations of behaviour and effort. In a few lessons, however, silly behaviour was not immediately corrected and tolerance of it disrupted the pace and flow of the lesson.

129. In most lessons, there is skilful questioning to draw out information or to check understanding, but this is not always targeted on individuals to ensure that their interest is maintained. Teachers plan lessons well catering for the different needs of pupils and making full use of resources. Year 11 pupils very quickly consolidated their knowledge and understanding during the teacher's use of CD ROM computer demonstrations projected onto a screen. Many lessons include a good range of activities keeping pupils very well motivated and interested. In an excellent Year 11 lesson, there was a quick recall session with skilful questioning. A competent demonstration followed with the teacher teasing out information and developing pupils' ideas. Pupils were then fully engaged in a practical investigation. They discussed sensibly and worked safely and productively without constant close supervision. By the end of the lesson, they successfully addressed the examination board's assessment criteria for investigations.
130. Class management is usually good, with pupils kept busy throughout. Sometimes, during class activities, some of the groups are too large, with the result that individuals are not fully involved. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. They are taught well in smaller groups and given suitable tasks. Teachers are well aware of the difficulties of individuals and give them extra help whenever possible. In many lessons there is very effective support. A visually impaired boy was provided with brightly coloured apparatus to enable him to do the practical work. Grouping arrangements and good teaching enable gifted and talented pupils to make good progress. Teachers mark work promptly and regularly and frequently use informative, encouraging comments helping pupils to move forward. Homework tasks are purposeful, often reinforcing work done in lessons. Some Year 8 pupils produced extensive pieces of written homework, clearly showing their understanding of pressure.
131. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements. It is enhanced for younger pupils with lessons designed to accelerate development of their thinking skills. There are GCSE courses in double science and biology, chemistry and physics for older pupils. It is planned to make more use of assessment data and to set targets for younger pupils. There is a shortage of textbooks.
132. The teachers are appropriately qualified and there is a good balance of experience. Four of them are recent appointments and they have without exception much talent and expertise. The technicians are well organised and provide effective support. The newly appointed head of department is enthusiastic and competent. He has already identified areas for review including evaluation of the courses offered and is providing clear direction. Monitoring of both teaching and marking are taking place. A good team spirit is evident with a clear commitment to high standards and improvement.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

133. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' overall level of attainment in 2000, as judged by teacher assessment, was average; almost all achieved the expected level and a few achieved more. Inspection findings confirm teachers' assessments. Over the period 1998-2000 the proportion of pupils gaining grades in the range A\*-C at GCSE was in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils gaining grades in the range A\*-G was above average. In all three years, girls performed much better than boys. In the last two years, girls' results were significantly better in art than in their other subjects, whereas boys' results were significantly poorer in art than in their other subjects.
134. By the age of 14, pupils' attainment is average, overall. Pupils develop designs in the style of Art Deco and Art Nouveau by using books and photocopies. They talk sensibly about the work and demonstrate sound understanding of the style as they produce decorative relief picture frames. Sketchbooks are used well for homework purposes. Homework assignments show that many pupils have access to and make good use of the Internet for downloading pictures and text. There is no evidence of information and communication technology being used for graphics or other purposes.

135. By the age of 16, pupils' attainment is generally above average in the traditional areas of drawing, painting, fabric studies and three-dimensional work. Pupils' skills in using information and communication technology are below average in this subject. Pupils' folders of work show a wide range of observational and imaginative studies. Pupils use past experiences well to inform their course study research. In their assignments they demonstrate their familiarity with using a wide range of art materials. By this stage, girls are more able to plan for and do more than one thing at a time, whereas boys are often less independent than girls.
136. The best standards are attained in life drawing classes, which take place in the evening. Here gifted and talented pupils from as young as eleven extend their understanding and skills. They make appropriate use of a range of materials in order to render light and shade as it affects the human form. Some of this work is quite outstanding. One particular benefit is that pupils work with their teacher and other adults on a more equal footing than is possible in normal lessons and their knowledge, understanding and skill development improve accordingly.
137. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their lessons. Behaviour is generally good and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The quality of their learning is enhanced by the good library provision. Most pupils work at a good pace and are very productive in both lesson and homework. One Year 7 class had achieved a number of head teacher's awards for their booklets about artists and packaging for art materials. Much effort and thought had gone into each of these pieces of work.
138. Noise levels are, however, too high in most lessons, mainly due to large numbers of pupils in a confined space. Currently there is an overemphasis on practical activities at the expense of time for quiet reflection and focused discussion. A number of boys, other than those in Year 8, make use of this busy environment to gossip and waste time, thus slowing progress. In contrast, the boys in Year 8 work productively and with more concentration than other year groups. In this case the combination of team working linked with three-dimensional studies provide good motivation as pupils develop models of angels.
139. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory, good in two thirds of lessons and on one occasion very good. Teachers work well together. They have good subject knowledge and understanding and a deep interest in the pupils whom they teach. Their interests and skills are complementary and pupils benefit from their sensitive handling of difficult situations. Their wider responsibilities beyond the art curriculum can, however, lead to loss of time at the start of some lessons. Lack of technical help puts undue strain on teachers, particularly in setting up and clearing away after the life class. Inadequate provision of space means that three groups of pupils are regularly taught in two rooms. In these circumstances, teachers accept higher levels of noise than is consistent with best practice. Planning for pupils' literacy, verbal and information and communication technology skills have not been fully considered.
140. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Statutory requirements are met, with the exception of the use of information and communication technology. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing some, but not all, of the issues raised by the last report. Time provision for art is much improved. Assessment is now linked to National Curriculum levels. Better planning is in place to ensure that Year 9 pupils retain an interest in art. Sketchbooks are still not provided for Key Stage 3 pupils. This limits the development of problem solving activities within lessons as well as assessments procedures. Very good links exist with parents through reports and homework diaries, and with the community through the life drawing class and initiatives such as Year 11 pupils' mural for a local school playground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well provided for through art. The accommodation is unsatisfactory for present usage and in need of refurbishment. The lack of a suitable computer, television and video facilities limits learning opportunities.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

141. Teachers' assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 in 2000 indicate that standards are similar to the national average. Inspection evidence confirms this and pupils generally achieve

appropriately. There is, however, much variation within the components of the subject. Standards in food technology lessons are consistently high for both 14- and 16-year-olds. Standards observed in work on resistant materials are below average. GCSE examination results have improved year on year for the past three years. They are well above the national average in food and graphics courses and above the average in electronics and resistant materials courses. Able pupils are successful in gaining A\* grades. The standards of 16-year-olds observed were average, overall.

142. Pupils have mastered the designing and making process and use their very good levels of knowledge, understanding and practical skills to develop new products. In the workshop based units of work, pupils need to develop designing and making skills in an integrated way from Year 7 to Year 9. Currently skills are taught in isolation and pupils do not, therefore, have the understanding to solve design tasks. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do the gifted and talented.
143. Attitudes to work in the subject are good, overall, and very good in food technology. Behaviour and personal development are satisfactory. However, in a significant minority of lessons low level disruptive behaviour inhibits pupils' progress and personal development. A Year 8 lesson on resistant materials got off to a slow start and many pupils were reluctant to settle and co-operate with the teacher. Many pupils, especially girls, did little work and learning was negligible for the majority.
144. GCSE results have improved since the last inspection. Pupils now have a strong grasp of food nutrition, a weakness in the last inspection. The quality of education is limited by continuing gaps in the curriculum. Graphic skills are not yet related to the design process and information and communication technology is not used widely enough. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements for structures and mechanisms and is weak on control systems. Overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The general standards of 16-year-olds are in line with national averages with most achieving appropriately. Pupils who are gifted and talented and those with special educational needs make good progress at this stage.
145. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. All teachers have good subject knowledge and skills. They have a good mastery of the criteria for GCSE assessment and this aids the achievement of pupils' high grades. Lesson planning and the setting of clear learning objectives are strong in food technology, leading to generally good and sometimes very good teaching and learning. For example, in one Year 10 class, pupils worked in groups of four to plan and design new soups to meet different taste, texture and consistency criteria. They had to agree how they were to adapt and use existing ingredients, trial and record different proportions, plan and organise the preparation, cooking and documentation tasks. This resulted in a very high standard of finished product and very good knowledge and skill development.
146. In the workshop courses, planning and setting clear learning objectives are weak. Planning is geared to completion of the task rather than to what pupils need to learn. Lesson by lesson assessments are not used positively to identify the next steps in pupils learning.
147. The department has responded well to the whole school monitoring initiative on attainment and target setting. Staff have acquired a greater awareness of pupils' potential and this provides a good focus for raising pupils' aspirations. Technician and classroom support assistance is good. However, the department lacks a clear sense of direction. The current schemes of work do not meet the National Curriculum statutory requirement; development planning is weak and not related to a whole school plan. The ethos within the department in the workshops is poor; the environment is cluttered and out of date. Inadequate accommodation inhibits pupils' progress. It is in urgent need of refurbishment and is currently having a negative impact on attitudes, behaviour and standards. The department does not undertake risk assessments in line with the health and safety policy. Overall the quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

148. When teachers assessed pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in 2000, results indicated that pupils' attainment was above the national average. This was higher than the previous year. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' overall attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national expectation. Girls and boys achieve similar levels, overall.
149. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' overall level of attainment is above the national norm. Results in GCSE in 2000 were above the national average for grades A\* to C, but were slightly below the national average for the higher A\* and A grades. No pupils have gained the highest A\* grade in the last two years. Results in 2000 were below those in 1999, when results were significantly above average, but pupils did better in geography than in most of their other subjects. Work of 16-year-olds observed was at an overall level above the national average. The number of pupils, particularly girls, taking GCSE geography has declined significantly during the last three years. A small group of pupils in Year 11 take a Basic Geography course and achieve a good level of success.
150. The department reviews all examination results carefully each year and has identified some areas of weakness. No clear and systematic strategies have been consistently implemented to address these areas and to raise pupils' attainment further.
151. Pupils have a good knowledge of the subject. They can describe what landscapes are like and how they are formed. They describe patterns in cities, and in Years 10 and 11, how they are changing. Higher attaining pupils have a well above average knowledge of what places are like and of the links between people and the environment, for example in the exploitation of the Amazon rainforest. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a basic knowledge of geography, but have difficulty in explaining how features are formed and places are changing. For instance, they describe the main features of a volcano, but have difficulty in giving detailed reasons why it occurs. The majority of pupils have a sound knowledge of geographical terms and begin to use them in written work in Years 10 and 11.
152. Pupils extract information effectively from a range of resource material to complete exercises and for research. In one lesson, for example, higher attaining pupils in Year 8 successfully used atlases, travel brochures, books, and computers to complete detailed research into the effects of tourism on the environment in a country of their choice. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a poor knowledge of the methods of geographical fieldwork enquiry, in collecting and analysing data and drawing conclusions. In Years 10 and 11, when completing GCSE coursework, they display a basic knowledge of the methodology, but lack a detailed understanding of the range of techniques that are available to them. Written work is generally accurate and well presented. Pupils have good numerical skills. They use statistical data to construct and analyse a good range of graphs successfully. Pupils, overall, make sound progress. Those with special educational needs make good progress, because work is well matched to their needs.
153. Teaching is of a good standard, overall. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject. They give clear explanations that are well structured and questions are well focused to ensure that pupils have a firm understanding of the topic. Teachers are always well prepared and organised, so lessons always have a brisk and prompt start. Lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives, but they often lack a variety of purposeful activities, so the pace of the lesson and the progress of pupils slow towards the end of the lesson. Good quality resources are used, but the variety and range is too narrow.
154. Pupils make good progress when they are encouraged to use the knowledge they have gained in a new context. In one lesson, for instance, a group of pupils in Year 9 made good gains in their study of earthquakes. They watched and discussed short clips of a video of two earthquakes, one in Japan and one in India. Then they used their knowledge to explain the differences in the effects of the earthquakes in the two areas.
155. Teachers relate very well to pupils and provide positive, well-informed support. Activities and discussions are generally pitched at an appropriate level for the needs of the pupils. Work is very well matched to the requirements of pupils with special educational needs, with adapted materials for those with visual impairment and good use of a range of techniques to support written work.

There is regular liaison with the support assistants working in the classroom and they provide a good quality of support for pupils during lessons. There is no policy of support for the most able pupils and lessons often lack the rigour to challenge them sufficiently. Marking is up to date.

156. Pupils learn well. They generally work hard and complete work neatly and fully. Pupils generally listen carefully and assimilate information rapidly. They cooperate effectively in groups and, once the work is set, the majority work independently of the teacher. Most pupils are confident and willing to be involved in lessons and maintain concentration throughout. Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject and are well motivated and keen to do well. They are well behaved. Books are maintained in good order and pupils present their work with care.
157. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 is of sound quality and fully complies with the national requirements. There is no teaching scheme for Years 10 and 11 and, as a result, there is not a clear indication of progression through these years or continuity from Year 9. Fieldwork enhances the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, but there is no fieldwork in Years 8 and 9 to provide a good basis for later examination coursework. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
158. The department is developing a sound scheme of assessment, results are recorded centrally and are increasingly being used to provide support for individual pupils. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. The day-to-day organisation of the department is sound, monitoring is being developed and there are clear plans for the future. The department policies and scheme of work for Years 10 and 11 are both incomplete and there is a lack of real vision and dynamism.
159. The resources and accommodation are satisfactory. There is a lack of display board and displays of pupils work either inside or outside the subject's classrooms to celebrate good work, inform and to give the area subject identity. Almost all the lessons are taught by two very experienced and well-qualified members of staff, both of whom have major responsibilities elsewhere in the school. The department has made a positive response to the last report, and is committed to raising standards still further. With heavy commitments elsewhere in the school, the capacity of the departmental staff to do so is constrained.

## **HISTORY**

160. Most pupils begin Year 7 a little above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment, overall, is above that expected nationally. Teachers assessed their pupils as being in line with the national average by the end of Year 9 in 1999 and well above average overall in 2000. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection was above that seen nationally and a larger proportion than that usually seen reached the highest standards. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with visual impairment, achieve appropriate standards and make good progress. The vast majority of pupils reach a standard at the end of Year 9 that is at least in line with their earlier attainment and higher-attainers, in particular, achieve well.
161. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 understand and successfully explain the causes of past events - for example, in work by pupils in Year 8 on the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. They use a good range of sources confidently and competently to describe and explain the past. Pupils in Year 9, for instance, used and interpreted statistics to explain the relative strength of the Great Powers on the eve of World War 1. In their work on the Peterloo Massacre, higher-attaining pupils evaluated sources very well in order to arrive at a view of who was to blame for the deaths. They have a good understanding of why people in the past may have held views that are different from those of today. This was seen especially in work by pupils in Year 9 on attitudes to the British Empire in the late nineteenth century.
162. Most pupils write well at length and the highest attaining pupils do so especially well, researching for themselves to produce work which is detailed, analytical and well-structured. That of the most able pupils at Key Stage 3 is already of GCSE quality. Pupils with special educational needs have sound knowledge and understanding about the past, as seen, for example in their work on the

Peterloo Massacre and on the Norman Conquest, but their low literacy levels mean that their written work does not always reflect this.

163. Pupils taking the GCSE course reach an overall standard that is above the national average for 16-year-olds, a standard similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining A\* to C grades was well above the national average. Boys' attainment was notably significantly higher than the boys' national average. The percentage of pupils gaining A and A\* grades has been above average for the past three years and, in 2000, over two-fifths of the pupils who took the course gained these highest grades.
164. The overall standard of work seen in Key Stage 4 was above the national average. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the topics they are studying. A group in Year 10, working on Stalin's successful bid for leadership of Russia, showed good understanding of the reasons for his defeat of Trotsky. Pupils in a Year 11 group used, evaluated and interpreted a wide range of sources very effectively to explain how Hitler controlled the German people. The highest attaining pupils write very well at length. They present cogent arguments and viewpoints, backed up well by appropriate evidence. Pupils make good progress overall, and those with visual impairment make sound progress.
165. The effective teaching is a strength of the department. It is good, overall, occasionally very good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers know their subject very well at all levels and communicate it effectively. As a result, pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding about the past. Lessons are well planned, taking good account of the pupils' abilities and proceed at a brisk pace.
166. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils and set suitable work that challenges the highest attaining pupils and allows them to work at a high standard. A card-sorting exercise used with an upper set in Year 8 enabled them to identify and categorise different types of reasons for the defeat of the Armada. The work set for pupils with special educational needs is suitably challenging for their ability. In a lesson on the Peterloo Massacre, pupils were asked to write a newspaper account in which they blamed one side or the other for the deaths. Effective support from both the class-teacher and support- teacher helped them to do so.
167. An appropriate variety of teaching methods, including individual study, work in pairs or groups and whole-class discussion, ensures that pupils have good opportunities to learn in a range of different ways. Lessons are often broken into a series of short activities, interspersed with feedback sessions, in which teachers check pupils' progress. Teachers use questioning very effectively in most lessons, to ensure that pupils have understood, but also to deepen pupils' understanding by asking pupils to explain further and to extend their initial answer. This technique enables the higher-attaining pupils to reach the highest standards. Teachers manage their pupils well, with a firm but friendly approach and pupils respond with respect and a willingness to work hard.
168. As at the time of the last inspection, most pupils show interest in and commitment to their work. The majority clearly want to achieve good standards, and work hard in order to do so. As a result, they make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and understanding. Pupils listen to their teachers attentively and most concentrate well on their work. The behaviour of the vast majority is good and often very good. Pupils display a mature approach to working in pairs and groups. In a small number of lessons, a few pupils are too ready to let others do the work.
169. The subject meets the statutory teaching requirements for Key Stage 3. The department is very well led and managed. There is a clear commitment to maintaining and, if possible, improving the above-average attainment in public examinations, and there is a very good ethos for learning in lessons. There is a good contribution by the department to the pupils' moral, social and cultural development and the annual visit to Ypres continues to provide excellent opportunities for spiritual development. Planning for future development of the department is at present only short-term, and is not clearly linked to the school development plan. The lack of any computers in the department for use by pupils is a weakness, but the department has reasonable access to the centrally-

provided information and communication technology facilities and is beginning to develop ways of using information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

170. The 2000 GCSE results were above the national average. Results have improved significantly over the past four years. There was no significant difference on the attainment between boys and girls. The teacher assessment of 14-year-olds in 2000 showed standards similar to the national average. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
171. In lessons and work seen, the attainment of 14-year-old pupils is at the level expected. Pupils enter the school with varied previous experience, but, with the benefit of regular lessons, they make good progress. They have a good understanding of word processing and use this confidently. They enter the text, use the appropriate facilities to correct and edit their work and have a clear grasp of producing a publication to suit a particular audience. For example, they present a text in columns, use different styles of lettering and place art graphics, adjusting them appropriately to fit the publication.
172. Pupils use a database competently by the age of 14. They know how to enter the information and that it is necessary to create 'fields' to separate the data and how to search for information. Pupils have an awareness of its use and that one can access information quickly, but few pupils were able to explain its use in a wider context.
173. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of spreadsheets and have modelled spreadsheets to represent real life situations; for example, the expenditure of a household, displaying fuel costs and other payments over a period. These findings were then displayed in a graph form. These real life situations contributed well to their overall understanding of a spreadsheet and its use beyond the classroom.
174. Pupils' knowledge and use of control technology are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. Although pupils in Year 9 are beginning to use Logo, a simple control program, their overall understanding of this element is too narrow. The school is aware of this weakness and there are plans to develop this element of technology with more improved software and a greater use of control technology within the design and technology department. Pupils use the facilities of the Internet with confidence. They understand the benefits when researching information for topics and projects.
175. The knowledge and the skills of the pupils in the GCSE groups are above average. However, the overall attainment of pupils aged 16 is average. The GCSE pupils have good knowledge of a range of applications and use them with confidence. Pupils have a very good understanding of a spreadsheet and its use in a wider context. An example of this was a topic on currency transactions. Here, pupils using the Internet to collect information, entered the exchange rates for several countries and, using the appropriate formulas, calculated percentage commission on individual transactions. In order to make this application attractive to the user, flags of countries were placed on the front page and, using the hyperlink facility, pupils were able to access and quickly display the exchange rates for individual countries.
176. Pupils' knowledge of a database is good at this stage. Pupils have a clear understanding of the benefits of the use of technology to access and filter information quickly. They also have a sound understanding of the use of control technology. This was evident in a topic examining the use of computer control at a local water park. Pupils who were creating a web site for the school, using basic computer language to create a moving text, displayed thorough understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons and achieve appropriate targets. Larger monitor screens are provided for visually impaired pupils. The overall standard of pupils' attainment has improved since the previous inspection.
177. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. That of the specialist teachers is good. Some of that by non-specialists is unsatisfactory. Most teachers have good subject knowledge; this is well used to demonstrate procedures. Good individual support during lessons, helping and motivating all



pupils, promotes effective learning. Teachers have good discipline, insisting on full attention when explaining a new procedure, resulting in pupils quickly on task.

178. Most lessons are underpinned with well focused questioning to ascertain understanding before starting a task; this leads to good progress. An example of this was when demonstrating the use a control technology. The outcome of this was that pupils developed a good understanding of control, showing a high level of interest and enthusiasm.
179. Teaching is less effective when teachers do not have the subject knowledge and are unable to guide pupils through the appropriate procedures, resulting in a slowing of learning and little or no progress. The planning of lessons is generally good, but there are occasions when the content lacks challenge and does not extend the pupils' knowledge, especially that of the higher attainers. Learning is better when teachers use a large screen to demonstrate procedures. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection.
180. The provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum was judged to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection with an unstructured approach. This has now improved, with some good examples of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The number and quality of computers are now much better. Good examples of better usage were observed in geography, using the Internet, in music composition at Key Stage 4, and in science for data logging. Although most subject areas use the main computer area regularly there is still a lack of hardware in departments to provide regular hands-on experience. Subjects that have access to computers in their departments make good progress, for example French, using the Internet facilities, and English who use the word processing facility for the drafting work. Art and religious education make too little use of information and communication technology. Although design and technology use information and communication technology facilities for food studies, their use of computer-aided design is insufficient. E-mail is a well-developed area.
181. The subject is well led by a head of department who has a clear vision for future development and the need to maintain and improve standards. The good support provided for teachers, including that by a very able network manager, the on-going training, the improved resources and the increased provision for the teaching of information and communication technology are all having a positive effect on progress and learning.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

182. All pupils study French or German as a first foreign language in Years 7 to 9. Half the pupils also learn the language they did not begin in Year 7 in Years 8 and 9. These pupils choose one or both languages in Years 10 and 11. The remaining four sets continue with their foreign language in Years 10 and 11.
183. The French GCSE results have been below national standard in recent years and German results have been well below that level. The GCSE results in both languages have been lower than most other subjects in the school. However, teacher assessments in Year 9 were well above national standards in 2000 and a significant minority of pupils in the current Year 9 are already in line with national standards in both French or German in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
184. Standards in the lessons seen in Year 10 showed pupils working close to national averages, but standards are still below average in Year 11 in both French and German. At both key stages, standards are above average in reading and writing and below it in listening and speaking. When listening, a Year 11 German class heard information about different people on holiday on tape and could identify many details: the best pupils were able to do this after listening only once. When speaking, a Year 8 German class worked in pairs preparing a dialogue about their family and then performed them for the whole class. Pupils in a Year 10 German class read opinions about films and understood whether they were positive or negative. Pupils in a Year 10 French class wrote about their daily routine.

185. Pupils make unnecessary errors in grammar and spelling and do not check their written work carefully enough. Girls are more conscientious and usually attain better results than boys. However, insufficient use of pair work and the careless errors pupils make in written work are preventing pupils from achieving higher standards. There are no significant variations between pupils of different ethnicity, background, nor ability. Pupils have regular reading sessions: these contribute well to their general literacy and develop their French and German skills and knowledge, including the use of dictionaries.
186. Pupils spend most of their lesson time using the foreign language in listening, speaking, reading and writing: this contributes appropriately to their literacy skills. Numeracy activities have been incorporated successfully into schemes of work and are used by teachers. Some pupils have had limited access to computers, but they use them well when they have the opportunity, particularly to access foreign language resources from the Internet.
187. The previous report, written at a time when French and German were optional after the age of 14, mentioned a number of positive points: there were no specific criticisms to address and there has been satisfactory improvement since 1996, with clear improvements in management and the departmental ethos for learning. All 16-year-olds now study a modern foreign language.
188. The overall quality of teaching of both French and German is good. All the teaching was at least satisfactory; most was good and some very good or excellent in both French and German. The quality of teaching is raising standards and ensuring satisfactory and often good progress. The teachers plan a sequence of activities, are proficient in French and German, project their voices clearly and have good accents in French and German. They use the foreign languages for parts of the lesson, but sometimes use too much English. Some use overhead projectors well, but others do not use them sufficiently. They use other resources effectively to increase learning.
189. Standards of discipline are generally good, but a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate sufficiently. Time is used well and teachers are good at encouraging oral work in pairs: however, sometimes, they do not use pair work sufficiently. Teachers display pupils' work, maps, posters and other authentic material, which increase the pupils' knowledge of the languages and countries concerned. However, more maps and display are needed in some classrooms.
190. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and results inform subsequent teaching. Useful homework is set regularly. The teaching of those with special educational needs is satisfactory and meets the needs of these pupils well. Teachers manage classes well. For example, in a Year 9 French class, the teacher practised information about food and drink, then revised the past, present and future tenses, before asking pupils to write an account about what an active young person did regularly, had done and would do. In a Year 10 German class, the teacher gave detailed and helpful feedback to individual pupils about their written coursework, while the remainder were doing reading and writing tasks. In a Year 8 French class, the teacher used the overhead projector and flash cards effectively to ask pupils questions about transport.
191. The vast majority of pupils behave well. They show interest in their work, sustain their concentration and develop good study skills. Their response is at least satisfactory and often good or very good in Key Stages 3 and 4. Many pupils show an obvious sense of enjoyment in lessons. They work well in pairs and, sometimes, have opportunities to use their initiative in creating role-plays and working independently. Their positive attitudes are enabling them to improve their performance. However, a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate and achieve their potential. Most pupils, including the most and least able and those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons at both key stages.
192. The organisation of the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The head of department monitors the progress of pupils in French and German. The department is well led and organised, has prioritised development plans and works well as a team. The department lacks sufficient computer software, blinds and screens. Some rooms also need white boards. Visits to France and Germany encourage social interaction and personal responsibility and improve language competence. The

textbooks and other materials used, together with the visits abroad, help develop awareness of the diversity and richness of other cultures.

193. The quality of most teaching, the attitudes of most pupils, visits abroad and the leadership of the head of modern languages have a positive effect on standards. However, insufficient use of pair work and the foreign languages by teachers, lack of resources, and the errors pupils make in written work are preventing pupils from achieving higher standards.

## MUSIC

194. Teachers' assessment of 14-year-olds in 2000 show that pupils' attained the standard expected. In the 2000 GCSE examination, all the pupils entered achieved grades A\*-C. This is well above the national average. These high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. There was no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.
195. By the time pupils reach 14 years, their attainment is at the level expected. Pupils' performance is good. They read accurately from formal notation and have the confidence to perform in groups or on their own. All the pupils have the opportunity to play the recorder and this is contributing well to their rhythmic qualities that are at a good level. Pupils' listening skills are well developed. They recognise different styles of music, identify instruments that are being played and use the appropriate vocabulary when describing the music, using words such as dynamics and texture with understanding. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
196. Pupils' composition skills are not as good as they should be by age 14. One reason for this is the limited time allocated to develop these skills and so pupils do not have the opportunity to transfer the knowledge gained from performance and listening to their creative work. Another reason is the inadequacies of the accommodation and the lack of suitable areas for pupils to practise. Pupils in Year 9 use information and control technology programs to support composition work, but this facility is not used enough at Key Stage 3. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are fully integrated into lessons.
197. The attainment of 16-year-old pupils is well above that expected. They have very good knowledge of the main historical musical events. They name the different periods of music, recognise the individual styles and name the composers that contributed to each period. Pupils' composition skills are well developed at this stage. The majority have produced a series of compositions that have structure, the appropriate development and an individual style.
198. Pupils discuss their work confidently and are committed musicians. They work well in lessons, even when not directly supervised by the teacher and approach the subject with a sense of maturity. Information and communication technology music programs are used well to support development in composition. This is having a positive effect on their progress and learning. Pupils perform competently on their individual instruments with confidence. These high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
199. The quality of teaching is good at all stages and none was unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use their musicianship skills effectively to demonstrate, resulting in pupils being quickly on task and making good progress. Teachers have good discipline, insisting on quiet when explaining a skill. Lessons are appropriately planned to develop pupils' musical knowledge with a variety of activities to maintain their interest. Clear explanations at the beginning of lessons ensure that pupils are fully aware of the task, leading to good progress and learning. On the occasions when teaching was less effective, too much time was spent on one activity, resulting in the pupils getting restless and learning slowed. Learning also slowed when the activity lacked challenge. This was noticeable during a creative lesson. Here the content of the lesson did not take into account pupils' previous experience and did not build on pupils' existing knowledge; consequently learning and progress were slow.
200. The standard of extra-curricular music is high. The wide variety of styles of music available contributes well to the pupils' musical development. These ensembles are keenly supported by

pupils who are proud to be included. These activities are well organised by teachers and rehearsals proceed at a good pace. The management of the subject is good. The head of department and assistant work hard and provide rich and varied musical experiences for pupils. This is contributing well to raising standards. Accommodation is inadequate; there are insufficient music practice rooms.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

201. The standards achieved by pupils in the GCSE examinations in 2000 were above the national average and they were significantly above the national average in 1999. Results have been consistently high over the past years. Teachers' assessments of 14-year-olds in 2000 indicated that pupils' attainment was well above the national average.
202. Pupils arrive at the school with a below average level of skill and experiences in gymnastics, particularly. By the age of 14, standards vary between activities, but are in line with those expected, overall. In Years 7 and 8, standards in dance are above those expected, with most pupils able to plan and perform a group dance. Pupils demonstrate good body awareness and most show poise in their work. In Years 7 and 8, standards in basketball are in line with those expected, but, in Year 9, they are not as high as they should be. Pupils dribble the ball with control, know a range of passes and play the game to an average level. Shooting at the basket is a weakness of some pupils.
203. Standards in gymnastics are not good enough for 14-year-olds in general. A few pupils in a Year 9 gymnastics class, however, demonstrated above average standards. They linked movements in a sequence with an understanding of body tension in balancing. In another Year 9 lesson, most pupils did not understand the features of a balance and were unable to perform simple rolls or plan a satisfactory sequence.
204. The standards attained by 16-year-olds are in line with those expected. In the GCSE course, standards vary between classes. Pupils on the GCSE course in Year 11 demonstrated accurate stopping skills with a stick in hockey and passed accurately in practice. These skills were not transferred to the games situation and most pupils were unable to play the game to the required level. Pupils have too little knowledge and understanding of the strategies of the game. The scrutiny of pupils' work revealed a high standard of presentation and positive use of the Internet in the good quality of GCSE project work.
205. In the core lessons, taken by all pupils, standards in volleyball are in line with those expected. Pupils play the game effectively with good knowledge of the rules of the game. They serve and understand the techniques that enable them to play the game successfully. Pupils at both key stages know the importance of a warm up before exercise, but many do not understand the effect of exercise on the body. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated into lessons and make satisfactory progress. Visually impaired pupils receive specialised teaching and make good progress. Pupils in general make satisfactory progress at all stages.
206. Pupils' overall attitudes to work are very good. The relationships between teachers and their pupils are very positive. Pupils are enthusiastic in their lessons and many try hard to do their best. The behaviour of most pupils is very good. They listen to instructions and many work co-operatively with a partner and in groups. Some pupils on the GCSE course do not take their work seriously, have a poor attitude to their work and demonstrate little interest in theory lessons. This is replicated in their lack of participation in practical work and their unsatisfactory behaviour. Pupils are not always co-operative and a few show a lack of respect for their teacher.
207. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good, although two lessons at Key Stage 3 were less than satisfactory. In the best lessons, planning is good and indicates appropriate objectives, but, in other lessons, planning does not consider specific activities or support for pupils with special educational needs. Pace to lessons is often brisk and teachers manage classes effectively. In dance lessons, teacher expectations are high and demands are made on pupils to produce quality movement and consider others in a group dance. The small amount of less than satisfactory

teaching was due to a lack of challenge in a Year 7 soccer lesson and pupils in Year 9 being off task for too long in a gymnastics lesson. At Key Stage 4, teachers have high expectations. All teachers are enthusiastic. Their subject knowledge of specific activities is good, but their general understanding of the National Curriculum requirements is not good enough. There has been no planning for the recently introduced Curriculum 2000. After school sessions are offered to the older pupils and these extend the gifted and talented pupils.

208. The management of the department is unsatisfactory overall, but the leadership is good. There has been little improvement since the last inspection. Standards have remained broadly the same, but there is a better ethos for learning. The curriculum still does not ensure equality of access for boys and girls. At Key Stage 3, boys are not taught dance and girls are not taught orienteering. At Key Stage 4, boys are not taught trampolining. The time allocated at Key Stage 4 is insufficient to allow coverage of the planned curriculum. The department does not make its full range of expertise available to all pupils. Curriculum planning is weak and assessment, a shortcoming in the last inspection, still does not take into consideration what pupils know, understand and can do. Schemes of work do not yet match all the programmes of study in the National Curriculum. There is not a consistent involvement by all staff of non-participant pupils in lessons and there is no accreditation for pupils apart from the GCSE course. The hard court areas have been resurfaced.
209. The indoor accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is only one suitable indoor space in the sports hall and the heating is inadequate. Two lessons often take place in the sports hall at the same time and the interference caused between them limits the pupils' progress. The school hall is unsuitable for dance, especially immediately after lunchtime. Resources for gymnastics are unsatisfactory. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities on offer to pupils and many pupils have been successful in representation at local, regional and county level.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

210. The results in the 1999 and 2000 GCSE examinations at grades A\*-C were above the national average. In both years, all pupils obtained a pass grade. The standard achieved by girls was significantly better than that achieved by boys. There are no strategies to address this issue. Since the last inspection, the time allocation for non-GCSE religious education in Key Stage 4 has been increased and from September 2000 non-GCSE pupils are being offered an opportunity to enter for a short course GCSE.
211. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' achievements are in line with the expectation of the locally Agreed Syllabus. All pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils have a basic knowledge of five world religions and use technical vocabulary confidently. They know about such topics as the founders of faiths, worship, religious books, symbolism and imagery and divisions within Christianity. They recall factual information and extract information from a variety of sources such as books, videos and worksheets, as in a Year 7 lesson on the importance of Moses for Judaism. Pupils collected a lot of information from a video and discussed it confidently with the teacher. Pupils also state and explain some similarities and differences between two religions, such as those between Muslim and Hindu beliefs in an after-life, as seen in a Year 8 lesson. Pupils have difficulty in coping with questions of meaning, such as the existence of suffering, free will and arguments for the existence of God.
212. At Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is similar to that of most 16-year-olds. They know about religious and moral issues associated with such themes as forgiveness, war and peace, abortion, euthanasia, racism, marriage, ageism and sexism and they have the opportunity to study another world religion, Buddhism. Some pupils have difficulty in developing informed opinions based on evidence, reasons, analysis and evaluation. Some extended pieces of writing by higher attaining pupils were of a high standard and well presented. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils worked in groups, reflected on the theme of gender stereotyping and used role-play successfully to share their understanding with their peers. Standards achieved are appropriate for most pupils; pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented make good progress.

213. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs, including the visually impaired pupils, also acquire satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding, but they often have difficulty in writing down their ideas. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented make sound progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4 because teachers match tasks and learning resources to their needs and ensure that pupils know what to do in class.
214. Standards of attainment are higher than when the school was last inspected. In response to the last inspection report, assessment procedures have improved and are now good; there needs, however, to be a clear statement of how assessment data are being used in the planning and evaluation of learning. The department has increased pupils' awareness of information and communication technology, but more needs to be done in religious education to improve the proficiency of all pupils in its use. Work is usually well matched to the whole range of pupils' ability.
215. The attitude of many pupils to learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4. Pupils listen to the teacher and to each other. Many show their interest by concentrating on their tasks and working sensibly in pairs or groups. Although there were no serious behaviour problems, a minority in several classes needed to be rebuked frequently, because of silly behaviour and calling out. This had an adverse effect on pupils' rate of learning and interrupted the pace of a lesson. However, most pupils are interested in their work and are keen to do well.
216. The teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject, plan their lessons effectively and expect pupils to behave well and work hard. Appropriate methods are used to rouse interest and extend pupils' understanding, such as questioning, role-play, research tasks and brainstorming. Lessons, generally, moved at a brisk pace and time was often well used, except in a few lessons where there were minor interruptions. Teachers have a good rapport with most pupils, create a positive learning ethos and try to raise pupils' self-esteem. Homework is regularly set and assessed work is especially carefully marked, with comments added. Sometimes comments indicate how pupils' work could be improved.
217. The rate of learning is especially good at Key Stage 4 where pupils learn about moral issues. Challenging tasks, stimulating learning resources and questioning stimulate pupils' interest, as seen in a Year 11 lesson on racism where video material provoked pupils' thinking and strong emotions at the treatment of a coloured pupil by white teachers. The learning of some pupils is occasionally hindered by their poor motivation.
218. Although the head of department was absent, there was evidence of professional and academic leadership in the quality of learning resources and the programme of study, based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, 1996. Staff show a commitment to raising standards and need to continue to do so. The programme of visits and visitors needs to be developed further to include a wider range of religions and similarly, the department should consider extending the practice of the very successful Hindu Day to include other faiths. This would also enhance pupils' understanding of the cultural dimension of world religions and improve the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to which religious education makes a very good contribution.