

INSPECTION REPORT

BISHOP PEROWNE CofE HIGH SCHOOL

Merriman's Hill Road, Worcester

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116993

Headteacher: Mr. P. Warner

Reporting inspector: Denis Pittman
16976

Dates of inspection: 14th – 18th May 2001

Inspection number: 188899

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Merriman's Hill Road Worcester
Postcode:	WR3 8LE
Telephone number:	01905 746800
Fax number:	01905 746846
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. A. Kington
Date of previous inspection:	13 th May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16976	Mr. D. Pittman	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9724	Ms. B. Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
28097	Ms. S. Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3943	Mr. D. Innes	Team inspector	English Special Educational Needs	
20729	Mr. J. Berry	Team inspector	Science	
10385	Mr. K. Hopkins	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology Design and Technology	
10053	Ms. J. Simms	Team inspector	Art and Design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20497	Mr. V. Williams	Team inspector	Geography	

4829	Mr. I. Waters	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
22501	Ms. S. Jones	Team inspector	Music	How well is the school led and managed? (Staffing)
13217	Mr. M. Butterworth	Team inspector	Physical Education	How well is the school led and managed? (Accommodation)
10895	Mr. D. Wasp	Team inspector	History Equality of Opportunity	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? (SMSC)

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

15 The Birches
Bramhope
Leeds
LS16 9DP

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 11
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12 - 17
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	17 - 20
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	20 - 22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	22 - 24
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	24 - 25
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25 - 28
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	29
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	30 - 34
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	35 - 53

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bishop Perowne is an average sized, mixed, 11-16, Church of England High School situated in the Cathedral City and Diocese of Worcester. As a Church school it draws children from all over the diocese, but primarily from five local primary schools serving the northern part of Worcester. The school is fully comprehensive with a full range of abilities and diversity of socio-economic backgrounds. The school draws children from both affluent suburbs and deprived areas of Worcester. The school has been consistently over-subscribed for a number of years and is in the process of expanding further. The current school role is 961 (442 boys, 519 girls). Overall standards of attainment on entry are average. The school has identified 208 pupils as having special educational need; this number is in line with the national average. Eleven pupils have statements of education need, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language (5.6%) is higher than in most schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bishop Perowne is a good school with some significant strengths. It is well led and managed by the headteacher, governors and other staff with management responsibilities. Standards of attainment are above national averages. Pupils make good progress, achieve well and have an enthusiasm for learning. Relationships are good; there is a strong sense of community where everyone is valued. The quality of teaching is a major strength; it effectively promotes pupils' learning. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Raises attainment and promotes pupils' achievement in GCSE examinations.
- Standards of teaching are good and often very good.
- Development of the performing and visual arts.
- Promotes very effectively the social, moral and cultural development of pupils.
- Develops positive and supportive relationships between staff and pupils.
- Encourages positive attitudes to learning and provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.

What could be improved

- Monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress, which leads to the setting of individual targets in basic skills, and for pupils with special educational needs.
- Communication with parents and the quality of reports
- Behaviour management in Years 10 and 11.
- Provision of information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11 and across the curriculum.
- Management of music.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues raised in the last inspection in 1996. Standards of attainment have improved; this is reflected both in results for National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations. Attainment has been substantially raised in Years 10 and 11, in geography and design and technology. Pupils have better attitudes to learning and achieve well. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in mathematics. The school has introduced successful strategies for raising the achievement of boys.

Leadership and management have improved significantly. A clear agenda for school improvement has been effectively implemented. Staff have been encouraged to share the educational vision and be part of the process of change; most have responded positively. Consultation and procedures for decision making are more detailed and efficient. Communication within the school is becoming more open. Curricular planning is systematic and has enabled the introduction of new courses such as expressive arts. Effective strategies for developing literacy have been introduced and successfully contribute to the progress being made in reading and writing

The school has developed an effective cycle of self- review for departments. Staff with management responsibilities are now more involved in forward planning. A communication and monitoring link has been established between senior management and departments. Detailed evaluations of lessons and subsequent support for staff have led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching. Standards of teaching have become a strength of the school with many examples of high quality performance.

Financial management and the planning of the use of resources are efficiently linked to school priorities. A higher proportion of the school budget is allocated to learning resources for departments.

The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents have been improved; they now contain all the required statutory information.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds, based on average point scores in National Curriculum Tests and GCSE examinations.

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

Last year, the overall result in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests was above the national average and in line with that for similar schools. In English attainment was well above the national average; it was in line with the expected standards for mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, standards in English were above average but were below average in mathematics and science. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

Overall GCSE results were above the national average and were in line with similar schools. The attainment of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades (55 per cent) was above the national average. However, the number of pupils gaining five or more A* to G grades or one A* to G grade was below the national average and well below comparable schools. The performance of boys and girls are not significantly different from each other. The trend of improvement in GCSE performance is above the national picture. There were above average standards of attainment in English literature, art, design and technology, geography, expressive arts. Results in French were below average.

The school set a realistic target of 53 per cent for its GCSE performance at A* to C in 2000; subsequent results were marginally above this figure. The target for 2001 of 54 per cent is appropriate and reflects the potential of this particular group of pupils.

Standards seen in lessons generally reflect the national test and examination results. At age 14 standards are above national expectations for most subjects, apart from in physical education, ICT and modern foreign languages where attainment is in line with expectations. Attainment in music, in Years 7 to 9, is below average. Standards in art are well above national averages. Improvements in the attainment of mathematics and science are as yet not reflected in national test results. At the end of Year 11, attainment is also above national expectations for the same range of subjects; standards improve in design and technology and geography to become well above average. Attainment in physical education improves to become above expectations. In lessons, standards of attainment in music are more in line with expectations. Standards of literacy are improving particularly in reading and writing. Standards of numeracy are also improving but not at the same pace as literacy.

Pupils' progress is generally good in subjects; it is satisfactory in mathematics, science, music, ICT and modern foreign languages. The progress and achievements of pupils with special educational needs are good; and result from the very effective support given to them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are well motivated and respond with high levels of interest. Most pupils enjoy school. Many take an active part in clubs, sports and charity events. Pupils also work well together.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In lessons, pupils behave well. Most pupils also behave well around the school but a small minority, predominately in Year 10, does not conform to these good standards; there are instances of oppressive and rude behaviour. Behaviour in assemblies is good but is not so consistent in 'community spaces' such as the dining area. There are occasional instances of bullying.

Personal development and relationships	Good. Relations are good, both among pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils value their teachers' help and have confidence in their support. Pupils show a good participation in extra-curricular activities such as sports, dance, music and art clubs.
Attendance	Good. Attendance figures are above the national targets for schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen	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 overall quality of teaching is good. In the lessons observed during the inspection, it was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of them. Teaching was very good or better in 26 per cent of lessons and good in 44 per cent. Four per cent of lessons were excellent and a smaller proportion (three per cent) was unsatisfactory. There are examples of excellent teaching in English, art and design, dance, design and technology and physical education.

Good subject knowledge and high expectations of students are strong features of many lessons. Standards of teaching are good in all subjects apart from modern foreign languages and music in Years 10 and 11 where they are satisfactory. The teaching of music in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. In most subjects the thoughtful planning of activities helps to sustain pupils' interest and involvement in their work. The effective management of pupils is a particularly good in mathematics, geography and physical education. The skills of literacy are taught well in most subjects. There is an increasing emphasis given to the teaching of numeracy skills in the curriculum..

Pupils' learning is predominately good in most subjects. Their positive attitudes to learning ensure that they develop subject skills well. The interest and commitment they show in lessons produces high-quality work, as in art, textiles and English. Overall, the school meets the needs of its pupils well particularly those who are higher attainers and those who require support for special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The breadth and balance is appropriate to pupils' needs and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Statutory requirements are met, although National curriculum requirements are not met in music through lack of ICT resources
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. In years 7-9 pupils are well-supported by classroom assistants. Good extension to their courses through both a skills and work-related programme. Target setting needs to be improved.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well integrated into the lesson activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for the social development of pupils is very good. Moral and cultural development is good. A rich diversity of visits, trips and activities extends pupils' experience. Spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. Procedures to promote good behaviour and enforce discipline are broadly satisfactory but lack consistency in practice. A minority of pupils in Year 10 and 11 are disruptive. The monitoring of the personal development of individual pupils is unsatisfactory. There is no co-ordinated whole school system to track pupils' attainment or to rapidly identify underachievement

The links, which the school has with parents, are satisfactory overall, though stronger in some areas than others. Parents make a good contribution of parents to their children's learning. The school appropriately involves parents when concerns over attendance or behaviour occur. Sometimes the school responds more slowly when parents contact it with their concerns. The information provided for parents about their children's progress is unsatisfactory. Annual reports give only a very general indication of attainment and achievement. There is no system for tracking individual pupils' personal progress but the school is aware of this shortcoming.

The pupils' learning is effectively promoted through schemes of work of good quality in most subjects. There are good links with primary schools from which the pupils transfer. The personal and social education course provides informative and challenging opportunities for discussion and study. The extra-curricular provision is good with many clubs and activities arranged to support pupils' personal development. The school council encourages pupils to take responsibility and show initiative. The provision for the arts is a strength. The provision of discrete lessons in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 7 is satisfactory but the provision thereafter is inconsistent within departments. The overall provision for ICT, in Years 10 and 11, is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is effective and efficient; he provides a very good educational direction for the school. Good support is evident from most other staff with management responsibilities. The management of design and technology, geography and physical education are very good but the management of music is unsatisfactory.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors take a keen and informed interest in the school's work. They take a full part in forward planning and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. The communication between the school and governors is open and productive. The school fails to comply fully with the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Procedures for evaluating the quality of teaching are effective and have improved examination performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are efficiently deployed through detailed planning and a clear specification of educational priorities. The school is using new technology well to improve its efficiency.

The commitment and work of the pastoral teams is satisfactory but lacks consistency as for example in the monitoring of 'student planners'. The overall staffing provision is satisfactory. In most subjects, staff specialisms meet the demands of the curriculum, apart from in modern foreign languages and business studies. The overall accommodation provision is good but facilities for dance and drama are unsatisfactory. Allocations for learning resources are satisfactory.

Financial planning is effective and relates well to the schools' improvement plans. The school consults a range of people about important matters and obtains resources at a competitive price. It uses them in the best possible way to meet its aims. It is becoming more efficient in comparing its performance with that of other schools. Financial control is adequate but sometimes lacks sufficient rigour in meeting deadlines for reporting and monitoring requirements.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expectation that children should work hard. • Their children like school and are making good progress. • The teaching is good. • Their children are being helped to become more mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not work closely enough with them and does not keep them sufficiently informed about their children's progress. • The amount of homework being set. • The range of extra-curricular activities being offered.

The inspection team supports the positive views of parents, especially about the high expectations and good teaching; these features enable pupils to make good progress. The amount of homework is generally appropriate and is regularly set, although not consistently monitored. The range of activities provided outside lessons is generally good although there has been a reduction in the amount of sporting activities for girls. However, the information provided about progress is not satisfactory and on occasions the school is slow to respond to parental concerns which undermines faith in the communication between the school and the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall standards of attainment on entry are in line with national averages. From the evidence produced in nationally recognised tests of potential, the ability profile of pupils has been improving in recent years.
2. Last year, the overall result in the Key Stage 3 tests was above the national average and in line with that for similar schools. In English pupils' attainment was well above the national average; it was in line with the expected standards for mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, standards in English were above average but were below average in mathematics and science. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.
3. Overall GCSE results were above the national average and were in line with similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades (55 per cent) was above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to G grades or one A* to G grade was below the national average and well below comparable schools. The performance of boys and girls was similar. The trend of improvement in GCSE performance was above the national picture. There were good examination results in English literature, art, design and technology, geography, and expressive arts. Results in French were below average.
4. The school set a realistic target of 53 per cent for its GCSE performance at A* to C in 2000; subsequent results were marginally above this figure. The target for 2001 of 54 per cent is appropriate and reflects the potential of this particular group of pupils.
5. Pupils' attainment in English is above average at both key stages. Pupils aged 14 have developed good listening skills. They speak clearly and confidently with many making appropriate use of technical language. Pupils read aloud confidently and fluently and with good understanding of the main ideas. A high proportion can identify significant details, understand implication and recognise how writers gain their effects. Pupils take pride in their written work and are careful to present it well. They can write for a variety of purposes using the relevant language. The persistent misspelling of words in everyday use often reduces the quality of the writing of pupils. At sixteen years of age most pupils are confident and articulate in speech. They listen attentively and with quick understanding to teachers and their classmates. Pupils read aloud well. Levels of achievement by most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is good. Progress in both key stages, for all ability groups, is good.
6. Standards of literacy improve from satisfactory at the time of pupils' entry to the school to good. Pupils with severe weaknesses in reading and writing, particularly, make good progress because their difficulties are identified early. They receive very effective specialist help when withdrawn from lessons or when working alongside the capable classroom assistants. In this way, pupils' skills and confidence improve. Year 7 pupils benefit from reading with partners from Year 10.
7. All pupils benefit from the quality of contributions made by most subjects to the development of their literacy skills. Teachers have good awareness of work now done in primary schools to raise standards. They build upon this in several ways. In most

classrooms there are displays of words pupils need to know. Teachers ensure that pupils understand, use and correctly spell these key words. Most subjects provide opportunities for pupils to write at length but only in English and history are pupils regularly given clear guidance on how to organise such writing. Good opportunities for writing verse are provided in English and science. The link between speaking and reading and writing is well understood and class discussion occurs regularly in all subjects though opportunities to work in smaller groups is a strength only in design technology, English and history.

8. Standards of attainment in mathematics are above average by the end of Year 9. Pupils in middle groups have good 'mechanical' skills particularly in algebra. Some pupils have difficulty in interpreting graphs accurately and find work on bearings difficult. Pupils in lower groups have weak numeracy skills. By the end of Year 11, although standards remain above average overall, there is a range of attainment in lessons, which is mostly a reflection of the setting arrangements. Pupils take a systematic approaches to investigational tasks and link their generalisations well to the physical problems. They are confident in using mathematical notation, working with angles in polygons, and in using a range of methods to solve equations. Pupils with special educational needs manage simple transformations well but have difficulty in identifying underlying patterns. Achievement through both key stages is satisfactory. Within mathematics, there is planned provision to develop pupils' numeracy skills in Year 7 and to continue the learning begun in primary schools. This practice is gradually influencing positively strategies to improve pupils' attainment in numeracy in other year groups.
9. Art lessons make a strong contribution to enhancing and developing pupils' spatial skills. Pupils are particularly successful in applying these skills to the two-dimensional representation of three-dimensional shapes. In science, pupils use graphs satisfactorily to communicate their experimental results. Their algebraic skills are sufficient to enable them to manage simple formulae in their scientific calculations. Pupils use graphs less well than they should, in geography, in their early years in the school. However, pupils use their numerical skills well in their GCSE geography coursework. In both history and religious education, pupils use and interpret statistical data satisfactorily when considering population and issues of poverty. In design and technology, teachers make good use of opportunities to use and reinforce pupils' skills, as in calculating resistance in an electronics lesson.
10. Overall, pupils' numeracy skills are better in Years 7 and 8 than in older year groups. A group in Year 7 showed very good facility in converting decimals and fractions mentally, while others managed work with number operations well. In these year groups, pupils' numeracy skills match the level of their other mathematical skills. However, some older pupils still struggle with mental methods, with one group finding change from a pound difficult. GCSE pupils still have weaknesses in finding fractions of quantities, and in topics such as long multiplication. A significant proportion rely too readily on their calculators.
11. By the end of Year 9 standards in science are above average. Progress is most rapid in experimental science, where pupils acquire many useful skills for carrying out and recording experiments. Year 7 pupils can competently use a power pack with wire, iron rods and paper clips to investigate the factors affecting the strength of an electromagnet. Year 9 pupils are able not only to perform experiments competently and record them well but also to predict what is likely to happen from basic principles. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. Attainment in Years 10 and 11 is above average. Higher attaining pupils achieve well: average and the lower attaining pupils

make satisfactory progress. Year 10 pupils can investigate practically the relationship between the angles of incidence and refraction. In all years pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils are presented with more demanding work in years 10 and 11, due to the setting system.

12. Standards of attainment in design and technology and geography are above average at in Years 7 to 9 and improve to become well above n Years 10 and 11. In design and technology, pupils show a good understanding of the design process and principles. High attainers show good graphical communication skills. Average and lower attaining pupils are sometimes unsure of the correct terminology when explaining their ideas and describing the processes involved. Pupils' skills and understanding in control technology are good. However, the work in mechanisms and pneumatics is not so well developed. In Years 10 and 11, the design process is well understood and is appropriately reflected in design projects. Graphical communication skills are very good in textiles. Design work shows good levels of creativity, and pupils make good use of the computer to produce elements of coursework. In geography at both key stages, progress is good. This level of achievement is the same in design technology and is even better at in Years 10 and 11 where it is very good.
13. Pupils' attainment in art is well above average at Key Stage 3, and is above average at Key Stage 4. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' achievement in painting is particularly good. Their constructional skills in three-dimensional work, predominantly based on card sculptures, are impressive. Pupils successfully learn the skills of mixing and blending colour. However, pupils do not learn the historical and political aspects of art so well. Practical work is very good overall by the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, pupils continue to develop their good skills in painting and modelling to high levels of expressiveness. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in both key stages.
14. Attainment in history is good at both key stages. Pupils in year 7 acquire a wide range of historical skills, including a sense of chronology and an ability to use historical sources. For example, the projects about the development of Worcester Cathedral were of a high standard. In key stage 3, higher attaining pupils use their imaginations well to produce good examples of creative and extended writing, for example, on the slave trade. In Years 10 and 11, pupils can effectively analyse documents which leads to appropriate gains in their knowledge and understanding of historical issues. Pupils make good progress in both key stages.
15. Attainment in physical education is in line with national expectations in Years 7 to 9, and improves to become above average by Year 11. At the end of Year 9, boys show good skills in cricket and a large majority have a consistent control of line and length in bowling. Girls show good progress in developing their athletic skills. All pupils make appropriate gains in game skills such as catching, throwing and striking. In Key Stage 4, pupils' files are well presented, with good standards of writing, although there was insufficient examples of the use of ICT. A minority of pupils showed a good understanding of the effects of exercise upon promoting health. Practical attainment in dance lessons is exceptionally high; pupils co-operate thoughtfully to produce work of outstanding aesthetic and interpretative quality. In both key stages, pupils make good progress in the development of their skills.
16. By the end of Year 9 pupils' attainment in music is below average. Pupils can identify different styles of music but their knowledge and understanding of music vocabulary are underdeveloped. Keyboard skills are developed well, and though the quality of

singing is satisfactory, it lacks expression. There is little evidence of pupils combining melody and harmony. By Year 11 attainment in lessons is broadly in line with expectations. Pupils can compose structured and coherent pieces of work, which are based upon their own musical interests. Some pupils are able to perform fluently and expressively. Pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but improves to become satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

17. Attainment in ICT and modern foreign languages is in line with expectations for both key stages. In ICT most pupils have good keyboarding skills, although lower attainers are not always confident at inputting text. Pupils use the mouse well to negotiate icons, menus and functions when loading the required programs and files from the network. At both key stages pupils attain well above expectations in this strand of communicating information through word processed text; these skills often incorporate producing images which are imported from a wide variety of electronic sources, including the Internet. In Year 7, pupils are able to assess different advantages of desktop publishing over word processing. Pupils' skills and knowledge in using computers and peripheral equipment for control work are good. However, skills in data logging and measuring are weak. Overall progress in both key stages is satisfactory, but is more uneven at Key Stage 4 through the unstructured opportunities within the curriculum.
18. In modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3, pupils' listening and understanding skills are generally better than their oral ones. In a Year 9 higher attaining French set, pupils asked each other about past events during the week and answered questions successfully using the perfect tense. In Year 8, pupils produced some above average writing about holidays combining time, travel and weather expressions well. However, in Year 9 there is insufficient opportunity for extended writing. In Years 10 and 11, pupils written work shows a sound knowledge of the topic vocabulary which supports them for role-play situations and aural work. Many pupils find it difficult to be consistently accurate when they use the tenses in extended writing. Few pupils redraft their corrected work or complete corrections to improve accuracy. Generally, achievement is satisfactory at both key stages.
19. Pupils on the register of special educational needs gain results in public examinations, which exceed reasonable expectation, based on attainment assessed at entry. The school has identified 16 pupils as being gifted on the basis of high performance in screening tests taken soon after entry. Teachers have been asked to monitor the progress of these pupils and to seek to enrich their learning. This represents a pilot and it is intended to introduce agreed strategies at a future date. Pupils and parents are not aware of which pupils have been identified. Provision for higher attainers leads to results which match assessed potential. The school makes no specific provision for pupils with English as an additional language as their English competence is of a sufficiently high standard so that can be fully integrated into subject groupings.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. Pupils have good attitudes to the school and to their studies. They are well motivated and respond with high levels of interest to stimulating teaching. In a Year 7 English lesson, studying ballads, pupils listened attentively, were quick to understand but ready to ask for clarification where appropriate. This was also the case in a Year 11 mathematics lesson where pupils answered questions confidently and sought further clarification on points of uncertainty. Pupils apply themselves diligently to set tasks. In a history lesson for Year 9, pupils arrived from break in a downpour, but settled down

well, worked hard and enjoyed their lesson. Pupils respond well to praise and to teaching styles which encourage enthusiasm and interest in the subject. In a Year 7 design and technology lesson – an introduction to graphics – there was a keenness and buzz of excitement: pupils were fully engrossed in their tasks. Pupils work well independently: this is a notable feature of English lessons.

21. Standards of behaviour are generally good. In lessons, pupils behave well. Pupils also behave well as they move around the school. They are friendly, courteous, and considerate, even in congested areas. A small minority of pupils do not conform to these good standards. They can play up in lessons, by talking and misbehaving. This same small minority can be a nuisance at break and lunchtime and display rough, and occasionally rude behaviour. There are instances of bullying and oppressive behaviour which are normally resolved quickly. Permanent exclusions are low: there were none last year and only one so far this year. The level of fixed term exclusions is about average for a school of this size. During the current academic year, most fixed term exclusions – 18 out of 32 – concerned pupils in Year 10 and were a consequence of behavioural problems in that particular year group.
22. Relations in the school are good, both among pupils and between pupils and members of staff. Pupils value their teachers' help and have confidence in their support. Pupils also work well together, as for example in a Year 11 music lesson, when they helped to reassure each other about forthcoming examinations. They co-operate effectively together, as for example, in physical education and dance lessons seen during the inspection. Pupils also respond well to the provision which the school makes for their personal development. They appreciate the responsibility they are given in the Year Councils and exercise it sensibly. Older pupils help younger ones with their reading. All pupils raise money for charitable causes.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school and benefit as much as others from the opportunities it offers. When working within mixed ability classes, for example in English, or as a special set in Year 9 for science or in small groups withdrawn from classes for specialist help, pupils have positive attitudes, growing confidence and make good progress. Pupils identified as having significant emotional and behavioural difficulties mostly behave well because their difficulties are known to teachers and they are skilfully helped by learning support assistants. In a minority of lessons, their behaviour reduces the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
24. Attendance at the school is good. The rate of attendance for the academic year 1999/2000 was 92.6 percent, which is above the national average of 91.3 per cent. Authorised absence was 6.6 per cent. Unauthorised absence was 0.8 per cent, a little below the national average of 1.1 per cent. Figures for the academic year 2000/2001 are similar, though slightly less strong.
25. Pupils' attitudes have improved since the last inspection, as has attendance. Unauthorised absence has fallen.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26. The overall quality of teaching was good at both key stages. In the lessons observed during the inspection, it was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of them. Teaching was very good or better in 26 per cent of lessons and good in 44 per cent. Four per cent of lessons were excellent and a smaller proportion (3 per cent) was unsatisfactory or poor. The general quality of learning in lessons is good.

27. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects. This is used very well in art, history and physical education. In art, teachers are very skilled in showing pupils how to apply coloured techniques in a variety of media. This is particularly effective with painting and enables pupils to be unusually confident when embellishing other artefacts. In history, teachers use their subject knowledge very well to enthuse pupils, and as a result, pupils make good progress in the development of learning skills. In physical education, teachers' subject knowledge is used well to emphasise the important points of technique, to ensure that pupils get a clear understanding of what they intended to practice and learn.
28. The teaching of basic skills is generally good. In English, teachers have a good understanding of how the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy develops learning. In science, teachers pay good attention to developing pupils' literacy skills, encouraging free writing, accurate spelling and on occasions poetry. Similarly, numeracy is well integrated in many science lessons. In design technology, the development of technical language is usually implemented across all the design areas. Similarly, there are good opportunities to develop numeracy skills. In geography, key words are regularly reinforced and guidance in extended writing is effective. There are good opportunities given to pupils to read aloud in lessons.
29. Relatively few lessons have unsatisfactory features. In music lessons, for Years 7 to 9, teaching is unsatisfactory; lesson planning is often weak, learning objectives are not clearly identified, and the tasks set are not always sufficiently adapted to challenge and meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. Some science lessons tend to be teacher dominated with a limited range of methods; pupils are not sufficiently stimulated or interested in these lessons. Similarly, in some mathematics lessons, there is too much emphasis on written methods and a lack of variety in the activities for learning.
30. Detailed lesson planning is a good feature of most lessons. In English, teachers plan lessons carefully and conduct them at a crisp pace towards clearly identified learning objectives. Similarly, in science lessons, clear objectives are set for pupils. In art, the schemes of work now include historical and critical aspects in all project work. The design worksheets produced in design and technology provide pupils with clear guidelines for their tasks, although a minority of worksheets are not always sufficiently modified to meet the needs of all levels of attainment. In history, higher attaining pupils are challenged to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the subject through extension and project work. In modern foreign languages, all lessons are planned with more than one activity and a combination of language skills; this helps pupils to maintain their interest and concentration.
31. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' performance. In dance lessons, pupils are actively encouraged to plan and evaluate their work. As a result they produce an outstanding practical standard. In general, staff make every effort to provide an environment which promotes success. In most subject lessons, teachers move briskly from one task to another. This ensures that pupils sustain their concentration. In modern foreign languages, the target language is used for most of the lesson to challenge the pupils and to make them think. In history, teachers have high expectations, and this is reflected in the enlivened pace and purpose of most lessons. However, there are a few occasions when the text book tends to predominate, and in these lessons there are few opportunities for pupils to develop group work skills. There are good levels of productivity in most subjects and learning proceeds at a good pace.

32. The active involvement of pupils helps to sustain interest. In English, lessons usually comprise a series of linked units which provide a variety of activities for pupils. In mathematics, the best lessons include structured and challenging questions, as in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were skilfully guided to interpret the impact the spread of a distribution on decisions. In science, much of the teaching provides a good deal of factual knowledge for pupils and questioning is thorough to see if pupils understand the topics being discussed. In good science lessons pupils are encouraged to produce and develop ideas for themselves, with the teacher injecting just enough information to enable them to develop their own understanding. In geography there is a strong practical element with pupils involved in their own learning. For example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils confidently role-played interviews with a variety of people affected by the local Worcestershire flood. The music teacher makes good use of her own performing skills for demonstration purposes. In a Year 7 lesson, the teacher showed pupils how to fit the rhythm of the words of a song into the melody, which resulted in pupils copying and then singing the song more fluently.
33. The management and control of pupils in lessons is generally good. The good relationships between pupils and staff help to create a positive climate for learning in most lessons. Staff use praise in an effective manner to raise students' self esteem, and confidence in their abilities. However, in English, learning is sometimes disrupted by the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils. In geography lessons, classroom management and control is of a very high standard and is built upon the foundation of good relationships. In modern foreign languages lessons, relationships are good and teachers know their pupils well.
34. Time and limited resources are used well by most teachers. English classes use computers more frequently than other subjects; pupils learn to use a good range of applications which improve their drafting skills and enable them to undertake wide ranging research. In mathematics, there is also a well planned use of ICT to enhance pupils' understanding. The extensive use of visual aids such as photographs, video extracts, maps and graphs adds variety to the learning experience of pupils in geography. However, the restricted access to computer facilities is limiting pupils' development in this area.
35. The use of assessment in teaching shows some inconsistencies between subjects. In mathematics, there are missed opportunities to assess what each pupil has learnt in lessons. The pupils' work is not always regularly marked, and comments are not helpful in showing how pupils could make progress. However, in science, much of the marking is of a very high quality with useful comments, but a significant proportion of work goes unmarked, and this affects enthusiasm and standards. The quality of teaching in art is generally very high, but pupils would benefit from a greater involvement in the assessment and monitoring of their own work. In design and technology, pupils' work is consistently marked to a good standard, and teachers write constructive comments as to how pupils can improve. In geography, pupils are involved in evaluating their own work and setting targets for the future. In Year 7 ICT lessons, good verbal assessment techniques provide pupils with a clear direction for their work and identify areas for improvement. However, at Key Stage 3, pupils are not always aware of what National Curriculum levels they are working towards. In modern foreign languages, the marking of pupils' exercise books at Key Stage 3 is irregular, inconsistent and sometimes lacks sufficient rigour.
36. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught because teachers make good use of helpful information provided about each pupil's needs. Individual education

plans identify aims for progress but there is a general lack of understanding about how targets might be set to guide provision and progress towards matching these aims. Targets now being set are often imprecise, not linked to time limits and progress towards their achievement is not measurable. In mainstream lessons, particularly when support assistants are present, learning is good because teaching provides appropriate challenge for all levels of attainment. Pupils are very well taught in withdrawal sessions. Pupils with English as an additional language are effectively integrated into lessons and learn well. Pupils who have been identified in the pilot study for gifted pupils get relevant extension work to develop their learning well.

37. The standard of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now a strength of the school. There is a firm emphasis on adding variety to teaching methods and concentrating attention on how pupils learn.

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

38. The school's curriculum planning and monitoring have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils now receive a satisfactory curriculum at both key stages. Statutory requirements are met. The governing body, through its committee structure, keeps well abreast of curriculum issues through discussions with subject leaders and through links with departments. Provision for literacy is well embedded in English, but some opportunities are still missed in other subjects to reinforce aspects such as discussion. There is limited provision for numeracy across the curriculum. However, an audit of how each subject is using and enhancing numeracy has been completed, and subject areas are beginning to develop their own policies for the teaching of numeracy.
39. The school's "academic board", consisting of heads of department, the head teacher and the deputy headteacher responsible for the curriculum meets regularly to plan, monitor and review curricular developments. The school's philosophy is to regard the organisation and planning of its curriculum as seamlessly interwoven with the teaching and learning aspects of the school. This has proved effective in providing a carefully considered curriculum, which offers pupils a breadth and balance in their studies which is appropriate to their needs. An example of this is seen in the provision for a group of Year 9 pupils being taught in a flexible way which includes some setted and some mixed ability teaching. GNVQ courses, which were discontinued after the last inspection, have been replaced by a First Skills course, and/or a "Project 19" course with NVQ accreditation at Level 1. This provision exists primarily to accommodate the needs of lower attaining pupils who attend the local Further Education College for their lessons for three days each week. Whilst this is appropriate provision for these pupils, they naturally miss these days of their school curriculum studies, with consequent effects on some of their subject GCSE grades.
40. The provision for the arts is a strength, with dance well provided for and Expressive Arts GCSE providing a popular new course for many pupils in key stage 4. Staffing issues are having adverse effects on the provision of these and other post-14 areas. GCSE Business studies, for example, is provided but is staffed by temporary, non-specialist teachers. Music is unable to meet the full range of the requirements of the National Curriculum because of inadequate resources.
41. The curriculum is appropriately amended to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. In Years 7 to 9, pupils have the same access to the curriculum as other pupils because teachers know their needs and they are well supported by

classroom assistants. Provision of necessary withdrawal for specialist help aims to keep to a minimum any disruption of learning in subjects. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have opportunities to gain accreditation for a course in First Skills and to take a work-related course at the local college. The time taken for the latter means that pupils have insufficient time in school to take full courses in English. Two pupils in Year 11 have been formally disapplied from taking a modern language so that they may have extra time to improve basic skills.

42. The provision of discrete lessons in ICT in Year 7 is satisfactory. Thereafter, this provision is inconsistent, as it relies on departments to teach ICT to pupils and to assess their competence. Some departments do this, others do not. These arrangements are unsatisfactory as they do not provide equality of provision for all pupils. They otherwise have equality of access to the curriculum, with an open-option arrangement from Year 10 where 99 percent of pupils get their first choices of GCSE options.
43. The extra-curricular provision is good. Pupils are very active in taking part in music and sports activities. They attend orchestras, choirs, dance workshops and games matches. Sadly, the extremely popular, well supported and much enjoyed cross-Arts Christmas productions have recently ceased. Pupils and all involved miss these greatly, although the school still produces workshops and drama activities linked with the English department. Drama provision is amongst the school's priorities for future development.
44. The personal, social and educational programme is currently satisfactory, covering all the expected aspects of health, drugs and relationships education. With a newly appointed co-ordinator in this area reviewing the schemes of work, this is set to improve. Careers education is likewise satisfactory, but provision currently disturbed by the absence of the careers co-ordinator. The provision of vocational education is weak. However, the school is aware of this and the introduction of GNVQ's and vocational GCSE's are being considered. The local community contributes well to pupils' learning opportunities. The recent Curriculum Award acknowledged the involvement of many local companies and other organisations in the curricular provision. Links with the primary schools from which pupils transfer is strong. Several classes came into the school on the week of inspection, for example, experience in design and technology with the artist in residence who was working in wrought iron. The strong literacy elements seen in the English curriculum represent good continuity and progression from the Key Stage 2 literacy hour. When they leave the school, pupils benefit from good links with local Further Education colleges.
45. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. There is a good programme of school and year group assemblies and Eucharist celebrations. Time is provided on these occasions for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral matters. There is also a comprehensive school policy on spirituality but the impact of it is inconsistent within the school. Form tutor times fail to enrich this provision and are mainly used for social and administrative purposes. As a result, the school fails to comply fully with the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Within the curriculum, opportunities for spiritual growth are provided in history, geography and art. This provision is particularly strong in English and religious education, where numerous opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on wider issues of beliefs and values. Spiritual growth is also fostered through dance. In this context, an excellent Year 10 dance lesson was seen, in which pupils performed a very inspiring group interpretation of a war poem.

46. Good provision is made for the moral development of pupils. Firm procedures are in place to help pupils to distinguish right from wrong and issues of bullying are dealt with effectively by staff and through the peer group mentoring process. There is a valuable merit system to reward achievement and an annual awards ceremony is held in Worcester Cathedral. There is a strong sense of shared moral purpose in the school and older pupils in particular provide good role models. Many pupils are involved in charity work for a range of local and national causes. Opportunities for moral development are provided in art, history, design and technology, religious education, geography and physical education.
47. The provision for social development is very good. The year and school council system is a useful channel of communication between staff and pupils, although there needs to be a sharper definition of roles and responsibilities within this system. Older pupils act as counsellors for younger pupils and help with the Year 7 induction process. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility in activities outside school and have achieved notable successes in this area. Pupils from the school have reached the national finals of the Magistrates Court Mock Trial Competition and pupils also regularly win awards in local history competitions. There is good extracurricular provision for pupils and a number of sports clubs, music and dance groups and other activities enrich the pupils' social development. The school provides a safe and harmonious atmosphere for all its pupils based on mutual respect. Opportunities for social growth are provided in most subjects, particularly in English, religious education, physical education and geography.
48. The cultural development of pupils is good. There is a wide variety of trips, visits and exchanges to enhance awareness of the wider world, especially in English, modern foreign languages and physical education. There are also school trips to California and the Austrian Alps. Cultural awareness is also fostered through concerts given in music, through dance activities and through sporting fixtures. In the mainstream curriculum, there are opportunities for pupils to celebrate cultural diversity in religious education, with an emphasis on multifaith issues; also in history, design and technology, English, geography and art.
49. Overall, the school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. All members of the school community share a strong sense of commitment. In order to build on this positive picture, it would be beneficial for the school to monitor the provision more systematically, both at departmental and at whole school level to enable a more uniform provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. Procedures to look after pupils and ensure their welfare are generally good and have improved since the last inspection. Heads of Year and tutor teams now stay with their groups year by year. They come to know them well. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety, both within the school and on visits outside, are good. A medical room has been created since the last inspection. The personal, social and health education programme includes a good range of health education topics. Procedures for child protection are effective, with appropriate guidance for members of staff. Attendance is recorded correctly and monitored efficiently with the help of the Student Welfare Officer.
51. Pupils with special educational needs benefit as well as all other pupils from the quality of care the school provides. Reviews of progress are held at appropriate intervals, with parents or carers invited to participate. There is a weakness in the

effectiveness of target-setting. Transition plans are made for pupils with statements to support them in their final years in the school and into the next stage of their education, training or employment.

52. The procedures to promote good behaviour and enforce discipline are broadly satisfactory. There is a detailed policy on behaviour for learning but it is not implemented consistently. Pupils have a clear code of conduct to follow. Good work and effort are rewarded by merits. The school uses a points system as a means of controlling minor misdemeanours. Pupils start each term with 20 points which are lost should they misbehave. They can appeal if they consider a point unjustly lost. Points can be regained through good behaviour. Members of staff have guidance on when to deduct points. However, there are problems with the way these procedures work in practice. Pupils interviewed considered the system to be counter-productive: instead of deterring bad behaviour it discouraged good. Parents too voiced concern about the points system and in particular felt that some conscientious pupils become over-anxious about losing points. A lack of consistency in the way points are deducted is a concern shared by all - pupils, parents and members of staff. For these reasons the procedures, while not unsatisfactory, are less effective in practice than they should be. Standards of behaviour are generally good. The procedures to monitor and eliminate oppressive behaviour are good, although cases of bullying do occur. The peer support group of pupils in Year 11 is an important part of the school's anti-bullying strategy.
53. There is no system to co-ordinate the monitoring of pupils' progress across the school. Tutors see annual reports, but the information these give on attainment is very limited. In theory, students' planners should give tutors sufficient information about pupils' personal progress for them to monitor it. However, the planners are frequently incomplete and the targets set too general. Tutors vary in the attention they give to monitoring as well as in the way they use the morning registration periods and tutor time. There are areas where personal support of good quality is given - the guidance for choosing subjects at Year 10 and post 16, for example. Some pupils in Year 11 have the support of mentors. Initiatives such as First Skills and Project 19 help particular groups of pupils. The absence of co-ordinated procedures across the school for monitoring the personal development of individual pupils is unsatisfactory. The general procedures for pupils' welfare have improved since the last inspection, but responsibility for monitoring progress has not improved sufficiently.
54. Whole school arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress remain unsatisfactory from the time of the last inspection. However, there is now an efficient system to record appropriate information on pupils' attainment when they enter the school and at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Generally subject departments build on this data through their own records of test results and examinations. Although, subject areas follow a range of assessment practices, central records for pupils remain skeletal. There is very good and accurate assessment of pupils' achievements in some subjects, such as design and technology, English, history and geography, but the levels of the National Curriculum and GCSE examination grades are not used consistently, so that many pupils are unsure of how well they are doing. Likewise, the school's common marking policy is used inconsistently, both between and within departments.
55. Assessment data from examination results and subject tasks is used satisfactorily by the school and many departments to inform curricular planning. There are good examples in subjects such as English, where pupils' achievements in lessons are well used to plan further work. There is similar very good practice in design and

technology. Both science and mathematics use their analysis of examination data well to adjust the curriculum to the needs of their pupils. Although assessment data is increasingly used to predict future examination grades, rigorous target setting to help pupils achieve of their best, is still in its infancy.

56. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress across the range of subjects of the curriculum are unsatisfactory. There is no co-ordinated whole school system to track pupils' attainment or to rapidly identify underachievement. There are areas of good practice where subject departments and year groups monitor their pupils, at least satisfactorily. Within mathematics, there is a well-established database, which tracks pupils' achievements at key points. In Years 9 and 10, heads of year and tutors monitor the progress of their pupils. However, the lack of consistency in the school's practice limits the effectiveness of its efforts to support the pupils and to raise their attainment.
57. Since the last inspection, the school has made limited progress in developing its assessment practices and monitoring and support procedures. However, there has been a heightening of teachers' awareness of the use of data in raising attainment through training sessions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. Parents' views of the school are broadly satisfactory. Most parents are pleased with the school and what it provides for their children. Some expressed concern about certain aspects of the school. Most of the parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting think that their children like the school. They consider that their children make good progress and are expected to work hard. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of these parents. Some parents – a significant minority of those who returned the questionnaire - have concerns. They do not think that the set homework is appropriate, that the school provides an interesting range of extra curricular activities, that they are well informed about progress or that the school works closely with them. The inspection team considers that the homework set by the school is appropriate and that the range of activities provided outside lessons is good. However, the inspection team agrees that the information provided about pupils' progress is unsatisfactory and that on occasions there are problems of communication between the school and parents.
59. The links, which the school has with parents, are satisfactory overall, though stronger in some areas than others. The school usually involves parents quickly when concerns over attendance or behaviour occur. It writes to parents to tell them when their children have done well. Parents of pupils in Year 11 were invited to a special evening to advise them how to help their children prepare for GCSE examinations. Although parents are invited through the newsletter to comment on most school documents they were not invited to take part in the annual revision of the behaviour policy. Routine communication with parents is through pupils and tutors. Here difficulties in communication can arise when pupils are absent. Sometimes too the problem is one of perception. Some parents have the impression that the school has a slow response when they contact it with their concerns.
60. Parents of pupils with special education needs are invited to participate in reviews of their children's progress and most do so. The school liaises well with parents about day-to-day and longer term events and developments.

61. Generally, the information, which the school provides for parents about their children's progress, is unsatisfactory. Annual reports give only a very general indication of attainment within the year, and do not link this to National Curriculum levels. Only in Year 11 are pupils' target grades for practice and actual GCSE examinations given. Parents are, however, separately notified of the results of tests taken at age 14, as is required by statute. Parents did not receive interim reports this year. Some teachers tell parents precisely how well their children have done and what they should do to improve attainment in a particular subject. Such good practice is not uniform throughout the school. The quality of the information, which the school provides about itself - for example in the prospectus, the newsletters and the governors' annual report to parents, is satisfactory.
62. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is broadly satisfactory. The use parents make of their children's planners varies, while attendance at consultation evenings is good. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at home and at school. Pupils' homework benefits from access to computers if they have them at home. Parents support trips and events. The work of the Friends of Bishop Perowne makes a substantial contribution through their fundraising, social events and the organisation of the Perowne show, which also provides an important link with the community.
63. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents have improved since the last inspection. They now contain all the required information. The quality of the information about attainment and progress in pupils' annual reports remains a weakness.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. The quality of leadership and management is good. The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues raised in the last inspection in 1996. Standards of attainment have improved and they are above average at both key stages and GCSE examinations have been on an upward trend of improvement. Standards in geography and design and technology are now better. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in mathematics. The school has introduced successful strategies for raising the achievement of boys. Effective strategies for developing literacy have been introduced, and effectively contribute to the progress being made in reading and writing. The school has successfully developed an effective cycle of self-review for departments.
65. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is fully committed to raising standards in the school. He is highly efficient and has established a clear direction for the school's work and the next stages of its development. Central to his approaches to management are the principles of consultation and the delegation of appropriate responsibilities. There is a strong commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity. The management structure operates effectively and enables strengths to be recognised and areas for development and improvement to be identified.
66. The overall quality of leadership at middle management level is good. It is particularly strong and effective in design and technology, geography and physical education; management is good in all other departments apart from mathematics, science and modern foreign languages where it is satisfactory. The management of music is unsatisfactory. In this subject development planning is weak as priorities are not sufficiently linked to the school development plan and current national issues relating to the teaching of music. Schemes of work do not take account of the requirements of

the new programmes of study for Curriculum 2000. Most middle managers have established a clear direction for their subjects and efficiently monitor the work of their department. There is room for improvement in the monitoring and evaluation strategies in mathematics and music. The quality of documentation in departments is generally good. The pastoral staff satisfactorily promote the school's objectives to support and guide the students' personal development.

67. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well co-ordinated. Regular meetings with departmental representatives contribute to the sharing of helpful information about pupils and their difficulties. Pupils make good progress personally and academically. All legal requirements are being met. There is a need to improve support and monitoring of pupils' learning by improving the quality of target setting so they are more precise, shorter term and enable more detailed measurement of progress.
68. The governing body has a good working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and supports the school well. It takes an active role in monitoring the work of the school through its various committees. It has an effective programme of subject reviews. Governors work well with the school's management team in identifying areas for development, setting targets and monitoring progress towards those targets. However, the governing body does not have its own 'development plan' to identify training needs. Governors have made an appropriate provision for working groups to take responsibility for special educational needs and performance management. The governing body effectively fulfils its statutory responsibilities for the curriculum. However, the school does not fully comply with the requirements for a daily act of worship. The prospectus and governor's annual report to parents have improved, and now contain all the required statutory information.
69. The procedures for the monitoring and support of teaching are very good. These comprehensive strategies have become a major and successful component for implementing change in the school. The school has made significant progress in promoting improvements in teaching since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher (curriculum) effectively carry out a programme of classroom observations. Subject performance reviews are regularly arranged, examination results are discussed and action plans drawn up to support subjects. The results of this approach are evident in the improvement in the quality of education provided and the substantial gains in pupils' progress and learning.
70. Development planning at a whole school level and at departmental level is generally good, with carefully identified priorities. These are clearly linked to raising standards and improving the educational experiences of pupils. Systems are used to compare the performance of departments in examinations with each other. The school sets challenging objectives for both the standard of teaching and the standards which pupils should achieve.
71. Financial management and the planning of the use of resources are more efficiently connected to the schools priorities than at the time of the last inspection. A higher proportion of the schools' budget is now allocated to learning resources for departments. In financial administration, there are appropriate divisions of responsibility and satisfactory procedures for ordering, receiving and payment for goods and services purchased by the school. However, there have been inconsistencies in the quality of reports given to the Headteacher and governors. The last financial audit indicated areas for improvement in financial efficiency. These have been corrected. Since the last inspection, the strategic planning has been more

effectively linked to the budget to enable educational priorities to be met. Specific grants are appropriately accounted for. Competitive tendering is used for the ordering of goods or services, and the school works hard to achieve the best value in its financial decisions.

72. Given the significant improvements in the quality of teaching, the high standards achieved relative to national standards, the good progress pupils make and the continuing commitment to improving attainment, the school provides good value for money.
73. The provision of resources for learning is satisfactory. There has been significant under-funding and low capitation over a number of years in many subjects but a noticeable increase in budget allocations have been made over the last four years. However, despite major recent investment there is inadequate resourcing in ICT due to the poor ratio of computers to pupils when compared with the nationally recommended levels. Learning resources are good in science and physical education and very good in religious education. The range, variety and sufficiency of materials is good in art, design technology, physical education and religious education and has a positive impact on standards. There is an inadequate provision for practical equipment in mathematics, in the materials available for low attainers in history, and there is need of full class textbook sets in geography and modern foreign languages where currently pupils are required to share for GCSE examination work. The provision of basic teaching equipment is good within the school and helps to promote effective learning.
74. The learning resource centre has expanded and developed greatly since the last inspection with the range, quantity and quality of provision considerably improved due to an injection of over £20,000 this year. It is well directed and managed and the library and computer room is well run. The learning resource centre is welcoming and attractive. Its usage varies considerably, being very well used at lunch times but little used after school. The resource centre is well used by the English and drama department for teaching purposes but underused by most other subjects. Book issues are low overall; there is a significant decline in items issued each year from Year 7 onwards. The additional funding provided for books has significantly improved the fiction book section and there have been improvement in the subject provision also. However, for many subjects there is still limited support available for curriculum enhancement and investigatory resource based learning. Overall the provision is now satisfactory.
75. The school has a well-qualified teaching staff, with sufficient subject expertise to provide good quality teaching in most subjects and to contribute to good standards of attainment. There are few weaknesses; not all members of the modern foreign languages department are suitably qualified. Teachers have very good opportunities to further their professional development which assists their teaching and the learning of pupils. Procedures are also in place to implement effective performance management as a further aid to professional development. There are good induction procedures for new staff to effectively integrate them into the life of the school. Technicians and other support staff make good contributions to the work of the school. However there is insufficient technical support in science and art.
76. The quality of learning support assistants is good and their work is efficiently managed. Examples of lessons where learning support assistants were not available when needs were apparent were noted in modern foreign languages, science and English.

77. The overall standard of accommodation is good. The school has several new buildings and others which have recently had significant alterations. Some features, like the new science block, the refurbished art rooms, the sports hall and gymnasium, are excellent. Provision for art comprises two rooms, of unusual but interesting design, which provide a very attractive and creative environment in which to teach the subject. Buildings are generally well appointed and the whole campus is pleasantly landscaped with grassed areas and many fine trees. There are plenty of appropriate resting areas, well used by pupils, which have seats and tables. Corridors, although many are rather narrow, are very well appointed and all have been double glazed on external walls to make movement about the school comfortable during inclement weather. Very good displays are placed throughout the school. Geography and religious education have very good facilities.
78. Some aspects of accommodation, however, need attention, most notably the necessity of a purpose built facility for dance and drama. These two strong curricular areas would benefit strongly from such provision. Inadequate outside games courts, poorly drained and with deteriorating surfaces, affect the teaching of games. There are insufficient outside courts to accommodate the classes timetabled to use them. Dated and worn working surfaces in food technology are also insufficient in this respect and many are unhygienic. The upper floor of the Malvern Block is poorly ventilated resulting, at times, in quite stifling teaching conditions. Some exterior footpaths, particularly those leading to the Sports Hall which is used for whole school assemblies and examinations on many occasions, are not wide enough to cope with this very heavy usage.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- Improve the monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress by:
 - improving the use of student planners;
 - establishing a central database of pupils academic and personal development.*(Paragraphs: 53, 54, 56, 57)*
- Develop communication with parents and improve the quality of reports by:
 - establishing a 'clinic session' where problems can be discussed with parents;
 - developing the awareness of staff and pupils of curriculum levels and incorporating targets into reports; and
 - taking parental views into account on the content of reports.*(Paragraphs: 58, 61, 63)*
- Set targets for pupils' attainment in basic skills and for pupils with special educational need by:
 - training staff on the setting and use of targets.
 - revising the individual educational plans to include targets.*(Paragraphs: 51, 55, 165)*
- Improve behaviour management at Key Stage 4 by:-
 - revising the behaviour for learning strategy;
 - conducting an audit of alternative approaches to managing behaviour*(Paragraphs: 21, 52)*
- Improve the provision of ICT at Key Stage 4 and across the curriculum by:
 - revising the arrangements for the option structure in Years 10 and 11;
 - ensuring consistency in the teaching of ICT within the curriculum; and
 - improving assessment procedures;*(Paragraphs: 42, 132, 134)*
- Improve the management of music by:
 - improving curricular and lesson planning; meet statutory requirements.
 - providing support and staff training for head of department;*(Paragraphs: 66, 151)*

In addition, the school should give consideration to the following minor issues:

- Meet statutory requirements for a daily act of worship. *(Paragraph: 45)*
- Improve the effectiveness of registration and tutor time. *(Paragraph: 45, 53)*
- Achieve greater consistency in the quality of marking. *(Paragraph: 54)*
- Produce a 'development plan' for the Governing Body to identify training needs. *(Paragraph: 68)*
- Improve the collation of financial data for reports to governors. *(Paragraph: 71)*
- Improve the analysis and use of academic data. *(Paragraph: 56)*
- Improve standards in French. *(Paragraph: 137)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	143
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	22	44	27	2	1	-

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	961	n/a
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	78	n/a

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11	n/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	208	n/a

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	54

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	72	114	186

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	49	52
	Girls	96	70	65
	Total	140	119	117
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (74)	65 (69)	63 (58)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (31)	43 (44)	37 (28)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	58	48	50
	Girls	102	73	70
	Total	160	121	120
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	88 (89)	67 (75)	65 (63)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	51 (56)	41 (48)	36 (39)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2000	77	102	179

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	40	70	72
	Girls	59	88	97
	Total	99	158	169
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	55 (50)	88 (95)	94 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41
	National	38.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	2
Indian	8
Pakistani	26
Bangladeshi	17
Chinese	0
White	901
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	29	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	46
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	13.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	149

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.1
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	27.84
Key Stage 4	22.41

Results of the survey of parents and carers**Financial information**

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

	£
Total income	1919805
Total expenditure	1835565
Expenditure per pupil	1989
Balance brought forward from previous year	84240
Balance carried forward to next year	93113

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	961
Number of questionnaires returned	175

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	55	6	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	59	9	2	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	53	19	6	3
The teaching is good.	21	62	9	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	15	44	32	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	38	11	7	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	46	5	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	17	43	27	7	5
The school is well led and managed.	27	43	13	6	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	56	7	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	34	18	9	12

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

ENGLISH

80. Attainment in tests taken by pupils aged 14 in 2000 was well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. Results were better than in mathematics and science. The results of boys were better than those of boys nationally but further below those of girls than is found nationally. In recent years, results have consistently been above average and the trend of improvement matches the national trend. At GCSE, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was well above the national average and the average for similar schools and all who were entered gained grades. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in English literature was well above average with an above average proportion of pupils being entered. The majority of non-entrants missed lessons to take a college-based course. In both subjects the proportion of pupils gaining higher grades has risen significantly since the last inspection.
81. The inspection judgement is that standards of attainment are good. Pupils aged 14 have developed good listening skills. They are attentive to teachers and have good understanding of explanations and instructions so that they approach tasks with confidence. If unsure, they ask for further clarification. In a small number of classes, they listen less well to each other. They speak clearly and confidently with many making appropriate use of technical language when working as a full class or in smaller groups. Pupils read aloud confidently and fluently and with good understanding of at least the main sense. An unusually high proportion can identify significant details, understand implication and recognise how writers gain their effects without relying upon guidance by teachers. The significant minority of pupils who entered the school with weak reading skills mostly now read with satisfactory understanding and much increased confidence. Those with continuing difficulties are well supported by teachers, who are aware of their problems, and by the skills of the learning support assistants. In all year groups, pupils with persistent difficulties are withdrawn in very small groups for very effective specialist help. Pupils in the present Year 7 benefit greatly from opportunities to read to Year 10 pupils, an experience which benefits both age groups. Pupils take pride in their written work and are careful to present it well whether written by hand or using computers. They can write for a variety of purposes using appropriate language. Pupils' creative writing is of high quality particularly in verse. At all levels of attainment, pupils are ambitious in their use of words and organisation of sentences. Frequently in their own writing they employ features of the writing of authors whose work they have studied. Higher attaining pupils are confident in selecting and organising material for extended writing but the majority, at this stage, need advice and support. The quality of the writing of most pupils, including some otherwise very capable writers, is often reduced by the persistence of misspelling of words in everyday use. For example, those words with similar sounds such as 'they', 'their' and 'they're'. Some inappropriate use of capital letters in the middle of words and faulty use of the full stop also feature too regularly in pupils' writing.
82. The attainment of pupils mostly aged sixteen is above average and the balance of strengths is similar to that observed in younger pupils. Pupils in Year 11 enjoy positive relationships with each other and with their teachers. In consequence they know that their contributions to group or class discussion will be valued. This increases their willingness to offer opinions and suggestions and their ability to respond to searching questions. Most are confident and articulate in speech and

listen attentively and with quick understanding to teachers and their classmates. They read aloud confidently and accurately. When reading analytically they know what kinds of evidence they need to consider so that they may reach worthwhile judgements. In classes of pupils with a wide range of attainment, the higher attainers are able to work with considerable independence whilst lower attainers are more reliant upon the teachers' guidance on how to organise material when required to write at length.

83. The achievement of pupils of all ages and at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, is good. Pupils make good progress in lessons and over time by comparison with their earlier attainment. In lessons, differences of attainment between boys and girls evident in examination results are not apparent. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is sometimes reduced by the disruptive behaviour of a very small minority of pupils some of whom have identifiable behavioural difficulties. In most lessons, and particularly in Years 7 and 11, behaviour is very good. Pupils are well-motivated, have positive attitudes to their work and enjoy harmonious relationships with teachers and each other which considerably benefit their learning. In the unusually high proportion of lessons where very good teaching and learning take place, there is mutual respect between teachers and pupils.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In Years 10- 11 teaching was good or very good in equal proportions and occasionally excellent. In earlier years, it was mostly good, sometimes very good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons carefully and conduct them at a crisp pace towards clearly identified learning objectives. Usually, they set challenging time limits for tasks which require pupils to use time efficiently and help to sustain their interest and concentration. Teachers' understanding of the National Literacy Strategy is evident and features in many lessons. This helps in the development of English skills. Lessons usually comprise a series of linked units which provide an appropriate variety of activity for pupils. Teachers have good knowledge of the pupils' individual strengths and difficulties and provide appropriate encouragement and support for all. They link learning to previous and future work so that pupils understand its relevance. The concluding plenary includes evaluations to reinforce key points, establish a sense of achievement and identify what needs further attention. Computers are used more in English than in other subjects and pupils learn to use a good range of applications which improve their drafting skills and enable them to undertake wide- ranging research. Teaching is less effective when learning is disrupted by poor behaviour of a very small minority or, occasionally, teachers allow too much time for an activity and the pace slows. Because teachers are concerned that all pupils should be fully prepared for tasks, higher attainers occasionally receive more help than they need. The best marking of pupils' work identifies strengths and indicates the means of further improvement but not all marking is of this high quality.
85. The teaching of English makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development. A Year 11 class reflecting on their experiences during the two years of their GCSE course clearly recognised that not only had they prepared for an examination but had also learned lessons for life.
86. The provision for English benefits from the good leadership of a strong team of teachers. Since the time of the last inspection the results of national tests have improved significantly; criticisms of lack of progress by some pupils with special educational needs are now not justified and the quality of stock in the library is much improved. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is good.

87. Drama is taught as a separate subject by teachers of English to pupils in Year 7. Techniques of drama are successfully used in some English lessons to help pupils interpret situations, characters and relationships in their reading. This was observed in a Year 7 class using 'freeze frame' techniques to illustrate their understanding of important moments in a seventeenth century ballad they were reading. Drama sometimes features within expressive arts courses at GCSE. During the inspection too little teaching of drama could be observed for meaningful judgements to be made. The present accommodation for drama is unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

88. On entry to the school, standards of attainment are broadly average in all areas of mathematics, including numeracy. By the age of 14, the pupils' attainment is above average. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Over the period of their GCSE mathematics course pupils also make satisfactory progress. However, the highest attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make faster progress than the majority of the pupils of average attainment.
89. Over recent years, results achieved in the national tests for 14 year-olds have been above national averages. However, in 2000, mathematics results fell very slightly, so that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level or above was in line with the national average. Generally, teachers' assessments match the standards that pupils achieve in the tests. When compared with similar school, standards of attainment at the end of Year 9, in 2000, were below those for similar schools. These test results in mathematics are similar to those in science but not as good as those in English. Over time, boys' and girls' results are close, and there is no significant difference in the results of those pupils in the school whose home languages are other than English. The test results in mathematics show an underlying trend of improvement.
90. The 2000 results in GCSE mathematics are above the national average in the proportion of the school's pupils achieving grades A* to C. These results show an improvement from those of recent years. Pupils' results at grades A* to G are in line with national expectations for both boys and girls. There is no significant difference in boys' and girls' results. However, boys perform better in mathematics than in English or science, while girls perform as well in mathematics as in English and science, in relation to the national picture. GCSE results in mathematics are above average in relation to similar schools, match those of science, but are less good than those of English. There is no significant difference in the achievements of those pupils from minority ethnic groups.
91. The inspection judgement is that standards are above the nationally expected level by the end of Year 9. The higher groups reach above average standards as in a Year 9 lesson where pupils were able to discuss the characteristics of linear graphs in relation to their equations. A high attaining Year 8 group very competently considered the means and ranges of sets of data to justify decisions. They were confident orally and able to give reasoned judgements when challenged. Pupils in middle groups have good mechanical skills in many areas of their mathematics, particularly algebra, but this sometimes masks misconceptions which prevent their deeper understanding of the topic being investigated. Some pupils have difficulty in interpreting graphs accurately and find work on bearings difficult. Lower attainers have weak numeracy skills. For example, they find difficulty in adding and subtracting two digit numbers from a hundred, even in context. Pupils with special

educational needs make good progress in their work, as in the Year 9 lesson on imperial and metric units, where they were able to measure and record lengths meaningfully in both systems.

92. By the end of Year 11, overall standards are above average. The highest groups of pupils in Year 11 have very good algebraic skills. They use systematic approaches to investigational tasks and link their generalisations well to the physical problems. Pupils in middle groups are confident in using mathematical notation, working with angles in polygons, and in using a range of methods to solve equations. However, they sometimes recall earlier work with difficulty, such as finding the mean of grouped data, or finding fractions of quantities. They have difficulty in giving reasons for their answers and in interpreting questions accurately. Pupils in lower groups and those with special educational needs manage simple transformations well but have greater difficulty in identifying underlying patterns and classifying questions.
93. The quality of teaching is good overall, though ranged from satisfactory to very good. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching within the department, particularly where there is non-specialist teaching. In all lessons, teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, manage pupils' behaviour very well, and are supportive of individuals' needs. In the best lessons, there is a well-planned use of ICT to enhance the pupils' understanding of their mathematics. In a Year 10 lesson on the transformation of graphs, this enabled pupils to extend their understanding of the impact of translations on curved graphs. Other features of the best teaching include structured and challenging questioning, as in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were skilfully guided to interpret the impact of the spread of a distribution on decisions. However, although all teaching observed was at least satisfactory, there were missed opportunities to assess what each pupil had learned in several lessons. In a few lessons, work is insufficiently challenging for the pupils, as in a Year 7 lesson where the review of area and perimeter did not extend the pupils' understanding. In some lessons, there is too much emphasis on written methods and a lack of variety in the activities for learning. The pupils' work is not always regularly marked. Nor are there always helpful comments so that pupils know how to make progress. In these lessons the achievement of pupils is not fully enhanced.
94. Since the last inspection, the mathematics department has made satisfactory progress. Pupils' attainment has improved at both key stages, particularly in the proportion of the pupils achieving higher grades of A* and A, in GCSE examinations. Teaching has improved and is increasingly influenced by the National Numeracy Strategy. Girls' and boys' results are no longer significantly different. However, some issues from the last inspection remain. There is still a lack of variety in the activities for learning within lessons, and the department lacks much essential practical equipment to carry out mathematical investigations. Marking is still inconsistent.
95. The department is soundly led and day-to-day management is smooth. It is now in a good position to raise attainment further in mathematics, especially by exploiting fully the potential of its data base, so that pupils' attainment and progress can be more closely tracked. Additionally, there is a need to re-structure the mathematics scheme of work to guide teachers more explicitly and improve the consistency of teachers' practice within the department.

SCIENCE

96. Pupils' attainment in the 2000 National Curriculum tests in science, taken at age 14, was average in comparison with all schools and below average when compared to similar schools. Attainment as judged during the inspection places standards at above average.
97. The performance of boys is stronger than that of girls. Considering the results over the last few years there was a downward trend that has recently levelled out. The schools' performance in science is weaker than that found in English, but similar to that seen in mathematics.
98. At GCSE, combining double and triple award courses, standards are above average for the grades A* to C when compared both to national levels and to similar schools. Inspection observations confirm that these standards have been maintained. Girls do better than boys and achieve more of the top grades. In recent years the trend has been downwards, but this was reversed in 2000. The schools' standards in science are lower than they are in English, but broadly similar to those in mathematics
99. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good because of the improved attitudes of pupils towards the subject, and better standards of teaching. Progress is most rapid in experimental science, where pupils acquire many useful skills for carrying out and recording experiments. This is exemplified by pupils in Year 7, who can competently use a power pack with wire, iron rods and paper clips to investigate the factors affecting the strength of an electromagnet. They can also relate circuit diagrams, concerning series and parallel situations, to real circuits they build on circuit boards. As the course progresses greater volumes of written work are produced and topics are covered in more detail, resulting in increasing levels of skills and a greater range of knowledge. By Year 9 many pupils are able not only to perform experiments competently and record them well but also to predict what is likely to happen from basic principles. This is instanced in their experiments about dissolving jelly, where ideas like surface area, volume and kinetic energy are produced in response to questions.
100. In Year 10 and 11 lessons, standards of attainment are above average. Higher attaining pupils achieve well. During the two years pupils steadily improve the breadth of their scientific study through a range of topics. They deepen and strengthen their level of scientific understanding and investigation skills. For instance, pupils in Year 10 had investigated the relationship between the angles of incidence and refraction. They determined the critical angle and were then able to apply their knowledge to the way that waveguides work. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.
101. In all years pupils with special educational needs are well known to their teachers, and tasks set are appropriate to the pupils levels of ability. Teachers grade their approach and sometimes produce work specially tailored to their needs. However, there are no individual education plans produced by the department, and extra support is infrequent. Nevertheless these pupils make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils are presented with more demanding work in Years 10 and 11, due to the system of grouping pupils by their level of attainment. However, they are not always sufficiently well challenged. The same is true for these pupils in lower years. The use of ICT is well established for word processing, using the Internet, CD ROMs and data loggers. The use of spreadsheets and databases requires further development.

102. Most pupils clearly enjoy and take a pride in their science, especially the practical work. They generally behave well and work hard, so long as there is plenty for them to do. They usually work well in groups with most members contributing to the common aim. Apparatus is handled with respect and increasing precision. When interested they are keen to answer questions, but they pose few of their own.
103. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. Half of the teaching observed was better than satisfactory and there were some very good lessons, a small minority were unsatisfactory. Most periods are well planned with crisp objectives that are made plain to the pupils. Classes are usually well managed and disciplined. Much of the teaching provides a good amount of factual knowledge for pupils and questioning is thorough to see if they understand the topics under discussion. However, in the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to produce and to develop ideas for themselves, with the teacher injecting enough information to enable them to go further in their understanding. In these lessons and some others the pupils' knowledge from the last lesson is re-established at the start and the new knowledge checked and shared at the end. Where lessons are less successful they are more likely to test pupils' knowledge and to provide a recipe for practical work. These lessons tend to be teacher dominated with a limited range of teaching methods: pupils learn but are not stimulated. In a small minority of lessons indiscipline impedes learning. Teachers pay good attention to developing pupils' literacy skills in relation to science, encouraging free writing, good spelling and even poetry. Similarly numeracy is well integrated into much of their work and quantitative thinking is promoted. Much is done to utilise and extend the pupils skills with computers and clearly teachers will make very good use of the departments computers when they arrive. Much of the marking is of a very high quality with useful comments, nevertheless a significant proportion of the work goes unmarked and this affects enthusiasm and standards. Homework is usually set and it provides a useful extension to pupil's learning.
104. The management of the department is satisfactory. The courses fulfil all the requirements of the National Curriculum and GCSE. They are taught to a standard that allows access to high levels and grades. The classroom curriculum is good though it is insufficiently well supported by a programme of visits or by the use of field courses. The satisfactory systems of assessment are not well used to monitor and support pupils' progress and as a result pupils are not given targets to work towards. Systems are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching, pupils' books and homework, but they are not yet fully effective in raising standards. Two efficient technicians who maintain and deploy the resources support science. However, the situation is not satisfactory because there are two separate buildings which, for much of the day, have to be covered by one technician. The resources are satisfactory, and are set to improve when the department gets its' new computers. The accommodation enjoyed by the subject is very good and promotes effective learning.
105. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have been maintained in Years 7 to 9 and improved at GCSE level. Higher attainers continue to perform well and there has been an improvement in the performance of the average pupil. Teaching is now good and assessment better used to plan the curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 7 is typical for their age. They make very good

progress in key areas of their art studies in Year 7 and by the end of the year pupils' attainment, boys in particular, is well above average. Progress remains good to the age of 14 and attainment seen in Year 9 matches the high teacher assessments of recent years. Fewer pupils than average take art at GCSE, usually more girls than boys. Attainment by the age of 16 is above average, particularly for boys, whose standards are often very good when judged against boys' averages. Art and design is a very successful subject in the school.

107. In years 7 to 9, pupils' attainment in painting is particularly striking. Their constructional skills in three-dimensional work, particularly that based on card sculptures of all sorts, are also especially strong. Combined together, these two sets of strengths produce very high standards of card-based painted sculptures in different scales, and on a variety of themes which are imaginatively displayed across the department and the school. These greatly enhance the environment, and celebrate pupils' achievements very well. Pupils learn the skills of mixing and blending colour successfully, particularly when using paint, so they can control this medium very successfully to produce effective tonal colour in their pictures and apply it well to their three dimensional work. This is because they are taught very effectively the techniques of how to paint well. Although projects include suitable teaching of the historical and critical aspects of art, pupils do not learn these so well, so their standards in critical analysis of their work do not develop to the same degree of finesse as their practical work. Pupils require too much prompting to remember and use the links between what they studied at the start of projects about, for example artists' work, or other exemplars from other cultures, and their current realisations. While doing their practical work, three-dimensional masks, for example in Year 8, pupils do not work directly from any designs they may have produced earlier and have often lost sight of any link there may be with their preparation studies. Practical work, though, is very good overall by the end of Year 9. Pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress. The work of pupils with special educational needs or those learning English as an additional language are indistinguishable from their peers.
108. This pattern of attainment broadly continues into pupils' GCSE years. GCSE A*-C results in 2000 were well above the national average. They rose very significantly from 1999 when standards were well below average. Results have been very variable over recent years. 2000 results included an extremely high proportion of A grades, but unusually, no A*s. Pupils' progress from Year 10 is good. They have already benefited from the good skills in painting and modelling acquired earlier, often refining and honing these to high levels of expressiveness. Lower and middle attaining pupils progress extremely well, with boys, often achieving very well when judged against their underlying abilities. Relative weaknesses remain in some pupils' abilities to develop the necessary levels of critique and to apply these to GCSE work. Through good teaching, average and lower attainers can do this to a level which makes their overall performance better than might be expected, strongly guided by their teachers. These pupils can thus access grades at GCSE better than would otherwise be the case. Higher attainers, though, especially those who could potentially reach A* level, do not develop or present their preparation and investigative research work in a sufficiently personal, imaginative or reflective way. These qualities though, are present in their practical work, which accounts for the high proportion of A grades.
109. Pupils' attitudes to art are overwhelmingly positive. They enjoy being able to apply their developing skills to produce the high quality of two- and three-dimensional work described above. Those able to go on visits to galleries, Year 7 for example

who were planning a visit to the Birmingham gallery, look forward to these and use them well in their work.

110. Teaching of art is good overall. Some excellent teaching was seen, particularly in year 7. A member of staff was absent during inspection, with many classes being taken by cover teachers. Some very good and excellent lessons were observed at both key stages. Wider evidence, which included a scrutiny of pupil's work, indicated that when both specialist teachers were present, art teaching overall is very good. Teachers are very skilled in teaching pupils how to apply colour techniques in a variety of media very early in the school. This is particularly effective with painting, and enables pupils to be unusually competent when embellishing other artefacts they make later on. Teachers have appropriate schemes of work which include the historical and critical aspects in all projects. Pupils do not retain what they learn in these areas well enough, though. More constant reference is needed to these ideas, and to designs pupils make in preparation for their final realisations. This would help the ablest pupils towards even higher attainment. Teachers are extremely skilled in raising the standards of pupils of average and lower attainment whose achievement is often very good because of the effective ways they are taught. Teachers now need to consider how to empower the highest attainers to develop the degree of individual expressiveness needed at their level, especially in the presentation of research, creative investigation and evaluation work. Pupils would benefit from greater involvement in the assessment and monitoring of their own work. When provided with the opportunity most pupils can identify what they need to do to improve to a higher grade. More focused assessment systems and better use of available data about attainment and progress are required to bring this about.
111. The management of the department is good. Improvement on the issues raised in 1996 has been good, especially in the consistency of the good progress pupils make in learning. Better funding enables pupils to use a better range of media which, while not rich, is well used to generate good progress in the curriculum and excellent displays of pupils' work school-wide.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. The end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments for 2000 show that the great majority of pupils attain at least at the national average and a significant proportion achieve above it. More boys and girls achieve at a high level than is the case nationally and girls do particularly well. The proportion of pupils achieving an A* to C grade in design and technology has risen year on year and last year was significantly above the national average. All pupils achieved an A* to C grade in resistant materials, which is significantly above the national trend. Both boys and girls achieve significantly above the national average. The number of girls achieving at the highest grades of A* or A is well above the average, whilst boys performance is inline with the average for these grades. Pupils' attainment in this subject is better than in most others.
113. In Years 7 to 9, work seen in lessons and in exercise books shows pupils' standards of attainment to be above average. Pupils have a good understanding of the design process and principles. Most pupils produce good finished pieces of work in all material areas. The work seen reflects the teacher assessments reported. Higher attainers show good skills in graphical communication and present their design ideas well. Girls tend to take greater care and pride in their work with a more meticulous approach to research and design work than the boys. Average and lower attaining pupils have weaker graphical communication skills and are sometimes

unsure of the correct terminology when explaining their ideas and in describing the processes involved. In textiles pupils have high levels of creative flair and imagination. As seen in their work on 'fantasy headwear'. Pupils' skills and understanding in control technology is good in both resistant materials and textiles but work in mechanisms and pneumatics is underdeveloped. Pupils have good analytical skills and apply them well when carrying out sensory evaluations of their product outcomes. Achievement in most lessons is good. Pupils with special educational needs show much interest in their work and make good progress achieving appropriate standards for their capabilities and especially when supported by specialist staff and the technician.

114. The scrutiny of work submitted for GCSE and discussion with pupils, shows that the majority attain well above the national average in all material areas and reflects very good achievement over time. The design process is well understood and firmly embedded in all design projects. Graphical communication skills are generally satisfactory overall and very good in textiles particularly in the work of the higher attainers. Graphical presentation skills remain the weaker element in the work of average and lower attaining pupils. Product outcomes show good levels of creativity especially in the best work seen. Literacy skills have improved appropriately over earlier years with higher attainers able to explain their ideas confidently using the correct terminology although lower attainers do not readily use the correct technical terms. Pupils make good use of the computer to produce elements of coursework. However, the use of the computer to design and make products is underdeveloped.
115. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and is outstanding in a small proportion. Teaching methods and styles used are successful in enabling pupils to improve and develop their design and realisation skills. Teachers' produce design worksheets that provide pupils with clear guidelines for their design tasks although a minority of worksheets are not always sufficiently modified to meet the needs of all levels of attainment. The development of pupils' literacy skills, particularly the technical language of the subject, is universally implemented across all design areas. There are also good opportunities to develop numeracy skills. Teachers provide pupils' with high levels of individual support and guidance, which assures that most pupils are clearly aware of what they are required to do in lessons. As a result, they make good progress in the great majority of lessons and build effectively on their prior skills and knowledge. In many lessons good humour prevails and an atmosphere conducive to positive learning is established. Almost all pupils respond well to the teaching methods adopted. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good in most lessons. The new assessment procedures enable teachers to effectively monitor and support pupils' progress towards their predicted attainment targets in Year 10 and 11. Most work is consistently marked to a good standard and teachers write constructive comments to explain to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. However, pupils are not always aware of what level of the National Curriculum they are working towards in Years 7 to 9. Homework is regularly set and effectively extends the curriculum time with appropriate tasks. In some practical classes the numbers in the lesson reduces the amount of individual support and attention teachers are able to provide. Teachers promote safe working practices and ensure that pupils' safety is a principal factor in all lessons. The technician and learning support staff provide an invaluable contribution to the pupils' learning by helping them whenever possible with their tasks.
116. Since the last inspection, a new head of department has been appointed and provides a very clear educational direction for the subject. The department is very

well managed with a very good team approach that is well focused on raising standards. The head of department and her team have very successfully put systems in place to assess pupils' performance and to monitor and improve standards across the material specialism and to raise the profile of the department. Design and make projects in Key Stage 3 are challenging at the intellectual and creative levels. Although control technology is well taught with opportunities for pupils to experience different control work there is very little opportunity for pupils to experience work in mechanisms and pneumatics. There is insufficient technical support time in food and textiles.

117. Attainment at the end of both key stages has significantly improved since the last inspection, especially in resistant materials. Teaching and learning has greatly improved and is now of a good or better standard throughout both key stages. The good achievement overall at both key stages is a result of very good management, good teaching and learning, and the promotion of very positive attitudes to learning.

GEOGRAPHY

118. At the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is above the national average. Pupils have a good grounding in geographical skills. Most can use and interpret Ordnance survey maps satisfactorily but more practice is needed in the presentation and analyses of statistical data graphically. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of geographical locations. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' progress is good for low and average attaining pupils, but in some lessons high attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. Pupils with special educational needs when provided with specialist support make good progress but in some lessons there is inadequate learning assistants support. However, progress is still sustained due to the considerable help and guidance provided by class-teachers. Achievement in lessons is good.
119. Standards are high in the subject throughout the school. Recent GCSE A* to C grade results have significantly improved from being broadly in line to being well above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades is now close to the national picture. Girls consistently perform better than boys. The proportion of boys gaining A* to C grades was very high; it was more than any subject. When compared with other GCSE subjects, geography results are above the average for both girls and boys. This trend of improvement is greater than the national picture.
120. Attainment is well above the national average at the end of Year 11. Higher attaining pupils can explain a range of physical and human processes very well. Average attaining pupils, although progressing well, rely far too heavily on their teachers and this stunts personal development. The best individual independent study projects for GCSE, are of very high quality. Achievement at Key Stage 4 for most pupils is good although in some Year 10 classes the lack of a permanent teacher for some months is adversely affecting their progress and is likely to affect GCSE results next year.
121. Teaching overall is consistently good at both key stages and at times is very good. Teachers are very committed, caring and supportive of pupils. Classroom management and control is of a very high standard. The best teaching has clear and manageable aims shared with pupils and tested at the end of the lesson to ensure that learning is effective. Detailed and imaginative planning encourages interest and offers a variety of suitable learning opportunities. In these lessons, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, set an effective pace and have high expectations. There is a strong practical element with pupils involved in their own

learning. For example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils role-played extremely competently interviews with a range of different types of people affected by the local Worcester flood. Similarly, in Year 10, pupils used a "mind map" effectively to revise work on rivers. These lessons required pupils to show understanding of issues covered. When visual aids were used such as photographs, video extracts, maps and graphs not only did they add variety, but learning was noticeably more secure. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils compared and assessed the education and work patterns in Japan with that of their own school experience. Presentation is lively, well structured, focused and promotes learning of good quality. Marking is satisfactory and pupils are involved with teachers in evaluating their own learning and setting targets for future work. However, this needs to be more rigorously applied so that attainment and progress are monitored, recorded and reported to parents.

122. However, learning would be further enhanced by greater consolidation and re-enforcement of the main teaching points visually on the board. Regular use of atlases with a permanent world display map would help develop pupils understanding of geographical patterns and place. Local Ordnance Survey maps, local examples and pupils based enquiry tasks need to be used much more in teaching. Schemes of work need reviewing to provide more challenge in materials and tasks particularly for higher attainers. Literacy skills are very well developed in some lessons with key geographical words and guidance for extended writing. There are good opportunities given for pupils to read aloud in lessons. However, in other lessons insufficient time is given for pupils to consolidate written work. Numeracy skills are satisfactory overall. Very good revision and examination preparation helps progression as it consolidates classwork well and focuses on key issues. Fieldwork provided locally in Year 7 and in the Peak District in Year 10 greatly enriches pupils' studies but it is inadequate at Key Stage 3 where there is need to study a physical landscape and an area outside the local area. ICT has seen some development since the last inspection but restricted access to suitable computer facilities has been a drawback. The department needs now to establish a coherent and workable programme of ICT skills to ensure that requirements over both key stages are met.
123. Pupils' attitude to learning is positive and most display a real interest in their work. They are attentive, work conscientiously and respond productively to teaching across the range of attainment including the lowest attainers in Year 9. Pupils' behaviour is usually very good and is often excellent. Relationships with teachers are constructive and frequently a real rapport is evident and this contributes significantly to pupils' progress. Boys and girls relate well to each other when undertaking paired or group work. Pupils' individual responses to questions are good but in some lessons a greater class response needs nurturing. Boys contribute more in lessons than they do in most schools particularly at Key Stage 4 and this involvement partly accounts for their well above average performance at GCSE examinations.
124. Leadership and management are the responsibility of joint heads of department a very unusual arrangement. However, due to the absolute trust, co-operation and professionalism of the post holders the department is effectively and competently managed and strategic and curriculum planning is good. The permanent teaching staff is strong and they work professionally and well together. There is a need of a longer-term development plan which is fully costed and annually evaluated. Teaching and learning are regularly reviewed but the impact of teaching and training on the quality of pupils' learning is insufficiently well linked. Accommodation is in specialist rooms that provide sufficient space for investigatory resource based learning which is a great asset and contributes to successful learning. Wall displays provide for a stimulating learning environment. Resources are satisfactory overall

but there are some shortfalls such as the need for individual textbooks for Year 10 pupils studying for GCSE examinations; a permanent display map in each specialist teaching room; a suite of ten computers for class teaching purposes and a fieldwork budget.

125. There has been marked and significant improvement since the last inspection in most areas including teaching and learning, establishing a literacy policy, curricular development and in standards achieved throughout the school. There is very good capacity to develop further the work of the department to meet the points identified in this report. This is a good department with many very good features.

HISTORY

126. In recent GCSE examinations, results in both the A* to C and A* to G range have been above national averages, although they fell slightly below these norms in the year 2000. In lessons seen and in work analysed during the inspection, standards were high throughout the age range. From the start of Year 7, pupils acquire a wide range of historical skills, including a sense of chronology and an ability to use sources in their historical context. This has addressed an issue arising from the previous inspection. They also learn to organise their work well and, in this respect, some excellent Year 7 projects were seen on the development of Worcester Cathedral. Higher attaining pupils in particular are able to write for a variety of purposes and there are some very good examples of extended writing in Year 9 on the slave trade. Standards are above national expectations by the time pupils reach the age of 14. These high levels are maintained during Years 10 and 11. Pupils can analyse historical documents in depth, and are making clear gains in their knowledge and understanding of historical issues. For example, in a Year 11 revision lesson, pupils showed a detailed understanding of the different aspects of the Hitler Youth movement. The achievement of pupils in both key stages is good.
127. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject and respond very well to the learning opportunities provided by their teachers. They show commitment to history, behave well and clearly enjoy their lessons. This was demonstrated very well in a Year 7 lesson, in which pupils studied the progress of Hannibal's attack on Rome and engaged themselves enthusiastically on preparing a newspaper account of his achievements.
128. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their subject knowledge very well to enthuse pupils, and, as a result, the latter make good progress in the development of learning skills. Classroom management is strong and lessons are planned well with clear learning objectives. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, with the result that most history lessons are enlivened by pace and purpose. There are a few occasions, however, in which the textbook tends to predominate. In these lessons, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop group work skills and insufficient time is given at the end of lessons for pupils to reflect on their progress. When asked to participate in class discussions, however, pupils do so with enthusiasm and maturity. The previous report noted a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils, but this is no longer the case. Higher attaining pupils are given every encouragement to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the subject through extension and project work. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The department is producing materials to suit their individual needs but there is still work to be done in this area.
129. There has been considerable disruption to the work of the department this year, and

it is to the credit of the teaching team that they have maintained high standards at this difficult time. The department has an experienced team of subject specialists and the management of history is strong and effective. The school regularly wins awards in local history competitions. Resources have improved since the last inspection, and, in particular, the use of ICT is playing an increasing part in the work of the department. In this respect, some excellent examples of coursework folders from Year 11 pupils using ICT were seen during the inspection. Procedures for monitoring are thorough and pupils are fully involved in the assessment process. In order to build on this positive picture, pupils would benefit from more opportunities to visit historical sites and places of interest.

130. Overall, the department has made good progress since the last inspection and has addressed successfully most of the issues raised in that report. There are clear plans for further development and the experienced teaching team has the undoubted ability to raise standards still further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

131. By the end of Year 9, teacher assessments for 2000 show attainment to be significantly above the national average. Teacher assessments at the higher levels were three times above the national position. The inspection judgement does not support this assessment, and shows that most pupils are broadly in line with the national average, with a small minority attaining at a higher level. Most pupils have a good understanding of communicating information through word processing or desktop publishing. Attainment in data logging, measurement and control technology is broadly in line with expectations. It is not possible to make national comparisons with externally accredited courses at age 16 since no accredited courses in ICT have been offered over the past three years.
132. Overall standards for the most pupils are in line with expectations at ages 14 and 16. Due to the variable provision of ICT, pupils' achievement is just satisfactory. In the ICT lessons observed, pupils show good skills when using the hardware, in accessing software and using the Intranet. Higher attainers are confident and fluent in their use of technical terminology when explaining what they are doing. There is no significant difference in the skills and standards achieved by boys and girls. In Year 7, pupils are able to investigate the attributes of software packages, being able to compare and contrast them. For example, they can distinguish between the advantages of both desktop publishing and word processing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain appropriate standards for their capabilities.
133. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers' planning is thorough, although the worksheets that are produced to guide pupils' in their work do not always take sufficient account of the different literacy skills and attainment in each group. A few pupils who have very good skills are not always sufficiently challenged in some lessons. In Year 7, good oral assessment techniques provide pupils with a clear direction for their work and identify areas for improvement. However, in Years 7 to 9, pupils are not always aware of what level of the National Curriculum they are working towards. The management of pupils is generally very good with good individual support and encouragement given when and where necessary. The predominantly good teaching assures that pupils are well motivated and aware of what they are required to do. In Year 7, projects are well matched to pupils' interests and capabilities. The teaching promotes good progress and good standards of behaviour. The discrete schemes of work cover the requirements of the National

Curriculum, including appropriate sections on control. However, there are insufficient resources and curricular time to enable a greater practical application of some of the skills learnt. A very recent acquisition of a CAM machine should enable wider opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in this ICT strand. Large group sizes also impede individual progress; where this is the case the teacher is unable to provide the support and guidance to individuals sufficiently promptly. The technician provides an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning and regularly supports pupils with their work.

134. Information technology is timetabled in Year 7 and taught entirely across the curriculum in all other years. This arrangement results in an uneven level of access for pupils to their entitlement to ICT. Pupils' use of ICT is very much dependent upon the interest, expertise, experience and enthusiasm of subject teachers. In addition the variability of access to ICT resources together with the limited teaching time that can be allocated to ICT in each subject restricts progress for a significant proportion of pupils. The assessment process is over-dependant upon non-ICT specialists and is reflected by the recent unrealistic reporting of standards in the subject.
135. The new head of department is beginning to provide a clear educational direction for the subject and has recognised many of the shortfalls identified above. He is in the process of developing a more consistent and co-ordinated curricular plan and more even provision for all pupils across subjects together with a rigorous monitoring of practice and the standards achieved.
136. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained. The quality and range of ICT resources have been greatly improved although they remain below the national average. Since the last inspection the accredited IT course at Key Stage 4 has been withdrawn. The lack of any form of accredited IT course at age 16 is not consistent with current practice in most schools.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

137. In 2000 the number of pupils gaining A* to C grades in the French GCSE examinations was below the national average. The performance of girls was better than that of boys. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to G was above the national average. In German, the number of pupils gaining grades A* to C was close to, and for A* to G was above the national average. Few pupils gained the highest grade A* or A in either language. Pupils tend to perform better in most other subjects than in French and German.
138. In standards of work seen during the inspection, pupils' overall attainment in French at the age of 14 is broadly average. It is not as high for the pupils who take German, which is begun one year later than French and has less curriculum time. Pupils' understanding of the foreign languages is good and is their best skill. Oral practice occurs in many, but not all lessons. Year 9 pupils in the higher and average sets in French asked each other about past events at the week-end and answered the questions successfully, using the perfect tense. In their written work pupils write lists of vocabulary and complete exercises to develop grammatical constructions and different tenses – the perfect tense and the immediate future. Some of the recent sentences in the Year 9 exercise books in French showed mistakes in copying, for example, the omission of the auxiliary verb or failure to make the past participle agree with the subject. These exercises are rarely drawn together into short paragraphs of extended writing. However, higher attainers in Year 8 had produced some above-average writing about holidays, combining time, travel and weather

expressions with the perfect tense. The pupils were redrafting their work on computer in the ICT room after their teacher had corrected mistakes.

139. Pupils' overall attainment in French and German at the age of 16 is close to the national average. Understanding of the foreign language is satisfactory or better. In their written work pupils display a sound knowledge of the topic vocabulary, which supports them for role-play situations and oral work. Pupils complete various exercises to consolidate the use of different tenses, but many pupils find it difficult to be consistently accurate when they use the tenses in extended writing. There is room for greater accuracy in written work at both key stages, particularly with the use of accents and gender in French and of capital letters for nouns and case endings after prepositions in German. Few pupils redraft their corrected work or complete corrections to improve accuracy.
140. Pupils' achievement by the age of 14 is generally satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the cassette recorder to underpin pupils' understanding of the foreign language. Year 7 pupils in a French lesson in the computer room learnt how to ask questions about leisure activities, had to write our five questions, then conduct a survey and print out the result as a graph. Pupils' achievement by the age of 16 is satisfactory; although boys are underachieving relative to girls. They have acquired a sound knowledge of the relevant vocabulary and have been taught to introduce a variety of tenses into their written work. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress. Class support, when it is available, is good. Some lessons, however, would benefit from more helpful worksheets for pupils on the register of special educational needs.
141. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in most lessons. They listen well to the cassette recorder in comprehension exercises. Occasionally, however, they remain passive if they are not sufficiently challenged by the teacher, and they do not always volunteer information. They generally respond well to chorus work. When given the opportunity for work in pairs or to conduct surveys, they complete the tasks sensibly and with a minimum of fuss. In two small classes of lower attainers, boys showed more interest and greater participation than girls. There is room for improvement in the presentation of pupils' written work.
142. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at both key stages; in just over one third of the lessons it was good. The sound features are the structured start and finish of most lessons, with a greeting and dismissal. Learning objectives are shared with the pupils at the outset, so that pupils are able to focus on the lesson. All lessons are planned with more than one activity and a combination of language skills: this helps pupils to maintain their interest and concentration. There is usually an evaluation of what has been learnt at the end of the lesson, but this does not always involve the majority of the pupils. Classroom management is sound. Relationships are good, and teachers know their pupils well. Homework is set regularly and helps to achieve a continuity of work. Teachers make good use of resources such as the overhead projector, worksheets and the cassette recorder, but less so of flash cards.
143. In the lessons when the teaching is good, expectations are high. The foreign language is used for most of the lesson to challenge the pupils and to make them think. There is a greater challenge to individual pupils, particularly after chorus work, in question and answer sessions and with the use of flash cards or the oui/non cards, which are particularly effective in encouraging class participation. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their oracy skills in work with partners, when they put questions to each other or answer them.

144. There is no consistent uniform lesson pattern across the department. The marking of pupils' exercise books at Key Stage 3 is irregular, inconsistent and lacks rigour. Basic writing skills, such as accents, capital letters and careful, accurate copying of vocabulary, need greater emphasis. Teachers should employ different methods to replace pupils' dependency on the use of English, both orally and in written work.
145. The department has experienced difficulties over several terms with unavoidable changes in staff, including one term without a head of department. The teachers worked hard to minimize this disruption. The situation has also resulted in a loss of continuity of learning for many pupils at different levels. The new head of department took up the position very recently, but already has a clear view of the action needed to raise standards.
146. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. A departmental review took place in the spring term 2000, although some of the teachers have changed since then. No teaching is now unsatisfactory. An initiative with the local educational authority is being undertaken to redress the underachievement of boys. However, assessment in Years 7 to 9 needs to make use of the attainment levels of the National Curriculum to track pupils' progress, to show pupils how they can improve, to inform curricular planning and to provide targets. In some Year 10 and 11 lessons, pupils still have to share books in French. Overall there are insufficient teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum.

MUSIC

147. The year 2000 teacher assessments at the age of 14 indicated that the percentage of pupils achieving the expectation and above was well above the national average. However, these are unreliable because arrangements for the standardisation of assessment were inadequate. At GCSE in 2000 the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A* to C was well above national averages. Since the last inspection results have improved and have been consistently well above national averages with increasing numbers of pupils achieving A* and A grades.
148. By the age of 14 pupils' attainment is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 9 can identify different styles of music and understand the features of blues music but their knowledge and understanding of music vocabulary are underdeveloped. Pupils' keyboard skills are developing well and though the quality of singing is satisfactory, it lacks expression. In their composing pupils understand how the elements of music can be combined successfully to produce appropriate and effective music for a silent movie. However, there are few instances of pupils combining melody and harmony. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons.
149. By the age of 16 pupils' attainment is broadly inline with expectations. In Year 11 pupils compose well-structured and coherent pieces based on their own musical interests and instrumental or vocal expertise. Pupils can successfully notate them by hand or using music notation software on a computer. Pupils perform fluently and expressively and the performances of some pupils are well above average. Their knowledge and understanding of the features of different music is good but some pupils are insecure in notating rhythms and pitch. A number of pupils receive instrumental lessons and this has a positive impact on all aspects of their work.
150. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is unsatisfactory and in Years 10 and 11 it is satisfactory. Pupils are managed well and

relationships are good. As a result pupils are well behaved and concentrate well. The teacher makes good use of their performing skills for demonstration purposes. In a Year 7 lesson the teacher demonstrated how to fit the rhythm of the words of a song into the melody which resulted in pupils copying and then singing the song much more fluently. The teacher gives effective support to pupils as they are working. In a Year 11 lesson pupils gained a better understanding of the difference between major, whole tone and pentatonic scales. The teacher has good subject knowledge and sound knowledge and understanding of examination requirements, which leads to pupils achieving well in their examinations. However, in lessons of Years 7 to 9, lesson planning is often weak, the learning objectives are not clearly identified and tasks and materials are not always sufficiently adapted to challenge and to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils, including those who play musical instruments. Consequently, these pupils do not always make sufficient progress by the end of the lesson. The pupils received good support in lessons from the organ scholar from Worcester cathedral.

151. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Department development planning is weak as priorities for development are not sufficiently well linked to the school's development plan and to current national issues relating to teaching and learning in music. Schemes of work are unsatisfactory and have not been revised to take into account the requirements of the new programmes of study for Curriculum 2000 including the integration of performing, composing and appraising activities and planning appropriate opportunities for the use of ICT. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory and do not make clear how assessments will be linked to the levels of attainment identified in the National Curriculum. Overall there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.
152. The department has insufficient pitched and unpitched instruments to enable pupils to develop their instrumental and composing skills. Pupils have insufficient access to ICT equipment. The keyboards do not have onboard sequencing facilities and pupils have access to only one computer with music sequencing and notation software that works. Consequently teachers are unable to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and GCSE in providing opportunities for pupils to enhance their attainment in performing and composing through the use of ICT.
153. Extra-curricular provision is good and has a very positive effect on developing pupils' performing skills. Instrumental tuition provides opportunities for pupils to learn to sing or to play a wide range of instruments including recorder and bassoon and to learn how to use music technology for recording in the well-equipped recording studio. Pupils can also participate in one of the four choirs, two orchestras and brass group which perform to a high standard. There are also opportunities for pupils to take part in the many events that take place during the year such as the carol service in Worcester cathedral, GCSE music evenings and the annual concert to St. Barnabas Primary School.

Expressive Arts

154. Expressive Arts is a GCSE course taken by pupils in Years 10 and 11. At the time of the inspection the co-ordinator for Expressive Arts was absent, and the lessons were taught by a temporary member of staff. Evidence for the inspection was limited as most of the Year 11 coursework had been sent away for moderation, and therefore judgements about standards were unable to be made

155. GCSE results have been consistently well above national averages since the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieved very good results in 2000. By the age of 16 pupils' attainment is above average. A good standard of performance was observed on video.
156. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils showed excellent attitudes towards their work. They were working very well together in their groups and were totally focused on their work. Pupils were able to talk very knowledgeably and with great understanding about the requirements of the course and were very enthusiastic about their work.
157. The scheme of work provides a good overview of the course with clear learning objectives. The improvement plan is detailed and is based on analysis of examination results, a review of short and long term targets and is clearly linked to the school development plan. Evidence points to very good management of the course.
158. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Access to the hall, the only performance space and area with appropriate stage lighting, is often difficult. One of the GCSE groups has only been able to use the hall for fifty percent of lesson time.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

159. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, pupils attainment in the A* to C grade range was slightly above the national average. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
160. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is good. Pupils' GCSE files contain examples of good written work reflecting their clear understanding of theoretical concepts and issues. Most files are well presented with good standards of writing although not many contain examples where pupils had used ICT. Both boys and girls in Year 11 use the Internet to retrieve information. However, only a small minority of pupils, boys or girls, show any understanding of cardio-vascular functioning or of the effects of exercise upon it. Homework is generally up to date and carefully marked.
161. Practical attainment in dance is excellent and pupils co-operate thoughtfully to produce work of quite outstanding aesthetic and interpretative quality. Boys show satisfactory striking skills in tennis and cricket. Some boys have very good skills in tennis, being able to produce consistently accurate ground-strokes and volleys to both forehand and backhand. Volleyball skills are sound with boys and girls able to perform well and referee games effectively.
162. By the time pupils are 14, attainment is generally satisfactory. Boys have accurate bowling skills at cricket, a large minority having consistent control of line and length. Year 8 boys have satisfactory racket skills in tennis, with a minority having well-developed skills. Girls showed progress in baton changing in athletics. All pupils have good basic catching, throwing and striking skills which are relevant in games situations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in terms of their prior attainments at both key stages.
163. The overall quality of teaching is good; it is sometimes excellent. In those Year 10 and 11 dance lessons, which are excellent, pupils are encouraged to plan and evaluate their work. Consequently, they have a very good understanding of the features which are essential for dance to be successful. Good relationships exist between teachers and pupils. Lessons proceed with lively pace and purpose.

Preparation is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ability to emphasise the important points of technique to ensure that pupils get a clear understanding of what they are intended to practice and learn. When teaching games, teachers ensure that practices are relevant and carefully structured so that pupils have maximum opportunities to participate during lessons. Pupils are encouraged to co-operate and collaborate and this provides chances for them to plan and evaluate both their own work and that of others. Boys now have equal opportunities to do this, an improvement since the last inspection.

164. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are often good and sometimes excellent. Pupils arrive promptly to lessons and there is a very low incidence of any not taking part in lessons. Concentration is maintained throughout lessons and there is clear enjoyment in the subject. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs, attend extra curricular activities provided by the department. Pupils co-operate, collaborate and work well together even under competitive conditions. Standards of dress are good, boys and girls both being appropriately attired.
165. The leadership and management are very good. The head of department gives clear leadership and organisation. Departmental policies are largely in place. Assessment has been modified to give clear recording of pupils' attainments although some amendment is needed to help pupils to set their own targets. The curriculum is well balanced. There are very good displays in the department designed both to inform pupils and to celebrate their successes. Most teachers know the needs of pupils with special educational needs, and activities are appropriate to their level of ability. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.
166. Accommodation is very good with some parts, the gymnasium and sports hall, excellent. There is, however, need for a suitable space for dance in order to raise standards even higher. Outside tennis courts urgently need resurfacing and need sufficient camber to allow rainwater to drain off.
167. Extra curricular provision is good, particularly for boys and there is a good range of activities. A number of pupils, boys and girls achieve well in competitions. There is strong provision for extra curricular dance and groups of pupils regularly perform dance to the public.