

INSPECTION REPORT

VERMUYDEN SCHOOL

Goole, East Riding of Yorkshire

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 118064

Headteacher: Miss A McErlane

Reporting inspector: Mr E Wheatley
10013

Dates of inspection: 15th – 19th January 2001

Inspection number: 188972

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Centenary Road Goole East Riding of Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Orange
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10013	Ted Wheatley	<i>Registered inspector</i>		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
9895	Roger Williams	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20457	Brian Fletcher	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.	
12844	Mick Saunders	<i>Team inspector</i>	English.	
30746	Julie Woolley	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.	
1990	Graham Preston	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology.	
31685	Val Girling	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and design.	
7084	Jack Haslam	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology.	
10316	Norman Bertram	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography.	
28101	Andrew Lagden	<i>Team inspector</i>	History.	
2626	Marion Thompson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages; Equal opportunities.	How good is teaching?
1340	David Wigley	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music.	
30198	Reg Chick	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities? The Sixth Form.
1845	Robert Tweed	<i>Team inspector</i>	Religious education; Special educational needs.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Vermuyden School has 1,209 pupils of whom 92 are students in the Sixth Form. The school is bigger than other secondary schools and is increasing in size. Numbers of boys and girls are approximately equal, although there are wide variations between year groups, and there are more girls than boys in the Sixth Form. The school is on the outskirts of Goole, and takes pupils and students from the town and several outlying villages. The area the school serves is predominantly of mixed private housing and local authority accommodation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average, and there are no pupils with English as an additional language. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and 2. Five per cent have statements for special educational needs. These pupils mainly have moderate learning difficulties or dyslexia.

Attainment on entry to the school fluctuates significantly between years, but in 2000 was broadly in line with national averages for 11 year olds, although the proportions of pupils obtaining the higher levels in the national tests at the end of primary school was below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound standard of education and standards are rising. Teaching is good, and heads of department and heads of year are effective in helping raise standards. Management provides direction for the school's development, although monitoring and evaluation of teaching and departmental performance are underdeveloped. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards are rising.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Pupils' and students' attitudes to work in lessons are good.
- The work of middle managers is effective in contributing to rising standards.
- Governors' knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and how it needs to improve, is good.
- Extracurricular provision is good and attracts a large number of pupils and students.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), geography and design and technology.
- Teaching in art, design and technology, and a minority of French lessons.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and sharing good practice.
- Management of the poor behaviour of some pupils in a small number of lessons.
- The curriculum, by ensuring statutory requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education are met; provision for collective worship; reporting on pupils' progress in ICT to parents.
- Attendance and punctuality of a small proportion of pupils.
- Resources for science and ICT.
- The accommodation of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1996, and since then there has been satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues raised. At all stages, the school has established methods of raising attainment, including analysis of results and producing targets for individual pupils, improving pupils' behaviour, and working with the local community to raise the local status of education. Time allocations for music, physical education and science have been increased. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the school's work and its cost effectiveness have improved overall, although there is still room for further development. Statutory requirements to provide religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form are still not met, and although there has been a little improvement in provision for ICT, progress has been insufficient and standards are still low. Health and safety issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average **A**

above average **B**

average **C**

below average **D**

well below average **E**

In the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 2000, the proportion of pupils obtaining the average Level 5 or higher was broadly average, although in mathematics they were below average. Compared with similar schools, results in English were above average,

in mathematics they were below average and in science they were average. Over recent years standards at Key Stage 3 have risen in line with the national trend. Pupils have made sound progress against a background of below average attainment on entry to the school.

In the GCSE results in 2000, 35 per cent of pupils obtained five or more A*-C grades and 88 per cent obtained five or more A*-G grades, both of which were below average. Compared with similar schools, these results were well above average. The school did not achieve its GCSE target of 50 per cent five or more A*-C grades for 2000, but these were unrealistically high. Over the last five years standards have risen, and based on performance in end of Key Stage 3 national tests, pupils performed at least as well as expected of them, and sometimes better. A small proportion perform worse than expected and the school has worked successfully with these pupils to raise their interest and involvement in school.

At A Level, comparisons with national results in 2000 were not valid because small numbers of students were entered in most subjects. The average points scored by students were below average. Numbers staying on to take A Level and AS Level examinations are increasing. Inspection evidence indicates that students' attainment is average overall, but many students perform below this, and are likely to achieve low grade A Level or AS Level passes.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall and pupils have a positive view of school and their education.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classrooms is generally good with some unsatisfactory behaviour in a small number of lessons. Around school, behaviour is mostly satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. Relationships between pupils and students, and with adults are generally good. Personal development is satisfactory overall, with pupils and students taking on responsibilities around school and in supporting the school at functions.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory because a small but significant number of pupils take holidays in term time. A small number of pupils are frequently late arriving at school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. In 94 per cent of lessons teaching is satisfactory or better. Forty-four per cent of teaching is good and 20 per cent is very good with a little excellent. Six per cent is unsatisfactory and this is mainly at Key Stage 4. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in the Sixth

Form. In English, teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and challenging, usually with a wide range of activities. On occasion, teachers talk for too long in lessons, the pace is slow and work is not suited to individual needs; in these lessons teaching is unsatisfactory and learning is slow. In mathematics, teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. In science, teaching is good, with good lesson planning and clear lesson objectives which are shared with pupils. Learning is sound overall and good for many pupils; poor facilities restrict the pace of learning at times.

There is good teaching in all subjects, much of it lively and challenging, which involves pupils effectively in their own learning. There is unsatisfactory teaching in some art, design and technology and French lessons, mainly because teachers do not manage the disruptive behaviour of some pupils well. In art and in design and technology further teaching problems arise where there is some temporary staffing, but the school has plans to them.

Teaching in the Sixth Form is good. Work is challenging, well matched to examination requirements and teachers provide a high level of personal support.

The school meets the needs of all pupils well. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is sound. Teachers use individual education plans effectively to provide work for pupils, and the quality of individual help by learning support assistants is good. The highest attaining pupils are well supported in most subjects, often with targets to help them progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory in quality and range and enriched through provision of dance, drama and the wide range of extra curricular activities. Statutory requirements to cover all elements of ICT are not met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall, and the work of learning support assistants is good. Some pupils withdrawn for support are disadvantaged because they miss the same lessons each week.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall; sound provision for moral, social and cultural development. However, there are too few planned opportunities for making pupils aware of the significance of subjects, or to wonder at work within the subject.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. The school monitors pupils' personal development well.

The school has a sound partnership with parents. Parents' generally support the school well. The school provides good quality information for parents, particularly the letters and reports which keep parents well informed about pupils' and students' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior staff provide sound direction for development, and heads of departments and heads of years are effective in working towards raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors carry out their responsibilities well. They provide considerable support for the headteacher and school, know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, are involved in development planning and setting and managing the budget. However, they have not ensured that statutory requirements for ICT, religious education, reporting on ICT to parents and collective worship are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory overall. Analysis of assessment information to help departments raise standards is good. However, there is no means by which the work of departments is effectively monitored and teaching is not formally observed and evaluated and good practice shared.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well. Financial planning is good, the school takes considerable effort through the work of governors and staff to obtain the best value for the funds at its disposal.

The accommodation of the school is unsatisfactory, but present building work will improve facilities considerably. There are insufficient resources for science and there are not enough computers to support the teaching of ICT. Staffing is satisfactory overall, although there are staffing problems in mathematics because one vacant post has not been permanently filled and the head of department is leaving the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their sons and daughters enjoy school.• Pupils make good progress in their work.• The school provides the right amount of homework.• Teaching is good and the school has high expectations of pupils and students.• The school is well led and managed.• The school helps pupils grow into mature young adults.• The school provides a good range of activities outside of lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils' behaviour.• The amount of information provided by the school about how well pupils are progressing.• How closely the school works with parents.

Inspectors are broadly in agreement with parents over the strengths of the school. They found that in a small number of lessons pupils do not behave well, but in most lessons pupils are well behaved. The school provides good quality information. Reports on pupils, apart from not including details, of progress in ICT, are good. The school has good working relationships with parents and maintains these well. At the meeting held for parents before the inspection, parents expressed their pleasure with how the school has improved in terms of managing pupils' behaviour and improving standards of attainment.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school in September 2000 was broadly average although few pupils had obtained the higher levels in the national tests in mathematics. Attainment on entry has varied considerably between years, but in recent years has been predominantly below average.

2. In the end of Key Stage 3 national tests in 2000, the attainment of pupils was average overall. In English and science, the proportion of pupils obtaining the average Level 5 or higher was in line with the national average, and in mathematics it was below average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 6 or better was below average in English, mathematics and science. Over recent years results have improved in line with the national trend, and there has been significant improvement in the last two years. Compared with similar schools, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 or higher was above average for English and science and below average for mathematics. At Level 6 or higher, the results for English and science were broadly average and in mathematics were below average.

3. In other subjects, teachers' assessments indicate that standards are average overall by the end of Key Stage 3. In art and in design and technology, teachers' assessments indicated above average performance, but inspection evidence shows that this is too high. Attainment is average in art and in design and technology; teachers' assessment skills are not secure. Attainment was above average in music and this is confirmed by the inspection. Attainment was below average in information and communication technology (ICT), largely because the full curriculum is not covered. However, there has been recent increase in provision for (ITC) and standards are starting to rise. Standards in art are rising as staffing has now improved.

4. Achievements at Key Stage 3 are satisfactory overall and are good in science, music and drama. They are unsatisfactory in geography and information and communication technology. In English, well planned teaching and a focus on developing literacy skills is having a positive effect on learning in some classes; reading, writing and speaking skills are improving, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. The achievements of other pupils is satisfactory overall, and for a small proportion is unsatisfactory, where learning is not well planned. In mathematics, achievement is satisfactory overall, and for some pupils is good; the effect of focusing on developing key mathematical skills is starting to have a positive effect. In science the use of a new scheme of work and staff development have improved the quality of teaching, and this is helping pupils learn well. However, practical skills are not developing quite so well because there are limited laboratory facilities – soon to be remedied in the new buildings. Pupils' progress in music and drama is a reflection of well prepared, enthusiastic teaching leading to high level performance skills. In geography achievement is unsatisfactory, but the situation is improving with improvement in identifying pupils' learning needs through effective use of assessment methods and setting targets for pupils. In ICT achievement is unsatisfactory because the control element of the subject is not fully in place.

5. At GCSE in 2000, 35 per cent of pupils obtained five or more A*-C grades, and this was below the national average. However, based on the end of Key Stage 3 results of this group of pupils in 1998, performance was well above average. Eighty-nine per cent of pupils obtained five or more A*-G grades at GCSE, and while this was below the national average, it was well above average compared with similar schools. Over recent years the school's results have improved at a faster rate than the national trend, and the progress made by pupils compared with those in similar schools was above average.

6. At GCSE level, results in English, drama and German were better than in other subjects in the school. In English and drama, results were close to the national average. Results in German were also above average for the school, but this was expected, as higher attaining pupils took this subject. Results in art and design, geography and physical education were below the average; staffing changes were largely responsible for this.

7. Inspection evidence endorses GCSE results, although there are some variations. Standards in English are rising, and while they are rising in mathematics, they are doing so more slowly. In science there is some improvement in standards, but these improvements have been hampered by poor facilities and restricted opportunities for practical work. These are being improved with the imminent start to a building programme. Standards in mathematics, art and design, and design and technology are below average, due predominantly to staffing problems not of the school's making. These have been partially resolved in art and standards are improving. In design and technology, expectations are not always high enough, but the head of department is due to return from maternity leave, resolving temporary staffing problems. Staffing problems in mathematics are not being resolved so easily; a vacant post has not been filled and the head of department is leaving the school.

8. Overall achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. In English achievement is good; well planned lessons, clear learning objectives and good management of pupils are effective in maintaining pupils' efforts and involvement. Achievement is good in music and drama as a result of enthusiastic teaching. In other subjects achievement is sound, although in a few classes pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory where teachers' skills at managing some disruptive boys are not strong. This is evident in art and design, design and technology and some lower attaining classes in French. In some lessons, good control and a clear focus on what is being learned means that pupils learn well. Achievement is unsatisfactory in geography where implementation of course work changes is not complete.

9. The school's published targets for GCSE results in 2000 and 2001 are too high. Analysis of pupils' attainment up to present, based on standardised assessments show that the school was too ambitious with what could be achieved. Revised targets are more realistic, and while these were not achieved in 2000, to the disappointment of the school, they more closely reflect the prior attainment of pupils in the school and what can be reasonably be expected of them. The school has identified issues influencing underattainment, and aims to raise standards at GCSE level. The school is working closely with the community to raise the status of education locally, and has developed strategies to improve attendance of older pupils. Strategies to raise attendance have not long been in place, but more pupils are now staying on to follow A Level courses, an indication that the school's stress on the importance of education is starting to have a positive impact.

10. Results at A Level were below average in 2000. Comparisons with national averages are difficult because the numbers entered for most subjects was low. Nevertheless all subjects have students achieving A Level passes. Inspection evidence indicates that student's attainment is average overall, but many students perform below this, and are likely to achieve low grade A Level or AS Level passes. The school is offering joint courses with another local school, and this is contributing to increased numbers of students staying on in the Sixth Form. At A Level, comparisons with national results in 2000 were not valid because small numbers of students were entered in most subjects. The average points scored by students were below average. In English, grades were below average overall, but three-quarters of students obtained an A Level pass. Eleven out of fourteen students obtained passes in business studies and eleven out of twelve passed in history. Students also obtained A-Level passes in art, biology, chemistry, physics, French, German, drama, computing, geography, mathematics, physical education, performing arts and psychology. At AS Level, students obtained passes in biology, computing, mathematics, physics and sociology.

11. Pupils' literacy skills are broadly average. Pupils and Sixth Form students gain sound writing skills through planned work within departments. The use of writing frames and subject-specific terminology helps pupils develop competent independent writing skills. Pupils have sound reading skills and can extract relevant information from subject matter they read. For example, they read scientific material and answer questions on what they have read. However, presentational skills are underdeveloped. Numeracy skills are sound and are a feature of many lessons. In design and technology pupils accurately measure length and weight and calculate volume. They use numerical skills as an essential part of the design brief. In geography, pupils draw bar charts to illustrate climate change and apply their knowledge of co-ordinates to map reading. In science, pupils are shown the importance of accurate measurement when preparing for an experiment. In history, pupils use their knowledge of statistics and graphs to chart the progress of the industrial revolution, and in physical education number skills are in evidence in recording times in athletics, or measuring pulse rates before and after exercise.

12. The progress of pupils with special educational needs, (SEN), is satisfactory across both key stages and in the Sixth Form. Standards of attainment are often in line with national expectations. In science, for example, some pupils with special educational needs at Key Stage 3 know the difference between herbivores and carnivores, and can describe methods of separating solids and liquids. In mathematics, pupils with special needs benefit from setting arrangements, and small groups at both key stages make good progress in achieving the numeracy targets in their individual education plans, (IEPs). In English, the use of writing frames encourages pupil to extend narratives and to use technical vocabulary accurately. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress in other subjects and in religious education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to the school are satisfactory overall. Most pupils feel positive about their education and they respond well to the school's motto, 'Aim High'. In a science lesson in Year 9, for example, a group of pupils who have special needs were fascinated and excited by the demonstration on gold panning, and worked hard and with concentration to grasp the skills involved. A measure of pupils' attitudes to school is the high level of involvement of pupils, (about 50 per cent), who are involved in extra-curricular activities. Teachers work hard to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

14. Pupils' behaviour is usually satisfactory and parents' views that behaviour has improved is borne out by the inspection. Classroom behaviour is often good, especially when teaching is challenging, and pupils' interest is captured. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson on ratios and gears, pupils worked well in pairs developing their thinking skills and discussing the task co-operatively. However, in a few lessons, where this is not the case; a small number of pupils, both boys and girls, are inattentive and sometimes disruptive, which does not assist their learning.

15. Occasionally, when moving around the school, a minority of students jostle each other and do not follow the school's rules ensuring orderly movement between rooms. Often, there are no staff or senior students to maintain good order at these times. The school's most recent behaviour policy is being phased in, and staff are receiving continuous training. Bullying is not tolerated, and is satisfactorily dealt with by the school.

16. Although the number of instances of exclusion of pupils is above the national average, the school excludes pupils only as a very last resort, and has a policy of reducing the time they spend out of school. Many more instances of exclusion now, compared with the situation at the last inspection, are for half or one day, and care is taken in re-integration when pupils return. All the proper procedures are undertaken, and parents and governors play a full part in the process.

17. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the impact their actions might have on others, particularly in the classroom. For example, in a physical education lesson on basketball, Year 7 pupils' co-operation was very good, as they learned to avoid bodily contact, and they showed each other a good level of respect throughout the lesson. Overall, most pupils do respect others' feelings, values and beliefs satisfactorily.

18. Opportunities for pupils to take the initiative or develop personal responsibility are satisfactory. Pupils help at parents' meetings, including evenings for parents and pupils from the feeder primary schools. Pupils are also involved in running the school tuck shop, managing the collection and retrieval of lost property and with helping teachers with administrative tasks. In the Sixth Form students officiate at school functions and fulfil other responsible roles at various events. Very little independent learning and research by pupils takes place at Key Stages 3 and 4, although students in the Sixth Form are involved in a wide range of personal study.

19. Attendance is below the national average, and is, therefore, unsatisfactory. A significant factor in pupil absence concerns holidays taken in term time. The school has sought parents' co-operation, without success. A few pupils are late coming to school, some of them regularly. There is occasional lateness too for classes, and in the afternoon for registration, which takes up teachers' time unnecessarily and reduces the effectiveness of the tutorial period.

20. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are good. They concentrate well in lessons, as do pupils generally, and show enthusiasm and motivation. They gain satisfaction from challenging teaching in English. They are polite and respectful and respond appropriately when teachers correct or admonish them. There is no significant evidence of any discrimination towards pupils with special educational needs, and they are fully integrated into the life of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching is good overall and is a strength of the school. In 94 per cent of lessons it is satisfactory or better, in 62 per cent of lessons it is good or better and in 20 per cent of lessons it is very good with a small number of excellent lessons. In 6 per cent of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory with a very small amount of poor lessons. Standards of teaching are similar at Key Stages 3 and 4 but improve slightly at Key Stage 4, where there is less unsatisfactory teaching and more good teaching. Teaching is generally good in English; in mathematics and science it is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, and good in Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form. Teaching is unsatisfactory in 5 per cent of lessons and poor in 1 per cent; this relates to the unsatisfactory management of pupil behaviour in a small minority of lessons in design and technology, art and French, (at Key Stage 4), and to unsatisfactory planning in art. In a small proportion of English lessons, both at Key Stage 3, expectations for pupils are too low.

22. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school in history, physical education and music, and very good at all key stages in drama. There is some good or very good teaching in all subjects. Teaching in the Sixth Form is good or better in about eight lessons out of ten checked and is never less than satisfactory.

23. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and the issues related to non-specialist teaching, particularly in drama, raised at the time of the last inspection, have been addressed. Good subject knowledge is evident in the quality of explanations, questioning and the relevance of the work provided. This enables pupils to work with interest and concentration. One example of this was in a Year 12 ICT lesson, where the teacher specified the key skills assessment requirements well so that students knew exactly what they had to do to reach the required standard. In all modern language lessons, the good quality of teacher's accents and pronunciation make them good role models for pupils to copy, and helps them to speak more fluently.

24. Teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall. Teachers give particular attention to spelling and key words in all subjects. In many lessons, support for reading and writing was evident and effective, with teachers using strategies from the National Literacy Strategy. Developments in the school regarding literacy are well in hand. Training and work between staff from different departments to develop common approaches to teaching literacy skills are having a positive

influence on teaching, and consequently on the improvements made in pupils' literacy skills. Teachers have identified specific literacy skills required or developed within their own subjects, and have worked hard to develop suitable teaching materials, sometimes with teachers from the English department to support them.

25. Strategies for teaching numeracy skills are well developed within the mathematics department. There is a clear scheme of work for teaching the use and application of number. All teachers use the same techniques, and specific questions are set, which allow pupils throughout the key stages to use their number knowledge to solve everyday problems. The department implements the National Numeracy Strategy in Year 7, which provides for quick-fire mental and oral mathematics at the beginning of each lesson. This practice sharpens numerical skills, and is used in most mathematics lessons. In other subjects, the teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory, although there is no whole school policy to provide a framework of support for teachers.

26. Teachers' planning is good, and in physical education is very good. Schemes of work are well organised and lesson planning is good even in some lessons where the teaching is unsatisfactory for other reasons. Teachers use a wide range of tasks, activities and strategies that are effective in helping pupils to learn in an ordered manner. In many lessons, the aims of the lesson are shared with the pupils, with the result that they understand what they are trying to achieve. This happened in all lessons in modern languages, where lessons were built on previous knowledge and where a review of progress at the end of lessons usually resulted in pupils having a sense of achievement when they realised how much progress they had made.

27. Teachers' expectations of the learning and behaviour of pupils of all abilities is satisfactory overall. The issue of a lack of challenge for pupils of average ability raised during the last inspection has largely been resolved, except in science where the lack of facilities for investigative work continues to limit the achievement of pupils in middle ability groups. In English, whilst still satisfactory, the level of challenge is less effective for those of middle ability. In English, physical education, drama and history and in some lessons in modern language, science and information and technology expectations are usually high and result in work and behaviour of high quality. One example of this was an English lesson with higher attaining Year 7 pupils, where the teacher moved judiciously from a straightforward word game incorporating adjectives and rhythm to the more challenging task of writing a poem on their own choice of theme. This resulted in work of good quality. In dance lessons in Years 8 and 10, high expectations resulted in a high level of performance of very creative work, which enthused and engaged the pupils. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is good. Teachers have established good relationships with most pupils and this is the foundation of much of the purposeful learning that goes on in classrooms. It also provides an atmosphere in which pupils feel confident to try out their ideas and ask questions. However, in a minority of lessons in English, art, French and design and technology, expectations of pupils are too low, pupils are not motivated to learn and their behaviour often distracts others from work. In religious education expectations are sometimes unsatisfactory, where there is insufficient emphasis on the spiritual elements of the subject.

28. Teachers use a range of methods to meet the wide range of attainment of pupils in the school. There is variety, pace and momentum to the teaching and learning. As a result, pupils' interest and concentration is generally in evidence. Exposition, explanation, opportunities for research and

presentation and skilful questioning are used effectively in most subjects. In a Year 10 physical, social and health education lesson, for example, pupils of all abilities researched sensitive topics such as abortion, animal rights and pollution and made confident presentations to their peers, fielding questions without embarrassment and illustrating their work well. However, pupils of above average and below average ability are not always challenged by the teaching methods in design and technology and in less able groups this results in disaffection. Insufficient investigative work in mathematics and independent work in science limit pupils' development of enquiry approaches and independence. In all subjects there was very limited use of ICT as a learning tool. Resources are used well in most lessons, but there are insufficient resources in science, principally because there is restricted space for practical work.

29. The use of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory overall, but is varied across the school. Where it is good, for example in English, it is used to help pupils improve the quality of their work through giving them a picture of their progress. In a Year 10 lesson, pupil self-evaluation and teacher evaluation of a video presentation of the trial of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth was based on well-understood assessment criteria. This activity presented pupils with substantial but manageable challenge, combining creativity and critical awareness. In lessons in physical education, modern languages, drama and history pupils become aware of how to improve their work. However, there was little evidence of the use of day-to-day assessment in religious education and it was not systematically used to plan teaching in design and technology. There is no established system for the assessment of pupils' skills in ICT. Marking is regular and conscientious and useful feedback is provided to pupils to help them improve. Homework is set and marked regularly.

30. In most cases, teachers' work constructively with learning support assistants, and share their objectives and planning. Grouping arrangements are used effectively to promote learning, as in religious education lessons involving group discussion. Good classroom management enables pupils with special educational needs to focus on their work, and isolated cases of disruptive behaviour in lessons are dealt with effectively. Specialist teaching in small groups for basic skills is very well organised and makes excellent use of information technology.

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

31. The quality and range of opportunities offered by the school is satisfactory throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and the Sixth Form. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced. The curriculum meets the time requirements of the local agreed syllabus for religious education at Key Stage 3, but does not at Key Stage 4; nine lessons per year is insufficient time. Statutory requirements for religious education are not met in the Sixth Form.

32. The curriculum includes a full range of subjects at Key Stage 3, including two modern foreign languages. The introduction of drama at Key Stage 3 has enriched the curriculum, because apart from developing drama as a subject, it has provided opportunities for improving language skills and raising pupils' self-esteem. The mathematics curriculum gives

good emphasis on problem solving and investigative skills. At Key Stage 4 all students take a substantial core of subjects, with option choices allowing students to choose additional subjects which match their individual needs. The introduction of dance has enriched the Key Stage 4 curriculum. However, the curriculum offers no short courses or vocational courses.

33. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum also includes flexible arrangements to attract some pupils who do not readily attend school. The school has identified three different groups of pupils who benefit from a curriculum closely linked to vocational training. Two small groups of Year 10 pupils, one identified as displaying disaffection and the other consisting of lower attaining pupils, are following work-related courses at Goole College on five half days per week. A small group of Year 11 pupils have been disapplied from the National Curriculum and they attend work-related courses. These arrangements are having a positive impact on attendance and attitudes to school.

34. Provision for ICT, at Key Stages 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory. The control element of the subject is not being covered adequately at either key stage. The time allocation for separate ICT lessons at Key Stages 3 is too little to meet National Curriculum requirements. The use of ICT in design and technology, science and mathematics is underdeveloped. ICT is used well in religious education at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, there is too little ICT taught in most subjects, and there has been no improvement since the last inspection. ICT in the Sixth Form is covered in the recently introduced key skills programme, which provides a satisfactory experience for students.

35. Sixth Form provision is sound and includes both traditional A Level subjects and recently introduced General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses in leisure and tourism, care and business studies. Sixth Form provision has benefited from links with local schools and the local college of further education. The successful introduction of a key skills programme in the Sixth Form meets the new requirements of Curriculum 2000.

36. The coverage of subjects is well balanced. This is an improvement since the last inspection, and the time allocation is now broadly average. Curriculum planning is satisfactory, although the school does not have a curriculum policy or handbook. The governors' curriculum sub committee is active in taking advice from staff, reviewing and developing the curriculum.

37. Although the school has no explicit equal opportunities policy, all students have equal access to the curriculum, and there are no serious issues of restricted access to some subjects.

38. A strength of the school is its wide ranging programme of extra curricular activities. The programme is well managed by one member of staff, who has the use of a small budget to monitor and evaluate the programme of activities. On average, 650 pupils per week attend clubs and activities ranging from 'Astronomy' to 'Robot Wars'.

39. The school has built good links with its partner institutions. Links with Howden School and Goole College are providing Sixth Form students with a wider curriculum than the school could offer itself. The school has strong links with its feeder primary schools and pupils from Years 5 and 6 experience a well organised programme of activities in their visits to the

school. Links also include providing opportunities for primary school pupils to attend out of school sporting activities, hosting and managing Goole Primary Schools' sports day, and running an ICT Summer School. Primary school pupils enrol on the Year 7 French trip whilst at primary school.

40. Links with business and commerce are good. The school recently received an award from Humberside Education Business Partnership for its links with business. Together they promote mentoring schemes, industry awareness days and curriculum enhancement activities. Several businesses sponsor the school brochure. The school is closely linked with Goole Education and Training Forum to promote education and training for local people.

41. The school has an established literacy policy that has developed well through training, collaboration between departments and the support of teachers from the English department. Common approaches to strengthening spelling, reading and writing have been developed, building on the specific needs of individual subjects. Development work continues with a planned focus on improving speaking and listening skills, and an awareness that there is a need to continue with work in developing writing skills, particularly of pupils' presentation skills.

42. A school numeracy policy is in draft form, and is built on effective practice already taking place in the mathematics department and in response to what is happening in other subjects. There are several examples of good practice already established in the school. In design and technology, pupils accurately measure length and weight and calculate volume. They use numerical skills as an essential part of the design brief. In geography, pupils draw bar charts to illustrate climate change and apply their knowledge of co-ordinates to map reading. In science, pupils are shown the importance of accurate measurement when preparing for an experiment. In history, pupils use their knowledge of statistics and graphs to chart the progress of the industrial revolution, and in physical education, number skills are in evidence in recording times in athletics or measuring pulse rates before and after exercise.

43. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory, and has improved greatly since the last inspection, when there was no provision. The school now has a planned programme throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, which covers all the major elements of PSHE and supports careers education and guidance, health and sex education. The programme, taught by tutors, includes a variety of well planned activities such as special events, like the industry day or the European awareness day, educational visits, outside speakers, opportunities for residential experiences, team building events and community service. It makes a valuable contribution to the work experience programme that has good links with the local community. Teachers also respond to particular needs, for example, by setting up a smoking cessation group to help pupils who want to give up smoking. This has met with some measure of success. All pupils are entered for the 'Lifeskills' examination at the end of Year 11 and the school has met the targets it has set for itself. Materials have been developed to assist with the teaching of the course and these have been evaluated to improve their quality. Not all tutors are yet comfortable in teaching some of the more sensitive aspects of the course, for example sex education, but appropriate arrangements have been made for their support. Teaching in PSHE lessons is satisfactory overall. Pupils take a mature attitude

in discussion and debate for example on how to make decisions about option choices. Year 8 pupils were enthusiastic, learned to work co-operatively and solve problems, and gained knowledge about Europe during their European morning. However, pupils and tutors expressed a range of opinions about the value and quality of PSHE and there is still unevenness in the quality of provision.

44. The programme of PSHE in the Sixth Form is informal, and is responsive to students' declared needs. Sixth Form tutors are the main providers of the programme, although outside speakers and specialists are also involved. The course is based on key events in the Sixth Form calendar, for example, target setting and review, careers advice and guidance and help in applying for places at university. It is linked to the development of study skills and key skills, and to a more limited extent, to issues related to the stage of students' lives, like safe driving. Students value the close and helpful relationship with their tutors and the support they are given. Currently there is no link between the Key Stage 4 programme and that in the Sixth Form, but this has been identified by the co-ordinator as a key area for development.

45. The drugs education policy is in place and the sex education policy is in draft. These policies reflect the moral framework established by the school. Although information for parents is provided about the content of the sex education programme, information is provided from houses within the school and no whole school approach is adopted; parents do not all receive the same information.

46. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the same curricular opportunities as their peers. Withdrawal teaching for basic skills is timetabled so that pupils do not miss major parts of their subject teaching, and learning support assistants remain in those lessons which are missed to provide pupils with any notes or homework that they need. Provision is particularly sensitively arranged in Year 11, so that some pupils follow work related courses and regular work experience which are suited to their particular needs.

47. Provision for careers education and guidance is good. A coherent programme for pupils in Years 9 to 11 is provided in form tutor periods and careers lessons, with good support from an enthusiastic and committed careers education and guidance co-ordinator. Good working relationships with the local careers guidance provider ensure that all pupils and students receive appropriate advice and guidance. An up-to-date careers library, with appropriate resources and information and communications technology programmes, is used throughout Years 9 to 11 to support careers lessons. A well-planned and carefully monitored work experience programme, together with industry days, further enhances the careers education and guidance programme for Year 10 pupils.

48. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Departments are expected to audit their own contribution to these areas of pupils' experiences. Whilst some departments show an understanding of their contribution to pupils' wider development, others do not, and further development in this area is necessary.

49. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. There is a regular pattern of assemblies, and whilst they often address moral, social and cultural aspects, only a few have any spiritual element, allowing for collective worship, including prayer, reflection and a

sense of the almighty. Some subjects provide a limited spiritual experience for pupils, for example, in an annual carol concert in music, and through the study of African beliefs surrounding the use of masks in art. However, in most subjects opportunities are missed to enhance pupils' spiritual awareness.

50. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral issues are explored in a number of subjects, including religious education, where the principles of right and wrong are taught. In physical education, pupils are encouraged to accept defeat in a positive way, and in drama they examine issues such as homelessness and domestic violence.

51. Pupils' social development is evident in many subjects, where pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively. For example, in mathematics and in art they share thoughts about one another's work and offer constructive criticism. There is much emphasis on group work in drama and co-operation in physical education. A number of visits are arranged to take groups of all ages to the theatre, exhibitions and on field trips locally, nationally and internationally. There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs run after school, which are well-attended.

52. Provision for pupils' cultural development is promoted by a number of subjects. Dance theatre workshops and blues and jazz workshops are organised by the music and drama staff. African singers and dancers visit the school, and along with a talk about a collection of African artefacts, promote understanding of the African culture. In art, much use is made of the art of other cultures, for example, aboriginal art, African art Egyptian art as well as that of Western Europe. Pupils learn to appreciate and respect the values of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

53. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory, and have improved since the last inspection. Good training in child protection procedures is given to all staff, and this is updated each term by the school's child protection officer. Risk assessments are carried out regularly, and the site manager has day-to-day responsibility for health and safety at the school. Governors play an active part in site safety and the site manager is an ex-officio member of the governors' committee for health and safety. The school keeps good records of fire and electrical safety tests and drills. First aid and medical arrangements are also satisfactory, and care is taken to ensure any pupils needing medication are treated by the school nurse. The school runs a breakfast facility each morning, and provides late buses three times a week for pupils who attend after school activities. The school was successful in joining the pilot social welfare scheme, 'Connexions', and this has resulted in the full time secondment of a trained social worker to work with disaffected pupils as part of the initiatives concerning pupil inclusion.

54. There are good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. The school has set realistic and challenging targets for improving attendance, and has invested much effort in staff time and data analysis to this end. A first day contact system is now in place and there is close liaison with the educational welfare service. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance, and attendance is continually referred to in school documentation and wall displays, which emphasise the need for improved attendance, to both pupils and parents, as a continuing theme.

55. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The school analyses data on behaviour carefully, and is now refining its behaviour policy as a result of past evaluation. Although the policy, in full, is still in draft, parts have been invoked and are beginning to be implemented with some consistency across the school.

56. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The use of individual planners for pupils as both a diary and record is proving successful, and it is carefully monitored by teachers and senior staff, and signed by parents. The life skills examination in Key Stage 4 personal and social education is valuable for pupils in Year 11. Records of achievement are well kept and provide useful records of pupils' progress from Year 7 onwards.

57. The school has satisfactory assessment procedures and has made sound progress since the last inspection in incorporating new approaches, though there is considerable variation in the quality and practice between subjects. In part, this results from a lack of a detailed whole school policy that incorporates developing good practice and ensures a coherent and consistent approach across departments.

58. Within the different subjects, there is a commitment to establish effective assessment, and where middle management is strong this leads to very good practice. This is evident in modern foreign languages and science, where National Curriculum level criteria are used well to inform pupils of their current attainment and ways of improving it. Assessment practice is less strong in art, design and technology and geography, resulting in less secure Key Stage 3 assessment decisions at the end of Year 9. Assessment of information and communications technology in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory, with staff yet to establish a system within the taught programme and across the school. Day-to-day marking in most subjects has improved but there is some inconsistency in its use within and across departments.

59. Senior managers encourage departments to use information about pupils' attainment on entry, and some departments, such as mathematics and English, build on this by adding their own test results and progress checks in order to set pupils clear attainment targets. Within the school, examination results and other forms of assessment are analysed and used to evaluate pupil performance, particularly at GCSE and A Level. Departments are encouraged to use those results to consider ways of improving teaching and curriculum provision; and some subjects are doing this successfully. In this respect, the school is beginning to address successfully a concern raised in the last inspection.

60. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress across the range of subjects of the curriculum are satisfactory, and the reports to parents provide a sufficiently detailed account of pupils' academic attainment and progress in all subjects except ICT. Year heads and tutors are effective in supporting pupil progress, but the school has yet to formulate a more formal system of academic monitoring and target setting.

61. Target setting in individual education plans, (IEPs), is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator, (SENCO), writes targets for basic skills which are reviewed systematically. It is a

strong feature in English, where targets are used to enable progress to be tracked effectively. Learning support assistants make a particularly valuable contribution to ongoing assessment, by keeping detailed feedback sheets in every lesson of the progress that pupils make, and of their attitudes and motivation. These records are used to inform future teaching and as a basis for reporting to parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. Parents' views of the school are positive, and are generally satisfactory. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Most parents believe behaviour has improved. Although a minority of parents felt they would like more information on their children's progress, and that the school could work more closely with them, the inspection found this was not the case. Parents greatly appreciate the school's provision of after school clubs, and the care which is shown to pupils; this extends to providing late buses, at the school's expense, to facilitate them attending these activities. Most parents are pleased at the level of homework pupils are given, and the inspection confirmed this view.

63. The school's links with parents are satisfactory. The use of pupils' planners is particularly effective in maintaining close links with parents, and their use is effectively ensured by teachers' regular supervision, in lessons and during tutorials. Parents find them useful too, and the planners enable useful dialogue with the school. A few parents come into school to help in the classroom, and more help with special events and attend them to support the school. For example, existing parents attend school to help new parents at induction evenings.

64. Good quality information is supplied to parents on a regular basis. In addition to the excellent use of the pupil planner, there are interim reports and letters on important issues for students. The annual reports, and subsequent open evenings, give parents information on pupils' progress and any important areas needing development. The very active Vermuyden School Association, which raises funds for the school, is also used as a forum for a wide variety of speakers. Parents hear talks from members of the school staff on a variety of curriculum subjects, national initiatives, (such as National Curriculum tests), and future developments, like the new science building. Home-school agreements are contained within the planner, and are therefore seen regularly, as a working document. This insert for the planner was funded by the Association.

65. Good care is taken over careers information and inducting new pupils into the school. Parents are fully involved fully with individual educational plans and every other important matter, such as attendance and behaviour problems, as they arise.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. There is clear direction from the headteacher for raising standards and improving teaching, and the heads of department are effective in their work to improve standards in their subjects. Significant work in introducing methods to analyse examination results and to produce subject and group targets has been done by the senior

management team. There is a shared commitment to raise standards, and individually departments work hard. There is a valuable heads of department group in which heads of department, heads of years and the special educational needs co-ordinator discuss developments. However, monitoring of departments by the senior team of staff is underdeveloped, resulting in no organised means to identify and share effective practice, for example, in managing the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils. The recently increased size in the senior team, to include assistant headteachers, provides a good opportunity to establish a line management structure with a major role in monitoring and evaluating the work of departments.

67. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, with a planned programme of development, is unsatisfactory overall. Departments use assessment information from end of key stage tests and GCSE examinations, from monitoring of pupils' work and teachers' planning and from observation of teaching with feedback and suggestions for improvement. However, there is no consistency in approach, and little sharing between departments over what works best, in spite of the heads of department working group. For example, in science and English, good strategies for managing difficult pupils in lower attaining classes are used, but there has been no methodical discussion between departments to make sure that all teachers, particularly younger ones and temporary teachers, benefit from these methods. While the headteacher has a good knowledge of the teaching strengths of teachers and has taken effective action to improve standards of teaching when necessary, this practice is not part of senior management practice.

68. At the time of the last inspection, attendance rates were lower at the school, and there were more exclusions of pupils for long periods of time. The school has worked hard to increase parental involvement in the school and to ensure that the local community, business and commerce are involved. This has raised the status of education locally; attendance has improved, long exclusion periods have decreased, pupils value their education and more students stay on to take Sixth Form courses.

69. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have been actively involved in working to raise standards, through support for the school in the community and visiting classrooms. They provide a valuable level of support for the headteacher, and work closely with the school to produce the carefully detailed and costed school development plan. However, governors do not ensure that the school complies with all statutory regulations. The requirements to provide all elements of ICT are not met, pupils do not receive their entitlement to religious education in Key Stage 4 or the Sixth Form, reports to parents do not include a subject report on ICT, and provision of a daily act of collective worship is inconsistent.

70. The school's development plan provides realistic priorities for development, and has led to some improvements in pupils' performance, improved behaviour and attendance, greater involvement by parents and increased numbers of students staying on into the Sixth Form. Use of ICT has improved, though not far enough. Teachers' performance management targets are in place.

71. Staffing is generally satisfactory with well-qualified teachers in most subjects. The range of experience is varied, and this is generally beneficial to developments in the school. Newly appointed teachers are well supported and integrated into the school. Problems with

maintaining discipline with some boys in lower attaining groups arise in some subjects, and teachers are not always supported effectively when incidents occur. A small number of temporary and supply teachers do not have the skills to manage some of these more difficult pupils.

72. The recently appointed SENCO provides good leadership, and manages special educational needs provision in the school well. Learning support assistants are the school's main resource for helping pupils with special needs, and they are allocated by the local education authority to statemented pupils. Their work is purposeful in classes, and the school shows strong commitment to developing their role through training and development.

73. Resources in the school are satisfactory. They are good in mathematics, poor in art, science and music and in all other subject satisfactory except in so far as computers are concerned. The school has just installed a new computer network but this has still to be developed. Even with the addition of an extra room and the purchase of more computers, the resources will still be limited. There is insufficient computer access and inadequate software to meet the demands of the National Curriculum for some subjects. At a pupil to computer ratio of 12 to 1, the provision of computers is still below the national average. The library is a very good, well-managed resource, available throughout the working day for pupils to undertake research either with books or computers. The stock of books is regularly updated with advice and support from the local education authority. Basic textbooks are provided in all subjects, mathematics in particular having improved in this respect since the previous inspection.

74. The school plans the use of the funds at its disposal carefully. Governors are fully involved in budget planning and link expenditure closely to the school development plan. Expenditure per pupil is below average, but cautious spending has meant that in most areas of the school there are sufficient resources to support learning well.

75. The overall adequacy of the school's accommodation is unsatisfactory. This will be largely addressed by the imminent capital building project to provide new facilities. The science accommodation is currently poor. It is run down and there are only two laboratory areas with full services. Science will be the main beneficiary of the new building. The drama studio is too cramped for practical use, especially for large groups of older pupils. Information and communication technology space is also restricted, and is currently unsatisfactory. The school anticipates improvement after completion of the new accommodation. Although accommodation for physical education is satisfactory overall, the gymnasium is old, and very cold in winter, and the changing rooms are not in use. The sports hall is sometimes out of use for examinations. The school uses available wall space well for displays and information, and much pupils' work is in evidence throughout.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. The school has done a great deal over recent years to ensure that all of its work is focused on raising standards achieved by pupils and to provide a secure environment in which pupils can learn and take pleasure in their learning. Much has been done to motivate pupils who have lost interest in school and to provide courses of study closely related to work and life after school. Generally, the school has been effective in its work and has development plans to further improve its effectiveness.

77. The school must now:

- Raise standards;
 - * in mathematics by continuing the recent good work in teaching key mathematical skills;
(Paragraphs: 4, 101)
 - * in information and communication technology,(ICT), by ensuring that National Curriculum requirements are fully met;
(Paragraphs: 4, 69, 154, 155)
 - * in geography by implementing planned changes in coursework;
(Paragraphs: 8, 141)
 - * in design and technology by providing challenging work for all pupils;
(Paragraphs: 7, 28, 130)
 - * share the good practice in assessment so that teachers in all subjects assess consistently against National Curriculum criteria and set targets to guide pupils' further progress.
(Paragraph: 58)
- Improve methods of evaluating and improving the school's performance by introducing:
 - * procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and share good practice;
(Paragraph: 67)
 - * procedures to involve senior management of the school in monitoring and evaluating the work of departments.
(Paragraph: 66)
- Improve the behaviour of pupils in a small number of lessons, by helping teachers in art, design and technology and French to develop strategies to manage the behaviour of disruptive and poorly behaved pupils.
(Paragraphs: 8, 14, 21, 27, 67)
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring statutory requirements are met for:
 - * Information and communication technology;
(Paragraphs: 34, 69, 154, 155)
 - * religious education;
(Paragraphs: 31, 69, 191)
 - * reporting on pupils' progress in ICT to parents.

(Paragraphs: 60, 69)

- Improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils, by continued use of the good procedures already used, and by exploration of further approaches.

(Paragraphs: 9, 19)

78. Minor issues:

- * Improve resources for science and ICT so that all pupils have appropriate access to all parts of the National Curriculum.
(Paragraphs: 73)
- * Continue to explore ways with the local authority on how the accommodation of the school can be improved.
(Paragraphs: 27, 75)
- * Ensure statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are met.
(Paragraphs: 49, 69)
- * Plan schemes of work to provide opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual awareness of the important issues in the subjects of the curriculum.
(Paragraphs: 49)

SIXTH FORM PROVISION

79. The school's performance at A-Level and AS-Level in 2000 was well below national averages. The average point score for pupils taking two or more A-Level examinations or their equivalents was 12. Nine, as opposed to a national average of eighteen. Results were similar to recent years. The average point score per entry is above the school average in history, English and design, and slightly below in business studies. Very good results were achieved in drama where all five students gained A-C grades. The numbers of students entered were small, so comparisons with national averages are not valid.

80. All teaching in the Sixth Form is satisfactory or better. Fortyfour per cent of teaching is good and in 33 per cent of lessons observed teaching was very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and work hard at raising pupils' aspirations. Staff have good relationships with students, evident in the increasing number of pupils staying on in the Sixth Form. The vast majority of pupils show a committed approach to their work. The standards observed in lessons was broadly average, being slightly above in drama and media studies and slightly below in Geography. The achievement of students overall is good.

81. Since September 2000, the school has formed links with the Sixth Form in another school to increase the number of A/AS Level courses available, and with the local college of further education to offer GNVQ courses in leisure and tourism, caring, and business studies. This positive approach has enabled the school to increase the number of Sixth Form students it takes.

82. The A/AS Level provision includes traditional school subjects as well as media studies, psychology and sociology. An increasing number of pupils will be able to combine "AS" courses with vocational courses successfully from September 2001. One year GCSE courses are offered in mathematics, English and science. Combinations of all three examination areas will be more manageable next academic year due to inter-school matching of timetables.

83. Key skills have been successfully implemented into the Sixth Form curriculum programme. Students receive one lesson per week involving numeracy, communication and portfolio building, plus one lesson of information and communication technology. Courses are taught by subject specialists. This works well and is generally appreciated by students.

84. A broad range of extra-curricular provision further enriches the Sixth Form programme. Students have an opportunity, amongst many activities, to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award and engage in links with Europe.

85. Students are well supported and personal guidance is a strong feature of the Sixth Form. Students regularly receive feedback on their progress. All students are encouraged to "Aim High", as the school motto encourages. The tutor period is valuable time for individual support and combines well with the PSHE programme to offer students advice on study skills and personal organisation. Within the PSHE programme students also receive good advice on careers and higher education. There are good links with other outside agencies, for example, HSBC Bank and The Driving Standards Agency.

86. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for providing religious education to Sixth Form students.

87. The management of the Sixth Form is good. Both heads of the Sixth Form work hard with their colleagues to provide the best education for their students. Regular meetings with staff from Howden and Goole have ironed out initial organisational, curriculum and pastoral issues. Students welcome being treated as 'adults' and are complimentary about the advice and support that they receive from staff. A positive ethos is developing which gives value for money.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	203
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	59

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	18	43	32	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1,127	82
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	220	0

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	31	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	265	0

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	52
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	41

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1

National comparative data	5.9
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National comparative data	0.4
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	105	130	235

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	55	56	65
	Girls	99	83	83
	Total	154	139	148
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	66 (63)	59 (48)	63 (65)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	22 (21)	30 (22)	22 (9)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	62	57	57
	Girls	103	83	84
	Total	165	140	141
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	70 (65)	60 (44)	60 (49)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	24 (21)	35 (17)	19 (15)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	116	98	212

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	102	113
	Girls	35	86	92
	Total	75	188	205
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	35 (36)	89 (89)	97 (95)
	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	31 (33)
	National	38 (38)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/A
	National	N/A	N/A

Attainment at the end of the Sixth Form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A Level or AS Level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	29	23	52

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-Levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-Levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	13.3	12.3	12.9 (11.3)	N/A	0	0
National	17.7	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/A
	National	0	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	1205
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	184	3
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)	69.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff:**Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	361

Deployment of teachers:**Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.4
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Average teaching group size:**Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	25.8
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Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2,666,596.00
Total expenditure	2,570,766.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,187.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	92,833.00
Balance carried forward to next year	188, 663.00

Key Stage 4	24.2
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Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,209
Number of questionnaires returned	217

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	54	8	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	49	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	48	15	4	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	55	12	5	3
The teaching is good.	26	61	3	1	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	42	19	7	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	42	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	36	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	21	52	15	6	7
The school is well led and managed.	22	58	6	2	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	56	7	2	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	45	3	1	4

Other issues raised by parents

Inspectors generally agreed with the strengths parents identified, although the inspection team considered that the reports to parents provide good quality of information on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. However, reports on pupils' attainment and progress in ICT are omitted from annual reports.

In the meeting with the registered inspector before the inspection, parents expressed pleasure at the progress the school had made since the last inspection. In particular they were pleased about the way that the school manages disruptive behaviour by a small proportion of pupils and how standards achieved by pupils have risen.

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

ENGLISH

88. Key Stage 3 results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests were broadly average and were above average compared with the results in similar schools. The trend for results over the period 1998-2000 is upwards. At GCSE the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades also shows an upward trend. In 2000, attainment in English Language was above the national average, with 61 per cent of pupils gaining A*-C grades compared to a national figure of 56 per cent. Boys performed better than girls, and better than the national average for boys. In English Literature at GCSE, performance was well below the national average. For both language and literature the proportion of pupils achieving A*-G grades was close to the national average. Within school, pupils entered for English language performed significantly better than in most other subjects. In English literature, performance was broadly average compared with other subjects in school. At A Level there has been a downward trend over the period 1998-2000. In 2000 there was an overall shortfall in predicted achievement. Twenty-nine students were entered. Some did significantly better than predicted; some significantly worse. Overall, achievement was well below the national average.

89. The standard of pupils' work seen during the inspection was broadly in line with these results, though in many lessons attainment was enhanced by particularly skilful planning and teaching. Pupils' writing shows progression and range. By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils are able to write effectively in a variety of forms. They can produce dialogue in script form, and within extended narratives. They write accurately for argument, information and creative effect. A Year 9 class, for example, having looked at and commented upon travel brochures and their target audience, produced witty and nicely judged copy to persuade teachers of the benefits for their pupils of a trip to Alton Towers. The most able pupils are confident in a number of genres, and evaluate their own work according to understood criteria. An extended reflection on a piece of media work in Year 9, for example, began with: "The newspaper front page 1 produced was a tabloid". The least able are able to use drafts to improve the technical accuracy and structure of their writing. They communicate straightforwardly and with a reasonable command of spelling and sentence structure.

90. At the end of Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils have extended the range of their writing and their understanding of audience. Coursework folders show pupils' ability to entertain, to analyse, to marshal evidence, to reflect, and to argue. Folders contain the GCSE grade descriptors. This allows for teacher comment and pupils' self-evaluation to be precise and informed by reference to the grade criteria. The most able pupils write at impressive length, and have a secure grasp of how to gain and maintain the interest of readers. One piece, fourteen pages long, accounted for the writer's pride in his grandfather. It was beautifully controlled personal writing. Pupils can account for choices of form and technique in their own writing and in that of others. The least able show themselves able to handle informal and more formal styles for a number of purposes.

91. Standards of reading also show progression over time. At the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils read and understand a range of texts, both narrative and informative. They can identify and discuss features of style and effect. A lesson on genre, for instance, involved pupils reading and capably identifying the kind of vocabulary, setting and theme which would fit particular categories of text. Pupils are able to read effectively for a range of purposes, including for study and for enjoyment. The most able read critically. They are aware of authors' intentions and the means by which they invite and control readers' responses. The least able read less independently. They are able to read for meaning and for information. They respond well to the lively presentation of story and to media texts.

92. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' ability to offer and justify their personal response to texts is well developed. They understand that texts can offer a variety of meanings, and are able to recognise and comment upon inference and implication. The most able can do this with considerable subtlety. They are alert to features of style and organisation, and have the critical vocabulary to analyse and comment on matters of intention and effect. The least able can compare and contrast texts of various kinds. In one productive lesson, for instance, students read and noted the similarities and differences between two murder mysteries, one by Roald Dahl, the other by Conan Doyle. Pupils are able to read for information to support project and other work. They have developed an understanding of audience and how texts work differently according to their purpose. Pupils' abilities in reading aloud are less evident than their capacity to read silently for a variety of purposes. They need help and opportunity to work on matters of intonation, expression and delivery.

93. This last remark connects with standards of speaking and listening. These are less secure than those in reading and writing. Pupils respond well to teachers' questions and operate satisfactorily in group discussion. However, they do not always listen well or supportively to one another. Teachers are alert in the supervision of discussion at Key Stages 3 and 4 in order to keep pupils' focused on work. Pupils have difficulty in developing and expanding their talk for the purposes of learning. They are not, generally, confident speakers. In the right circumstances, for example in drama lessons, pupils achieve high standards. Liaison with drama colleagues to develop this aspect of English work is recommended as a strategy for improvement.

94. The standards of teaching in the English Department are good. Of the lessons observed, 15 per cent of the teaching was judged to be excellent, 35 per cent was very good, 20 per cent was good, 20 per cent was satisfactory and 10 per cent was unsatisfactory. Teachers plan to good effect. Schemes of work are clear, well-structured, and show progression. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They question effectively. Pupils are offered genuine challenges and are helped to meet them. Classes are managed confidently. The English rooms encourage learning through displays which reflect and exemplify strategies for learning. All teachers make good use of prior assessment to plan and differentiate approaches for groups and individuals. These strengths are reflected in what pupils are enabled to do through the teaching they receive. They respond to the range of tasks and activities positively and productively. They write with increasing confidence and technical accuracy. They read for enjoyment and information with increasing criticality and perception. They show close knowledge of the texts they read and study. They are familiar with the

technical vocabulary of grammar and analysis, and use it effectively to show what they know and think.

95. Relationships are generally excellent. Teachers know their pupils extremely well. In turn they are trusted and respected. There is much humour and warmth in lessons coupled with explicit challenge and high expectations.

96. The quality of teaching is having a significant effect on the good quality of learning. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on parts of speech and creative writing, the teacher checked the knowledge of the group by referring back to grammatical terms from the Key Stage 2 Literacy Strategy. Her scheme of work made explicit reference to National Curriculum Attainment Targets. The pupils first played a word game, and from that simple but involving beginning were taken through a series of activities of increasing complexity to a point where they were writing a poem on a theme of their own choice. Matters of rhythm, rhyme and verse structure informed the writing they were doing. Their enjoyment and achievement were equally evident. In another example, a Year 11 lesson with a class of lower attaining pupils involved a comparison of two short stories, a piece of GCSE work ordinarily regarded as very demanding for a group of this kind. Pupils were helped by breaking down the necessary analysis into focussed attention on setting, genre and character. The teacher and class assistant planned the lesson together to take account of the needs of individuals. The carefully staged activities gave pupils clear direction as to how they might select significant detail and present it enjoyably to others in a variety of ways. A writing frame supported the final stage of the lesson.

97. In those few lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory the connection with poor pupil progress was linked to lack of challenge. For example, a Year 9 lesson took pupils through exercises at too low a level for their abilities. A cloze exercise was undemanding. The class looked for similes in the opening chapter of *A Christmas Carol*. They were invited to complete a worksheet which had been encountered the previous year. Learning was not being promoted despite orderly control and pleasant relationships.

98. At A Level good teaching leads to involvement and progress. General attainment is not equivalent to the standards seen in teaching and learning. Groups in the Sixth Form contain a wide range of ability. Individuals are given close support, and teaching is matched to students' need. There has also been a sensible broadening of the curriculum. Language is now a possible A Level choice for students. This takes account of those with aptitudes and backgrounds not best served by literary study. The advantages of strategies such as directed reading and writing frames are as evident in the Sixth Form as lower down the school. For example, a lesson preparing students for exam questions on *Othello* showed careful attention to the text, to critical reading, to encouraging the full involvement of all students, and to modelling writing and note-taking techniques with the demands of the exam in mind. Predicted grades for these people (and their course work) showed a wide spread within the group.

99. The department is well led. The departmental handbook is a clear working document outlining responsibilities, approaches, and policy which are closely linked to the school improvement plan. The particular strengths of the people contributing to the teaching of English are known and appreciated. Deployment is thoughtful and matches strengths to responsibilities. The setting

arrangements for English work well and allow for satisfactory differentiation according to the needs and abilities of the pupils. Schemes of work are monitored carefully and developed year on year. The department works coherently together, but there are varying professional development needs which are currently difficult to oversee properly. There is no established framework for monitoring, evaluating and sharing most effective teaching practice, or for identifying and taking forward the continuing professional development of colleagues.

100. The last inspection noted that pupils' performance in reading and writing was weaker than in speaking and listening. There were insufficient opportunities to draft written work. Data on progress at Key Stage 2 was not available. At Key Stage 3 there was a narrow range of fiction and an absence of poetry. These matters have been fully addressed. There are now significant strengths in the support of development in reading and writing. These help to account for the substantially improved results at the end of Key Stage 3 and at GCSE. The writing, reading and study of poetry is firmly embedded in the curriculum throughout the school. The previous inspection noted that there was no system for regularly assessing and meeting the professional development needs of individual teachers. ICT was not properly incorporated into the English curriculum. These issues have not yet properly been addressed.

101. An important further development has been the incorporation of aspects of the Literacy Strategy into the work of the department. This is work in progress, but at both Key Stages there is clear evidence of the value of targeted work at word, sentence and text level and of the powerful support for learning which results. The head of department has taken the lead in setting up school-wide arrangements for literacy development. The awareness of general and subject-specific strategies for supporting literacy is having an impact on teaching and learning. All departments display and emphasise the key words of their discipline. Most have an increasing focus on the key skills of written and oral presentation. Most offer specific support for reading. These developing school-wide measures have a positive impact on the Attainment Targets specific to English, (reading, writing, and speaking and listening).

MATHEMATICS

102. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with the national average. In the 2000 national tests, the majority of pupils obtained the average level or higher, although a significant minority did not. Relatively few pupils attained the highest grades. Pupils' attainment has risen over the past three years, and although below the performance of pupils in similar schools, is now close to matching it. There was a sharp rise in attainment in 2000 due to the department's emphasis upon the development of key mathematical skills. At the end of Key Stage 4, all pupils who complete the course are entered for the GCSE examinations. In 2000, the results show that attainment overall is below the national average although greatly improved since the previous year. Significantly, the school has doubled the proportion of pupils obtaining A*-C grades at GCSE since the previous inspection. The general trend is upward. Subject performance compares favourably with that of most other subjects. At both Key Stages, there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. The A Level results for 2000 were below the national average, although of the seven pupils who were successful in the examination, four obtained

the higher, (A-B), grades. A Level performance over the years is variable but pupils usually realise the potential of their GCSE grades.

103. At Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, pupils are arranged in teaching groups according to prior attainment, which allows them to work at their own pace and to develop confidence in their own abilities. At Key Stage 3, the inspection evidence confirms the results of the national tests. By the age of 14, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national

standards. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in nearly all lessons, and higher attaining pupils progress well. Pupils with special educational needs benefit significantly by the arrangement of classes and from the encouragement and support they receive from learning support assistants.

104. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils have a good range of number skills, which they apply to problems in shape, measure and data collection. Pupils know how to find the three averages of a set of numbers. They illustrate information collected in a traffic survey on a bar chart and pictogram. Pupils also study the use of statistics in every day life and are aware that they can be used to manipulate opinion. Pupils are able to name all 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional shapes and describe their properties. They are able to link number and shape when describing, for example, triangular and square numbers. Pupils solve simple equations and know how information can be set down in algebraic shorthand, although some claim not to understand it. They know how to fix a point by its co-ordinates and how this knowledge may be applied to map reading. They know about great mathematicians of the past, and how the methods of Pythagoras can be used to find angles and sides in right-angled triangles.

105. By the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils extend their knowledge of number, shape and measure. They progress steadily towards the GCSE examination. Higher attaining pupils progress well and are given the scope to work independently if they choose. This promotes greater maturity in mathematical thinking and problem solving. Pupils with special educational needs are supported by smaller classes and by learning support assistants who emphasise basic skills. Most pupils achieve in line with their predicted grades, indicating an overall result much closer to the national standard than their predecessors. Pupils apply their knowledge of number to calculate the amount of simple and compound interest due from a financial investment. They calculate the cheapest total cost of carpeting a room and draw diagrams to illustrate their reasoning. Pupils correctly calculate the volume of water flowing through a pipe and apply this knowledge to the wastage of water if the pipe leaks. Higher attaining pupils broaden their knowledge of algebra, solving quadratic equations by factors, formulae and graphical methods. All pupils learn about probability and games of chance and some calculate the likelihood of winning the national lottery.

106. In the Sixth Form, students extend their ability to manipulate complex algebraic expressions and how to apply their developing knowledge to problem solving. Students in the upper sixth apply algebra techniques to solve problems about frictional forces, and begin to see the relevance of mathematics to mechanics and engineering. Students with relatively low GCSE grades find the course difficult, but they persevere and make progress. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection.

107. Number skills are used effectively in other parts of the curriculum, most notably in design and technology and science. A high value is placed upon the ability to provide accurate measurements in preparation for projects and experiments. There is no established numeracy strategy to guide the work of teachers.

108. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is better than at the previous inspection. At Key Stage 3, two-fifths of all lessons seen were good or better; the remainder were satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, three-fifths were good; the remainder was satisfactory. Teaching in the Sixth Form is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality and consistency of the teaching makes a major

impact upon learning and contributes significantly to the raising of standards. Teachers are well qualified in mathematics and many are experienced in teaching it. This means that they are quick to spot when pupils do not understand and adept at finding alternative explanations. Most lessons begin with quick-fire mental mathematics, which enthuses and stimulates the pupils and prepares them for what lies ahead. Teachers manage the pupils well and create an environment in which pupils have every opportunity to learn. The vast majority take the chance and work well. Behaviour is often exemplary. Very occasionally, pupils disrupt the lesson, distract the teacher and spoil the learning opportunities of others. Such behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. Teachers plan well, and lesson objectives are shared with the class so that pupils know exactly what is required of them in work and behaviour, most respond willingly to the challenge. Teachers value the contributions of their pupils and this increases the level of co-operation and enjoyment. Relationships are good and lessons are often laced with good humour.

109. The department has made considerable strides forward in the last three years. This is due to the expert leadership of the head of department and the full support and co-operation of his colleagues. The department is very well managed. Where time permits the work of teachers is sensitively monitored. The documentation to support the organisation of this large department is exemplary. Teachers employ a consistent approach to the quality of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Assessment is rigorous; the progress of all pupils is carefully monitored. Pupils know their personal targets and work towards them. The targets are revised regularly. Each pupil has a textbook, which is used in class and for homework.

110. However, ICT is insufficiently used to support and extend learning. ICT does not enjoy a secure place in lesson planning. The department has plans to remedy this deficiency in the immediate future. In all other respects the department has made good progress since the last inspection, in spite of the difficulty, experienced nationally, of recruiting and retaining the services of mathematics teachers.

SCIENCE

111. Since 1998 performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 has risen. In the year 2000 it was in line with the national average where previously it had been below average. When compared with pupils from similar backgrounds, performance was broadly average. In 1999 and 2000 the percentage of pupils obtaining GCSE A*-C grades was below the national average. 2000 results showed lower attainment than previous years. However, based on the pupils' Key Stage 3 results in 1998 performance was better overall than would be expected. Some middle ability pupils did not perform as well as they should have done because they did not complete course work or lost interest in school. More able pupils obtained higher grades than would be expected from their Key Stage 3 performance. The girls did not perform as well as the boys. Students in the Sixth Form who study science subjects achieved pass rates that were below the national average. The distribution of grades was distorted towards the lower end, mainly because the department encourages pupils of a wide ability range to follow A Level courses.

112. By the end of Key Stage 3, or when pupils are 14, attainment is above average. The highest attaining pupils in Year 9 have good knowledge and understanding of recent work on variation and how plants and animals are classified. They are able to apply their knowledge of species to living examples. Lowest attaining pupils in Year 9 have difficulty with scientific terminology, but can describe in simple terms why variation occurs in plants and animals. The recent improvement in performance at Key Stage 3 has been brought about through staff development, the introduction of new schemes of work, the analysis of Key Stage 2 performance data and new text books. At the end of Key Stage 3 investigation skills are not well developed, but pupils do have an understanding of the principles of prediction and fair testing.

113. By the time pupils are sixteen, attainment is average and pupils are progressing at the expected rate. The highest attaining pupils in Year 11 can design their own experiments and collect valid data related to inheritance. They have an understanding of electromagnetism and how electromagnets are made and can explain the difference between mass and weight. The lowest attaining pupils can name and describe a number of ways to separate substances, but some are unsure of examples of magnetic materials.

114. In the Sixth Form, attainment is commensurate with the students' abilities but below the national average in some groups. Most chemistry students have an understanding of bonding and the structure of molecules, and can produce models of these. In biology, students can make models to show protein synthesis and explain how this occurs. In physics, nuclear forces are understood and graphs representing these can be interpreted.

115. Since the last inspection, there has been a marked improvement in the performance of pupils in Key Stage 3 but some middle attainers are still under performing. Time allocation at Key Stage 4 is now sufficient to deliver the double science course. All pupils still have too little exposure to ICT.

116. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is good or very good in over half of the lessons and satisfactory in the rest. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is livelier in Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form than in Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 a rotation of units allows most pupils to be taught by a subject specialist. In the lower sets, pupils are taught all units by the same teacher in order to establish strong relationships. These strategies have a positive effect on learning, ensuring good questioning, high level explanations and a secure learning environment. Teachers set high standards for behaviour and they have good subject knowledge and understanding. Expectations of the pupils are generally appropriate, with some challenging work being carried out. Evidence of this was seen in the lessons being taught as part of the thinking skills course in Key Stage 3, and in Key Stage 4 revision lessons where pupils were preparing for end of module tests. Lessons are very carefully planned but a limited range of research and audio-visual activities are used. Pupils are placed in the appropriate class according to their attainment, and the work given to them reflects what the class should be able to do. Within these groups activities are sometimes designed for individual pupils.

117. Teachers apply the school marking policy well. Pupils are informed of National Curriculum levels and test results they achieve and most understand what these mean. Supportive targets are given, explaining how the pupils can improve, and this is having a positive effect on their learning. The quality of reports is satisfactory, providing information about what the pupils know, understand

and can do, and how they can improve. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is satisfactory, with a range of appropriate activities being set. Some inspired teaching was seen, for example, in a Year 9 lesson for less able pupils on separating substances, and in a lesson on distillation in Year 10. In both lessons teachers enthused pupils through their own enthusiasm, the quality of explanation and questioning, and their involvement of pupils' contributions. The pupils made good progress in developing their understanding of the processes involved.

118. Pupils' attitudes to learning in about two thirds of the lessons are good or better. Behaviour is satisfactory or better in the nearly all lessons. Where it was unsatisfactory it was related to a small number of boys and was challenged effectively by the class teacher. When carrying out investigations, pupils work well together. They work safely and follow instructions to wear safety glasses. Pupils act responsibly when moving around the laboratory to collect materials and equipment.

119. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department recognises that monitoring of pupils' performance and sharing good practice in teaching and learning will raise standards. However, there are too few opportunities to observe and evaluate teaching so that the most effective teaching methods are identified. There is a well structured departmental development plan and a good handbook. The department is working hard to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and this is improving standards within the subject.

120. Accommodation is at present poor, and is adversely affecting the achievement of pupils by restricting the amount of practical investigations. New accommodation is planned for the near future. There is a shortage of ICT resources, and much equipment is old or in poor condition. Finance will be available to improve resources as part of the equipping of new accommodation. The quality of display is poor and does not celebrate pupils' success. There are insufficient opportunities for fieldwork, visits and industrial links, or for pupils to show initiative both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils' queuing on the stairs prior to lessons is potentially dangerous, but the department pays sufficient attention to health and safety in its planning and in practice.

ART AND DESIGN

121. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, according to teacher assessments, is above the national average by a significant amount. This is 14 per cent for boys and 16 per cent for girls. However, this has not been borne out by work seen in the inspection, and standards are judged to be in line with national expectations. Standards at age sixteen are well below the national average; 18 per cent of pupils obtained A*-C grades in the GCSE examinations in 2000 compared with 64 per cent nationally. Results have been below the national average and on a downward trend over the last three years. Pupils perform least well in art than in any other subject in the curriculum. The deterioration in exam results is due to the unstable staffing ever since the last inspection and the variable quality of the teaching in the past. Standards at age eighteen compare favourably with other A-Level subjects in the curriculum, but due to the small number of students it is not possible to compare these with national data.

122. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are working in line with national expectations, according to the work seen during the inspection. Pupils in Year 7 understand the concept of one-point perspective and can develop this into a pop-up 3 dimensional view-in card. Those in Year 8 are able to animate pictures to create a simple action by designing and making a flick book. Year 9 pupils demonstrate their ability to draw natural objects from observation, and develop them into patterns for fabric using the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh for inspiration.

123. By the end of Key Stage 4 the attainment of pupils is well below the national average. Rapid changes in staffing and variations in quality of teaching in the past have had a negative effect on the attainment of pupils in Year 11. Work seen lacks the development and depth associated with learning about artists and craftspeople and the establishing of a context in which to create new work. The effect on Year 10 pupils is not as marked and predictions for exam results in 2002 indicate high levels of performance, whilst predictions for Year 11 who take GCSE examinations in 2001 are below average. Inspection evidence supports these predictions. Pupils in Year 10 show that they can develop an extensive range of experimental research on African art which is inspiring them to design and make their own 3 dimensional sculptures using wire, papier-mâché and plaster. Higher attaining pupils are capable of sensitive pencil drawing and use colour effectively to create dynamic work. Pupils in Year 11 show that they understand how to do layouts for graphics projects and are researching the design of packaging and promotional material such as posters.

124. In the Sixth Form, students work is in line with expectations. Year 12 pupils understand how to relate their practical work to artists such as Cezanne, Escher, Schiele and Botticelli, and use their knowledge to help them develop their own ideas. Pupils in Year 13 show how they can look at the work of Monet to help them explore a theme about water, and use a variety of media to experiment with to create water effects.

125. Progress made since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, mainly because of the staffing problems the school has experienced. Until recently leadership and management of the department had not begun to address the issues raised at the last inspection.

126. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although there is some unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 3 where in one third of lessons teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Teaching is good in over one third of lessons. Where teaching is strong, there is good classroom management and good preparation that pitches the work at an appropriate level so that all pupils can progress. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, the teacher's high expectations resulted in pupils at all levels achieving the lesson objective. This surpassed even the pupils' own expectations, and resulted in gasps of pleasure at what they realised they had achieved. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, seen only where there is a temporary teaching appointment, pupils are managed less skilfully. Lessons are inadequately prepared, resulting in pupils being unclear whether lesson objectives have been met, and in the children learning less. For example, a Year 7 class struggled to cope with poor instructions and teaching materials which were unsuited to their needs, resulting in pupils who not only did not learn anything but felt inadequate as a consequence.

127. Attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic and interested. They are polite to one another and to teachers, and are helpful and responsible, giving

books out and clearing away. Pupils are encouraged to show respect for one another's work, and give constructive criticism as part of an evaluative process. For example, in a Year

8 lesson pupils were asked to look at each other's flick book drawings and assess what could be improved to make the actions better. In a Year 9 lesson pupils looked at everyone's work, and were encouraged to appreciate the fact that everyone has their own "style" of work, just like the artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh had a style.

128. Until September 2000, little progress had been made in addressing inspection issues, and leadership and management of the department was unsatisfactory. However, the newly appointed head of department is beginning to address the issues, and management is now satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

129. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 show that a significant number of pupils achieve above the national average. The results show that almost half of the year group attain the higher levels. Evidence from classroom observations and the review of pupils work show that teachers' assessments are over generous; attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national averages. The GCSE results for grades A*-C in 2000 were below the national average. When the pass rate is compared to other compulsory subjects in the school design and technology is below the average. Girls perform better than boys at GCSE level.

130. Standards seen during the inspection show that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 is in line with the standard expected nationally. The department's concern with developing skills in designing and making has ensured good outcomes in textiles, graphics and food technology. Pupils have a sound understanding of designing, and ways of presenting their work to communicate their ideas for designs. Technical skills are good. Pupils understand the working characteristics of a range of materials and how to use tools safely and accurately. The quality of finished products demonstrates an attention to detail, accuracy and precision. When making a soft toy in a textiles lesson, for example, pupils fit their design to very specific criteria, select suitable materials and use construction techniques confidently and with accuracy. They are familiar with the use of stencils, and they know how to set up a sewing machine to embroider their designs. In graphics, pupils' demonstrate good technical skills, contributing to high quality products, as seen for example in a project making containers. In food technology, pupils write a specification for pastry cakes and produce a product to a very high standard. Pupils make decisions about suitable ingredients and have an understanding of what constitutes a healthy balanced diet. In resistant materials, they make mechanical toys using cams and push rods and use a range of manufacturing processes, for example, vacuum forming of plastics objects, successfully.

131. By the age of sixteen, when they leave the school, pupils achieve below average levels of attainment overall. From work seen, attainment by the end of Year 11 is in line with national expectations in food technology and textiles. Pupils pay particular attention to accuracy, quality of finish and the selection of ingredients. In their design work, they develop an understanding of construction techniques, and presentation of work in food technology and textiles is of a high quality. Work in electronics is of a good standard and pupils develop

their knowledge of production processes well. They design their circuits using computers and test them. Current work with resistant materials and graphic design is below average. Work is not sufficiently demanding or well planned to help pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable, and management of pupils' behaviour is often poor, leading to poor attitudes and slow learning. Pupils have limited experience of control technology and computer aided design.

132. In the Sixth Form, students' work in A Level graphic design is of the expected standard. Students' projects provide sufficient detail, and they are able to make informed decisions on the choice of ideas. They give consideration to form, function and style. Their project work shows attention to accuracy, and they work to a rigorous specification. Students have opportunities to use their imagination and creativity, which they do competently.

133. The majority of pupils make sound progress. Their knowledge of design and technology increases steadily, because they have opportunities to solve problems and work independently or in groups. They develop sound practical and design skills, and investigation and research skills. In a lesson about vacuum forming, for example, pupils made good progress, because they were briefed about what they had to do in detail. They listened to instructions carefully, and worked to specific time limits. Pupils enter in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are average overall. In their early lessons, pupils make good progress in learning practical skills and the underlying theory on precisely structured tasks, with clear learning objectives for each week. The department emphasises good standards of graphical skills and presentation of work. However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop information technology skills. By the end of Year 11, their knowledge of designing and making improves steadily. The majority of pupils consolidate their learning satisfactorily, and build on their skills of designing, practical competence to solve more complex problems of design and knowledge of food preparation. They know how their work is assessed and quickly learn how to judge their standards and how to improve. At both key stages, pupils with special education needs make good progress, especially when extra support is provided in class. The department does not carry out moderation of pupils work to agree National Curriculum levels achieved. At present the department does not have a folio of exemplars of levelled work as a reference. Nevertheless, marking of work has improved since the last inspection.

134. The behaviour of pupils and their attitude to learning is sometimes poor. The majority of pupils show an interest in their work and maintain good levels of concentration to work to their best standards. They listen attentively, watch carefully to understand what they must do and show pride in their achievements. They respond well to teachers and they are able to work without close supervision. They take responsibility for their areas of work and in organising their tasks. There are occasions when this is not the case, and the behaviour of a minority of pupils can be disruptive. In some classes at Key Stage 4 pupils lack motivation and show little interest in the tasks set.

135. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there is often good teaching. However, there are occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory. Generally, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan well to ensure that lessons have suitable pace. Practical activities are well organised and the supervision of lessons is usually effective, with appropriate interventions to support and sustain individuals pupils' learning and maintain appropriate expectations. Some teachers have low expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance, and where this is the case teachers do not have the necessary strategies to deal with poor behaviour. Learning in these lessons

is unsatisfactory. In other lessons, learning objectives are clearly stated, and work is planned to provide for pupils' different levels of attainment and interests. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and teachers give helpful oral and written comments. The department is developing assessment systems that concentrate on tracking experiences and outcomes. Homework is set to reinforce the content of lessons.

136. At present there is an acting head of department, and leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The development plan comprises a list of key areas, but there is no detail of how the progress of each objective will be evaluated, the cost implications and members of staff responsible. There is a lack of clear vision and direction to promote curricular improvements. There is a good scheme of work and the department handbook outlines clearly the policies, aims and objectives of the department. Systems for raising achievement including assessment, target setting and monitoring are not consistent across the department. There are no strategies to observe teaching and set objectives for improvement. The delegation of responsibility for key areas of development is not clear. Pupils at Key Stage 4 work through a modular syllabus in Year 10 and choose an option in Year 11. This approach is not suitable for a significant number of pupils who find it difficult to maintain interest and motivation.

137. Accommodation is generous and there is a good level of resources and equipment available. Some of the classrooms and storage areas are untidy and some work rooms are in need of redecoration. The lack of planning to access information technology limits coverage of the programmes of study and the standards that pupils can attain. The technician makes a significant contribution to the organisation of the department and on occasion works with specific groups of pupils to support practical work, providing advice and guidance. The department has carried out a safety audit to ensure the safe organisation of resources and accommodation; staff awareness of health and safety requirements, including risk assessment are in place.

GEOGRAPHY

138. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show attainment to be below that expected, although a substantial minority reach the expected levels or higher. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2000 showed that the percentage of pupils obtaining A*-C grades was below average, and slightly lower than in 1999. Results over the past few years have fluctuated but have been consistently below national expectations. The results are amongst the lowest in the school. Numbers of pupils taking the subject at GCSE have declined. At A Level the numbers entered and taking the subject have lately been too small to make statistically significant comparisons. Few higher grades have been attained.

139. By the end of Key Stage 3, inspection evidence shows that most pupils are below the expected attainment levels. Achievement is unsatisfactory. A minority of pupils reach levels above expectations. Most pupils use maps to locate places and to explore the physical environment, and make researched comments about human occupation of the planet. Pupils achieve sound levels of competence in identifying contours and symbols on maps, and use Ordnance Survey maps to make judgements about location of, for example, business parks. All can justify their choice of site of a business park for Google; they identify flat land as an advantage and higher attainers confidently avoid

unsuitable sites, such as those without good communication links. Most pupils know the terminology to use in describing the action of eruptions and earthquakes, and name the parts of volcanoes accurately. Higher attaining pupils express clearly the consequences of the occurrence of either. They make reasoned judgements and put opposing arguments in a balanced way. The majority use information and communication technology well to present their work and access the Internet to obtain information. Lower attaining pupils make simple descriptive 'front pages' using word processing, for their own newspapers. Higher attainers use their geographical knowledge to produce projects of good quality, using a full range of information and communication technology, including digital imaging.

140. By the time pupils are sixteen, those who choose to study geography further attain standards that, for the majority are below the national standards, with a small number attaining well above. They make accurate descriptions of the land use of cities, and higher attainers analyse the reasons for the differing uses, with Glasgow as an example. They understand the reasons for the location of towns and use terminology correctly. Most understand the problems of pollution by buildings and industry. Higher attaining pupils produce reasoned arguments and reach justified conclusions, while others can accurately describe the simple effects of environmental change. The higher attainers make satisfactory progress, but overall achievement is unsatisfactory. Following on from the earlier work on natural hazards, most pupils go on to an understanding of plate tectonics as the underlying causes of earth movements. Projects based on first hand evidence and research are widely varied in standards. The best are capable of favourable national comparison, having high standards of presentation, accurate conclusions from well researched facts, and expression of a personal view.

141. Comparisons with national results at A Level are not possible because numbers of students taking the course are small, but most reach satisfactory grades. A Level provision is shared with a local school. There is a wide range of attainment among students. The majority of students are capable of the more complex studies at A Level, and most reach the minimum acceptable grades. In the lessons they work well together, for example, when preparing a presentation to the class about the fundamental engines of climate. They exchange ideas and challenge in a way that clarifies their ideas. The coursework shows a firm grasp of the principles of basic research. Hypotheses are presented clearly, methods explained and applied, and conclusions made both in physical geography in the study of rivers, and economic geography when investigating the spheres of influence of local stores. They are backed up with references to academic sources. The projects are carefully and soundly analysed.

142. There have been few changes in standards since the last inspection. The strategies for using data have improved in the past year, and include a regular series of testing of pupils at Key Stage 3, standardisation against National Curriculum levels and sharing improvement goals with the pupils. At Key Stage 4, a rescheduling of course work deadlines has been proposed, but not yet met. The staff are aware of what is needed to make significant improvements, but the implementation lacks pace, and a time scale to have immediate impact. A large improvement has been made in the use of information and communication

technology in data collection, teaching and research, and is having a positive effect on the standards of presentation and learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well known to the staff, and individual learning programmes for them include targets specific to geography, which ensures that they make satisfactory progress.

143. Overall, teaching is satisfactory or good and better at all key stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. At Key Stage 3 just under 50 per cent of teaching is good; at Key Stage 4, 50 per cent is good or better, with nearly 20 per cent being very good. In the Sixth Form, 50 per cent of teaching is good and 50 per cent very good. All lessons are based on satisfactory long term planning. All of the teachers have good subject knowledge, so that pupils are given accurate information and they know that teachers can be used as reliable sources. Lessons take place in an orderly atmosphere, where pupils know what is expected of them and respond appropriately by a positive attitude to learning. All lessons begin with a clear outline of the learning that is to take place, and pupils understand what is expected of them after a resume of previous learning, which is frequently in the form of a test. As a result both teachers and learners know how much has been assimilated. Skilled use of questions stimulates discussion to ensure that the teacher knows the levels of understanding. Each member of the department uses information and communication technology to enhance teaching, not only in presentation of worksheets, but also in class teaching. Good examples were seen in instruction and support for finding information on the Internet when studying earthquakes, and the desk top computer was used to display photographs taken by the teacher to illustrate brown field and green field sites in Goole. Lessons have varied activities, which sometimes include role-play to consolidate learning. All staff use the regular end of topic test results to help in their planning and in the grouping of pupils. Work is generally matched to the different attainment levels in the classes, although this is not consistent. Questioning techniques are used extensively and effectively to stimulate high levels of response and discussion. Extension work in some lessons and homework gives opportunities for the development of higher literacy skills. Homework is a regular feature of the learning that assists in the development of personal study. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils know what is expected of them in the way of work, and behaviour. Praise is used well to encourage good work and behaviour.

144. Resources in geography are adequate for the teaching of the subject, though many of the texts are showing signs of age. Atlases are not kept in every classroom, which means that pupils do not use them as an automatic reference. Large-scale maps are used to good effect so that all pupils are confident users of these essential tools. The department is managed well and all teachers have clear views of, and a determined approach to improvement. However, the pace of implementation has been slow, and the department is aware of the need to accelerate development.

HISTORY

145. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 indicated that the majority of pupils were attaining in line with the national expectations for their age; this represents an improvement from 1999. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, the proportions of pupils obtaining grades A*-C and A*-G were in line with the national average. Boys performed better than girls, but both boys and girls performed significantly better in history than they did on average in their

other subjects. These results represent an improvement from 1998 and 1999 when results were below and well below the national average respectively. In the 2000 A Level examinations, the proportion of students gaining grades A-E grades was in line with the national average, with 11 out of 12 candidates entered obtaining pass grades. This represents an improvement from the period 1998 to 1999 when the proportion of students gaining grades A-E was well below the national average.

146. By the end of Key Stage 3, when pupils are 14, the attainment of pupils is average. These standards reflect the attainment in recent examination results. Pupils of all attainment levels have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of topics such as the effects of the First World War, and many use source materials competently to make deductions and communicate findings. An example of this was a group of Year 9 lower attaining pupils, studying the psychological impact of the First World War on those fighting in the trenches. They correctly demonstrated their knowledge, based on the study of contemporary documents, of how censorship was used to control information from the front. Discussions are a feature of many lessons although pupil responses, especially those of some lower attainers, are insufficiently developed.

147. By the end of Key Stage 4, when pupils are 16, the attainment of pupils is average. These standards reflect the attainment in recent examination results. Pupils of all attainment levels show a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of issues such as the development of surgery in the nineteenth century and the lifestyle of the Plains Indians. Lower attaining Year 11 pupils successfully researched contemporary documents to discuss how the Plains Indians used the buffalo to overcome some of the problems they faced. The literacy skills of most pupils are satisfactorily developed and demonstrated through their ability to write analytical answers to questions using a wide range of historical source material competently.

148. By the end of the Sixth Form, the attainment of students is average. These standards reflect the attainment in recent examination results. Most students can formulate quite complex views, that are clearly expressed orally and supported by appropriate evidence. Inspection evidence confirmed this when Year 12 students gave successful and convincing accounts of the nature of beliefs and society in Nazi Germany.

149. The achievement of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and students in the Sixth Form is satisfactory. Pupils of all attainment levels make progress, especially in applying their historical knowledge and understanding to explain the background of events they are studying. In Key Stage 3, most higher attaining pupils make sound progress towards developing extended writing skills, but such skills are relatively underdeveloped amongst some lower attaining pupils. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils of all attainment levels develop the ability to use source material to support arguments, and most higher attaining pupils question the reliability of historical evidence. Most Sixth Form students develop good analytical skills; in a lesson on Hitler, Year 12 students demonstrated their increasing ability to analyse documents in order to discuss Hitler's views of the emancipation of women.

150. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and very good in the Sixth Form. In Key Stage 3, the teaching in five of the six lessons observed was good and in Key Stage 4, the teaching in all lessons observed was good. In the Sixth Form, the teaching in one of the two lessons observed was very good. Learning is good in Key Stages 3 and 4 because teachers use

their good subject knowledge successfully to capture and extend pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Year 8 pupils of all attainment levels quickly became involved in a lesson following a teacher's very good demonstration of the weapons and tactics of the Civil War. Good lesson planning with clear learning objectives, together with good classroom management skills, ensures that pupils are interested and engaged throughout the lesson. Good use of resources, variety of teaching approach and sensitive individual support lead to good progress being made by pupils with special educational needs. In the Sixth Form, teachers' expectations are high, and challenging questions are used to stimulate discussion. Good relationships between teachers and pupils, and the effective use of praise and encouragement ensure that the attitudes and behaviour of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are good, and those of students in the Sixth Form are very good. Pupils and Sixth Form students arrive at lessons with a positive attitude, listen to teachers' introductions and explanations attentively and work together on a collaborative basis successfully, demonstrating their willingness to listen to the views of others.

151. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of history ably leads and supports a committed and enthusiastic team of staff that has been built on very good relationships. He ensures, through good monitoring and evaluation procedures, that the department is clearly focused on raising standards. There is appropriate and detailed documentation, including very good schemes of work, contained in a useful departmental handbook. Most lessons are taught in specialist classrooms where attractive displays bring the subject to life.

152. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the department have improved. This, together with an improvement in the quality of teaching and the introduction of a reviewing and target setting process for pupils, has been responsible for the improvement in examination results. There has been some limited progress in the application of information and communications technology, and the department recognises this as an area for future development. The department has ensured greater consistency in the application of its assessment policy, but further development is required in the use of assessment information in curriculum planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

153. The school has improved the management and resources of the subject and the information and communication technology team has made good progress in its efforts to raise standards in teaching and learning. However, the school has yet to resolve a number of serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection report.

154. The most recent National Curriculum assessments at the end of Year 9 show 43 per cent of pupils reaching Level 5 or better compared with 62 per cent nationally. The GCSE information technology course was recently introduced but has yet to go to examination. Students taking the GCE A-Level in computing achieved standards in line with national average and performed significantly better in the course compared with their results in other subjects.

155. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is clearly below national average. In lessons and work seen, pupils have difficulty in working through the more challenging scheme of work without considerable

teacher preparation and support. With this support, most pupils, particularly the higher attainers, produce worthwhile outcomes such as producing their own web pages and presentations. However, most pupils' lack of familiarity with different applications, other than word processing, has meant that they had difficulty in incorporating scanned or downloaded images into their work. In using the Internet, most demonstrate limited research skills. Also lacking in most pupils is any experience in using information and communications technology to control, model or measure events. The new learning programmes are beginning to have a positive effect. However, lack of lesson time and very limited use in other subjects results in pupils' achievement over Years 7 to 9 being unsatisfactory. This was evident in a comparison of Years 7 and 9 where the lesson content and pupil outcomes were not greatly different. Special educational needs pupils make satisfactory progress because of their greater access to computers, and on occasion, additional support in ICT.

156. Attainment at the end of Year 11 is below national average. In lessons, the pupils' work is largely restricted to narrow skills practice in the limited time available, as part of a PSHE programme. Even within a programme that focused on a basic course in word processing, spreadsheet application and databases, pupils demonstrated variable skill levels. All could, for example, produce and modify text, though most could not change layout or use some functions such as word replacement. Achievement over the key stage is unsatisfactory, for most pupils continue to have insufficient time and opportunity to use information and communications technology in ways that cover the National Curriculum programme of study. Achievement is better for the quarter of pupils now taking GCSE information technology. In Year 10 lessons, pupils demonstrated a stronger understanding of the uses of ICT, for example, in data storage.

157. Attitudes are consistently positive in lessons where pupils have access to computers, and in general, they are attentive and behave well. This is particularly so when teaching and learning is effectively organised. Pupils readily contribute to question and answer and show respect for each other and the teacher. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and they are less independent in that they need regular teacher guidance to make progress.

158. Teaching in ICT is good, and this is reflected in lessons seen where two out of three lessons were good and the others were satisfactory. The subject team share good class management skills that ensure that pupils are mostly attentive and on task, so enabling them to make steady gains in their knowledge and skills. The good teaching is well planned, with a mix of whole class work and supported individual activity that sustains a good pace to learning. Questioning is used effectively to draw on prior knowledge and confirm understanding. This was well illustrated in a Year 7 lesson, where the teacher asked pupils to explain how to log on to the Internet, enabling most to work independently. In the examination classes, the skill of the staff in conveying more challenging information about programming and information systems helps GCE Advanced level students in particular understand specialist concepts and processes. Where there is less effective teaching, it tends to result from insecure teacher knowledge and lack of clear lesson objectives. While pupils nonetheless enjoy the computers, the lack of focus results in fewer gains in knowledge and skills. Even where the teaching is good, the technical problems in the school network adversely affect the rate of learning in many lessons.

159. Standards in the A/AS Levels in computing are broadly in line with national average. Students in both groups show a good range of knowledge and skills, evident in class discussion and practical

work such as programming and database design. Most students are achieving well, given lack of earlier opportunities to use ICT in the school.

160. The school has introduced GCSE and GCE Advanced Level, and recently improved its Key Stage 3 programme, but unfortunately has yet to fully cover the National Curriculum programmes of study at each key stage.

161. There is insufficient time to cover the improved scheme of work, and a lack of opportunity for pupils to use information and communications technology for measurement, modelling and control. Most other subjects are well intentioned in their planning for information and communications technology, and some are beginning to introduce some use, but currently the planned opportunities in both key stages are very thin. This lack of cross-curricular use, and the limited Key Stage 4 skills course, is also insufficient to cover the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4. More positively, the school has responded quickly to national developments in the Sixth Form curriculum and is providing key skills lessons in information and communications technology for all students.

162. The GCSE and GCE A Level have appropriate assessment systems but monitoring and assessment of information and communications technology at Key Stage 3 has yet to be established, and currently, pupils' progress is not reported to parents.

163. The full-time co-ordinator now provides good leadership and he is well supported by a small committed team of developing specialists. However, the school has yet to establish clear mapping and tracking of whole school ICT provision, and the lack of formal meetings inhibit team building and developing good practice. The school has made considerable efforts to improve accommodation and resources, and recently embarked on staff training. However, the majority of staff lack confidence in using ICT, and have yet to participate in the national training initiative. Resources are still rather below the national average, and the school has yet to resolve the problem of more effectively developing and managing the network of computers.

164. The school has been successful in its recent efforts to improve management and teaching, though a number of important issues raised in the last inspection have yet to be resolved.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

165. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 show that pupils' attainment was broadly in line with national expectations. The results were slightly below those attained in 1999. In line with the national trend, girls attained better than boys. In GCSE in 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades was well below the national and below the school average. Girls attained better than boys. Pupils attained broadly in line with the national average for A-G grades, and a significantly higher proportion of pupils were entered for the examination compared with the proportion nationally. Most attained a pass grade. Attainment in A-G grades has been maintained around the national average for the last three years, but results have fallen sharply in the attainment of

A*-C grades. In 2000 no pupils attained the highest grade. The reason for this was significant disruption to staffing over the last two years which has now been resolved.

166. In 2000, four girls took and passed A Level French. Results were slightly lower than those they attained in other subjects. No comparison has been made with national figures, as the number involved is too small.

167. The evidence of work and the lessons observed showed that by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils attain standards that are slightly below the national expectation. However, there is a wide range of attainment; in challenging lessons higher attaining pupils reach standards well above national expectation. They use past and future tenses to describe their leisure activities confidently and accurately using sophisticated language. They also understand and articulate what they need to do to improve the standard of their work. By the age of sixteen, standards are below the national average. There were examples of good achievement for pupils of all abilities; for example pupils in a Year 11 lower set were able to apply a range of reading strategies, such as picking out key words, to help them understand a fairly complex text containing unfamiliar language. However, in two out of five lessons in Key Stage 4 in lower sets, the attainment of pupils was lower than expected and in a small minority of lessons, pupils of all abilities would have achieved more if they had been challenged further. Sixth Form groups are small and students achieve as expected for their ability.

German

168. A small number of the most able pupils study German as a second language. Twenty two pupils were entered for GCSE in 2000. Attainment was well above national average and for individual pupils was similar to their attainment in other subjects. The attainment of pupils in A*-C grades fell sharply from the previous two years, particularly in relation to higher grades. All pupils attained an A*-G grade and girls achieved better than boys in each cohort. The number of pupils entered has increased steadily from eight in 1998 to twenty two in 2000. High teacher turnover has contributed to the drop in standards. The number of pupils entered is too small to make valid comparisons with national figures.

169. The most able pupils begin the study of German in Year 8. The evidence of work and the lessons observed show that by the age of 14, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations with a minority of pupils in Years 8 and 9 attaining very high standards. Higher attaining pupils are developing an understanding of grammar and can speak with confidence, for example in describing peoples' appearance using accurate language and with good pronunciation. They identify key points about appearance from a tape and draw accurate pictures and write descriptions from the information they have heard. By the age of sixteen, pupils attain standards that are above average. In written work they use a range of tenses and understand the teacher's fluent German for the conduct of the lesson, for example on the topic of health. They express preferences about where they live, and talk about the advantages and disadvantages of living in the town and country with confidence and good accents. Groups in the Sixth Form are small and attain standards in line with their ability. They express a variety of opinions and ideas on subjects, such as health and diet, in speech and writing using a variety of tenses.

French and German

170. In both languages, literacy skills develop well. Pupils become more confident in reading, writing, speaking and listening as they progress through the school. They have good attitudes to work, concentrate well and are confident speakers of the language. In both languages literacy skills are developed well.

171. The department has recently lost four experienced members of staff, including the head of department. After a period of disruption, they were replaced by a new head of department and three newly qualified teachers.

172. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the Sixth Form it is good. A third of teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good or very good and the rest of teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, teaching is unsatisfactory in one lesson in five in French. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use the target language extensively. Lessons are well planned with clear and appropriate learning objectives which are shared with the pupils at the beginning of every lesson. Progress towards them is reviewed at the end of the lesson, so that they experience a feeling of achievement. Pupils understand how they are progressing in relation to national curriculum and GCSE criteria, and in the best lessons use is made of this knowledge to challenge them to achieve higher levels of performance. For example, pupils in a Year 9 lesson were aware that they needed to use a range of tenses and express an opinion in order to improve their national curriculum level, and successfully did so. Teachers ensure good coverage of all four attainment targets in each lesson, which enables pupils to make progress in all skills. Teachers use a range of activities such as expositions, games and quizzes to reinforce newly introduced language and ensure it is consolidated. In unsatisfactory lessons, particularly in French at Key Stage 4, a small number of boys were disruptive by talking, and their behaviour interfered with the work of others. Teachers' expectations of pupils' conduct and behaviour were too low, and the lessons lacked pace and challenge; in these lessons pupils made insufficient progress. In some otherwise satisfactory lessons an increase in pace and challenge and slightly firmer control of pupils would have led to better learning. In these lessons, although pupils do their work, they are rather chatty and casual in their attitudes, and need to be encouraged to work at a faster pace. Learning support assistants are not always used effectively, as their roles are unclear. As at the last inspection, there is insufficient use of ICT as a tool for learning.

173. Homework is set and marked regularly. The quality of some marking is excellent, and pupils are aware that it helps them to improve their work. Pupils are carefully monitored as they work, and lesson plans are changed to meet their needs. For example, the delivery of a Year 7 lesson on saying where things were was completely altered in order to reinforce vocabulary.

174. The management of the department is good. The guidance, administrative systems and schemes of work introduced by the head of department have provided support for teaching staff. Structured observation and feedback has enabled teachers to improve the quality of their teaching, particularly in relation to planning and assessment, and is beginning to be effective in improving pupil management. Numbers of pupils entered for GCSE French, and taking up German in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form are increasing.

MUSIC

175. End of Key Stage 3 assessments last year revealed pupils to have gained significantly higher standards of attainment than the national average. Pupils currently have above average standards of attainment at Key Stage 3, and standards are mostly in line with the national average at Key Stage 4. Results in the most recent GCSE examinations were below the national average, but were in line with estimated grades, and in some cases were slightly higher than had been predicted. The trend has been for a raising of standards in recent years, and evidence suggests that pupils in the present Year 10 will continue this steady improvement. This is the result of new strategies having been put into place, including individual target setting and sessions of curriculum enhancement after school.

176. By the time pupils reach the age of 14, they have acquired a wide range of skills which enable them to appreciate, compose and perform music with accuracy and a certain flair. Most have had very limited musical experiences when they arrive at the school, and have little awareness of the most basic musical literacy or vocabulary. However, due to thorough teaching and their own inquisitive attitudes to the subject, they make good progress by the end of the key stage. Standards of improvisation and composition, often using music technology, are good. Pupils are aware of how the elements of music can be used, and understand how to use ostinati, chord formations and major, minor and chromatic intervals when working on the keyboards. They have studied the features of blues, jazz and film music, and can use these to great effect with their own compositions. Their analysis skills are well developed, and they can make accurate and perceptive comments when appraising music to which they listen. Pupils of all ability achieve with success in lessons. In one notable lesson, a pupil, who despite reading problems could successfully read both the treble and bass clefs, led his group in a composition exercise to produce a highly impressive atmospheric piece, which was designed to be a background accompaniment to a television advertisement.

177. All pupils are on target to achieve their potential in Year 10. Current practical standards range from very elementary to good, and these standards will largely influence the final results, as a significant percentage of the marks are allocated to practical performance. Already, the pupils in this year have covered a great amount of detail in analysing music and in composing. They can use conventions such as repetition, sequence, ostinato, imitation and retrograde phrasing with confidence; they are familiar with structures, including binary, ternary and rondo form. Composition work shows that many of them can write successfully in a range of styles, using a number of different chords as accompaniment, with appropriate modulation and correct cadences in relevant places. No pupils are studying music in Year 11.

178. There have been significant developments in the music department since the last inspection. There is now adequate timetable provision for delivery of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3. Numbers opting to take GCSE music have improved, and there are currently thirteen on the course in Year 10 and no pupils in Year 11. The department operates as a discrete subject in management terms, and is not now part of a performing arts faculty.

179. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and is very good at Key Stage 4. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are fine practical musicians. Careful planning and the developmental structure of lessons contributes to a good quality of learning at both key stages, and directly affects the progress pupils make in each lesson. Much work has been undertaken in order to provide informative, graded worksheets which are proving to be very useful aids for practical work. Lessons are finely paced, and contain sufficient variety of activity to maintain pupils' interest: occasionally, the time allocated to paired or group work can be too long, resulting in less motivated pupils becoming a little restless. It is excellent practice that music is played as pupils arrive for music lessons, and that there is a short discussion about this music to set the lesson in motion. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the pupils' abilities and potential in Year 10, and provide specific individual tasks for them in practical work.

180. Pupils have very good attitudes to music across both key stages. They listen attentively to the taught part of lessons, and all join in whole-class discussion. It is evident that they very much enjoy the practical part of lessons. It is good practice that lessons end with performances of the work they have covered, as this keeps pupils on focus, and demonstrates the levels of achievement that have been gained. They listen respectfully to each other during performances. There is an insufficient number of keyboards for group work, and headphones are not available. When three, or even four, pupils share one instrument, it is inevitable that concentration spans are limited by those not using the instrument at any one time. This affects the quality of pupils' learning. Year 10 pupils have a positive attitude to their studies, and operate in a highly focused way when working independently.

181. Assessment and recording systems are under review in the music department, and systems are in operation for end of Key Stage 3 assessments to be made with the new levels next summer. The function of manuscript books as a means of recording is unclear: ways of recording pupils' musical development across key stages could profitably be reviewed. The department contributes positively to the cultural life of the school through projects by professional musicians in the school, and by presenting a range of concerts.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

182. In summer 2000 the A*-C pass rate for pupils who followed a full GCSE course was 19.5 per cent. This is well below the national average, and below the average for the school. However, all pupils achieved an A*-G pass grade. The trend over the past five years has been an improving one. The predicted grades, for the present Year 11 pupils indicate further improvement, and the inspection evidence confirms these predictions. A Level results over the same period have been average, and broadly in line with the school average.

183. The attainment of the vast majority of pupils by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 is in line with national expectations. Many pupils, by the end of both key stages, achieve higher than is expected nationally. A small minority of pupils achieve below national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are particularly good at using consistently the practical skills they have learned. At the end of Key Stage 4 they are able to select and combine advanced physical and coordination skills. In dance, at both key stages, the pupils work very hard to compose movements which effectively convey the themes of work they undertake.

184. The achievement of boys is slightly better than girls. However, the achievement of both boys and girls with special educational needs is better than expected, due to the department's successfully implemented policy of support and inclusion of pupils in all activities. More able pupils achieve appropriate to their higher level of ability. The few non-participants show significant understanding of work taught in their analysis and evaluation of other pupils' performance.

185. Teaching and learning are strengths of the department. All teaching observed was good or better, with 27 per cent of teaching being very good. This has a great impact on the productivity in lessons. It provides a positive atmosphere for learning in which teachers' expertise and skill promotes pupils' success and progress. For example, in a Year 10 girls' aerobic lesson, the teacher's advanced knowledge and great enthusiasm encouraged excellent effort from the girls, and produced a lesson of enjoyment and very high productivity. There were very good relationships between teachers and pupils. In a Year 7 lesson, effective varied teaching styles, combined with good classroom management, led to pupils quickly learning the skills of the chest pass and set shot.

186. Short term planning is very good. It creates structured lessons which allow for progression in learning. This, combined with pupils' high level of co-operation and behaviour produces lessons where aims are met and learning outcomes achieved. This was seen in football and basketball lessons, where large numbers of boys progressed in their passing, shooting and dribbling skills. Teachers' high expectations and enthusiasm, alongside pupils' eagerness to take part creates lessons where pupils work hard and extend their physical capabilities. In a Year 8 dance lesson, boys and girls worked hard to express their more creative and intellectual sides. They performed, with developing accuracy, body dynamics and shapes around the theme of 'My Name and My Space'.

187. All teachers set challenging tasks to extend all pupils. In a few lessons, a small number of lower achieving pupils occasionally chatter and miss important teaching points; consequently, these pupils do not make suitable progress. Teachers are sensitive to pupils needs. For example, in a Year 9 netball lesson, the teacher used tactful teaching methods, engaging girls who had previously shown signs of disaffection; the girls' made sound progress in developing basic physical skills.

188. The department has sound, short and long term assessment procedures. Teachers encourage pupils to plan, perform, and evaluate their own performance in lessons and this promotes pupils' independent learning. Assessment outcomes, including assessments at the end of each unit of work, are used well to plan lessons and set targets and performance grades. Reports to parents comment well on pupils' achievements, but targets are not sufficiently prominent.

189. The curriculum is broad and balanced at both key stages, meeting statutory requirements. The reintroduction of dance for all pupils at Key Stage 3, and as a GCSE subject has enriched the curriculum because it enables pupils to become confident in expressing their feelings. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities. These activities are on offer to all pupils and appreciated by them. The extra curricular programme is a strength of the department.

190. The department is developing good links with its primary schools. The department promotes the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and acknowledges the importance of information and communication technology. This is evident in high quality visual displays, materials used for non-participating pupils, and the learning of key words.

191. Leadership of the department is very good. Departmental documentation is very comprehensive and portrays a clear vision for the future. Staff work well together, are well deployed and are good rôle models, giving willingly of their time. Accommodation is good, as are resources. The ethos of the department is good. The department fully deserves its Sportsmark Award.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

192. Pupils do not take any public examinations in religious education. At Key Stage 3, pupils are tested annually on their knowledge by the school. This is a recent development and as yet there is no reliable data from these tests as to any trend in standards. At Key Stage 4, pupils receive only nine lessons of religious education teaching as part of a Life-skills course. This is not enough to meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

193. By the end of Key Stage 3, when pupils are 14, pupils' attainments in learning about religions are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. They build on a sound knowledge of the beliefs and ceremonies of the main world faiths in Year 7 and 8 to develop an understanding of how these traditions influence people's lives. They can explain the importance of places of worship, rituals and traditions in the main world faiths. They use terminology accurately. They learn to reflect on their own attitudes to moral and social issues but their understanding of how different faiths approach these issues is less secure. Pupils in Year 7 have very limited recall of the religious education they covered in primary school, especially those of low ability. Against this background, pupils of different abilities make good progress across Key Stage 3.

194. There is too little evidence in pupils' written work to form a judgement about pupils' attainments by the end of Key Stage 4. The topics covered in the Life-Skills course do not meet statutory requirements for studying religious education. Sixth Form students do not follow a course of religious education, other than that which occurs incidentally as a part of general studies.

195. Pupils' attainments and progress reflect those which obtained at the time of the last inspection. Plans to improve provision at Key Stage 4 referred to at that time have not been implemented effectively.

196. Most teaching at Key Stage 3 is good, and none is less than satisfactory. Carefully planned lessons and good classroom management help to maintain pupils' interest and concentration, and consequently benefit their learning. Good use is made of questioning to draw out pupils' own attitudes to moral issues. Well planned use of video material, as in a lesson on the Nazi persecution of Anne Frank, has a strong impact on how pupils develop their own values. Able pupils are not always suitably challenged, particularly in their study of how different faiths approach moral

dilemmas. Pupils with special needs are helped by effective use of IEPs to develop their subject vocabulary.

197. Insufficient use is made of information technology to broaden pupils' experiences, and the library stock is not sufficiently up-to-date or wide enough to support pupils' learning. There are too few opportunities for visits to places of worship, or for pupils to meet representatives of different faiths. These are particularly important areas to address in a school community which lacks cultural and religious diversity.

198. Pupils behave very well in lessons. They are polite and attentive to their teachers, and respond readily to any correction or admonition. They work hard and sustain their effort and concentration across a lesson. This benefits their learning by enabling the pace of lessons to be maintained.

199. The subject is ably led by a committed and enthusiastic head of department, who has a clear vision of the steps needed to improve provision. However, there has been insufficient support to help improvements take place, although the school's improvement plan contains important and achievable targets for religious education, especially in its proposals for improving assessment. In addition the school has not established religious education in Key Stage 4 or the Sixth Form as required at the last inspection.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

BUSINESS STUDIES

200. The school offers two courses leading to qualifications in this subject, namely GCSE and A-Level business studies in Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form respectively. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, the percentage of pupils obtaining A*-C grades was well below the national average, and the percentage obtaining A*-G grades was below the national average. Boys and girls performed significantly better on average in their other subjects than they did in business studies. A high proportion of candidates had lower levels of prior attainment. In 1998 and 1999 the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A* to C was below and well below the national average respectively. In the same years, the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A* to G was in line with the national average. In the 2000 A Level examinations, the proportion of students gaining grades A to E was well below the national average, with eleven out of fourteen candidates entered obtaining pass grades. In 1998 and 1999, the proportion of students gaining grades A to E was well below the national average.

201. By the end of Key Stage 4, or when pupils are sixteen, the attainment of pupils currently taking business studies is average. Pupils of all attainment levels have a sound understanding of business issues, such as internal communications in companies and methods of production. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11, for example, used their knowledge to correctly select appropriate methods of production for various products.

202. By the end of the Sixth Form, or when students are eighteen, the attainment of students currently taking business studies is average. Most students have developed an improved understanding of concepts such as economies of scale, and can successfully apply them in a business context in order to explain developments such as the growth of large firms.

203. The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 4 and students in the Sixth Form is satisfactory. Gains are noticeable from one year to the next, as they acquire subject knowledge and understanding and develop and apply skills in business situations.

204. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and classroom management skills, and successfully employ a variety of teaching methods so that the pace of learning is good. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in Key Stage 4 and students in the Sixth Form are good.

205. The department is ably managed. There is helpful departmental documentation, including clear schemes of work. Some use is made of information and communications technology in the subject, but there is limited use of business links in the curriculum. Both of these are areas for further development.

DRAMA

206. Results in the most recent GCSE and Advanced Level examination were above average, and this has been the trend in recent years. Current standards of attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4, and with Post-16 students, are also above average. By the end of Key Stage 3, in which drama is taught as a discrete subject, pupils become fully acquainted with a wide range of conventions of the theatre through extensive practical work. They do, for example, understand and use facial expression and body and verbal language in a masterful way. The introduction of pupils to a wide variety of role play results in them becoming very confident in the way they relate to each another, and in their attitude to study. Key Stage 4 pupils produce highly impressive group work, for example, the Year 11 tableaux, arising from the Irish troubles, which were produced in one lesson during the inspection. Sixth Form students make perceptive and mature analyses of texts in the course of their studies.

207. Examination results have been improved since the last inspection. There is now a higher proportion of boys on drama courses. Teaching is now delivered by accomplished and dedicated specialists, and is very good across the department. Lessons are often inspirational and challenging, and demonstrate the teachers' love of their subject. At all key stages, pupils thoroughly enjoy their drama lessons, and are totally involved in all activities. The combination of quality teaching and pupils' attitudes results in even higher standards of attainment, and an acceptance of drama as an important feature of the curriculum. The accommodation is barely adequate, and often has a limiting effect upon delivery of lessons. The subject contributes in a significant way to the cultural life of the school, and to the personal and social development of the pupils.

MEDIA STUDIES

208. The Advanced Level Media Studies course is in its second year of operation. It is developing well, and is attracting viable numbers of students. During the inspection, one lesson in Year 12 was observed in which a mature, authoritative discussion was held arising from a comparison of tabloid and broadsheet newspapers. Students took a very intelligent and perceptive approach to the topic. The quality of teaching was very good, and in particular, the teacher's knowledge and guidance, provision of appropriate stimuli, and the pacing of the lesson. These elements contributed to the overall good quality of students' learning and to an above average standard of achievement.