

INSPECTION REPORT

THE HAYES MANOR SCHOOL

Hayes, Middlesex

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102446

Headteacher: Mr R H Baars

Reporting inspector: D M Phillips-Davies
2687

Dates of inspection: 22 - 26 January 2001

Inspection number: 188990

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wood End Green Road Hayes Middlesex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Wedlock
Date of previous inspection:	20 May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
(Ofsted No. 2687)	Morton Phillips-Davies	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' or students' achievements. How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
(Ofsted No. 16472)	Catherine Stormonth	Lay inspector		(How well is the school led and managed?) (How well does the school work in partnership with parents?) (Special Educational Needs)
(Ofsted No. 23880)	Olivia Hall	Team inspector	Physical Education Art	Special educational needs
(Ofsted No. 24127)	Jim Kidd	Team inspector	History	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils or students?
(Ofsted No. 31295)	John Bennett	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
(Ofsted No. 12630)	David Naylor	Team inspector	Mathematics	(How well does the school care for its pupils or students?)
(Ofsted NO. 23588)	Charanjit Ajitsingh	Team inspector	Religious education	English as an additional language. Equal opportunities
(Ofsted No. 12121)	Jack Mallinson	Team inspector	English Drama	
(Ofsted No. 18584)	Martin Davis	Team inspector	Science	
(Ofsted No. 8786)	Michael Whalley	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
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(Ofsted No. 15163)	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	

() denotes support role

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a mixed foundation comprehensive school in Hillingdon with a roll of 584 pupils aged 11-18, with 78 pupils in the sixth form 63 of whom are in Year 12. Forty-three per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, well above both local and national averages. There is a significant level of pupil mobility. In addition to those who enter at 11 or leave at 16 and 18, 80 pupils joined the school and 73 left in the last year. About a fifth of the pupils are refugees, including asylum seekers; the predominant country of origin is Somalia. About a third of the pupils are white. More than half the pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) which is very high, and a significant proportion of them requires additional support to learn English. There are 35 different mother tongues represented in the school population, the main ones being Punjabi, Somali, Gujarati and Farsi. The school has just over a fifth of its pupils on the special educational needs register, including 11 pupils with statements, which is broadly in line with that found nationally. The ability range of the intake as indicated by the end of Key Stage 2 tests and cognitive ability tests shows a strong skew towards the lower ability end with few pupils of the highest ability represented.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides effectively for those pupils who attend regularly but there is still a significant minority of pupils whose attendance is poor. Whilst the standards of attainment are well below the national averages, they are commensurate with those in similar schools. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and their achievement is at the level that could be expected. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, with many good aspects. It is very good or better in 20 per cent of lessons and good or better in 61 per cent of lessons. The school strongly promotes racial harmony and cultural tolerance and is very successful in this. Overall, the management of the school is working effectively and there has been significant improvement since the last inspection. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and 61 per cent is now good, very good or excellent.
- The organisation and management of pupils in lessons is very good and pupils generally display good attitudes to learning.
- Members of staff show a high level of commitment to providing a good quality of education for the pupils, and the overall relationship between staff and pupils is very good.
- The personal development of pupils is very good and a climate has been created where pupils support and help one another and behaviour is generally good.
- Monitoring of attendance and the provision for the work-related curriculum is good.
- There is a good learning resource area, which is very well managed.

What could be improved

- The pupils' attainment, through reducing further the proportion of less than satisfactory lessons at Key Stage 3 and improving the quality of teaching in mathematics, aspects of the accommodation and the resources for learning.
- The financial situation in the school, which severely limits the school's ability to bring about improvements in the resources for learning and the accommodation.
- Pupils numeracy and their competence with information and communication technology (ICT), through improving the provision for both.
- Attendance and punctuality and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and the partnership with parents.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual development, for extra-curricular activities and for pupils with EAL.
- Compliance with statutory requirements, including health and safety regulations.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

A team of inspectors, led by a Registered Inspector, inspected the school in May 1996. As a result of the weaknesses identified the school was seen to be failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. A team of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) undertook an inspection in March 1999 and found that the school was providing an acceptable level of education for its pupils. The findings of this inspection are that this is still the case. Since the original inspection significant progress has been made, overall; however, there is still much to be done. Good progress has been made in improving the management of the school, including the financial management. The school had restored financial viability and good progress had been made; however, due to a sharp drop in pupil numbers it again faces financial difficulties and much of this good progress has been eroded. The raising of pupils' attainment was and remains a key issue, but progress has been reasonable. Pupils' progress and achievement is now satisfactory at all stages. Progress in improving the quality of teaching has been very good. Just over 30 per cent of lessons were less than satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. The HMI inspection in March 1999 found that the quality of teaching had improved and this improvement has continued. Teachers, however, still do not have the resources they need to do the job in some subjects. Reasonable progress has been made on improving attendance; however, although rates are better than at the last inspection, it is still unsatisfactory and has a negative effect on pupil attainment. Reasonable progress had also been made in complying with the law and the health and safety issues identified at the last inspection. However the requirement for the provision of an act of collective worship has not been fully met and new legislative requirements and health and safety issues have emerged. HMI identified two additional key issues in 1999. Good progress has been made in sharpening the focus of internal monitoring and evaluating the findings to help to raise standards. The provision for pupils with EAL has improved and it is now satisfactory; however, more needs to be done and progress is only just satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	C
A levels / AS levels	E	E*	E	

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Pupils' attainment on entry is well below that seen nationally. Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 3, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science over the last three years has generally been well below the national average. Attainment in English has been better than in the other two subjects, with results broadly in line with those in similar schools in 2000 and well above in 1999. Overall, the results are below those in similar schools and the trend in the average points score has been below that seen nationally. Compared with similar schools the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above is in line in mathematics and English and below in science, and for Level 6 or above it is above for mathematics and science and well above in English. The percentage of pupils who achieve the higher Level 6 or above is close to the national average in English. In all three subjects the school is therefore more successful in achieving the higher levels than in its overall performance. In addition to the attainment on entry and the impact made by the school, two other factors were identified as influencing the results. A significant number of pupils both join and leave the school each year, and an analysis of the results for 2000 showed that pupils who joined the school during Key Stage 3 achieved significantly lower scores than those who arrived at the beginning of Year 7. Initial analysis indicates that they were about one year behind at the end of Key Stage 3. The results are also affected by the poor attendance of some pupils. These factors have an adverse effect on pupils' attainment, particularly those pupils who are in the groups of below-average attainment. Inspectors judged that, overall, in lessons and from the work seen pupils are progressing at the rate that could be expected and that achievement is satisfactory. It was seen to be best in English, science, history and modern foreign languages and weakest in design and technology, ICT and geography, although pupils are now making much better progress in geography.

The pupils' attainment in GCSE has generally been well below the national averages but was in line with similar schools both in terms of the points score and the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades in 2000. Attainment, in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving these higher grades in each of the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, was above that for similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-G grades increased from 69 per cent in 1999 to 80 per cent in 2000, but is still below that in similar schools. The GCSE results have shown improvement over the last five years but in terms of the average points score this is at a slower rate than seen nationally. About two-fifths of the pupils in Year 11 in 2000 were not on the school roll in September 1995. The two factors identified at Key Stage 3 of later arrivals and the poor attendance of some pupils also affect the results at Key Stage 4. Inspectors judged that, overall, in lessons and from the work seen pupils are progressing at the rate that could be expected and that achievement is satisfactory. It was seen to be best in English, science, history and physical education and weakest in art, ICT and in geography. As in Key Stage 3, pupils in geography are now making much better progress but from a low base. The school did not achieve its ambitious GCSE target of 31 per cent of pupils obtaining five or more grades A*-C in 2000 when the figure was 26 per cent. It just missed its target of 82 per cent for the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more grades A*-G. However, it exceeded the target for the percentage obtaining one or more GCSE grades A*-G by 4 per cent. Attainment at A level, as measured by the average points score per pupil, has generally been well below that seen nationally for a number of years. Pupils do not take an A level in general studies, which depresses this indicator. The results in 2000 were, using this measure, the best in the last four years but below those reported on at the time of the last inspection. The number of pupils taking individual subjects each year is relatively small and makes comparisons less reliable. The results show significant variation both within and across subjects due to this. Inspectors judged that in the subjects inspected pupils in the sixth form were progressing at the rate that could be expected and that achievement is satisfactory.

Apart from the higher-attaining pupils the numerical skills of pupils are unsatisfactory, and this has a significant impact on progress and achievement in mathematics and some other subjects such as science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils normally display good attitudes to their learning and are eager to take advantage of what the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are courteous and friendly to other pupils and to adults. Overall, standards of behaviour are good in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are normally very good. There is racial harmony in the school and pupils also adhere to the anti-bullying policy. Pupils show initiative and take personal responsibility when the opportunity is presented.
Attendance	Rates of authorised and unauthorised absence are much higher than the national average, and this is adversely affecting pupils' attainment. The school encourages punctuality, but some pupils arrive at school and for lessons late, which is a weakness.

The very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are a strength of the school, as is the way pupils treat others of different races and faiths with dignity and with respect. The lower than average rate of attendance is a weakness.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, with many good aspects. It is very good or better in 20 per cent of lessons, good or better in 61 per cent of lessons and less than satisfactory in 6 per cent of lessons, which are mainly in Key Stage 3. In English, at Key Stage 3, it is satisfactory and good at Key Stage 4. In both key stages, it is satisfactory in mathematics and good in science. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects but is much stronger in some than in others. It is strongest in history, where it is very good, and, in addition to science, is good in modern foreign languages and physical education. The quality of teaching is reflected in the quality of the pupils' learning, which is satisfactory, overall, and was seen to be good overall in these three subjects and very good in history. The quality of teaching is not as strong in mathematics, design and technology, art, religious education and ICT as it is in the other subjects. This again is reflected in the quality of the pupils' learning. Whilst there are no particular areas of outstanding strength or weakness in the teaching, teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, the teaching methods used, their relationships with and management of pupils and their planning and setting of objectives are, overall, the stronger aspects. Other areas, such as the level of challenge and the teachers' expectation of pupils, which is very good in history and physical education but less than satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology and ICT, are more varied. The quality of pupils' learning is good in the sixth form and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. There are no particularly outstanding features, with all aspects at least satisfactory. Pupils' concentration and interest is the strongest feature, overall. The school meets the needs of all pupils adequately and many aspects of provision are good. Emphasis is given to the development of pupils' literacy in a number of departments, and this is seen in the progress made by pupils in this area, but more needs to be done in the other departments. The development of numeracy is not as well catered for and is a weakness in the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The range and quality of the learning opportunities provided are satisfactory, with some good features. The curriculum, at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, has been made more relevant to the needs of all pupils and is more successful in motivating them. Extra-curricular provision is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision, overall, for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is satisfactory and pupils with special needs make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is an effective system for assessing and recording the needs of pupils with EAL. Specialist support is limited and provision in the different subjects varies from good to unsatisfactory. Management and co-ordination of the work is presently unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision for pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for social and moral education is good, it is satisfactory for cultural education and less than satisfactory for spiritual. Care and respect for others is emphasised, which promotes good attitudes and very good relationships.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is good overall. The school breaches health and safety regulations and this places pupils at risk. This has been reported to the school, which should tackle the breaches without delay. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are good. There are strong procedures for child protection.
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Despite the school's efforts, links with parents are insufficiently developed. The parents who came to the meeting or responded to the questionnaire stated that they would like to work more closely with the school. The school does not fully meet statutory requirements in design and technology and in art. The extra-curricular provision is limited.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	A clear lead is provided on the more immediate aspects of development, and these have been prioritised effectively, but more work is required on clarifying the strategic direction. Overall, the management of the school is working effectively but there are areas for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors generally fulfil their responsibilities adequately. Continuing attention needs to be given to complying with health and safety requirements. Governors as a group need to be clearer regarding the strategic direction to be taken by the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance well. It has used this information effectively to bring about improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The resources available to the school are used well, and, in the case of specific grants, for the designated purpose.

There are sufficient teachers to support the curriculum. However, the in-class support for pupils with SEN and those with EAL is in some areas insufficient and on occasions this affects standards. The accommodation in a number of areas has inadequacies. The learning resource centre provides a very good learning environment. Apart from the centre, the availability and quality of resources to support learning are inadequate, including those for pupils with SEN and those with EAL. This is seen to be affecting pupils' progress and standards in a number of subject areas. The leadership and management of the English and history departments and of the learning resource centre are particular strengths. However, the management and co-ordination across the subject departments of the provision for numeracy, ICT and EAL are weaker areas, which need to be strengthened. The school applies the principles of best value well in a number of areas. An area requiring improvement is consultation with parents.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like the school. • The good teaching. • The good progress made by their children. • The school expects the pupils to work hard and achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities provided outside lessons. • The amount of homework given to pupils. • The school needs to work more closely with parents. • The information provided on how their children are getting on.

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' generally positive views of the school. The inspectors judged that the range of activities provided outside lessons is limited and that this and the effectiveness of the school's links with parents are unsatisfactory. However, they feel that whilst improvement could

be brought about, the amount of homework is generally satisfactory as is the information on how their children are getting on.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below that seen nationally, with many more lower-attaining pupils than would be seen in a normal distribution and few of the highest attainers. Thirty per cent of the pupils in Years 7 to 11 are on the special educational needs register, more than double the proportion at the time of the last inspection.
2. Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 3, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science over the last three years has generally been well below the national average. The trend in overall attainment in the three core subjects, as measured by the average points score, is below that seen nationally. In English the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 6 is close to the national average. Although the attainment of girls in mathematics over this period is slightly better than that of boys, they are both well below expectations. In science, results have declined over recent years. The performance of girls in science has been better than that of boys. The results in English were broadly in line with those of similar schools in 2000 and they were well above in 1999. The results in mathematics were below those in similar schools in both years. However, the percentage of pupils in the cohort reaching Level 5 or above was in line with expectations and the percentage of pupils reaching Level 6 or above was above expectations. The results in 2000 showed an improvement on previous years. In comparison with similar schools attainment in science in 2000 was well below average. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or higher in science was below average, while the proportion reaching the higher Level 6 was average.
3. In addition to the attainment on entry and the impact made by the school, two other factors influence the results. A significant number of pupils both join and leave the school each year. An analysis of the end of Key Stage 3 test results for 2000 showed that pupils who joined the school during Key Stage 3 achieved significantly lower scores than those who arrived at the beginning of Year 7. Initial analysis indicates that they were about one year behind at the end of Key Stage 3. The results are also affected by the poor attendance of some pupils. These factors have an adverse impact on pupils' average levels of attainment, particularly of those pupils who are in the groups of below average attainment. Inspectors judged that, overall, in lessons and from the work seen, pupils in Key Stage 3 are progressing at the rate that could be expected and achievement is satisfactory. It was seen to be best in English, science, history and modern foreign languages and weakest in design and technology, information and communications technology and in geography, although pupils in this last subject are now making much better progress.
4. Standards observed in English in Key Stage 3 are borne out by the test results, although many pupils perform better than their attainment on entry would indicate. Pupils who have been in school since the beginning of Year 7 can write legibly with few errors in spelling and punctuation. Pupils' presentation and the quantity of writing produced are good and the best work includes well-structured essays and vivid stories and poetry. Many pupils, command of idiom is uncertain, and they can do little more than retell the story in their work on Shakespeare
5. The overall standards of work seen in mathematics in Key Stage 3 are well below national expectations. However, pupils are achieving at the level that could be expected of them in lessons with no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls. Pupils in the highest attaining sets are working in line with national expectations. For example, they understand and can apply the theorem of Pythagoras in Year 9 and simplify algebraic expressions in Year 7. Pupils in lower attaining groups in Year 7 are not secure when discussing "fair" in the context of probability. In Year 9 pupils can recognise simple fractions on a worksheet correctly.
6. Attainment seen in lessons and in pupils' work during the inspection in science is below average. The most able 14 year-old pupils have above-average knowledge of, for example, photosynthesis, where they can apply their knowledge of chemistry to their understanding of the process using chemical symbols correctly. The majority at this age has below-average knowledge across a

broad range of topics in science; for example, the lower set in Year 9 was unsure of the role of air in rusting.

7. The pupils' attainment in GCSE has generally been well below the national averages but was in line with similar schools both in terms of the points score and the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades in 2000. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-G grades in 2000 showed a significant increase on the previous year, 80 per cent compared with 69 per cent in 1999, but was still below that in similar schools. In terms of the main indicators used, the 2000 GCSE results show improvement on the 1995 results reported on in the previous inspection. In 2000, 26 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades compared with 18 per cent in 1995, and for those achieving five or more grades A*-G the corresponding figures are 80 per cent and 72 per cent. The GCSE results have shown improvement over the last five years but in terms of the average points score this is at a slower rate than seen nationally. About two-fifths of the pupils in Year 11 in 2000 were not on the school roll in September 1995. An analysis of the 2000 GCSE results shows that this group of later arrivals did not, on average, achieve as well as those who joined the school at the beginning of Year 7 in 1995. The results are also affected by the poor attendance of some pupils.
8. Inspectors judged that, overall, in lessons and from the work seen, pupils are progressing at the rate that could be expected and achievement is satisfactory. It was seen to be best in English, media studies, science, history and physical education and weakest in art, information and communications technology and in geography. As in Key Stage 3, pupils in geography are now making much better progress but from a low base. Whilst in ICT the pupils who follow the GCSE courses develop their knowledge, skills and understanding well, in general the skill levels of pupils are better than their knowledge and understanding of the subject.
9. Results in GCSE in English are below the national average in both language and literature, but a great deal better than their prior attainment would predict. The results are also relatively better than the average in all the other subjects taken by pupils. Girls perform better than boys, but by a margin no greater than that found nationally. There is good progress in Key Stage 4, where the best pupils can write fluently and accurately. Some of the poetry is good enough to be published. Nearly all can write lively stories. However, many pupils for whom English is a second language have great difficulty understanding the literature and, though often very perceptive, cannot write effectively about it. Despite this, they make good progress, often the result of more fluent speakers helping those who are still struggling.
10. In mathematics, 31 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE grades A*-C in 2000, well below the national average. The percentage of boys achieving grades A*-C is slightly above that of girls. The results are better than those obtained by pupils in similar schools; and, particularly for girls, are comparatively better than the average of the results in all the other subjects taken by the pupils. Overall standards of work seen in the school in mathematics in Key Stage 4 are well below national expectations. In lessons, pupils are achieving at a satisfactory level. No significant differences in achievement between boys and girls were seen. The higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 can use the cosine rule and simplify complicated algebraic expressions, and in Year 10 they can solve simultaneous linear equations in two variables. In a lower-attaining group in Year 10 they were not able to recognise that the height of a mountain measured in feet would be a larger number than when measured in metres.
11. The GCSE science examination results in 2000 were well below the national average and have declined since the last inspection. Only one pupil in every three gained the higher A*-C grades compared with one pupil in two nationally. Boys' results were below those of girls. The results are better than those obtained by pupils in similar schools; and are comparatively better than the average of the results in all the other subjects taken by the pupils. The grades achieved by the later arrivals, about two-fifths of the last Year 11, were significantly lower than for those who were at the school for the full five years. At the end of Year 11, pupils show below average attainment, overall. Pupils in the top set, studying dual award science, are above average. They are well-motivated, keen to learn and speak lucidly and confidently about their work investigating the reaction between hydrochloric acid and different concentrations of sodium thiosulphate, most distinguishing correctly between reaction times and reaction rates. They know how to carry out a fair test, measure accurately and record their results clearly. However, many pupils have difficulty calculating the concentration of a chemical solution. Weaknesses in numerical skills were also

found in other lessons because pupils do not get sufficient practice to learn them thoroughly. Lower-ability pupils lack a clear understanding of how to make a test fair and have difficulty analysing their findings.

12. Attainment at A level, as measured by the average points score per pupil, has generally been well below that seen nationally for a number of years. Pupils do not take an A level in general studies, which depresses this overall indicator. The results in 2000 were, using this measure, the best in the last four years but below those reported on at the time of the previous inspection. The number of pupils taking A levels in the school is relatively small, 26 pupils last year. The number of pupils sitting most of the subjects is very small; of those subjects with an entry of eight or more pupils the results in mathematics in 2000 were well above average, although they have generally been broadly in line, and those in business studies were well below. Some pupils attain at the highest levels and one pupil obtained a place at Oxford last year and another at Cambridge. Inspectors judged that in the subjects inspected, overall, in lessons and from the work seen, pupils in the sixth form were progressing at the rate that could be expected and achievement is satisfactory.
13. Those taking A level in English are too few in number for national comparisons to be made. In most years there are students obtaining the highest grades, but overall standards are below the national expectation. Standards in the sixth form vary widely. Most pupils can write clear explanatory and persuasive prose, as is shown by their work in Media Studies. They have a good knowledge of stylistic devices used in literature but often find it hard to probe behind those devices to evaluate the quality of the work.
14. In 1996, science A level results were above average. Since then attainment at A level has fallen sharply but showed a significant rise in 2000. However, compared with the national average, results in 2000 were below average. Attainment in sixth form lessons is satisfactory, overall. Students studying physics gain a good insight into problem-solving using the equations of motion, but their knowledge of the definitions of, for example, electromotive force and potential difference is not precise. In chemistry, most students understand standard chemical tests well. Attainment in biology is also satisfactory, with many students having a good general knowledge about plant growth related to plant structure.
15. Overall, in the school, standards of speaking and listening are lower than the national expectation. Standards of reading vary with the pupils' familiarity with English, but generally are a little short of the national expectation. When the opportunity arises, pupils can read with fluency and expression, and understand what they have read. Standards of writing are below the national expectation but close to it by the end of Key Stage 4.
16. Apart from the higher-attaining pupils the numerical skills of pupils are unsatisfactory and this has a significant impact on progress and achievement in mathematics and some other subjects such as science. Pupils depend on calculators for the simplest of numerical tasks, particularly in Key Stage 4. Other skills are also weak. For example, some pupils in a middle ability set in Year 10 had difficulty using a protractor correctly.
17. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress in both Key Stages 3 and 4. The pupils who need the most help receive good support in the classroom and they make good progress commensurate with their ability. Pupils in the withdrawal groups make satisfactory progress where they are helped to deal with a range of learning and behavioural difficulties, which hinders their progress. There is insufficient and inconsistent use of assessment of less-able pupils to provide lesson plans that meet all the needs of pupils with a wide range of differing abilities working in the same class in Key Stage 3. The best practice is seen in science, where pupils are given work matched to their level of understanding with an appropriate level of challenge. Scrutiny of the impressive science special educational needs work sample showed work of good quality and quantity, which is neatly and accurately presented. The school has not identified gifted or talented pupils.
18. More than half the pupils at the school have English as an additional language. These pupils make at least satisfactory progress in both Key Stages 3 and 4. One of the specialist staff supporting the school in this area has undertaken a detailed analysis of the attainment of pupils of different ethnic origins. Whilst the results indicate some possibly higher- or lower- achieving groups the numbers are not statistically significant and may be affected by other important

factors. One such factor, which seems to be crucial, is how long the pupils have been using English for academic purposes. This ties in with the more general analysis that shows that later arrivals to the school achieve on average lower standards in the end of Key Stage 3 tests and in GCSE than those who have been there throughout their period of secondary education.

19. The school did not achieve its ambitious GCSE target of 31 per cent of pupils obtaining five or more grades A*-C in 2000, when the figure was 26 per cent. There was significant improvement on the previous year in the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more grades A*-G, which rose from 69 per cent to 80 per cent, but the school just missed its target of 82 per cent. It, however, exceeded the target for the percentage obtaining one or more GCSE grades A*-G by 4 per cent. The school will need to do well to achieve its aspirational targets for 2001.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. The school is an orderly community and pupils generally display good attitudes to learning. They respond positively to the teaching and, where they are encouraged to work in pairs and in groups, they do so eagerly. They are keen to contribute information for the benefit of their classmates and to debate a variety of issues.
21. Overall, standards of behaviour are good in lessons and around school at breaks and at lunchtimes. Behaviour outside lessons is sometimes a little boisterous, but measures for dealing with this are applied sensitively and effectively. The number of exclusions has reduced markedly since the last inspection, and it is used appropriately.
22. Pupils are open, courteous and friendly to their peers, their teachers, non-teaching staff and visitors. They are proud of their school and have a real sense of community. They take great pride in their achievements in all areas of school life and value the rewards system. During assembly time, and also in lessons, pupils are given opportunities to recognise and to celebrate the successes of others. This they do with enthusiasm. Teachers' expectations of their charges are normally high and staff work hard to counsel and mentor their pupils. The pastoral system is a real strength in this regard.
23. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are normally very good and pupils speak highly of their teachers. Pupils treat others of different races and faiths with dignity and with respect. There is racial harmony in the school and pupils also adhere to the anti-bullying policy. Bullying is rare, but, when it occurs, staff act swiftly and effectively to eradicate it. There is a supportive culture in the school for pupils with a range of special educational needs. Pupils are helped and supported commendably by their peers.
24. The opportunities provided by the school for pupils to take initiative and personal responsibility are satisfactory. Students in the sixth form act as translators for pupils with a different first language and they act as mentors for youngsters lower down the school. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 assist during open evenings and pupils in the lower school are trained as library monitors. Pupils are encouraged to organise charity events, for example, and they can obtain relevant documentation from the school office that offers advice on this. There are fewer extra-curricular activities than would be expected, but pupils eagerly take part in those that are offered.
25. The school works hard to improve attendance, and, although rates are better than at the previous inspection, it is still unsatisfactory. Rates of authorised and unauthorised absence are much higher than the national average, and this has a negative effect on pupils' attainment. The school does much to encourage punctuality and to remove internal truancy. Nonetheless, lateness to school, which disrupts the start to the day, is a major weakness, as is lateness to lessons. Progress has been reasonable but much remains to be done.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching shows considerable improvement since the last inspection, when just over

30 per cent of lessons were less than satisfactory, and it was one of the principal reasons for the judgement that the school was not providing a satisfactory level of education for the pupils. The inspection undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in March 1999 found that the quality of teaching had improved. This improvement has continued. The quality of teaching is very good or better in 20 per cent of lessons, and good or better in 61 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, with many good aspects, and it is good, overall, in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. It is still less than satisfactory in 6 per cent of lessons, which are mainly in Key Stage 3.

27. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects but is much stronger in some than in others. It is strongest in history where it is very good and is good in science, modern foreign languages and physical education. In English, some very high quality teaching was seen and the teaching of some individuals in other departments was also of a very high standard. The improvement in the quality of teaching is reflected in the quality of the pupils' learning, which is satisfactory, overall, and was seen to be good, overall, in science, modern foreign languages and physical education and very good in history. The quality of teaching is not as strong in mathematics, design and technology, art, religious education and information and communication technology as it is in the other subjects.
28. Teachers generally show a good knowledge and understanding of their subject areas and use them effectively in presenting the work. The presentation of work is normally clear and accurate and in the better lessons, such as in history and a number of lessons in other subjects, it is stimulating and interesting and produces a good response from all pupils. However, a more coherent and co-ordinated approach is needed in design and technology.
29. Teachers normally plan effectively, and some examples of very good planning were seen in a number of subject areas. Overall, it is particularly strong in modern foreign languages, music and history. In history, teachers have a clear understanding of how their pupils learn and provide a wide range of experiences to meet pupils' individual needs. In modern foreign languages, teachers routinely share the lesson objectives with pupils and they help pupils to understand what they have to do to improve standards. This practice is, however, not general and is insufficiently developed in some departments, such as ICT. In English, the good pupil records allow teachers to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to set them high but realistic targets and plan their lessons effectively, which supports the good progress made by pupils in English. In other subject areas, such as modern foreign languages and science, the approaches to learning ensure a variety of work, which is taken forward at a good pace. This engages pupils effectively and they work at a good pace throughout the lesson; however, on occasions, the number of activities and the pace do not allow for adequate exploitation of the learning potential of each activity. The planning in geography has improved considerably. It is now good, and when implemented effectively pupils respond enthusiastically and learn well.
30. Teachers' expectations of pupils are variable; they are very high in history and in practical activities, such as games, and in physical education. In physical education, the teachers' very good expertise and enthusiasm are communicated effectively to pupils of all levels of attainment and those with English as an additional language. This, coupled with the good teaching, leads to high levels of effort and interest and good self-knowledge among the pupils. Teacher expectations are also high in English, science and modern foreign languages and pupils respond well. They need to be higher in mathematics, design and technology and information and communication technology. There are rare occasions when the challenge is inappropriately high and the work is not sufficiently matched to pupils needs; examples were seen in religious education and science.
31. Pupils are normally managed well. A strength of the school and the teaching is the very good relationships that the great majority of teachers have established with the pupils. In languages, the greatest strength was seen to be the way all teachers created a positive learning environment for all learners and attempted to make language learning enjoyable. This is true of many of the lessons seen in the school, where through a combination of praise, the effective use of humour and good levels of mutual respect, a positive atmosphere for learning is created. There is a minority of disaffected pupils, but these are normally managed effectively and are not allowed to set a negative tone or disrupt the learning. Occasionally, however, this does happen and, if not always the cause, was a contributory factor in more than half the lessons being judged to be unsatisfactory. An example of very effective management of learning was seen in physical

education. In this subject there is considerable attention to grouping, and, during a team teaching session in a Year 11 volleyball lesson an extra teaching group was created to improve girls' serving and passing skills.

32. Lessons are well-summarised at the end in a number of subject areas and this effectively supports pupils' progress. This aspect needs to be further developed in religious education. The use of homework is, generally at least, satisfactory and it is used well in a number of subject areas. In music, however, the demands could be increased.
33. Pupils work very well together and in a number of the best lessons there is much pupil activity; and the expertise and experiences of the pupils are used effectively to develop and support the learning. In these lessons, pupils learn much from the contributions of their classmates. Questioning is sharper and more effective in the better lessons. Whilst teachers use questioning widely to measure progress and develop knowledge, it is less frequently used to develop thinking and aid understanding. A good example of the effective involvement of pupils and the development of their ideas was seen in art, where pupils were given the opportunity to tell stories and the teacher questioned them to elaborate their ideas. In this Year 7 lesson, based on myths and legends, pupils spoke with increasing confidence in recounting a personal event in a supportive environment in which they felt secure about volunteering thoughts and opinions. The teachers' use of very challenging questions in history makes pupils aware that they are acquiring new historical skills.
34. The higher than usual levels of absence of some pupils result in a lack of continuity and progression in their learning, which affects their attainment. The lack of resources in the majority of subjects diminishes the effectiveness of the teaching and in many instances has an adverse effect on pupils' learning.
35. Significant and appropriate emphasis is given to the development of pupils' literacy in a number of departments, such as science, history, geography and physical education. Teachers' competence in developing literacy skills is particularly strong in English, and pupils' literacy is developed effectively principally through diligent marking. There is little additional support for pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language, and in some classes with a wide range of ability the teacher fails to give enough attention to the language difficulties of the weaker pupils. More needs to be done also in implementing the school's policy on developing literacy, for example, in the use of key words in departments such as mathematics and ICT. The significant emphasis on literacy in a number of subjects is seen in the progress made by pupils in this area. The development of numeracy is not as well catered for and is a weakness in the school. This is seen in the limitations in the basic numerical skills of pupils across the curriculum.
36. Whilst, generally, subject teachers cope effectively with the range of abilities in teaching groups, it does present a challenge in a number of areas. This is particularly so when there are significant numbers of pupils with special educational needs and others at an early stage of language acquisition in a group and there is no additional support. In these cases, there are limitations in planning for differentiated learning intentions, which can sometimes affect the quality of learning. In addition, the majority of Individual Education Plans for pupils with special needs do not make specific reference to mathematical needs. This creates difficulties for teachers of mathematics and reduces the effectiveness of the development of numeracy across the curriculum. Support for reading also needs to be further developed. Pupils who go to the Homework Club in the learning resource centre are helped very effectively to extend their reading experiences and are very well supported; but this relies on pupils' attending voluntarily an extra-curricular activity.
37. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features in the Key Stage 3 withdrawal classes for pupils with special educational needs. Staff know their pupils very well, relationships are excellent and progress is particularly good when staff are assertive and have effective strategies for managing difficult behaviour. However, the use of the same lesson plan for all three year groups does not provide adequately for the different ranges of pupils and this is a weakness. Teaching in mainstream classes is good when there is specialist additional teaching support. There are strengths in behaviour management, the targeting of good levels of individual support and teaching in small manageable steps, as seen in a very good lesson with a lower set in mathematics. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 is good and students are given some good

opportunities to develop independent learning skills in the NVQ and ASDAN programmes in particular.

38. The quality of pupils' learning is good in the sixth form and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. There are no particularly outstanding features, with all aspects at least satisfactory. Pupils' concentration and interest is the strongest feature, overall. Pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good in half the subjects inspected, but it is less than satisfactory in design and technology. A similar picture is seen in terms of pupils' intellectual and physical effort.

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

39. In Key Stage 3, all pupils follow courses on the National Curriculum subjects, and also have weekly lessons in information and communication technology (ICT), drama, personal, social and health education (PSHE), and religious education. On entering the school, in Year 7, pupils can choose to study French or Spanish as their modern foreign language, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection when only one foreign language was available. Additionally, the modern foreign languages curriculum is now compliant with National Curriculum requirements, which was not the case at the previous inspection. Design technology, however, still does not meet the requirements and art does not comply as it fails to offer sufficient opportunity for pupils to be involved in three-dimensional work. There is a reading intervention programme for pupils requiring additional support. Teaching groups in Year 7 are generally very small but in Year 9 teaching groups are generally large. Whilst small groups benefit Year 7 these arrangements are judged to be inefficient. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides appropriate in-class learning opportunities for all pupils, with the exception of design technology and art.
40. Changes since the previous inspection to the Key Stage 4 and sixth form curriculum have improved the quality, increased the range of opportunities available, and have made the curriculum more appropriate and relevant to the needs of pupils. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has undergone radical revision and now provides improved learning opportunities for all pupils, except in design technology, where the course still does not meet National Curriculum requirements. All Year 10 pupils study a core of mathematics, English and science, and select five further options, which include various GCSE courses, GNVQ Leisure and Tourism Part 1, and some vocational courses. There is guided choice within the options and every pupil must follow a course in ICT, technology, either French or Spanish and two other subjects. Within this choice pattern, it is possible to take one, two or three sciences. Around thirty pupils study one science, combined with additional vocational options. About half go to the local college to follow courses such as catering and hairdressing. The others remain in school and follow an ASDAN course, and two pupils in Year 11 have already gained their silver ASDAN awards. In Year 11, the curriculum follows a broadly similar pattern to that in Year 10, although the three separate sciences are not offered, and fewer pupils follow vocational courses.
41. The curriculum is disappplied for around twenty-eight Year 10 and 11 pupils. In place of technology and modern foreign languages, pupils follow a work-related learning course, which is supported by a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), funded project and is sponsored by Marks & Spencers.
42. The Key Stage 4 curriculum described above is socially more inclusive than that at the last inspection. Pupils are better motivated, and there has been a marked improvement in the attitude and attendance of some disaffected pupils following the work-related learning scheme.
43. As in Key Stage 4, the sixth form curriculum has been extended for the current Year 12, and also provides more effectively for pupils' needs. Year 12 pupils take A level courses or follow a one year curriculum. The former offers a limited number of AS levels and a core curriculum, including Key Skills and religious education. The latter offers GCSE resits in mathematics, English and Science, GNVQ Leisure and Tourism, an NVQ at the college, and the same core as for the A level course. The curriculum matches the needs of pupils well. It has two particularly effective

features. The GCSE resits are appropriate where the requirements of learning English as an additional language has not allowed some able pupils to achieve the levels of which they are capable at the end of Year 11. The Key Skills course is particularly valuable in giving all pupils confidence and essential skills, especially those with English as an additional language. The ASDAN course is available in Year 12 outside taught time, as is AS level art. The Year 13 curriculum is more traditional with a limited selection of A levels and a core that includes religious education but not Key Skills. No physical education is provided in taught curriculum time for Years 12 or 13. As a whole, the sixth form is cost-effective.

44. A number of effective systems exist to support and enhance pupils' achievement in the taught curriculum. Careers education, described as good in the previous inspection, remains a strength. It starts in Year 9 and assists pupils in making their Key Stage 4 subject choices. It is very well planned, particularly in Key Stage 4, and has some very good features such as a diary, which pupils complete during their work experience early in Year 11. Careers advice is provided for sixth formers, and this is supported by clear guidance provided by the school. Around thirty-two mentors from local businesses work on a one-to-one basis with Key Stage 4 pupils, and every Year 11 pupil is mentored by one of the teaching staff. In addition to the college links already referred to, the GNVQ Leisure and Tourism course has effective links with local business. There is a comprehensive, thoughtful and well-written personal, social and health education programme, which includes modules on health education and citizenship. Pupils appreciate the sessions. Pupils also benefit from presentations from outside speakers, the police, for example, and have opportunities to receive advice on the dangers of drug abuse.
45. Pupils with special educational needs are supported by a co-ordinator and one other member of the teaching staff, together with a small team of learning support assistants. Outside agencies are involved when appropriate. The reading intervention programme supports pupils in Key Stage 3. Departments meet individual pupils' needs to varying degrees. Mostly, this is satisfactory, but owing to a lack of additional support it is unsatisfactory in a few areas. Whilst the provision, overall, for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, and teachers normally meet their needs effectively, the additional support provided is inadequate. More than half the pupils in the school are on the register of pupils with English as an additional language, however, only a relatively small proportion of those on the register has serious difficulty. Such pupils receive good support from individual teachers in class, but little other support. The governors' monitoring of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is only partially in place.
46. Running through the curriculum from Year 7 to Year 13, is a strong sense of continuity and purpose. Form tutors are at the heart of the overseeing of pupils' overall progress and welfare. They are well-informed, provide guidance concerning options choices and also deliver the PSHE programme and most aspects of careers education. They support pupils in working towards their set GCSE targets, and give guidance concerning post-16 education. Form tutors contribute to the very effective sixth form induction week for Year 11 pupils and encourage pupils to support others. Thus, a number of sixth form pupils are involved in work with Key Stage 3 pupils in areas such as special educational needs, drama, science and physical education.
47. The improvement in the taught curriculum has not been matched by a similar improvement in extra-curricular activities, which remain limited in their extent and are unsatisfactory, overall. There has been no drama production for eighteen months and there are no drama-related clubs or groups. Around 80 pupils have individual music lessons, yet there are no musical ensembles apart from a choir and very small recorder and guitar groups. Physical education encourages competitive sport and makes satisfactory extra-curricular provision, with cross-country and football teams, but opportunities for girls are limited. Study support, in particular for sixth form students, and those approaching GCSE, is good. Examples include the use of the library and ICT facilities, which are often open outside normal school hours, and additional sessions offered by the mathematics and English departments. The number of off-site visits is satisfactory. Examples of these include a well-established Year 9 activity week to the Isle of Wight, visits made by pupils taking A level English to Shakespeare plays in London, and an exchange trip with a school in South Carolina, USA.
48. Satisfactory relations exist with local colleges, and there are good links with the local primary schools relating to pupil exchange and the new intake, but curricular links with local primaries

require further development.

49. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school places great emphasis on care and respect for others, promotes good attitudes amongst pupils and very good relationships between all members of the school community.
50. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory, overall, and the majority of departments do not plan for relevant provision. However, there are areas of strength. Assemblies observed during the inspection were conducted with sensitivity and were designed to celebrate the achievements of pupils in all areas of school life. Pupils were encouraged to reflect on the successes they have had, and also to persevere when difficulties occur. The teachers leading the assemblies did so with sensitivity and with humour and the pupils responded well. There are examples of awe and wonder in science, when pupils measure the blood pressure of pupils of different races. In English, pupils experience presentations of literature from ethnic communities and also anthologies of poetry. In history, pupils are fascinated when they reflect on the views of others during role-plays concerning protest groups in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
51. Moral development is good. Teachers act as good role models, encourage high standards of behaviour and promote the values of honesty, respect and consideration for others. The rewards system is valued highly by the pupils and is effective in motivating youngsters to high standards of industry and effort. The anti-bullying policy works very well indeed and pupils speak highly of it. Pupils treat their peers of different races and faiths with dignity and the school enjoys racial harmony. The personal, social and health education programme has modules on rights and responsibilities, respect for the environment and on prejudice and discrimination.
52. The school's provision for social development is good. In lessons, there are many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. Pupils' relationships with one another are very good and significant numbers stay behind at the end of the school day to discuss their day and plan their free time with friends. There is a residential programme for Year 7, a variety of field trips and visits to France. In addition, the sixth form has a partnership arrangement with a school in the USA.
53. Cultural provision is, overall, satisfactory, but the lack of regular theatrical and musical productions is a major weakness: the skills acquired by pupils in music and drama, and also the cultural diversity, by which the school sets great store, could be further celebrated beyond the formal curriculum. However, the school operates very well as a multi-cultural community and pupils pay the utmost respect, and afford the greatest dignity, to the successes of all racial groups. In some areas there are good displays, which seek to inform pupils of the tenets of a variety of religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds. Pupils benefit from a study of poetry and prose from Africa and the Caribbean, from the dance club, the limited extra-curricular drama activities and the various music groups. The modern languages department organises a variety of visits to Paris and St Omer. In addition, there is an e-mail link with a Parisian school and a Year 8 pen-friend correspondence link with France.
54. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for an act of collective worship each day.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

55. The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is good, overall. The pastoral team, comprising talented and industrious staff, is cohesive, committed and effective. Pupils also speak highly of the work of the administrative assistant (pupils), who goes out of her way to counsel those who sometimes find school life difficult. Teachers make a particular effort to recognise, record and celebrate both the academic and social successes of their pupils. Primary school visits, in which Year 7 pupils take part, seek to ensure that new pupils joining the school in September settle down quickly in their new environment. Moreover, the school accepts a considerable number of students during the year, many of whom have suffered traumatically from events in their homelands. The school is extremely effective in the way it seeks to welcome and to integrate these youngsters into its community. Pupils with special educational needs are given good advice for their personal development. Members of staff know pupils very well and are able to provide helpful guidance for improvement on behaviour and attitudes to learning. The lack of a dedicated room which pupils could use as a safe haven for confidential interviews and for access

to specialist resources is a weakness.

56. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and the school ensures that measures for promoting good attendance are always high profile. Attendance statistics are mentioned in all assemblies and pupils are encouraged to arrive on time for school and for lessons. The school has various policies in this regard and ensures that excellent attendance is rewarded by excursions at the end of the year. An area for further development is the use of twenty-minute-long registration periods when pupils are not required to attend assembly. The majority of registration sessions visited were conducted well and pupils took part in a variety of activities designed to encourage reflection on behaviour, attendance and academic progress. However, in a minority, the session achieved little more than the marking of the register.
57. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good and the relevant policies are applied rigorously, sensitively and effectively. Pupils speak positively of the anti-bullying policy and say that bullying is rare in the school. Moreover, the school is a haven of racial harmony, where pupils treat those from other racial groups and of other faiths with the utmost respect. The reward system, including credit cards, is valued highly by pupils, is used very positively in assemblies and leads to letters of congratulation and also to attendance at subsidised activities.
58. Form tutors play a vital role in identifying those pupils who are not reaching their academic targets. Pupils complete progress files on a regular basis, and subject teachers liaise with form tutors each term to discuss academic progress. Grades are shared with heads of year and heads of school, who then discuss targets with their pupils and also during parent-tutor clinics.
59. There is a comprehensive, thoughtful and well-written PHSE programme, which operates for one lesson per week from Year 7 to Year 13. The programme includes modules on health education, economic and industrial awareness, careers education, environmental education and citizenship. Pupils speak highly of the sessions. The scheme considers a variety of moral and social issues and encourages pupils to reflect on rights and responsibilities, attitudes towards those less fortunate, their own personal development and also their academic progress. In addition, pupils benefit from presentations from outside visitors, the police, for example, and they are given opportunities to receive advice on the dangers of drug abuse. There are plans for further modifications, which include the introduction of PHSE qualifications in the sixth form. During the inspection, almost 60 per cent of the lessons seen were good or better and there were good opportunities for pupils to discuss and share ideas. In those that were less than satisfactory, behaviour management was weak and resources inadequate. An area for future development is further support for tutors in the delivery of the programme.
60. A strong feature of pupil support and guidance is the learning resources centre (LRC), which opens before school and remains available to pupils to use to work on their homework at the end of the day. This area is very popular with pupils and is managed very effectively. There are book boxes, which can be used by pupils for private reading during tutor time. The member of staff in charge has trained monitors who undertake duties in the learning resource centre. She also assists pupils in their search for books and magazines to help them with their assignments. Pupils can play educational games in the area and can also join the video club and hire educational videos for use at home.
61. There are strong procedures for child protection and a deputy headteacher is the nominated member of staff. In addition, the welfare assistants work effectively and there are five members of staff trained in first aid. However, other procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are unsatisfactory. The school is in breach of health and safety regulations. There were some aspects of this that placed pupils at risk and these have been reported to the school, which should address them without delay. For example, the annual safety check of electrical appliances is twelve months overdue. In addition, there is exposed wiring in some classrooms and in another area water was leaking on to a surface where there were a number of electrical plugs.
62. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are good. Since the last inspection a well-written assessment policy has been developed, agreed and implemented. It details clearly the procedures to be used for assessing pupils and sets out the objectives of assessment in terms of raising standards of achievement. There are in place processes for monitoring pupils' academic progress.

63. In most subjects there are good examples of marking and classroom assessment. In English and history, for example, marking is very thorough and helpful. Teachers write detailed comments that include targets and pointers about how to improve. In science, work is marked diligently and in such a way that it supports learning and progress. The assessment of pupils in physical education enhances pupils' progress. However, in mathematics and design technology, marking is variable and teachers within the department do not consistently explain errors or celebrate achievement.
64. In every subject pupils are given targets which are based on a range of information, including attainment at the end of the key stages, internal assessment and the results from standardised commercially available tests. The targets are given in terms of National Curriculum levels in Key Stage 3 and GCSE grades in Key Stage 4. Allied to the target grade, each pupil is also given a progress grade. In some subjects there is careful moderation of this process; for example, in English, there are exemplars of moderated work.
65. The progress and target grades are reviewed termly in each subject and they are recorded in the front of pupil's exercise books in that subject. Each term, members of the senior management team review progress and target grades with heads of department whom they line manage to monitor overall progress in the subject. A significant number of pupils join the school during the year, and there is often little documentary evidence of their previous learning or attainment. These pupils are quickly assimilated into the process of target and progress grades by departments, such as mathematics, which have devised a set of tests for the purpose.
66. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is generally good. There is good tracking of reading ages as pupils move up through the school, to monitor the rate of progress. The arrangements for Annual Reviews are very good and involve all the outside organisations that support pupils' learning. The Annual Review reports are also very good and provide a great deal of information on progress. Individual Education Plans are well considered for literacy and behaviour learning difficulties but do not have sufficient targeting of numeracy. Their inconsistent use by staff in mainstream lessons also limits their effectiveness.
67. The procedures for supporting pupils' academic progress are developing. The form tutors monitor the progress and target grades of each of the pupils in the form group in order to be aware of the overall progress of each pupil. The grades are reported to parents, either as part of the main report or as a termly progress report. The school contacts parents to arrange meetings to discuss progress and achievement for those pupils where there has been significant change during the term.
68. In some subjects, such as design technology and ICT, there is good use of self-assessment. Pupils have to complete a self-assessment of their progress as part of the yearly report. In subjects such as physical education and English, there are frequent discussions with pupils about their progress, about what they find difficult and what they find straightforward. The content and approach to teaching and learning is then adapted to suit the needs of the pupils. However, the effective use of assessment in curricular planning is not secure in all departments. Although the mathematics department has devised clear and understandable criteria for achieving each of the National Curriculum levels, these criteria are not being used systematically by teachers to aid planning or to guide pupils towards achieving higher standards. The school uses the Record of Achievement progress files effectively to enable pupils to reflect on their progress. Reports are comprehensive and meet statutory requirements.
69. The school has a great deal of information and data on pupils' progress and attainment. There is extensive use of commercially available processes to analyse progress and standards. The data is used effectively by the school, for example, to analyse the relative performance of different cohorts of pupils. It enables senior managers to discuss progress and achievement in detail with each department. Through the monitoring of the progress and targets grades the members of the senior management team are able to evaluate standards across the school effectively. As a result of analysing the GCSE grades of the more able pupils across all subjects, for example, it was decided to reduce the number of GCSE entries of each pupil and extend the vocational element of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.
70. There has been good progress in developing assessment and monitoring pupils' progress since

the previous inspection. There is focused internal monitoring of standards by senior managers, but within departments the impact on curriculum planning remains variable. Overall, progress in developing assessment to raise standards of achievement within the school has been good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

71. Despite the fact that the school has worked hard in certain areas to improve its partnership with parents, the effectiveness of the various links is unsatisfactory, and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is low.
72. Academic information, in particular that concerning pupils' progress, provided for parents by the school is good, and parents view the school as a "good school". However, the nature and quality of the other information provided and joint working with parents requires improvement. As in the last inspection, there remains no provision to offer reports, letters and other information about the school in any language other than English.
73. In all year groups, parents are kept well-informed about their children's progress. In Key Stages 3 and 4, there are termly clinics in which form tutors spend fifteen minutes with parents. Tutors are kept well-informed with regard to all aspects of each of their pupils' academic progress, potential and general welfare, and so are well-placed to provide precise, high quality information. In the sixth form, half-termly "tracking sheets" are sent home, and there are regular opportunities for parents to come to school to gain further information. Where parents have difficulty in speaking or understanding English, an older pupil is provided to act as interpreter.
74. The annual written reports to parents are very good with some excellent features. Each subject page of the report provides information concerning the work undertaken, individual pupil targets, progress made, skills acquired, pupil and tutor statements and good individual advice. Reports are very clear and easy to read. Information is generally of good quality, although this is not the case in design technology and religious education. Teachers' handwriting is occasionally difficult to read.
75. In addition to tutor evenings, there is an annual evening for each year group, which provides an opportunity for parents to meet individual teachers. These evenings are often poorly supported. However, last autumn, there was a very successful evening for parents of Year 11 pupils, which also offered an introduction to the sixth form. Parental attendance at annual reviews for statemented children is low despite the school's best efforts to involve them. Parents were present at only three out of nine reviews last year, thus losing a good opportunity to know more about and support their children's learning.
76. Each pupil carries a planner/diary, which is renewed termly. This is used to record the homework set and parents and staff can exchange notes, using the planner, on a daily basis, if required. The planner is an effective medium for contact with parents. The school also has an extensive system of standard letters that inform parents about such matters as when pupils are late, poor attendance and poor behaviour. Letters giving praise are also used effectively. Phone calls are routinely made about a wide variety of matters. All these systems serve to keep parents informed and encourage parental involvement. The school informs parents effectively and attempts to involve them in the Year 7 new pupil induction process, the selection of optional subjects at Key Stage 4 and the careers education process. The news provided in the half-termly newsletter is limited, with most space being given to administrative notices, health matters and advertising.
77. Despite all the above measures, the contribution of parents to pupils' learning is in many cases minimal. Very few parents support the daily homework clinics, and few parents support the school's annual sports day. There are three parents on the Parent-Teacher Association, which is currently unable to raise any funds. The school has repeatedly advertised for parent governors, but without success. There are a few links with the local community, such as a Saturday "Lifelong Learning" group, study support on Thursday evenings organised by the Somali Women and visits by older local people to read with children in the learning resource area.
78. Around 10 per cent of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, which is a relatively low response rate, and very few attended the pre-inspection meeting with the inspectors. The

parents who responded are pleased that their children like the school, with the progress they make and that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve at their best level. However, they would like to see a greater range of activities provided outside lessons, and even closer working between the school and parents. Some parents expressed concern over the amount of homework set.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

79. The last report was critical of a number of aspects of the management of the school and in particular the need to produce a new more focused and efficient management structure and to reduce the large budget deficit of about £250,000. The management has since been re-structured. There is now a more cost-effective staffing structure, with greater clarity in the roles and responsibilities of senior managers; a more effective line management system has been created. Overall, the management of the school is working effectively. A clear lead has been provided on bringing about improvements within the school and these have been effectively prioritised. Members of the senior management team each have clear and significant areas of responsibility and work as a team. They have been successful in bringing about improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching and of pupils' learning. There has been a focus on this and on improving standards. During the inspection week senior managers were visible around the school, an important aspect of their role. Many of the specific aims and values of the school are clearly seen in its work, such as the fostering of good relationships, the development of a sense of self-worth and seeking to achieve the highest standards. Whilst much has been done to involve parents as informed and active partners, the school has had limited success in this area.
80. There are strengths in the pastoral team and among the heads of department, particularly in English, and history. The learning resource centre is very well managed. In a number of the departments, such as science and modern foreign languages, the teachers work very effectively together as a team and this enhances the provision for pupils. The school has prioritised developments appropriately, such as the successful focus on improving the quality of teaching. There are, however, areas where improvement is needed. These include the management and organisation of the design and technology and the art departments, which are less than satisfactory, ensuring that there is a manager of sufficient seniority overseeing development of the provision for English as an additional language and clarifying roles and line management responsibilities in this area. The new head of art took up her post a month before the inspection and there are positive signs, which indicate that organisational issues are being tackled. Whilst some other aspects of the school such as careers education are well managed, other key aspects such as numeracy, ICT and literacy do not at present have a powerful advocate with the authority to manage their effective and consistent development across the curriculum. Whilst some very good work was seen in these areas, particularly on literacy, provision is inconsistent. In the case of numeracy, neither are there clear whole-school strategies for its development across the curriculum nor is guidance provided for teachers on how to consolidate and develop the numerical skills of pupils in a coherent way across the school.
81. The school, with significant support from the Funding Agency for Schools, achieved a balanced budget within three years. It now has adequate systems in place to monitor the budget and reports are provided regularly for governors. The conclusion in the most recent report by the auditors states that those areas covered by the audit were found to be satisfactory with no apparent problems. The school produced evidence of action taken on minor points identified in the report. The school appears to be prudent in its use of funds and applies a number of the principles of best value in its work in this respect. For example it thoroughly analyses pupil performance and has radically adapted the Key Stage 4 and sixth form curriculum to make it more relevant and appropriate to the needs of pupils. The principle of consultation is the weakest area; processes appear to be undertaken effectively with staff but those with parents need to be strengthened. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is currently being subsidised, due mainly to the small size of the teaching groups in Year 7. This is inefficient. A new responsible officer has been appointed but neither he nor the finance manager was available for discussions during the inspection. The deputy finance manager was, however, able to provide information on a range of budgetary issues.

82. Due principally to a sharp drop in the intake, particularly in the present Year 7, a new budget deficit has emerged, which it is estimated will be of the order of a £100,000 by the end of this financial year. The school has begun to take action to address this issue and has agreed a five-year recovery plan with the Local Education Authority. Using the projected pupil intake agreed with the local authority, a significant reduction in staffing is required over the period to achieve a balanced budget. Whilst there are plans to achieve this reduction in the short term the longer term is not as clear. The chair of governors was also until recently the chair of finance. It was decided that this was not an ideal situation and a new chair of finance is being sought. In the present situation it is important that this post is filled to ensure that a member of the governing body is maintaining a close involvement with the detail of the strategic management of the financial situation. Improvement of the financial situation is seen to be imperative for the school as lack of resources is adversely affecting standards. Significant funding is also required to improve the quality of the accommodation and to comply with health and safety regulations. The school has in the last few weeks prepared a bid for targeted capital funding to improve the learning environment and make more efficient use of the accommodation. This is being submitted to the DfEE. It is appropriate that the school is now adopting a more strategic view of the situation and actively seeking ways forward. The bid to DfEE, and other approaches to improving the financial situation need to be pursued vigorously.
83. The school has successfully brought about significant improvements since the last inspection and the issues in the School Development Plan are appropriate to supporting continuing improvement in the educational provision for the pupils. A number of areas identified by the inspection team for improvement are contained within the plan. The more recently produced financial recovery plan widens the scope of proposed developments and, appropriately, includes relationships with the community and the school's profile in that community. Whilst it also considers the staffing implications of the reduction in pupil numbers, appropriately it seems to have focused exclusively on teaching staff, and a wider review of need and provision would be appropriate. Both these documents lack clear analyses of the present position and a strategic view of possible ways forward, given the very difficult budgetary situation and the need to improve the resources for learning and the accommodation. The recently prepared proposal for improving the accommodation begins to do this. The three separate documents need to be brought together by senior staff and governors to provide a clear overall coherent statement of the development priorities for the school. There is the will among staff to bring about further improvement but, with limited resources, staff time and expertise need to be used to maximum effect.
84. A number of the governors show a clear and strong commitment to the school and its further development; these include staff governors. A few visit regularly and are aware of the areas that are operating successfully and those in need of further development. The chair of governors, in particular, exhibited a good knowledge of the school and the key areas for development. However, one governor was unaware of the recent bid for improving the accommodation and the governor with responsibility for special educational needs does not visit regularly. The minutes of governing body meetings show that governors consider issues of substance and are undertaking their duties and responsibilities in a number of areas effectively. The governing body has already set targets for the headteacher as part of the new performance management arrangements. Governors are generally fulfilling their statutory responsibilities; the greatest concern in this respect being the lack of compliance with health and safety issues, but there is also curricular non-compliance. Governors need to ensure that, in addition to the reports received, more of them have direct evidence of the work in the school, and that as a group they are fully involved in determining and supporting strategic developments.
85. The school has gathered a significant body of evidence on the attainment and progress of pupils and there are many areas in which this is being used effectively, including the setting of targets for individual pupils and the targeting of resources. Additional analysis of the information could, however, provide further useful insights - as was seen during the week of inspection. Overall, the use of information on the performance of pupils is good. The members of the senior management team have undertaken a programme of lesson observation and show a good knowledge of the areas of strength and those requiring improvement. Whilst some heads of department have observed colleagues, and this has been beneficial, there is at present no systematic programme linked to professional development being undertaken by them. This is being introduced as part of the new performance management arrangements. Whilst the senior managers can advise on

generic aspects of teaching, they do not between them cover the subjects taught and subject-specific issues relating to teaching are missed. It is therefore important that teachers with specialist knowledge in the different subject areas are involved, and also for the middle managers to adopt a broader role in the school. The significant improvement in teaching, however, indicates that the work undertaken to date has had a significant impact.

86. There are sufficient teachers to support the curriculum and the provision of educational support staff is adequate and in some areas good. However, the classroom support for pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, is in some areas insufficient to meet the need and on occasions is affecting standards.
87. The accommodation in a number of areas has inadequacies; particular areas identified being science, physical education and design and technology. The level of decoration is generally poor; this detracts from the quality of the working environment. There is an exception. The learning resource centre (library) is an attractive place and provides a very good learning environment in which pupils are made welcome. It is managed with a high degree of enthusiasm and efficiency and is a very good resource. It contains a good range of appropriate books and resource materials. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and help as librarians. The library adds greatly to the social and cultural development of pupils. Some departments, such as geography, have sought to improve the learning environment through the use of displays, including pupils' work.
88. Whilst significant work has been undertaken to improve health and safety at the school, and it has been re-wired at considerable cost, some electrical hazards remain. The corridors in the science area are very narrow, a potential hazard, if it was necessary to evacuate the building in an emergency. The cleanliness and the level of litter in some areas on occasions, such as after lunchtime, during the inspection, were below acceptable limits.
89. Apart from the learning resource centre, the availability and quality of resources to support learning are inadequate, including those for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. This affects pupils' progress and standards in a number of subject areas.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

90. Below are listed six key issues for action, which reflect the areas identified in 'What could be improved'. These are listed in order of their importance in raising standards in the school. A reference to the main paragraphs in the report where the areas for improvement are discussed is included for each issue.
 - (1) Improve pupils' attainment by:
 - reducing the incidence of unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 3;
 - improving the quality of teaching in mathematics;
 - improving the resources for learning in most of the subjects and for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language;
 - improving the accommodation, particularly in science, physical education and design and technology.

(Paragraph 2, 7, 26, 31, 34, 59, 87, 89, 110, 114, 117, 125, 128, 141, 151, 161, 193, 194)
 - (2) Balance the budget within the time-scale agreed with the Local Education Authority and ensure that funds are available to:

- provide adequate resources in all lessons;
- improve the accommodation.

(Paragraph 59, 82, 83, 87, 89, 114, 125, 128, 141, 151, 161, 185, 193, 194)

(3) Improve the provision for numeracy and for information and communication technology.

(Paragraph 16, 35, 36, 66, 80, 109, 113, 114, 150, 158, 166, 167, 168, 169, 185, 203)

(4) Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality through working more closely with parents and developing the partnership between parents and the school.

(Paragraph 25, 34, 71, 72, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79)

(5) Improve the provision for the development of pupils' spirituality, for extra-curricular activities and for pupils with English as an additional language.

(Paragraph 35, 36, 45, 47, 50, 86, 89, 103, 111, 167, 171, 184, 193, 211, 212)

(6) Ensure compliance with statutory requirements where non-compliance is indicated in the report. Ensure that all health and safety requirements are met.

(Paragraph 39, 40, 54, 61, 80, 88, 142, 185, 193, 209)

In addition to the above, the school should consider other weaknesses identified in the report in the following paragraphs when drawing up its action plan.

(Paragraph 17, 35, 36, 39, 45, 55, 56, 66, 80, 81, 84, 85, 86, 89, 111, 135, 171, 209)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	159
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	86

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	16	41	33	6	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	506	78
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	219	

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11]	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	151	

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	306

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	80
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	73

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.1
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	60	45	105

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	16	23	14
	Girls	25	21	18
	Total	41	44	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	39 (58)	42 (30)	30 (34)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (12)	22 (9)	10 (4)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	17	24	11
	Girls	24	24	18
	Total	41	48	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	39 (33)	46 (42)	28 (40)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	10 (8)	26 (9)	7 (14)
	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	61	72	133

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	13	49	54
	Girls	21	58	65
	Total	34	107	119
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	26 (27)	80 (69)	89 (78)
	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	26.3 (24.4)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

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
	1999	12	16	28

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	10.0	10.6	10.3 (5.7)	0		0 (0.1)
National	17.7	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	12
Black – African heritage	92
Black – other	13
Indian	161
Pakistani	27
Bangladeshi	10
Chinese	1
White	201
Any other minority ethnic group	67

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	12	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	9	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	17	6
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 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	38.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	18.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	369

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.1
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Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	2536388
Total expenditure	2618690
Expenditure per pupil	4197
Balance brought forward from previous year	91639
Balance carried forward to next year	9337

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22.0
Key Stage 4	20.3

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	584
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	41	0	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	29	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	37	2	5	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	36	13	2	2
The teaching is good.	55	36	7	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	27	11	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	30	7	7	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	21	0	5	2
The school works closely with parents.	56	29	11	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	55	30	11	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	29	4	4	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	21	19	5	9

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

ENGLISH

91. Standards in English on entry are well below national expectations, and well below those for the Local Education Authority area. By the end of Key Stage 3 those who have been permanently in the school for three years have made good progress, but attainment of all pupils in the end of key stage national tests was well below the national average in 2000. However, standards are as high as in those similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieve the higher Level 6 is close to the national average.
92. Results in GCSE are below the national average in both language and literature, but a great deal better than their prior attainment would predict. Girls perform better than boys, but by a margin no greater than that found nationally. Too few take A level for national comparisons to be made. In most years there are students obtaining the highest grades, but, overall, standards are below average.
93. Standards observed in Key Stage 3 are borne out by these test results, though with many pupils performing better than their attainment on entry would indicate. Those pupils who have been in school throughout the key stage can write legibly with few errors in spelling and punctuation. The presentation and quantity of writing is good. The best work includes vivid stories and poetry, with some well-structured essays. However, many pupils have uncertain command of idiom, and in their work on Shakespeare can do little more than retell the story.
94. There is good progress in Key Stage 4, where the best pupils can write fluently and accurately. In essays on literature they show that they have researched widely and understood the literary devices used by the authors. Such pupils can adapt their writing to different audiences, and use a range of genres. Some poetry is good enough to be published. All pupils make effective use of re-drafting to improve and polish their work. Nearly all can write lively stories. They make good use of information and communication technology. However, many pupils for whom English is an additional language have great difficulty understanding the literature and, though often very perceptive, cannot write effectively about it. Despite this, they make good progress, often the result of more fluent speakers helping those who are still struggling. This was most apparent in a lesson on *Macbeth* in which pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language were acting out most movingly the appearance of Banquo's ghost and Macbeth's terror. In another lesson, pupils with very weak language skills were still able to comment shrewdly on the fonts, pictures and lay-out used in an advertisement for weed-killer.
95. Standards in the sixth form vary widely; overall, they are below those seen nationally. Most pupils can write clear explanatory and persuasive prose, as is shown by their work in Media Studies. They have a good knowledge of stylistic devices used in literature but often find it hard to probe behind those devices to evaluate the quality of the work. They interpret the writing of someone like Jane Austen too literally and consequently misunderstand the irony. Pupils need more practice in structuring essays.
96. Standards of speaking and listening in the school are lower than the standards seen nationally. Pupils make presentations, and although none was observed it is clear that many pupils can give inspiring accounts of their experiences. However, it is rare in English to observe pupils arguing, explaining, defending opinions or commenting on what someone else has said. As a result pupils are not helped to listen sensitively and respond appropriately.
97. Standards of reading vary with pupils' familiarity with English, but generally are a little short of national expectations. When opportunities arise, pupils can read with fluency and expression and understand what they have read. However, as with speaking, these opportunities were less frequent than they might have been.
98. Overall, the quality of teaching in English is good. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 varied from unsatisfactory to excellent. In Key Stage 4 and the sixth form nearly all lessons were good or very good with none less than satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge of literature,

particularly at A level, and a thorough understanding of the technical language and devices used in the media. They teach the basic literacy skills effectively, with a focus on diligent marking. Errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar are carefully corrected. They keep records that allow them to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and set them high but achievable targets. They plan lessons carefully, and time them well. In the best lessons there is much pupil activity and discussion, and encouragement for stronger pupils to help the weaker. Some teachers, however, talk too much, and deprive pupils of opportunities to question, comment and discuss. In their lessons, pupils seldom speak or learn from one another. There is little additional support for pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language, and in some classes with a wide range of ability teachers' fail to give enough attention to the language difficulties of the weaker pupils. All teachers give generously of their time in helping pupils after school prepare for tests and examinations, and in running competitions. Where teaching is good or better the pupils achieve well. They learn through discussion and mutual help. They are very clear about their weaknesses and what they need to do to improve. In some lessons, however, although pupils do their best to follow and take notes conscientiously there is little thinking or sharing of ideas.

99. There has been marked improvement since the last inspection, due to the dedicated commitment and team spirit of the teachers, and excellent leadership. Schemes of work have been rewritten, so that all staff teach within a clear and consistent framework. There is effective monitoring and evaluation of progress, making good use of value-added data. The quality of teaching has improved to the extent that half the lessons observed were very good or excellent. The pass rate in GCSE has remained constant, but the levels of achievement have risen significantly, when those pass rates are measured against prior attainment.
100. Teachers across the curriculum are aware of the importance of literacy in pupils learning effectively. While there is good practice in some subjects in others it is poor. Moreover, while all teachers give some attention to writing, fewer do so in improving the skills of speaking and reading. That said, teachers of history and geography display important words in the classroom, encourage pupils to discuss their ideas, set homework which requires pupils to prepare speeches, and make good use of the research materials provided by the library. In science, too, pupils collaborate effectively and teachers ensure that they understand the technical terms used. Good speaking skills were cultivated in drama lessons. On the other hand, in mathematics and design technology, teachers do not teach the skills that would enhance more effective writing or speaking. In other subjects there is some support, but it is inconsistent and depends more on the attitude of the teacher than on the effectiveness of the school's strategy. Pupils are withdrawn from lessons to help them with their reading but the time is not always well used. However, all pupils benefit from reading for a minimum of twenty minutes a week guided by form tutors. Excellent support is provided by the manager of the learning resource centre (LRC), who checks what every pupil in the school is reading, provides boxes of books to all departments which ask for them, and makes the LRC a place that pupils want to use.

MEDIA STUDIES

101. Members of staff in the English department are also responsible for media studies.
102. Media Studies is taught in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Take-up is high and the results are among the best in the school. In the 2000 GCSE examinations 82 per cent of candidates achieved the higher grades in the range A*-C, and of the sixteen candidates for A level thirteen achieved grades C and D. From classroom observation and scrutiny of work in progress it is apparent that these high standards are being maintained: pupils understand the techniques used in television, film and the press. They can analyse the work of professionals, and create work of sufficiently high standard to receive praise from an advertising agency. Information and communication technology is very well used, as demonstrated by students' technical proficiency and creativity. Teaching is good in both key stages, with clear objectives and high expectations. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, and provide plenty of opportunity for students to discuss and be creative.

DRAMA

103. Drama is taught for one period a week to each form in Key Stage 3. Standards are below national expectation, but no more so than in most other subjects. Pupils can move well, interpreting their movements to music, which induces different moods. They work well in pairs and groups, and in two lessons demonstrated particularly high standards of speaking. Teaching ranged from satisfactory to good, encouraging pupils to respect the disciplines required in the studio. Pupils enjoy the lessons and work enthusiastically. Pupils make satisfactory progress, but this could have been better if the teaching had paid more attention to timing and built on one skill learnt to develop the next. The head of department has improved the condition of the studio, which is now re-painted and carpeted, but there is still much to be done. Lights, curtains and displays would make it a more attractive and effective space to work in. There are no after-school clubs or school productions to enable older pupils to use their dramatic gifts or sharpen their skills.

MATHEMATICS

104. Attainment over the last four years in Key Stage 3, as measured by the average points score, has been well below the national average. Although the attainment of girls over this period is slightly better than that of boys, they are both well below average. The results in 2000 showed an improvement on previous years but were still well below the national average. However, when compared with similar schools the percentage of pupils in the cohort reaching Level 5 or above was in line with expectations and the percentage of pupils reaching Level 6 or above was above expectations.
105. At Key Stage 4, 31 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE grades A*-C in mathematics in 2000, well below national expectations. The percentage of boys achieving grades A*-C is slightly above that of girls. The results are better than those obtained by pupils in similar schools; and, particularly for girls, are comparatively better than the average of the results in all the other subjects taken by the pupils.
106. Attainment has been broadly in line with expectations in the sixth form, but the results at A level in 2000 were well above national expectations. All eight pupils were successful, with 6 of the pupils achieving grade C or above and two pupils gaining the top grade.
107. Overall, standards of work seen in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are well below national expectations and those in the sixth form are in line with national expectations. In lessons and in the work seen pupils are achieving at a satisfactory level. No significant differences in achievement between boys and girls were seen. All pupils are taught in sets that are arranged on the basis of prior attainment. Pupils in the highest attaining sets are working in line with national expectations. In these sets, Year 9 pupils understand and can apply the theorem of Pythagoras and they can work out the volumes of solids, such as prisms. In Year 7, they can simplify algebraic expressions and they have knowledge of compass directions and different types of triangles. The higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 can use the cosine rule and simplify complicated algebraic expressions, and in Year 10 they can solve simultaneous linear equations in two variables.
108. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in mathematics is well below the national average. In each year group there is also a significant number of pupils who join the school after the normal admission date; for example, about two-fifths of the pupils in Year 11 are in this category. The average attainment of these later arrivals, as measured by their average score at the end of Key Stage 3 in the core subjects and in GCSE, is significantly below the attainment of the pupils who have been in the school throughout their secondary schooling. This affects the average levels of attainment, particularly of those pupils who are in the groups of below-average attainment. There were pupils absent in each of the mathematics lessons seen during the inspection, and this has an effect on standards and those pupils' progress. In the lessons seen pupils in the lower-attaining groups in Year 9 were able to recognise correctly simple fractions on a worksheet. In Year 7, they are insecure when discussing "fair" in the context of probability. In Year 10 they were not able to recognise that the height of a mountain measured in feet would be a larger number than when measured in metres.
109. Apart from the higher attaining pupils, the numerical skills of pupils are unsatisfactory and this has a significant impact on progress and achievement in mathematics and some other subjects.

Pupils depend on calculators for the simplest of numerical tasks, particularly in Key Stage 4. Other skills are also weak. For example, some pupils in a middle ability set in Year 10 had difficulty using a protractor correctly.

110. As in the last report, teaching in the mathematics department remains an issue. The quality of teaching in just under a quarter of the lessons was less than satisfactory. Overall, the subject knowledge and understanding of teachers in the department is good and homework is used effectively to reinforce learning in school. All teachers organise lessons in the same way. Each lesson starts with a reinforcement of numerical skills and ends with a summary of the main learning objectives. Where teaching is good or very good teachers have clear and challenging learning objectives which are shared with the pupils. Questioning is sharp to reinforce or enhance learning, and the teachers are insistent on accuracy. In these lessons, teachers manage the pupils well and classroom organisation is good. However, where teaching is unsatisfactory the teachers do not sufficiently engage with the pupils, their questioning skills are limited and teachers and pupils do not interact effectively. In these lessons, teachers do not use questioning to assess understanding or the progress made in their learning by individual pupils. Pupils have little opportunity to explore their understanding with the teacher. Within each set there is a wide range of ability; teaching, overall, does not ensure that all pupils in each class make enough progress and that the pace of learning is appropriate for each pupil.
111. The department does not use consistently appropriate strategies to support the learning of pupils for whom English is an additional language; for example, key words are not always emphasised by the teachers in class. The majority of the Individual Educational Plans of pupils with special educational needs do not make specific reference to mathematical needs, and do not, therefore, provide mathematics teachers with sufficient guidance when planning for individual pupils. The resources for supporting pupils with particular needs are very limited and support and guidance for mathematics teachers from specialist staff is also limited. This has a significant impact on the progress of some pupils, since teachers cannot plan effectively to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate attention.
112. When teaching is satisfactory or better pupils show good attitudes and their achievements in class are satisfactory. In these classes there are effective working relationships which enhance learning. Pupils are on-task and work productively. They listen carefully to the teachers and, if given the opportunity and managed appropriately, respond to questions with enthusiasm. Pupils collaborate well; for example, in one lesson a pupil was helping another for whom the language in the textbook was too difficult. In some classes the majority of pupils was clearly unhappy about the disruptive behaviour of the minority. Pupils who attend regularly and who have positive attitudes to mathematics make satisfactory progress through the key stages. However, some teachers need to raise their expectations of particular pupils and cohorts of pupils.
113. In other subjects there is limited evidence of pupils using numerical skills effectively. In design technology, the numerical work is mainly limited to bar graphs and occasional graphs from spreadsheets. In science, numerical work is limited; graphs are used, and in Key Stage 4 pupils are able to manipulate simple formulae and substitute values into such formulae. In geography, pupils are able to interpret simple features from a climate graph. Each mathematics lesson begins with a short consolidation of numerical skills. However, this activity is not planned coherently by the department to ensure continuity and progression. There has been some discussion between departments about the development of mathematical skills and the mathematics department is aware of the needs of other subjects. However, there are no clear whole-school strategies for developing numeracy across the curriculum, nor is there guidance for teachers on how to consolidate and develop the numerical skills of pupils in a coherent way across the school.
114. The scheme of work in mathematics, which all teachers follow, ensures appropriate coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is written to provide for the needs of lower, middle and higher ability sets and contains guidance on key words relating to particular topics. Investigative skills are developed through Key Stage 3 and pupils complete their investigative coursework in Year 10. Every mathematics group in Key Stage 3 has six lessons in the information and communication technology (ICT) suite to develop mathematics-related ICT skills. However, ICT resources to support learning in mathematics are very limited. The school does not have enough graphic calculators to enable whole-class teaching using this equipment.

115. Marking across the department is variable. In the best examples, books are marked consistently and there are helpful comments which enable pupils to see how they can improve. Target and progress grades are written in the front of each pupil's exercise book and these grades are used to monitor progress. At the present time members of the department do not discuss systematically with pupils what the grades mean in terms of mathematical criteria, what the criteria for the next level are and how they might be achieved. Teachers are involved in coursework moderation at Key Stage 4 but there are currently no moderated work samples for Key Stage 3. Consequently, it is unclear how consistency is assured or how pupils know to what they should aspire.
116. The mathematics department is in a period of change having had a number of staff changes recently. The head of department himself has only been in the school for two years and he has managed and led the department effectively through this period of change. A useful departmental handbook has recently been produced and there is a clear and appropriate departmental development plan. The head of department is monitoring pupils' learning by checking regularly that homework is set and completed and by looking at pupils' exercise books, but he is not as yet monitoring the quality of teaching. There are regular departmental meetings that include the discussion of teaching.
117. Since the last inspection satisfactory progress has been made, although recent changes have adversely affected the rate of this progress. The quality of teaching remains a key issue for the department. Attainment remains well below national expectations; however, at Key Stage 3, the 2000 results showed a slight increase on the previous year, the GCSE results were above those for similar schools and the 2000 A level results were very good. The department has begun work on developing mental skills but this now needs a strategic whole-school approach. Learning resources for pupils with particular needs remain limited. The head of department monitors the quality of learning and senior management monitors the quality of teaching. The more able pupils continue to make appropriate progress and the department is well led and managed.

SCIENCE

118. Pupils' attainment in science is well below the national average both at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Most pupils arrive at the beginning of Year 7 with well below average knowledge and understanding in science and many others arrive later during the five years of compulsory secondary education. Information produced by the school shows that the attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and in the GCSE of these later arrivals is below that of pupils who have been at the school for the full five years. Below average levels of attendance also limit some pupils' attainment at the ages of 14 and 16 years.
119. Attainment in the national tests for 14 year-old pupils is well below average, with girls outperforming boys in 2000. Results have declined over recent years. Comparing the end of key stage test results with those in similar schools, attainment is again well below average, although the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or higher in the tests is only below average, while the proportion reaching the higher Level 6 is average. This pattern arises because pupils who are at the school for the full three years, to the age of 14, do significantly better, overall, in the national tests than those who arrive later.
120. The GCSE science examination results in 2000 were also well below average and have declined since the last inspection. Only one pupil in every three gained the higher A*-C grades compared with one pupil in two nationally. Boys' results were below those of girls. The results are better than those obtained by pupils in similar schools; and are comparatively better than the average of the results in all the other subjects taken by the pupils. The grades achieved by the later arrivals, about two-fifths of the last Year 11, were significantly lower than for those who were at the school for the full five years.
121. The school caters for pupils whose ethnic origins are diverse, including some who are recent arrivals in this country with limited command of English; however, no significant differences in achievement were noted and the department pays particular attention to the development of literacy.

122. In 1996, at the time of the previous inspection, A level results were above average. Since then attainment at A level has fallen sharply but showed a significant rise in 2000. However, the results are below the national average.
123. Attainment in lessons and in the work seen is below average. The most able 14 year-old pupils have above-average knowledge of, for example, photosynthesis where they can apply their knowledge of chemistry to their understanding of the process using chemical symbols correctly. The majority at this age has below-average knowledge across a broad range of topics in science – for example, the lower set in Year 9 was unsure of the role of air in rusting. In a small number of lessons attainment is held back because the tasks set are too difficult for the pupils. At the end of Year 11, pupils show below-average attainment, overall. Pupils in the top set, studying dual award science, are, however, above average. They are well motivated, keen to learn and speak lucidly and confidently about their work, investigating the reaction between hydrochloric acid and different concentrations of sodium thiosulphate, most distinguishing correctly between reaction times and reaction rates. They know how to carry out a fair test, measure accurately and record their results clearly. However, many pupils have difficulty calculating the concentration of a chemical solution. Weaknesses in numerical skills were also found in other lessons because pupils do not get sufficient practice to learn them thoroughly. Lower ability pupils lack a clear understanding of how to make a test fair and have difficulty analysing their findings.
124. Attainment in the work seen and in lessons in the sixth form is average, overall. Students studying physics gain a good insight into problem solving using the equations of motion, but their knowledge of the definitions of, for example, electromotive force and potential difference are not precise. In chemistry, most students understand standard chemical tests well. Attainment in biology is also satisfactory, with many students having a good general knowledge about plant growth related to plant structure.
125. Teaching and pupils' learning in science is good and has improved since the last inspection. Overall, pupils' learning followed a similar pattern, resulting in good achievement. Teaching and learning are good in lessons covering all age groups and often very good in the sixth form. Teachers apply their secure subject knowledge effectively in well-managed classes to ensure that pupils' learning is good. They plan lessons well and use effective methods that encourage interest and learning. The relationships between teachers and pupils are a particular strength, enabling teachers to set high expectations that create good attitudes to learning. Pupils in Year 10, studying electrolysis for GCSE, made good progress because the teacher built on the good relationship with the class, dividing the learning into a sequence of well-organised tasks. Most pupils work well, with good concentration, and this supports their learning. A minority of pupils is not won over. Unauthorised absence is above average. An all-girl group, studying single award science in Year 11, is making unsatisfactory progress with their learning because many pupils are often absent. A lack of good modern apparatus restricts learning significantly in some lessons; there are, for example, no suitable ray boxes to demonstrate the laws of reflection of light efficiently and effectively.
126. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well because the science department has prepared and uses some very effective strategies to develop these pupils understanding and use of scientific terms. This work also supports effectively the language development of other pupils in the groups. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that they work and learn well in class.
127. Good learning in the sixth form classes also leads to good achievement. Teachers usually adopt very effective strategies to encourage learning. Year 12 students in an AS level chemistry class made very good progress developing independent research and presentation skills under the guidance of a teacher who posed questions that gave students a deeper insight into chemical tests.
128. The teachers have a good range of expertise and experience. They work as a collaborative team enhancing pupils' learning in science. Monitoring and evaluation of the work in the department is carried out and leads to effective action to bring about improvement. This is a strength of the department. The leadership of the department is good, providing teachers with strategies to raise attainment, for example, by organising some single-gender classes in Year 10. Initial analysis

indicates that this is successful in narrowing the differences between boys' and girls' learning. There is some useful analysis of examination statistics, but the department does not make full use of all the data that is available in the school to guide its planning. The department lacks sufficient textbooks to make homework tasks as effective as they should be in pupils' learning. It also lacks sufficient apparatus, which limits the development of pupils' experimental skills. The accommodation is unsuitable for its purpose in many classes and needs modernising. The laboratories are too small for the larger classes, restricting the opportunities for learning safely through experimental work. There is insufficient water pressure in the taps, presenting a health and safety hazard in the event of an acid spill. Few blinds work and the laboratories cannot be darkened sufficiently for experiments using light, thus restricting pupils' learning. Three dedicated technicians, one full-time and two part-time, work from wholly inadequate and cramped preparation rooms, linked to the laboratories by narrow twisting passages that make the transport of equipment difficult. The arrangements and space for storing equipment are poor. Good progress has been made on improving the quality of teaching since the previous inspection but this is not at present reflected in pupils' attainment, and overall progress is satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

129. Results in GCSE art examinations in the last two years have been significantly below national expectations. From 1996 to 1998 the rising trend at GCSE matched national averages. However, the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C in 1999 and 2000 fell to 19 and 28 per cent respectively, compared with national averages of 60 and 63 per cent. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-G grades has also been below national averages for the same period. In 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining A*-G grades was 74 per cent, 20 per cent below national averages. Girls are performing well below the average for girls in 2000. Boys' entries were low in the same year. Pupils' performance in GCSE art in 2000 is also low compared with their performance in other subjects. Overall, for the small number of pupils entered in the past three years, results have been below average and there has been a decline in standards during this period.
130. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below average in lessons observed and the work seen. Teacher assessment tests in 2000 show pupils attaining 20 per cent below the national average. Most pupils make appropriate use of a range of two-dimensional materials; however, pupils have insufficient opportunity to study three-dimensional materials and their understanding of form and the tactile qualities of clay, for example, are underdeveloped. The basic skills in art, such as line, tone, texture, colour, pattern and composition are not taught systematically and, as a result, attainment for the majority of pupils in drawing and painting is below average. Pupils use sketch-books successfully to record ideas and collect visual stimulus to help them develop their work, although drawing from direct observation is limited. Pupils in Year 8 can describe what they think or feel about their work and comment on how an artist such as Dali used 'dream' ideas to make an imaginary picture. However, they are less confident in extending the artist's ideas in their own work. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 7 show average attainment in planning and writing a story for illustration with the help of key words. Pupils use the language associated with art with increasing confidence, though knowledge and understanding of artists and the techniques they use are insufficiently linked with investigation and making across the key stage.
131. In lessons and work observed, attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below expectations, although it was well below in the 2000 GCSE results. Pupils study independent themes and experiment with an appropriate range of materials to develop their own ideas and feelings. For example, a few higher-attaining pupils in Year 10 working on landscapes and still-life are beginning to look closely at shapes and forms and are able to sustain their ideas to show average attainment in applying, mixing and controlling coloured pastels and paint. In Year 11, higher-attaining pupils show some inventiveness and independence in the way they develop ideas and a few have some knowledge of artists. However, the majority of average and lower-attaining pupils have difficulty in developing ideas because they have low-level skills in drawing and composition and research is not consistently based on either direct observation or from making connections with their own cultural contexts or artists' techniques.
132. In the sixth form, standards of work seen are below average. Entries for A level are low and most attain in the lower grades. The current Year 12 have insufficient taught time to complete the AS level syllabus and the quality of drawing, painting and composition is poor. Students' knowledge

of critical and contextual studies is underdeveloped, overall.

133. Pupils' achievement, overall, is unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 3, however, pupils' achieve satisfactorily. They enter Year 7 with a wide range of attainment, although the development of basic skills for the majority of pupils is well below average. Pupils make most gains in investigating and in making and learning to use a variety of materials and processes to develop ideas. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs receive good support and show increasing awareness of organising and presenting information in sketch-books and following instructions. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, achievement is unsatisfactory. Much artwork observed in folders is unfinished and the exploration and evaluation of ideas lacks progression. In lessons observed, higher-attaining girls show recent progress in planning and presenting ideas, but this is not sufficiently sustained across all levels of attainment and into the sixth form.
134. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and ranges from satisfactory to good across Key Stages 3 and 4. No teaching was observed in the sixth form. In half the lessons observed, teaching was good. The teacher's very good relationships with pupils, clear explanation and demonstration of tasks, helps pupils organise their own materials and settle down to work quickly. The majority of lessons are well planned and include purposeful and enjoyable tasks for a wide range of attainment levels. Pupils are given the opportunity to tell stories and teacher questioning helps them elaborate ideas. For example, in a Year 7 lesson based on myths and legends, pupils spoke with increasing confidence in recounting a personal event in a supportive environment in which the pupils felt secure about volunteering thoughts and opinions. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, pupils have insufficient opportunity to evaluate their own work with the rest of the group to check what they have learned. Good quality multicultural picture resources, to extend the ideas of the more able, are limited. There is an imbalance between structured teaching of drawing and painting from direct observation and pupils' freedom to express their ideas imaginatively. This limits the overall development of basic skills for older pupils. Homework is focused appropriately at Key Stage 3 but inconsistently linked to projects at Key Stage 4.
135. The department has not responded to tackle the decline in the GCSE examination results that began in 1998. Schemes of work have not been reviewed since 1995. A new head of department has been in post since January 2001 and there are now positive signs of organisational issues being tackled in the departmental development plan. Non-contact time is limited for the monitoring and development of the subject. The statutory requirement to develop three-dimensional studies for all pupils is not being met at Key Stage 3. The lack of a regular technician to support learning in the larger classes is having an adverse affect, overall, on the quality of provision offered in the fifty-minute art lessons and, as a result, clay, textiles and printing skills are insufficiently developed.
136. Whilst there has been improvement in a few areas, notably in the use of key words and art vocabulary to develop recording skills at Key Stage 3, overall improvement has been poor since the last inspection. Attainment in all key stages has declined and the restriction of option grouping has further reduced the numbers taking art. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use the religious and cultural diversity of the school community as a source of inspiration and to visit galleries and museums to see original works of art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

137. In recent years the progress towards creating an integrated and effective design and technology department and, therefore, fully overcoming the weaknesses found in the 1996 inspection has been too slow. However, the school has strengths and goodwill in the subject area on which to build.
138. Since the last inspection, teachers' assessments of the Year 9 pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of design and technology have varied widely, but have always been well below the

national standards achieved. The inspection confirms this view. Consideration of the Key Stage 3 pupils' work, as seen in their books and lessons, shows that attainment never reaches national expectations in any of the groups. For example, although pupils develop some of the basic concepts of working with foodstuffs, fabrics, soft wood and medium-density fibreboard, their skills do not develop sufficiently, and most cannot compare the different materials or the different tools and techniques used. Few can give examples of how to choose between materials or techniques or of how their work relates to the fundamental concepts of the subject.

139. At the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils enter for GCSE. Here again, the results vary widely from year to year, but the proportion achieving grades A*-C is always well below the national figures. For instance, in 2000, overall, only a third of the candidates achieved grades A*-C compared with a half nationally. In food technology, whilst it is difficult to detect any patterns in the results and numbers are small, candidates appear to do better than in the other design and technology subjects and there is some improvement in their success rate. Certainly in their lessons and in their books and folders, the pupils studying food technology in Years 10 and 11 show more knowledge of the design cycle approach to solving problems than those working in wood and hard materials, and the quality of their products is generally better. However, pupils lack an understanding of the basic nature of a technological approach and the reasons for using it to solve problems.
140. Pupils' attitudes to design and technology lessons are not always positive, and behaviour can occasionally become unsatisfactory; for instance, when the faster workers have finished their tasks and when those with language or learning difficulties do not understand what to do. The teachers generally manage this effectively, but teachers sometimes have difficulty keeping lessons moving as a result, particularly with large classes working on a range of tasks at the same time. However, the quality of the learning in the lessons observed was usually satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and usually good or very good at Key Stage 4. In the better lessons, teachers maintain a good pace of work, usually with a range of things to do during the time; they also have more success with helping the pupils overcome language and learning barriers and with encouraging problem-solving approaches.
141. Monitoring and evaluation to bring about improvement are not being undertaken effectively and the overall leadership and management in design and technology is poor. In recent years, the department's managers have not made much progress towards encouraging and creating a unified approach to design and technology and staff continue to operate in their discrete areas. Thus, there are as yet no design and technology displays in the department's public areas, no shared posters and worksheets, no shared approach to health, safety and security, and no success in ensuring meaningful use of specialist language and concepts across the department. On the other hand, there is some collaboration across the department. There seems to be a valid and effective system for assessing the pupils and recording and working with the marks, and the staff are moving closer to a joint curriculum. The school coped well with an unexpected staff absence in inspection week and can see how to build on that experience. It also copes fairly well with unattractive accommodation, including some unusual room shapes, a shortage of tools, such as computers, sewing machines, and graphics and electronics equipment, and of raw materials such as a range of woods and fabrics. The department is well-supported by technical staff.
142. There has been some progress since the previous inspection, in 1996, in that the school has tried to tackle some of the major issues raised at that time. However, the requirements of the National Curriculum have since changed and the department has not yet agreed how to manage this; it still, therefore, does not meet National Curriculum requirements - the main areas of weakness being in control technology, information and communications technology, and the fundamentals of technology. Also, although the main health and safety concerns raised in 1996 have been dealt with, others have appeared. The department and the school have been notified of the deficiencies. The end of Key Stage 3 and GCSE results remain below national averages. A renewed and concerted effort to recognise, share and extend good practice in the teaching of design and technology would assist in improving attainment and the other issues identified.

GEOGRAPHY

143. At the end of the academic year 1999-2000, both members of the geography department left the

school. The two staff who replaced them took up their new posts in September 2000 and inherited a department in which standards were low in all respects. Although a great deal has been achieved in just over a term, there has been insufficient time for pupils' attainment to be raised significantly or to tackle all the other matters requiring attention.

144. On arrival at the school, in Year 7, pupils' overall level of attainment is well below the national average. Most pupils are now making good progress in lessons and those with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. However, due to the low level many pupils were operating at achievement is unsatisfactory, and, by the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is still well below the national average.
145. Typically, about 40 per cent of each year group choose to study geography to GCSE. The standards achieved in GCSE have declined in recent years and GCSE results are well below the national average and the average for the school. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in lessons but, as in Key Stage 3, due to the very low base in terms of their previous knowledge and understanding of geography achievement is unsatisfactory and pupils' attainment is well below national standards towards the end of the key stage.
146. Overall, progress in both key stages has recently improved significantly. Lessons build on prior learning, and pupils' skills of enquiry, interpretation and analysis are satisfactory. Many pupils have a low base of reading and writing skills. However, this is catered for in the teaching style and techniques adopted within geography lessons.
147. Teaching is good, overall, with the most effective teaching in Key Stage 3. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and, on occasions, it is very good or excellent. This represents a great improvement on the last inspection. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative in their work are satisfactory and better than in the last inspection.
148. In the most effective lessons, pupils arrive on time and enter the classroom quickly and in good order. Lesson aims are clearly stated, and a short recap session follows. The lesson then proceeds through a number of clearly explained and varied activities, which are inter-linked and provide progression. Work is appropriately challenging and pupils are given individual support when needed. In one lesson, groups of pupils had to pretend to be ancient Britons. They adopted roles, for example farmer or warrior, and had to choose an ideal site for a new village from a map provided. This led to very good debate and an enthusiastic response from pupils. They rapidly gained an appreciation of conflicts that can arise when selecting a site. Whilst the debate continued, the teacher built in theoretical concepts such as the use of grid references. In such effective lessons, relationships are consistently good, and the teachers use humour well. Pupils learn and make good progress throughout the lesson. The lesson finishes with a clear summary of work undertaken, and homework is set, which builds on work already carried out.
149. In lessons that are satisfactory rather than good or better, the start is slower, often with a few pupils arriving late. The recap is very short, and the introduction to the lesson takes too long. This leads to pupils becoming a little restless and inattentive. The lesson progresses well, but there is not the clarity of purpose of better lessons, and pupils are less enthusiastic in their approach. A minority of pupils is talkative. However, these pupils and any disruptive pupils are dealt with effectively. Learning and progress are satisfactory; however, the work tends to be wholly theoretical and tasks are insufficiently varied.
150. The leadership and management of the department is very good and provides a clear sense of purpose and direction. Although the head of department has only been in post since September 2000, and the other member of the department also joined the school at that time, a great deal has been achieved and the improvement in the organisation and standards within the department has been exceptional. The head of department has evaluated the situation she inherited well, and is taking effective action. Despite this, the scheme of work is still incomplete, and there is a need to develop certain areas of the department's functioning. These include the use of ICT, which is currently unsatisfactory, the programme of fieldwork, the use of number, and the development of spirituality. Teaching and learning remain, appropriately, the department's current main priority. The marking of pupils' work is good. Some very good materials have been developed to support the learning of pupils of different abilities, and to develop pupils' skills of writing.

151. The department is located in two classrooms and accommodation is broadly satisfactory. There are inadequate storage facilities. The classrooms are in need of redecoration; however, this is disguised by the high standard of display in both rooms and in the corridor outside, which includes a high proportion of pupils' work. There is a limited range of textbooks for Key Stage 3 pupils, which is barely satisfactory. Textbooks for Key Stage 4 pupils are unsatisfactory in their quantity, condition and range. Atlases also need renewing. Blinds are old and inoperative or absent, and there are no overhead projectors or screens.

HISTORY

152. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below the national average. By the end of Key Stage 3, largely because of the quality of teaching and the high expectations of staff, pupils achieve well: there are examples of classes in Year 9 in which the majority of pupils are operating in line with or above national norms. Pupils use historical words correctly and can define their meaning. In Year 7, they can provide good information as to where historians may find evidence. In Year 8, they go further and can make reasoned judgements concerning the reliability of evidence, in relation to the Gunpowder Plot, for example. In Year 9, pupils use a variety of pictorial and written sources as a foundation for role-plays, when they argue skilfully both in favour and against the actions of eighteenth and nineteenth century protest movements.
153. GCSE examination results are below average. In 2000, for example, 28 per cent of pupils achieved grades A*-C compared with 57 per cent nationally. However, the entry as a percentage of the year was higher than the national average, and in relation to pupils' attainment in other subjects, history performed better than most. Moreover, in work seen in both Years 10 and 11, there are examples of a much higher percentage of pupils now operating at GCSE higher grade; potential and attainment is in line with the national average. Pupils are adept at using subject-specific terminology accurately and in context: in Year 10, for example, they make well-thought-out comments about the consequences of the Anschluss and also the reactions to the Munich Agreement. In Year 11, pupils give convincing explanations of why the Battle of Jutland might be considered a German victory, a British success or even neither of these.
154. Entries for A-level examinations are very low and a comparison of results with national averages is therefore unreliable. In A level lessons and in their work, pupils attainment is in line with that seen nationally. They display a real feeling for early nineteenth century Britain, and are able to make good links between politics, industry, contemporary literature and foreign affairs in their consideration of the state of the nation in 1815.
155. The high quality of teaching is the major strength of the department and is characterised by pace, rigour and challenge. Teaching is always at least good, and in nearly two-thirds of lessons it is very good or excellent, almost 30 per cent being excellent. Teachers have a profound understanding of how their pupils learn, and they provide a wide variety of experiences to meet the individual learning needs of their pupils. Teachers' use of very challenging questions leads to pupils becoming aware that they are acquiring new historical skills; pupils appreciate the value of the study of history. Because teachers display the utmost respect for their pupils and encourage them to think deeply, pupils enjoy the cut and thrust of historical debate and are able to refine their ideas and, in some cases, change them when they become aware of new evidence. Furthermore, teachers motivate their charges by the extensive use of humour and praise; pupils respond well, delighting in their own successes and in the achievements of their peers.
156. Teaching methods encourage pupils to play a large part in all the lessons and pupils learn much from the contributions of their classmates. As teachers have high expectations, use challenging questions and respect the views of all, pupils are not afraid to express their own opinions. In addition, the breathtaking pace of some lessons also instils confidence because the pupils are proud of the quick progress they make. They are very eager to learn and are often desperate to answer questions. Pupils are well aware of the levels and grades at which they are working, and they are grateful for the advice of their teachers on how to reach their targets. Those pupils with learning difficulties, and also those with English as an additional language, benefit from the skill and industry of their teachers and also from the sensitivity of their peers.
157. In all years, pupils' response to the teaching is, overall, very good. They speak highly of their

teachers and are often fascinated by the subject matter and by the way it is presented. Mutual respect, care for all, and the preservation of dignity abound in lessons. Pupils, therefore, behave very well and they have very good relationships with their teachers and their classmates. The calm yet confident approach of teachers also ensures that pupils remain on task and that they follow their studies in a most mature fashion.

158. The history curriculum is broad and balanced, fully meeting statutory requirements. Teachers place great emphasis on the acquisition of historical skills and are concerned to challenge, to motivate and to ensure that all pupils can learn, can think for themselves and make progress. The department places great emphasis on literacy and encourages reading, speaking and the accurate use of historical language. The use of information technology is an area for development but pupils are encouraged to use the Internet, word processing and desktop packages when they are producing assignments.
159. The overall contribution of the department to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. A sense of awe and wonder are evident in many lessons. Year 7 pupils, for example, eagerly anticipated tasting an Ancient Roman meal when the teacher announced that they would do so towards the end of the lesson. Teachers are good role models who insist on courtesy, high standards of behaviour and industry. There are many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and in groups and there are a variety of field trips in Key Stages 3 and 4.
160. Teachers mark books regularly, in depth, and are concerned to write comments in order to advise pupils on how they may make further progress. Ongoing assessment during lessons is also a strength and teachers use pupils' contributions well as a teaching resource. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 speak positively of the advice they receive on revision and examination technique.
161. Accommodation is satisfactory, with rooms adjacent to each other. The department is now looking to improve the appearance of the area by more extensive use of pupils' work for display. The department does not have enough textbooks, but teachers make considerable efforts to augment resources and they produce well-written materials that can be modified to meet the needs of all their pupils.
162. Improvement has been very good since the last inspection, particularly in teaching, pupil achievement and leadership. There is a good focus on monitoring progress to bring about improvement. The department is now an impressive example of effective corporate management, and the head of department leads the area with skill, verve and high levels of industry. Teachers share a vision and a passion for the teaching of history and they care deeply for both the academic and social well-being of the pupils in their charge. The history department has, therefore, significant capacity for future success.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

163. The school's specific lessons in information and communications technology (ICT) provide a sound basis for all learners. GCSE results in the subject are good and in 2000 they were above the national average. A popular Advanced GNVQ course has now started in Year 12. However, pupils who in the past did not follow these examination courses in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form had little opportunity to continue development of their competence in ICT. All Key Stage 4 pupils now have at least the equivalent of two lessons a week of ICT. Year 12 pupils follow a key skills programme in ICT.
164. Last summer, the teachers assessed that about two-fifths of Year 9 pupils reached Level 5 or above in information and communications technology compared with two-thirds nationally. Throughout recent years, although the proportion reaching this level at the end of Year 9 has fluctuated, it is usually below or well below national expectations. Consideration of the Key Stage 3 pupils' work, as seen in lessons and elsewhere, and discussions with them, support this view. Only rarely do they reach national standards in Key Stage 3. While almost all pupils can use a mouse and windows, not much more than half are fluent with menus or with thoughtful saving and

printing. Most have a satisfactory grounding in word processing; but many use capital letters inappropriately, use the space bar instead of the tab key and some press the return key at the end of each line of text. Most pupils can decorate their documents with clip art or WordArt, but very few do so with the effective communication to a specific audience in mind.

165. Those pupils who follow GCSE courses in Key Stage 4 develop their skills, knowledge and understanding well; last year 63 per cent of the 19 pupils on the courses achieved grades A*-C compared with 55 per cent nationally. In recent years, the standards achieved in GCSE have fluctuated without obvious reason; often, however, the results have been better than the national picture. About half of the Year 11 cohort was entered in 1999. The pupils' work in the current GCSE groups show that they gain a good grasp of a broad range of ICT skills in Key Stage 4. They are less secure on the subject's theory (basic vocabulary and technology), knowledge of how ICT helps people in the outside world and understanding how to apply ICT to solve a wide variety of realistic problems. For instance, while most become quite adept users of spreadsheets, almost none can say how they work, and few can format the text in cells, choose the best kind of chart to use to display given data or say how their spreadsheets solve problems. This gap between the level of ICT skills, which are satisfactory or good, and the levels of knowledge and understanding, which are not as well-developed, also applies to the many Year 12 students working on the new Advanced GNVQ course. This is the case whether or not they studied the subject at GCSE; however, the course is new and the gap should close quickly.
166. While the school meets National Curriculum requirements in ICT, the provision of one period a week of ICT, two at Key Stage 4, does not ensure proper coverage of all aspects of the subject. In addition to the weaknesses in language, knowledge and understanding mentioned above, the area of computer-based control is not yet taught thoroughly enough. The school's systems for assessing the pupils' grasp of the subject are now good, and these work well where they are applied. Some classes are too large for the school's computer rooms. Pupils quite often share a computer, and the school cannot guarantee that they all receive their entitlement. The new National Curriculum requires a much higher level of use of ICT in the various subjects than the school is currently ensuring it provides. There is occasional good work with some classes in some subjects; only in English and mathematics and to a lesser extent science, is there an attempt to spread that good practice widely and to assess ICT learning effectively. In general, pupils' attainment is in line with that seen nationally by the end of Key Stage 4.
167. There are presently two ICT teachers, one is a non-specialist on long-term supply; there is also a non-specialist classroom assistant who provides valuable help, especially for teachers and learners in other subjects. The members of staff ensure satisfactory, sometimes good, learning in most lessons in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form and in all lessons in Key Stage 4. They always ensure that learners with special needs develop at a satisfactory, occasionally high, rate but they sometimes spend so long helping pupils whose English is comparatively weak that others in the class do not progress as well as they should. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. Particular strengths of the teaching are the knowledge and understanding of the subject, of GCSE requirements and of the technology's wider use outside the school shown by the teachers and the management of the often large classes at Key Stages 3 and 4. The development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy is less than satisfactory and teachers' rarely expect pupils to do as much good work as they in fact can. While lessons generally are adequately well planned, it is rare for them to have clear specific targets and the stated targets never meet the needs of all the members of the classes concerned.
168. ICT as a specific subject in the curriculum is well managed and administered. The extension, practice and reinforcing of the skills, knowledge and understanding gained by the pupils are not, however, up to expectation. This is mainly because of the following factors. There is a lack of effective co-ordination of the work in the other subjects of the curriculum, which contributes to low levels of ICT usage across the school. The deployment of computer equipment around the school creates difficulties. There are insufficient keyboards in rooms to provide adequately for the number of pupils in a group; some computers and network stations are little used and some subjects are experiencing difficulties in accessing the specialist rooms. The level of access to available facilities on a drop-in basis is low both during and outside of lesson time.
169. There has been significant progress since the last inspection in 1996, particularly in the quantity and quality of the computers, availability of access to the Internet and in attainment in GCSE.

Progress is less obvious in the teaching of computer control, in the teaching and assessment of ICT across the curriculum, and in the familiarisation of all staff with the potential of ICT as an effective tool to support learning in their subjects.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

170. There has been considerable progress made in modern languages since the last inspection in 1996. The department has been fully staffed by a team of three specialist teachers since the arrival of a new and experienced head of department in September 1999. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and led to rising standards, although these have yet to be reflected in GCSE results. At the end of Key Stage 3, in 2000, however, teacher assessment judged pupil attainment in French at Level 4 and above to be, at 62 per cent, almost on a par with national averages. This is considerably above the previous year's performance of only 37 per cent. The evidence of work seen and of lessons observed confirms this improvement, although current standards near the end of the key stage lie below national averages, reflecting the ability profile of the intake.
171. Many pupils in Key Stage 3, especially those in Year 7, those learning Spanish and most of those who have special educational needs (SEN), or English as an additional language (EAL), achieve well. Pupils make a good start to their language learning. They hear the foreign language extensively, either from the teacher or on tape, quickly become used to hearing classroom instructions in French or Spanish and, therefore, develop good listening habits. They imitate sounds with enthusiasm and many acquire good pronunciation and intonation. Pupils in their second year of learning Spanish have made good progress, as demonstrated by a group of higher-attainers rehearsing confidently a role-play dialogue to order a meal in a restaurant. Many pupils in Years 8 and 9 do, however, lack confidence in their oral work, reflecting in some instances their EAL needs. They may respond briefly to specific teacher questions but are much less secure in more open-ended situations, for example, when asked to give some details about themselves. By the end of the key stage, higher-attaining pupils in French are beginning to use the perfect tense appropriately in writing a holiday postcard about a recent holiday. Written work is well supported by the range of tasks, the use of authentic stimuli and, on occasion, by the use of ICT. Reading skills are, however, underdeveloped; teachers do not make sufficient use of the language attractively displayed in classrooms and of key words to aid comprehension, especially of those pupils with considerable EAL needs. The number and extent of SEN and EAL needs, requiring in-class support adversely affect standards in some classes. In the two lessons observed where this was available, it made an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Nonetheless most SEN and EAL pupils achieve well. They are well-supported in their learning by extra materials such as listening grids and writing frames, by the sensitive correction of error and by carefully graded teacher questions, as in a Year 7 lesson introducing new vocabulary for pets through the use of flashcards.
172. GCSE results in modern languages over the past four years have been well below national averages for all maintained schools and, only in 1998, when German was the first language, has modern language performance come close to matching overall school performance in terms of A*-C higher grade passes. In 2000, performance fell well below that of other subjects with only 11 per cent of entrants gaining a higher grade pass and a much larger number of ungraded pupils than usual, a reflection of poor attendance.
173. Current standards of attainment in Key Stage 4 based on lesson observations and pupil work, including course work in Year 11, indicate a gradual improvement from this very low base; but attainment is still well below national standards. Standards are higher in Year 10 than in Year 11, where there are as yet very few examples of fluent, accurate writing giving access to higher grades. Many pupils can, however, use a limited range of set phrases in a defined and familiar situation, such as describing a journey. Some late arrivals in the school make rapid progress and achieve well in foundation-level tasks, such as writing about a shopping trip and presents purchased. A significant minority of Year 11 pupils continues, however, to have poor attendance. This affects standards, as does the limited time allocation of two fifty-minute lessons per week for some pupils. This is to be increased from September.
174. The quality of teaching was good or very good in just over half the lessons observed. The one

unsatisfactory lesson involved the use of information and communication technology, which, although well-managed and motivating, had insufficient language content. Teachers have good subject knowledge, using the foreign language as the normal means of classroom communication. They are highly committed to their pupils, establish good relationships and manage pupils well, not least by trying hard to plan tasks to meet the needs of different abilities and by injecting pace and variety into the work. Time is therefore well used, although on occasion too many activities are attempted for adequate exploitation. In some instances this leads to pupils attempting tasks such as pair-work before they are fully prepared linguistically. Teachers routinely share lesson objectives with pupils. They help pupils understand what they have to do to improve their standards by helpful comments on written work and by explaining how to move to the next National Curriculum level. Homework is set regularly and appropriately. Above all teachers create a positive learning environment for all learners and attempt to make language learning enjoyable. They succeed in engaging the interest of most pupils and deal unobtrusively with individual, disaffected pupils.

175. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to language learning. They settle quickly, concentrate well, even at the end of the day, and persevere at tasks, even when these are difficult. Attitudes and behaviour are particularly good in those classes where there has been continuity of staffing. Pupils take good advantage of opportunities they are given to be responsible for their own learning when using IT or dictionaries or working in pairs or small groups. Learners in Key Stage 3 particularly, and from across the ability range, show their enthusiasm in their response to teachers' questions and willingness to repeat sounds. It is pleasing that a few are beginning to ask questions about how the language works. There is a minority of disaffected pupils, some of whom are irregular attenders and some of whom have English as an additional language and require specific support. Their lack of motivation did not in the lessons observed set the tone, so that learning was able to take place without disruption.
176. The leadership of the department has many strong features and has played a key role in raising standards. There is a detailed scheme of work and helpful departmental handbook. The profile and status of modern languages have been enhanced through an attractive learning environment, improved resources and a curriculum enriched by the introduction of Spanish as an alternative first language and by contacts abroad, including visits and an e-mail link. German, a relative strength in the inspection of 1996, is no longer offered but Spanish is well taught, with pupils achieving well. The quality of French teaching has improved markedly. The challenge for the department now is to translate these rising standards into improved examination results at Key Stage 4. As a priority, teachers should gain a direct knowledge of one another's teaching styles, sharing ideas and resources, in order to make the most of their collective expertise.

MUSIC

177. Since the last inspection, there has been improvement in the standards achieved by pupils at Key Stage 3. In Years 7 and 9, pupils work to nationally expected standards, overall. The standards achieved by Year 8 pupils are lower than average in performing and composing skills, partly caused by lack of access to practical activities whilst repairs were underway to the main music classroom. These pupils do, however, meet expectations in appraising skills and the knowledge required for musical understanding and analysis.
178. At Key Stage 4, standards remain at or about the national average. Most pupils are supported by additional instrumental lessons provided by visiting instrumental teachers from the Hillingdon Music Service. Pupils play and compose at an appropriate level. They show understanding of musical processes in their compositions and have some knowledge of the social and historical context of the pieces they study.
179. Only a small number of pupils take the GCSE examination each year. Results are well above the school average and close to the national average.
180. There is at present no provision for music in the sixth form. A new short course GCSE will be offered as an option for September 2001.

181. Pupils make satisfactory to good progress in music. Eighty pupils take instrumental lessons, which are clearly beneficial to the progress of these pupils.
182. The response of pupils is good at Key Stage 3 and excellent at Key Stage 4. At both key stages, pupils enjoy practical music-making. They respond well to the teacher and work well in pairs. In a few instances, a small minority of pupils becomes over-excited when using classroom percussion instruments, but these are soon brought back to the task in hand. At Key Stage 4, pupils lack confidence but they are concerned to improve their performing skills and work supportively with each other.
183. Teaching is good, and the music director has an excellent rapport with pupils. Comments on pupils work in the classroom are encouraging, resulting in a positive atmosphere at both key stages. There is, however, too little demand on pupils for homework tasks, particularly at Key Stage 4, and opportunities are being lost to encourage pupils to develop skills and understanding away from classroom activity. Assessment procedures also need review in order to show consistency across the key stages and provide pupils with more specific information on their progress.
184. Extra-curricular activities are few. Their range and scope does not reflect the diversity of the school population, and only a small minority of pupils participate in these activities. As the current Year 11 have their music lessons after school on two days a week provision is currently limited, in part by the availability of staff.
185. Resources for Key Stage 3 are adequate in terms of classroom percussion instruments, textbooks and keyboards. At Key Stage 4, there is a need for pupils to have access to ICT equipment, which the department currently does not possess. Accommodation is adequate, although at the time of the inspection water was seeping through the windows of the main music room, giving rise to health and safety concerns. Practice rooms are out of use whilst repairs to the roof continue.
186. Despite the accommodation difficulties, the department is making good progress and has improved in important ways since the last inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of progress to bring about improvement is undertaken effectively. In order to improve further, the department needs to involve more pupils in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and to develop a wider range of musical opportunities for all pupils so that music can become a key focus for cultural activity in the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

187. Examination results for GCSE Sports Studies Science have been significantly below national averages for similar schools since the last inspection, with 9 per cent of pupils attaining grades A*-C in 2000. There had been a steadily rising trend to 17 per cent of pupils attaining grades A*-C in 1999; however, disruption in staffing contributed to the decline in results the following year. When compared with other schools in the borough, entries, as a proportion of the year group for 2000, are the highest with over half the year group taking GCSE and the school is placed third in terms of the proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades. Boys' attainment is consistently better, in terms of higher grades, than that of girls. Grades in the practical component are consistently higher than those achieved for theory, because many pupils have poor literacy and retention skills and perform less well in examinations. Pupils' performance in GCSE physical education is lower than their performance in most other subjects.
188. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with national expectations. Teacher assessment results show that the majority of pupils attain just above the national average. In lessons observed, standards in dance and athletic skills are below average in Years 7 and 8. However, a majority of pupils display an increasing sense of spatial awareness and the teaching regularly reinforces learning with clear explanation, giving pupils the opportunity to reflect on their decisions and refine their actions. By the end of Year 9, pupils attain an average level of

competence in the skills used in games such as badminton, for example, in holding the racquet correctly, scoring, serving and using overhead and smash tactics to win points. The majority of pupils plan, perform and evaluate in a variety of activities demonstrating control in travelling and changing speed and direction. In a Year 8 girls dance lesson, on the theme of 'Change' pupils used ribbons to explore a series of movements and higher attaining pupils showed competence in developing a sequence of movements. Pupils learn about safe practice and most organise small apparatus with care; for example, in a Year 7 athletics skills lesson where they are introduced to hurdling techniques. Pupils' group evaluations of each other help them succeed in their planning and performance. Recognising the short- and long-term effects of exercise on the body is less well-developed, overall.

189. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are attaining average standards in practical activities, overall, but the standards in theory are still below average. Standards are above average in basketball and volleyball for higher-attaining pupils in Year 11, where the good levels of control in passing and making space within the game are commendable. Girls show effective marking skills and a few higher-attaining pupils show versatility in mastering the dynamic qualities of the game of basketball. Year 10 pupils understand the rules of volleyball and work co-operatively in competitive activities. Girls are less competent in throwing, catching and serving, although they are developing well as independent learners through practice and mixed-gender play, which raises their self-esteem. In theory lessons, pupils develop knowledge about posture and the different types of training and most take part in discussion that helps them understand the effects of exercise on the body. Literacy skills develop well. Pupils compile information appropriately in specially prepared notebooks that include pre-drawn diagrams and key words, which help the lower-attaining pupils to progress systematically through the syllabus. Revision booklets reinforce key facts; however, there is less opportunity for higher attaining pupils to consolidate learning by developing extended writing.
190. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall, in physical education and there is some good achievement in games at Key Stage 4. Their increased awareness of rules and conventions in games, such as no-contact and their demonstration of a variety of increasingly refined techniques in volleyball, basketball and badminton in Key Stage 4, shows a sustained rate of progress in practical activities from Year 7. Girls' achievement is steady. A significant number join the school with underdeveloped skills in many activity areas and catch up by the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress through observation and good teacher demonstrations, which increase their motivation to take part. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well in cross-country championships and in after-school clubs, which improves their basic skills, overall.
191. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good, overall, and often very good in Key Stage 4. Most work with sustained effort; they are attentive and respond well to the challenging and enjoyable activities planned for them. Behaviour is good due to the commendable relationships between staff and pupils, which assist the maintenance of good levels of pace and physical effort in lessons. Pupils enjoy physical education and their interest is reflected in the good standards of dress, participation, respect for their teachers and the take-up of courses leading to GCSE in Key Stage 4.
192. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, and often very good at Key Stage 4. Teachers' subject expertise and enthusiasm is very good and is communicated effectively to pupils at all levels of attainment, particularly for those pupils with English as an additional language. Good use is made of questioning, explanation and demonstration to reinforce and extend learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Pupils' learning is managed very well, with considerable attention to grouping. For example, during a team teaching session in a Year 11 volleyball lesson an extra teaching group was created to improve girls, serving and passing skills. Where pupils are given responsibility to keep the scores of a mini-challenge basketball event, they quickly learn to work out the points and this improves their numeracy. Where teaching is less inspiring, pupils are insufficiently engaged in exhibiting good practice to one another during the lesson and the quality of the oral evaluation to check what pupils have learned at the end of lessons is inconsistent. Teachers' planning for warm-up sessions is very good, though cool-down opportunities for pupils are rarely included. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is good, through constructive oral feedback that ensures pupils know how they are achieving. Homework for the GCSE theory

component is based on learning key points for regular testing; however, opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to extend formal answers through short essay style questions is limited.

193. The department is led with considerable skill, expertise and sensitivity, considering the poor maintenance of the storage and learning environment in the physical education indoor areas. The department handbook is impressive and provides very good guidelines for staff. Assessment procedures are very good and appropriate strategies for developing literacy skills are in place. Information communication technology has not yet been developed and there is no provision for physical education in the sixth form. Monitoring and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement is sound. Showers lack privacy and pupils do not shower after vigorous activity, which presents some hygiene problems. Many pupils do not tie their trainers, which breaches requirements and endangers their own safety in many activities. Outdoor hard court accommodation is limited considering the large numbers in classes at Key Stage 3. The provision of extra-curricular competitive activities for girls is inadequate.
194. Unsatisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in improving the changing-rooms, showering and toilet accommodation. Physical education has still not been provided in the sixth form curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

195. Limited evidence was available on work in the sixth form and the standards achieved. There is no regular fixed teaching period and no formal lesson was seen but the inspector joined a visit to a Hindu Temple by Year 13 students. The available evidence shows improved standards, overall, in Key Stages 3 and 4 since the last inspection in 1996.
196. Attainment in Key Stage 4 is below the levels expected of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, although in the work seen pupils show increasing understanding and knowledge of religious traditions studied, but the way in which belief and practice interrelate is not well-developed. No GCSE examinations are taken, which is a recommendation of the local Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus, and this reduces pupils' motivation to study religious education at a much deeper and more reflective level. There is presently no opportunity for pupils to obtain recognised qualifications in this subject.
197. In general, their work shows that pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of social and moral issues, such as marriage, abortion and euthanasia from the perspectives of their chosen two world religions. Pupils' responses to the issues of meaning and purpose by relating them to their own lives are not as well-developed. However, when an outside speaker from the Open Door Project spoke about homelessness locally and showed a video about it, referring specifically to young people, pupils in Year 11 showed keen interest and learnt well about their social and moral responsibility.
198. In Key Stage 3, attainment is below the levels expected of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, particularly in relation to learning from religion, which is not as good as pupils' learning about religion. For example, they can tell what is a gurdwara, langar and nishan sahib and what is their purpose. However, pupils with a Sikh religious background were not given the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with others as part of the planned lesson, thereby losing the opportunity for all pupils to extend their understanding of the ways of relating belief to practice. Pupils in Years 7 and 8, on the other hand, are making sound progress in classes, which indicates that standards will improve in due course. Year 7 pupils learn about the meaning behind the story of the birth of Jesus in their study of Christianity by taking on the roles of the three wise men, shepherds, Mary and Joseph. In groups, they explore relationships and feelings about Jesus being a human and divine by writing their own scripts and presenting their work effectively to the rest of the class. Year 8 pupils are studying the rites of passage in Judaism by gathering information from different books with a view to writing reports for an imaginary newspaper. Some pupils, particularly those with English as an additional language, however, find the task of scanning texts difficult as their writing, note-taking and researching skills are not sufficiently developed to undertake such a task. They benefit more from discussion to improve their understanding and their speaking and listening skills.

199. Pupils respond well to religious education, particularly where teaching is linked to their interests, experiences and matters of concern to them. They like to talk about different religions and their relationships with one another through sharing their own experiences but have few opportunities to do so in classes. They can empathise and respect the feelings and beliefs of others. They sometimes struggle to sustain concentration because the work set is inappropriate or too challenging for them but their behaviour remains good, on the whole.
200. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory, with some good elements, particularly where there is good lesson planning that takes into account the needs, interests and motivation of pupils. In most classes, teachers display sound subject knowledge, good relationships with pupils and effective classroom management. They use resources, time and ongoing assessment well. The lack of variety in teaching methods and the current focus on research-based learning, though an important skill for pupils to acquire, is not always appropriate for the diversity of learning needs in classes. The lack of a clear summary of the work undertaken, which involves the pupils, deprives them of the opportunity to share together their progress in lessons and the teachers are unable to draw out the religious significance of pictures, artefacts and stories. When this is done, it has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
201. The religious education curriculum barely meets statutory requirements in the sixth form as there is no clearly designated teaching time, but activities are provided - such as the visit to a Hindu Temple. For Key Stages 3 and 4, the school follows a scheme of work based on the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus. All pupils in these key stages have access to religious education and no pupils are withdrawn. Pupils also have the opportunity to participate in the ASDAN project and visit local places of worship. Visitors from those places or projects like the Open Door are invited to talk to pupils about religious and moral issues and for religious celebrations.
202. Religious education makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about respecting each others' beliefs and have opportunities to share experiences and help one another. They also learn about social and moral issues such as euthanasia and abortion, and gain understanding about vulnerable people in the community and homelessness.
203. Religious education also makes a sound contribution to literacy as opportunities are made available for pupils to practise reading and writing, particularly note-taking, forming questions for interviews and writing articles for newspapers in lessons. There was little use of numeracy or information and communication technology, except the use of computers by two boys for finding information during lessons.
204. Leadership is sound in this department of one specialist teacher, as is the monitoring and evaluation of progress to bring about improvement. The head of department has improved the scheme of work, matching it with the requirements of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus and has set targets for each pupil in Key Stages 3 and 4. To improve access for pupils and the quality of teaching and learning, the local authority advisory service has been providing in-service training. As yet, there are no examination courses such as a GCSE short course. Other members of staff who teach religious education, though non-specialist, are experienced but the burden of work, including marking and assessment, falls on one person. There is a specialist room with displays of artefacts, pictures and pupils' work, which creates a pleasant learning environment. Resources for the subject, such as sets of textbooks, worksheets, artefacts and pictures are adequate, and these are further supplemented by provision in the school library.

PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

205. There are 306 pupils identified as having English as an additional language (EAL) with 162 of them identified as being at an early stage of language acquisition. All pupils with EAL are assessed on entry to school, either at the beginning of the school year or when they join during the year. Those needing additional support are identified and this is recorded in a register. Further assessments are made every spring to ascertain pupils' progress and to identify any areas of particular concern, and the register is updated. Pupils with EAL who also have special

educational needs are supported through liaison between the learning support team and the EAL teachers.

206. Since the last inspection by the Her Majesty's Inspectors, in 1999, when the 'improvement of provision and support for pupils with English as an additional language' was identified as a key issue, the school has acknowledged it as one of its key priorities. Within available resources, provision has been made more coherent and focused especially for those pupils who are at early stages of language acquisition.
207. An induction programme for casual admissions is provided for three mornings a week on a withdrawal basis for seven weeks. This enables pupils to make progress in basic English, after which it extends into subject areas and is maintained for a term and then reviewed.
208. There is also classroom support provided for those who make unsatisfactory progress. Furthermore, teaching partnerships with subject teachers in classes benefit both pupils and teachers. This was demonstrated in an English class with Year 10 pupils aimed at improving their skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Between them, the specialist EAL teacher and the English teacher, provided good models of spoken and written language in a lesson on Dracula. Another good example was an art lesson for Year 7 pupils in which a story was told, bringing out multicultural understanding of values and beliefs.
209. However, such provision is limited and is not consistent throughout the school. It is dependent upon the interests of individual teachers and departments and the availability of two part-time EAL teachers who, between them, provide the equivalent of four days. In science, history and physical education, EAL pupils make good progress in both key stages and in English in Key Stage 4 because the subject teachers are aware of their needs and have good strategies for meeting those specific needs. Progress is sound in art, geography, design and technology, information and communication technology and modern foreign languages, and in Key Stage 3 English. In mathematics, teachers did not display effective strategies for teaching this group of pupils or pupils with special educational needs. Pupils make sound progress, overall, and achieve because other pupils assist them. The severity of need and the level of support provided throughout the school are the main influences on the quality and pace of pupils' learning.
210. Teachers are generally sympathetic to the needs of pupils and know that pupils' first languages can be used whenever possible to support their learning. They use effectively the buddy system of pairing new pupils with other pupils who are confident in English and also speak the new pupils' language to assist them in accessing the curriculum. This is working well for Somali pupils.
211. There are, at present, no bilingual assistants employed in the school although efforts are being made to do so, nor are there enough high quality, culturally relevant aids and other learning resources to extend pupils' learning and reinforce their self-esteem.
212. There is also no overall co-ordination of the provision for those pupils with English as an additional language at a senior level to oversee this increasing area of work. This inhibits effective management of this crucial area of learning and of the development of effective liaison with parents, the local community and the Local Education Authority.
213. Overall, the provision for pupils with English as an additional language is just satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress.