

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **BROADLAND HIGH SCHOOL**

HOVETON, NORWICH

LEA area: NORFOLK

Unique reference number: 121159

Headteacher: Mr D Cameron

Reporting inspector: W Keast  
1522

Dates of inspection: 21 – 25 May 2001

Inspection number: 189536

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Tunstead Road  
Hoveton  
Norwich

Postcode: NR12 8QN

Telephone number: 01603 782715

Fax number: 01603 784354

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Margaret Henderson

Date of previous inspection: 30 September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1522	W Keast	Registered inspector	Special Educational Needs	The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught?
19798	J O'Keefe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22423	J Lovgreen	Team inspector	English	
1292	V Foster	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3525	P McGregor	Team inspector	Science	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2495	B Munden	Team inspector	Design and Technology Information and Communication Technology	
2501	R Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Art	
10817	G Rayner	Team inspector	Geography History	
2496	T O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
11746	R Coulthard	Team inspector	Music	
3726	M Bean	Team inspector	Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
10761	P Willan	Team inspector	Religious education	

The inspection contractor was: E-Qualitas Ltd

Langshaw  
Pastens Road  
Limpsfield Chart  
Oxted  
Surrey  
RH8 0RE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Broadland High School is a mixed comprehensive school for 11 to 16 year old pupils in a large village to the north east of Norwich. With 709 pupils on its roll, the school is smaller than most secondary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to a free school meal (8.5%) is below the national average. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register (14.5%) is below the national average while the proportion with a statement of educational need (3.2%) is above the national average. The needs of pupils for whom the school involves external help are predominantly related to dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language nor are there any pupils registered as representing ethnic minorities. This is not the general case, nationally. The school is oversubscribed and the proportion of pupils who enter or leave during the course of a year is small. Pupils come from a wide area. The area is slightly favoured in socio-economic terms although containing small pockets of rural deprivation.. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. At the time of the inspection there were no Year 11 pupils in the school as they were on study leave in preparation for examinations.

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

The effectiveness of the school is good. The results at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average. Although GCSE results fell in 2000, they had previously been rising. Standards currently being demonstrated in Year 9 and Year 11 are above nationally expected levels. The quality of teaching and learning is good with a significant proportion which is very good or excellent. Leadership and management are very good with a clear understanding of where further development is necessary. The school provides good value for money.

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

- it achieves high standards in the core subjects at the end of Year 9
- it provides a high proportion of excellent and very good teaching
- it achieves very good personal development and relationships
- it cares for its pupils very well through very good monitoring procedures and provision of support
- it provides, overall, very good leadership and management with a very effective governing body
- it has very good development planning supported by the strategic use of resources

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

- the underachievement in science in Years 10 and 11, and in music
- the use of the outcomes of monitoring to improve the weaker elements of teaching
- the accommodation for design and technology, science and mathematics

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in September 1996. Improvement since then has been good. The school has maintained the strengths reported last time. Standards at the end of Year 9 have improved and, except in 2000, examination results have been improving.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly. The issues of concern raised in the last report have been addressed effectively. Boys' standards have been raised, the curriculum meets requirements, and assessments now relate to National Curriculum levels. Provision for special educational needs has improved. Strategic planning, the systematic collection of data and monitoring and evaluation procedures are now good or very good.

## STANDARDS

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

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

<b>Key</b>
well above average A
above average B
average C
below average D
well below average E

Results, in 2000, in the national testing at the end of Year 9, were well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Results in mathematics were well above national and similar school averages. Results in English and science were well above national averages and above those of similar schools. Overall, boys performed as well as girls. Averaged over the last three years, boys have outperformed girls. The trend over the last five years is similar to the national trend. That is, rising slowly. The achievement of this group of pupils was very good.

GCSE results fell in 2000. Previously to this the average total point score had been rising year on year. The small size of the school means that small movements in pupils can have a large impact on comparative indicators. In this year group, several pupils who had high standards in Year 9 left, and several pupils, whose ultimate attainment was low, were admitted. The results of the 118 (of 129) pupils who followed the two year course were above the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. The achievement of this group of pupils was satisfactory. Results in all subjects were broadly similar to the national averages. Averaged over the last three years, the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A\*-C has been above the national average, and the proportion gaining 5 or more grades A\*-G, has been well above. Boys outperformed girls, the reverse of the situation at the time of the last inspection. The trend over the last five years is below the national trend. That is, rising more slowly.

The school did not meet its target for the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A\*-C but nearly achieved its target for the average total point score per pupil. Targets for 2001 have been set challengingly above those predicted by a national project which tests early in Year 10.



Overall, standards in the current Year 9 are above nationally expected levels. They are at expected levels in art, design and technology, information and communication technology and German. They are below in music. The very good test preparation in Year 9 may well raise these to the previous well above average level. Achievement, overall, in the first three years is good. It is satisfactory in mathematics and German, and unsatisfactory in music. Overall standards in the current Year 11 are above nationally expected levels and all indications are that the examination results this year will be significantly higher than in 2000. Standards are at expected levels in art, information and communication technology, science and German. Achievement is good. It is very good in French and satisfactory in mathematics. There is underachievement in science.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy coming and are keen to achieve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. A calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that any instances will be tackled firmly and effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show maturity and consideration, and take their responsibilities seriously.
Attendance	Good. Attendance levels are well above, and unauthorised absence below, national norms. There were no permanent exclusions last year.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 11-14 years</b>	<b>aged 14-16 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of the lessons observed. It was very good or excellent in 30 per cent and unsatisfactory in three per cent. This is a significant improvement. Teaching was good in English and satisfactory in mathematics. Teaching was satisfactory in science in the first three years but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in all other subjects was good in both key stages except that it was very good in French, in religious education in Years 7 to 9, and in German in Years 10 and 11. It was unsatisfactory in music. There are significant strengths throughout the teaching. Good subject knowledge leads to clear explanations. Good questioning probes pupils' understanding and draws out explanations. Good planning matches work to pupils' needs. Pupils' learning is good as the teaching develops their understanding, and engages their interest so that they work hard and at a good pace. Teaching was unsatisfactory in science because it was too variable. Weaker teaching contained poor explanation and generated too little interest. As a result, insufficient progress was made and the unsatisfactory learning led to underachievement. Teaching in music is unsatisfactory due to lack of pace and challenge, and a failure to provide a progressive development of skills.

Literacy skills have been the focus of development and training. As a result, they are well taught and there is a generally consistent approach in all subjects. Numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics and their use is consolidated across the curriculum.

The setting system generally provides well for pupils of all levels of attainment. The highest quality of teaching was observed in both higher and lower sets, as well as in mixed ability groupings. Teachers are well aware of the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs and use these to plan their lessons carefully.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. National Curriculum requirements are met. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly within activities week.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Learning support is appropriately focused on the Year 7 target group and the core subjects in other years. A small amount of withdrawal supports individual pupils with specific difficulties for short periods of time.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There are good opportunities provided for pupils' development in all aspects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The very good procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment, progress and development allow provision of very good support.

The school works hard to develop a close partnership with parents. It has done this through regular information and reporting beyond that which is a requirement, a home school agreement drawn up by a joint working group, and the annual curriculum review to which parents are invited. Not all parents recognise this.

Within the curriculum, careful planning has included a good subject range, with appropriate choice, but has resulted in some imbalance in the allocation of time. The most important of these being the little time devoted to a second language. The provision for personal and social education is very good. Extra curricular activities include less music and drama than is often the case. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for all pupils to have a daily act of collective worship.

A good information base is developing, informed by regular assessments, which allows close monitoring of pupils' progress. It contributes to reporting, the annual curriculum review and the developing target setting process. The role of form tutor is crucial in this process. The study support centre supports pupils who might otherwise have been excluded, assisting them with their studies and with personal behaviour management strategies.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. A good leadership team has been developed with a very clear view of the educational direction for the school and how it is to be achieved. Strategic development planning is now excellent, involving contribution from staff and governors, and linked to the county's overall priorities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effectively. They have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and perform a close monitoring role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Monitoring at all levels has been developed although more action is required on the outcomes. A detailed self-review, with external support, has been undertaken.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The allocation of resources is very closely matched to developmental priorities.

A strength in the management has been the successful support and development of staff. Line management has been restructured resulting in better communication and support. The school has moved forward to the point where most staff recognise and support the value of monitoring and review.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate but weaknesses exist in the balance within the science team and its technical support. Good accommodation provision for drama and languages contrasts with weaknesses due to geographical spread and isolation affecting the sharing of good practice in some other areas.

The school carefully evaluates its operation and achievement, and identifies areas for improvement. It seeks support to assist development and prudently commits its resources to support these. It applies the principles of best value very well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve well</li><li>• that their children make good progress</li><li>• that the teaching is good</li><li>• that the school helps their children to mature</li><li>• that the school is approachable</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the information about pupils' progress</li><li>• the closeness with which the school works with them</li><li>• pupils' homework</li></ul>

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school which are supported by the inspection evidence. The school works hard to develop close partnership with parents. All parents receive regular and well produced information. They receive more frequent reports than the school is required to provide. A home-school agreement was

drawn up by a joint teacher/parent/pupil working group. All parents are invited to the annual curriculum review. Parents who expressed a view about homework were equally divided between it being too little or too much. Inspection evidence is that appropriate homework is set, collected and marked. It is not always recorded in pupil planners and the homework timetable is not always strictly adhered to - the school could helpfully monitor this. The school has moved to a new reporting format. Inspectors would agree that not all the subject comments in these reports are as helpful as they could be in reporting pupils' progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 The attainment of pupils when they come to the school, as shown by their results in the national testing at the end of Year 6, and by the screening tests carried out by Norfolk Local Education Authority, is broadly average. This has varied slightly over the last four years.
- 2 Results, in 2000, of the national testing at the end of Key Stage 3 were well above the national average and were well above the average of similar schools. Similar schools refers to those schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be entitled to a free school meal. English, mathematics and science results were each well above the respective national average. Compared to similar schools, mathematics results were well above the average and English and science were above the average. Girls performed slightly better than boys in English and boys slightly better than girls in mathematics. Overall, boys and girls performed equally well. Averaged over the last three years, boys have performed better than girls. The trend in the results, over the last five years, is broadly similar to the national trend. That is, rising slowly. When compared to their attainment on entry, this represents very good achievement.
- 3 In 2000, the proportion of pupils who gained 5 or more grades A\*-C (50%) and the proportion who gained 5 or more grades A\*-G (95%), were close to the national average. On average, over the last three years, the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A\*-C has been above, and the proportion gaining 5 or more grades A\*-G has been well above, the national average. The average total point score for boys, in 2000, was above the national average while that for girls was close to the national average. On average, over the last three years, boys' results have been well above the national average and girls' results have been above the national average. At the time of the last inspection, girls were outperforming boys. The results were well below the average for schools whose pupils achieved similar Key Stage 3 average point score in 1998, and were below the average for similar schools. The total average point score has been rising for the four years prior to 2000, when it fell. The trend over the last five years, therefore, is below the national trend in that results are increasing more slowly.
- 4 The school is a small school so that any movement of pupils, during the course of a key stage, has the potential to affect results and alter comparisons against national data. This happened in the cohort of pupils who took examinations in 2000. The school subscribes to a nationally standardised project which tests pupils at the beginning of Year 10 and, on the basis of the results, predicts the potential results in their GCSE examinations. Subsequent analysis showed that, overall, these pupils achieved what was anticipated for them. Only 118 of the 129 pupils examined in 2000 had been at the school at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1998. Several pupils who had scored highly in this testing left during the following two years and several pupils were admitted who, in the end, had very low attainment. Analysis of the attainment of those pupils who had followed the two year programme totally within the school shows that the average total points which they gained was above the national average. In comparison with both similar schools, and with those in which pupils gained similar Key Stage 3 average points, these results were close to the average. When compared to their previous attainment, the achievement of this cohort of pupils was satisfactory.
- 5 In no subject, at GCSE in 2000, was the proportion of candidates gaining grades A\*-C significantly different from the national average in that subject. In all but design and technology, the average point score per candidate was at, or above, the national average point score. The

school entered a noticeably higher proportion of the year group for examination in English literature, French, double award science and information technology, and this should be borne in mind when comparing outcomes with national averages in these subjects. Overall, pupils' achievement, relative to all the subjects they took, was better in art, English, English literature, French and mathematics. It was worse in science, design and technology, history and physical education.

- 6 The school did not reach its target for the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A\*-C, or 5 or more grades A\*-G. The school nearly achieved its target for the average total point score per pupil. Targets, for 2001, have been set based upon, but challengingly above, the predictions of the national project testing of the pupils when in Year 10.
- 7 From scrutiny of work, classroom observation and the outcomes of testing, the standards of work of the pupils currently in Year 9 are, overall, above the national expectation for pupils of this age. Standards are well above in English and above expectation in mathematics and science. They are likely to be higher than this in the national tests due to the very effective preparation strategies. Standards are at expected levels in design and technology, drama, information and communication technology (ICT) and German, and below expectation in music. They are above expectation in other subjects. When compared to their attainment on entry, this is good achievement, overall, for these pupils. Their achievement is satisfactory in mathematics, drama, and German. There is underachievement in music. The standards of work of pupils currently in Year 11 are, overall, above nationally expected levels. They are at nationally expected levels in science, art, drama, ICT and German. This is, overall, good achievement for these pupils. Achievement is very good in French and it is satisfactory in mathematics and drama. There is underachievement in science.
- 8 Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve well. Their learning, as observed during the inspection, was good both within the target group in Year 7, in the lower sets elsewhere and within mixed ability classes. The paired reading programme is successful in raising pupils' reading ages. Pupils gain accreditation for their achievement both through GCSE and certificates of achievement. The study support centre has reduced the number of fixed term exclusions and maintained the educational provision for these pupils who would otherwise be excluded. The number of pupils on the special educational needs register has been reduced and, following review, they are at lower levels of support, most noticeably those that were at code of practice level 3.
- 9 Pupils' literacy skills are good, and they are being well developed and used in almost all subjects. Even younger pupils have very good listening skills, which they use effectively. When speaking, most have a good and wide vocabulary which they use to give detailed and clear explanation. Teachers of all subjects use this to lead into most lessons. Few pupils, however, have been taught to use their oral ability to generate new or unusual ideas, or to question ideas or opinions with which they are presented. Reading skills are very good, and even low attainers can find relevant detail in text and refer to it in oral and written work. This stems from the emphasis given to reading by regular quiet reading sessions in form time and at the start of English lessons, timetabled library lessons, and the increasing use of the library by departments. Pupils' writing skills are good. Extended writing is encouraged in many subjects and pupils of all abilities can write lively English in a style appropriate to the task in hand. Standards of presentation are variable. Too little attention is paid by teachers, and therefore by pupils, to accuracy of spelling and punctuation.
- 10 Standards of numeracy are good. Pupils acquire their numeracy skills in their mathematics lessons. Many lessons start with a mental mathematics activity which enables pupils to reinforce and extend their numeracy skills. Pupils have a good understanding of number bonds

and place value. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 10 add 3-digit numbers in their head and round to a given number of figures, with good explanations of their working. A lower-attaining pupil in Year 8 could double 2048. Pupils display and interpret data, sometimes with the aid of a computer. They make estimates, as in a Year 8 lesson where lower-attaining pupils estimated quantities in metric and imperial units. In an average Year 9 class, pupils estimated square roots in connection with their work on Pythagoras' theorem.

- 11 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with the national expectation. Pupils develop knowledge in a good range of computing activities in both their ICT lessons and through the use of computers in other subjects. Pupils demonstrate confidence, concentration and commitment when using computers. They quickly develop skills in accessing computer programmes and are good at remembering procedures. From a position, in Year 7, when pupils arrive in the school with a varied, and often limited, experience of using computers, they make fast progress in developing their skills. There are opportunities for pupils to practise, and in some cases develop, their computer skills as they move through Years 10 and 11. These tend to be more concentrated in subjects such as science, design technology, English and modern foreign languages and are mainly used in the presentation of course work.

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

- 12 Pupils' attitudes to the school and to learning are good. Most pupils enjoy coming to this school and are keen to achieve. In lessons they listen and concentrate well and answer questions enthusiastically. In French lessons, for instance, they show real commitment to their work and forge good learning partnerships with their teachers. In a few other lessons however, particularly where the pupil management techniques are inconsistent, a small minority of pupils have less impressive attitudes. Their lack of application and attempts to disrupt lessons affect everyone's learning.
- 13 The school is a friendly place where pupils say they feel safe. Behaviour is good overall with no evidence of bullying apparent during the inspection. Pupils expressed confidence that, should an incident occur, it will be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. Pupils move around the building in an orderly fashion and lunchtimes are calm and relaxed. During assemblies pupils listen respectfully to speakers, and are both courteous and confident when speaking to visitors. There were no permanent exclusions in the last twelve months. Fixed term exclusions have noticeably reduced since the opening of the study support centre. This new initiative provides disruptive pupils with an opportunity to continue with their work in school and develop their learning skills, without disturbing others.
- 14 The personal development of pupils, and relationships, are a strength of this school. Pupils show maturity and consideration, taking their given roles within the school very seriously. Prefects, for instance, work hard to ensure the safety and security of younger pupils. The Year 11 pupils who act as peer counsellors to the new Year 7 are kind and supportive. The school council is very well established and effective. The members meet regularly and initiate and organise many charity fundraising events. They support other areas of the school, for example by producing a useful 'Rough Guide to Broadland' booklet for all new pupils in the school.
- 15 Attendance is good. Annual figures are well above national averages. The figures for unauthorised absences are also below national norms. Punctuality is satisfactory overall. A high proportion of pupils arrive on school buses and these are sometimes delayed, causing pupils to be late. Registers are completed efficiently at the beginning of each session and all lessons start on time.

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

- 16 The quality of teaching is good and of a similarly high standard at both key stages. Ninety-seven per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better and thirty per cent of lessons were very good or excellent. Only three of the 120 lessons observed were judged to be unsatisfactory. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection.
- 17 There are significant strengths throughout the teaching. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to give clear and interesting explanations. These help develop pupils' understanding, capture their interest and contribute to their learning. Teachers use questions which probe pupils' understanding and require them to explain their answers and use appropriate subject vocabulary. In good teaching, these questions are often deliberately targeted to ensure that all pupils are engaged with the work and are learning. The best lessons are well planned with work which is well matched to the differing needs of the pupils in the class. Lessons move at a fast pace with specific times being set, and adhered to, for each task. This leads to pupils concentrating, working hard and learning well. All these features came together in a Year 9 science lesson on the heart and circulation. Pupils were captivated by the material, knew exactly what was expected of them, worked very hard for the whole lesson and made excellent progress in gaining new knowledge and understanding. In the great majority of lessons, pupils are well managed and so there is a good learning atmosphere in the lessons. There is a small minority of pupils, in each year, whose response to weaker or inconsistent behaviour management strategies adversely affects their own learning and that of others in the class.
- 18 Teaching in English, in both key stages, is good and leads to good learning. The learning outcomes of lessons are very clear so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. Good feedback is given, either from the marking of work or from discussion during the lesson. These strategies, and the interest generated in the lessons, encourage pupils to work hard, concentrate and improve their work, so that they make good progress. In mathematics, teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. There is a good structure to lessons, explanations are clear and time is generally used well. However, Year 7 pupils can spend too much time revisiting work which they have mastered earlier. This results in limited progress. The range of teaching styles observed was limited. The resulting learning was satisfactory. Teaching and learning, in science, are satisfactory in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, teaching is unsatisfactory. It is too variable in quality. Weaker teaching includes poor explanations. The work was not made sufficiently interesting to the pupils and not enough account was taken of pupils' prior learning and abilities. This resulted in a loss of motivation and insufficient progress. Pupils' learning was, therefore, unsatisfactory and has resulted in underachievement in this key stage.
- 19 In Key Stage 3, teaching in most other subjects is good. It is very good in French where teachers have excellent personal language skills enabling them to be good role models. Lessons are conducted largely in the target language which encourages and develops pupils' listening and speaking skills. Use of a good variety of resources and teaching strategies results in active learning with very good pupil participation. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastic about their learning. Teaching is also very good in religious education. Teachers' good subject knowledge and experience combine, resulting in tasks which are appropriate to the pupils and which draw on pupils' own experience and provoke thoughtful reflection. Pupils' responses are valued and used to develop understanding further. Previous knowledge and understanding are applied to new situations and religious education is related to current issues. The relevance of their study and their own involvement leads to engagement and good learning. Teaching is unsatisfactory in music. Although lesson content is interesting and explanations are clear, expectations are too low. Lessons lack rigour and pace, leading to poor use of time and insufficient progress. Assessment is poor so that pupils are not aware of the criteria by which their work will be evaluated and therefore have little idea how to improve and progress.



Practical work does not challenge pupils sufficiently and planning does not provide a progressive development of their skills. Pupils make too little progress or development in their knowledge and understanding both in individual lessons and over time. Pupils' learning is good, in this key stage, in most subjects. It is satisfactory in German and unsatisfactory in music. In Key Stage 4, teaching is very good in French and German and is good in all other non-core subjects. The resulting learning is very good in French and good in the other subjects.

- 20 Homework is set which completes or extends the work begun in lessons. It is collected and marked in the majority of cases. It is not always recorded in pupils' planners as parents expect. Pupils confirm that the homework timetable they are given is not always adhered to by their teachers. Although the quantity and appropriateness are satisfactory, there is inconsistency between teachers in the operation of the school's policy.
- 21 The setting system generally provides well for pupils of all levels of attainment. The highest quality of teaching was observed in both higher and lower sets, and in mixed ability groupings. Teachers are well aware of the individual education plans (IEPs) of pupils with special educational needs and use them to plan their lessons carefully, as for example, in a lower mathematics set in Year 8 studying probability. Work and questions were well matched to individual pupils so that all sustained a high level of interest and motivation. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace and pupils were disappointed when they were not asked to be involved in particular tasks. As a result, their progress and learning were very good as they developed an understanding of 'likelihood', and learned to make sensible estimates of probability.
- 22 Literacy has a high priority in the school development plan. Following staff training, all departments have agreed to look at literacy opportunities within the curriculum. This has resulted in good literacy teaching, especially in Year 7. Key words are well displayed in most classrooms, notably in French, geography and science, and regularly reinforced because teachers expect their appropriate use in discussion. This is a feature in design technology, where, however, key words are not sufficiently expected in written work. In contrast, a Year 8 history class were expected to write definitions of new terms related to a study of India. Terms related to probability such as 'impossible' and 'likely to be' were effectively introduced into a mathematics lesson. Good use is made of pupils' reading ability, but reading aloud around the class is used too thoughtlessly in some lessons, for example in science, so that less confident pupils sometimes flounder with both pronunciation and understanding of new terms and ideas. Good development of communication skills happened in science when the teacher of a Year 7 class allowed a class to write a poem about space as an alternative way of conveying their knowledge; in geography a poem was used to convey powerfully to a class the awesome force and impact of volcanoes. Careful nurturing of literacy skills by modern language teachers results in most pupils being willing and fluent speakers. Analytical language and skills have been well developed in art, but here the quality of class discussion is variable as teachers too seldom probe ideas from pupils to get them to think more deeply or express themselves more precisely. The library is well organised and has a good stock of books. Imaginative initiatives with history and science encourage pupils to use the library as a valuable source of information. Too few departments understand the value which the library has in stimulating and widening the awareness of higher attainers. The library is under-used during lesson time, partly because it is occasionally used as a classroom.
- 23 Numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics and pupils have opportunities to use these skills in other subjects across the curriculum. Science makes a particular contribution to developing these skills with a good numerical emphasis in the work, for example when pupils draw and interpret line graphs and bar charts.

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

- 24 The curriculum is broad, reasonably balanced throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, and well thought through. The pupils benefit from a good curriculum. All the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are planned for and taught, with a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy across subjects. The curriculum time available at twenty-five one hour lessons each week is appropriate, with additional time for assemblies, registration and tutor sessions. The morning tutor sessions provide time which is not always used to best advantage. Reading and homework diary checks are appropriate, but not consistently undertaken, and some time is currently wasted. The timetable is well conceived with arrangements for sets and mixed ability classes to suit individual subjects. The ten-day timetable is understood and works well, giving increased flexibility for senior managers as they try to respond to the many curriculum initiatives taking place nationwide. The arrangements for setted subjects result in some very large teaching groups. As many as thirty-four pupils are in some Key Stage 3 upper sets, in order to have classes of under twenty for lower-attaining pupils. Staff have opted for these arrangements and pupils are not disadvantaged by them. Group sizes in Key Stage 4 are much smaller; all are below thirty pupils.
- 25 The curriculum time for the three core subjects, English, mathematics and science, in Key Stage 3 is good, providing a firm foundation for GCSE work. ICT is taught through specific lessons as well as in a good range of subjects, ensuring that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Schemes of work in, for example, science, design and technology and English include references to ICT, providing helpful consistent guidance to staff. ICT planning has yet to be embedded into music and mathematics schemes of work, however and the ICT/religious, personal and social education (RPSE) rota results in some classes missing a substantial number of ICT lessons. Drama is planned for effectively throughout the key stage. A second modern language, German, is introduced by reducing the time for French from three to two hours. Modern linguists find this brief introduction to German is insufficient to establish the subject as a GCSE course and it detracts from what can be achieved in French. Few pupils opt for two modern languages at GCSE; there will be no GCSE German group in the next Year 10.
- 26 The option booklet for Key Stage 4 is comprehensive and interesting to the reader. The alternative routes through the available options are very good, an indication of the thought and understanding behind the school's curriculum planning. Messages about subjects are somewhat inconsistent, however, and the presentation is not particularly good. The routes have been reduced from six to four for the coming year, to try to improve each pupil's curriculum balance and because the school has found that routes offering single science were redundant as most pupils opted to take double award science. All pupils take English, mathematics, at least one science, physical education as a GCSE option or as a core subject, a modern foreign language and a technology subject. The last two can be taken as full or short GCSE courses. All pupils then select one to three more GCSE subjects and follow a course in RPSE that comprises three elements: religious education, careers guidance and personal development. This very good structure tries to maximise the pupils' opportunities, at the same time as providing a balanced curriculum. The relatively small size of year group, of just 140 pupils, places constraints on planning in terms of the number of subjects and groups that can be offered. The time allocations are generally sound but shortfalls in a few subjects inhibit the improvements that can be made in pupils' attainment. For example, the pupils opting for two modern languages are only taught for four and a half hours, whereas single linguists have three hours. Time for English is generous at four hours each week, for English language and English literature, but the four and a half hours for the double award science is half an hour less than the recommended time allocation. The pupils who opt for physical education at GCSE miss out on a range of activities that take place in the core course.

- 27 From September 2001, the school intends to offer a new GNVQ ICT course, subject to resources being available, equivalent to four GCSE passes, and a GCSE course in leisure and tourism to give greater vocational depth as well as width to the curriculum. Time allocations are reviewed frequently as the school struggles to fit the curriculum 'quart' into the 'pint pot' of available time.
- 28 Substantial time and effort have been expended by departments in updating their schemes of work. Several are of high quality, for example those for physical education, but others such as music, need further development. New curriculum requirements and examination syllabuses are resulting in thorough reviews of the courses offered, for example in science, as to whether a co-ordinated or modular curriculum should be offered. Schemes of work in design and technology and science are being adapted in the light of curriculum changes.
- 29 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Nearly all the teaching is undertaken in subject areas where the setting strategies provide smaller group sizes. Classroom support is focused on the small target group in Year 7 and the three core subjects in other years. A successful paired reading scheme operates for the weakest pupils in Year 7. A small amount of withdrawal teaching takes place on an individual basis for short periods of focused support.
- 30 The provision, through the RPSE programme, for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The programme is well-structured and very effectively taught by a small team of experienced teachers who address issues such as bullying and respect for others in a very professional and sensitive way. The course meets the statutory requirements for drugs awareness and sex education. Careers education begins through this programme in Year 7, and very effective support and guidance are given extensively from Year 9. This leads through to an effective work experience programme in Key Stage 4.
- 31 A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, particularly in physical education where several teams are trained each term. The only regular music activities currently available are a choir and some peripatetic music lessons. However, there is an annual stage production and various other concerts and events are put on during the course of the year. Pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and some subjects, such as art, design and technology, and science, offer club activities. Pupils would benefit from further subject clubs, for example in mathematics. A very good range of visits is provided, with field-work in geography, visits abroad for modern foreign languages, to local places of interest for history and science, to galleries for art, and to theatres for English. An activities week at the end of the summer term for Years 7, 8 and 9 coincides with work experience for Year 10 pupils, enabling all staff to be involved in planning and running a great range of interesting activities. Pupils opt for events from a substantial list. Trips to Paris, the Peak District and to a multi-activity centre in Cornwall are offered as well as cycling journeys nearer to home. The evidence of the work of mural painting groups can be seen throughout the school. These activities provide very good additional curriculum experiences for the pupils.
- 32 Equality of opportunity is provided for all pupils, with a good differentiated curriculum planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. The pupils choose from the range of options, but guidance is provided to ensure that expectations are realistic and realisable. The school does not analyse data in order to relate pupils' achievements to their background, but no evidence was apparent that any group was discriminated against. The redrafted equal opportunities policy is clear and helpful, providing a back-cloth for curriculum decisions and innovations.

- 33 In the last report five years ago, National Curriculum requirements were not met in design and technology and in ICT; they are now. Curriculum planning was inconsistent at that time, but it is now good in most subjects, with a clear understanding of where further improvements are needed in a few schemes of work. Visits, activities and clubs are as strong now as they were in 1996, with the exception of music. Overall good progress has been made since the last report, with substantial further developments planned.
- 34 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with good provision being made in each of the separate aspects.
- 35 Opportunities for spiritual development have been improved since the last inspection through careful planning across the curriculum. Planned opportunities now occur in many subjects. For example, when on a Year 9 history visit to the World War One cemeteries in Ypres, pupils are encouraged to lay crosses on a grave of their choice and reflect on the lives of the soldiers. Geography provides pupils with the opportunity to reflect on the beauty of nature, and physical processes such as volcanic eruptions. All pupils attend at least two assemblies each week but the school still does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of corporate worship for every pupil.
- 36 Opportunities for moral development are good with pupils showing clear awareness of right and wrong. Many chances to consider moral issues are presented to pupils through the curriculum. As part of their history course, Year 10 pupils study twentieth century America and discuss racism and slavery. In geography, teachers guide pupils to ensure they get a balanced view when discussing topics such as factory farming and nuclear power. Pupils, elected to be prefects, have good opportunities to exercise their moral judgements.
- 37 Social development is well promoted and reflected in the calm and friendly ethos of the school. Opportunities are provided in physical education for pupils to work together and encourage each other to do well. In drama lessons pupils are encouraged to work together in groups. The annual musical presentation also provides very good opportunities for pupils to work together and support each other. The residential visits make a major contribution to pupils' social development, as does the paired reading scheme for those who are involved. In French and German, opportunities are used well through role play, working in pairs and collaborative tasks. Membership of the school council provides additional opportunities to take on responsibility and work co-operatively.
- 38 Opportunities for pupils' cultural development are planned and provided across the curriculum. The school council sponsors, and is in contact with, children from Belarus. A good range of outings and residential trips is offered to pupils. These include visits to Ypres in history, to France in modern languages, and various art galleries and theatres through art and English. Foreign exchanges offer both social and cultural development opportunities. A well-attended multi-cultural concert was held last year to celebrate the new millennium.

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

- 39 The child protection policies and procedures which are in place are very good and comply with locally agreed procedures. The designated teacher with responsibility for child protection is well known by staff and has recently received further training to ensure that her knowledge and understanding of the issues are up to date. Child protection is a frequent item on the agenda for year team meetings so that form tutors are kept aware of any issues. This aspect of the school's systems of care is very good.

- 40 Arrangements for health and safety are appropriate. The safety and security of the site are well monitored and visitors to the site, such as contractors, are well supervised. The system of other visitors signing in and out and being supplied with an official visitors badge is good but is not consistently used. The school has a large number of qualified first aiders and the system for recording incidents is good. The school promotes behaviour which is free from harassment and bullying through the teaching of the RPSE programme and has clear policies on this aspect. The effectiveness of the school's procedures is evident in the very pleasant atmosphere in the school and the absence of such incidents.
- 41 Liaison with feeder primary schools is good. The head of Year 7 remains in that post so that the primary schools have a stable link-person to whom they can relate. Good relationships have been built up through this, and the induction of new pupils at the start of the school year is good.
- 42 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Twice-yearly assessments of effort and attainment contribute to the developing database of information held on each pupil. Teacher assessment of National Curriculum levels in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science relate closely to the results of the testing at the end of Year 9. In other subjects of the curriculum, where there is no national testing, assessments have only been internally moderated and, in some instances, are over-estimations of what pupils have achieved. Assessments in Key Stage 4 are informed by a great deal of experience and national documentation. They are generally much more accurate, and predicted outcomes closely match the examination results achieved. For the last three years the school has subscribed to a project which tests pupils early in Year 10, and then, based upon nationwide experience, suggests the potential examination success. This year the school has joined a similar project for Key Stage 3. This assessment data is used well to provide reports to parents, to inform the setting procedures, and to provide the basis for monitoring pupils' progress. In Year 7, it is used to help identify a group of pupils who are low attaining or have significant learning difficulties in order that support can be efficiently targeted.
- 43 The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress and personal development are very good. Pupils are very well known by their form tutors, because they move through the school together. The tutor teams are very well managed. Regular meetings between heads of year and the assistant head with responsibility for pastoral care, and between heads of year and tutor teams, ensure that everyone is kept fully informed. The strong form and tutor system is a significant factor in the caring ethos of the school. All information about academic work and personal development is coordinated by the form tutors. Pupil progress is monitored and supported within subjects through the annual discussion and agreeing of short term targets. Pupils' overall progress is monitored and supported by the annual curriculum reviews to which parents are also invited. Previous targets are reviewed and new ones set. The value of these targets and the form in which they are expressed are the subject of current development. Form tutors are in a very good position to identify and target potential under-achievers or aspects of behaviour which give cause for concern. A mentoring system for Year 11 pupils, judged to be at risk of under-achieving, is good. The rewards system, introduced throughout the school at the start of the present school year, is proving extremely effective. All the pupils, right up to those in Year 11, have worked hard to receive their commendations and they take a pride in their achievements. Good guidance is provided to pupils and parents, at the appropriate stages, for Key Stage 4 and post-16 option choices.
- 44 Supervision of pupils' conduct throughout the school is satisfactory. Expectations of good behaviour are high and, on the whole, pupils live up to this. An important instance of where they do not is in the matter of litter which is left on the field by pupils who have eaten their lunch there in fine weather. This is a potential hazard for subsequent athletic and games activities.

As a result of a specific grant, the school has set up and staffed an effective study support centre. Those pupils whose behaviour might otherwise have resulted in a fixed-term exclusion are sent to the centre. In the centre, they work under close supervision on the subjects that they would normally be following. They also receive counselling to address both the immediate cause of their referral and strategies they might use to avoid future attendance. Initial indications are that this has both significantly reduced the number of exclusions and reduced the number of repeated offences.

- 45 A county-wide screening process, on entry to the school, identifies pupils with significant weaknesses in reading and comprehension. Further diagnostic testing of these pupils identifies those who might most benefit from the paired reading scheme. Pupils on the special educational needs register have, when appropriate, IEPs. The format of these has recently been changed in an attempt to make them easier for subject teachers to use. Subject teachers are clearly aware of the IEPs and they generally use them well in their planning. Teachers and support staff work closely together to the benefit of pupils needing the support. Targets are becoming more pupil-specific. While there is a clear intention to bring the IEP and the school target setting process together, for pupils with special educational needs, the two systems do not yet coincide. The need to review short-term IEP targets more frequently than the six-monthly school target review but without unduly increasing teachers' workload, remains to be resolved. Outside agencies, for example the county behavioural support service, are used well in both directly supporting individual pupils and, more recently, helping their teachers to understand and use appropriate strategies.
- 46 Since the previous report the school had made good improvements in what were key issues in the support of pupils with special educational needs and in making assessments related to National Curriculum levels.

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

- 47 Overall, the school has good links with its parents. At the parents' meeting and in the questionnaire returns, parents' views varied. Most were happy with the school, in particular the quality of teaching, the high expectations the school set for pupils' achievement and the actual progress their children make. However, some expressed concerns about the information they receive on their children's progress and the arrangements for homework. They also felt that the school did not work closely enough with parents.
- 48 The school has worked hard in the past few years to foster useful partnerships with all of its parents. A good range of written information is now provided, including a newly-produced school prospectus and a well-presented governor's annual report. Regular newsletters and calendars are issued, as well as very useful booklets for each year group, describing what pupils will be learning in all subjects that year. Once a year, parents receive a short, informative interim report giving grades for their children's effort and attainment. Pupils' annual reports give grades for progress, record National Curriculum levels and set targets for each subject. However, the accompanying text does not always give parents a clear enough picture on the progress their children are making in that subject. Parents' attendance at curriculum review meetings is very good and supports teacher's efforts well. The parents of children who have special educational needs are kept regularly and well informed on progress and developments. They are fully involved in annual reviews of children with statements of need. A thriving parent-teacher association supports the school well. A well-organised committee arranges regular fundraising and social events, and provides refreshments at school concerts and meetings for parents. Almost all parents have signed the home-school agreement and a small group of them, together with some pupils, were fully involved in the writing of the document.

- 49 Parents support pupils' efforts in physical education by providing transport to games and matches outside school hours. They support modern languages well by participating in the exchange projects, by welcoming foreign pupils into their homes. Parental support for their children's learning through the use of the homework diaries, however, is inconsistent. These planners are meant, in part, as a means of communication between parents and teachers. They are not well used in recording homework or thoroughly checked by staff. Many seen during the inspection lacked regular parental signatures.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 50 The headteacher was appointed with a mandate to develop a number of key areas of management identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection. A good start had already been made on improvement, and the headteacher has shown considerable skill and commitment in taking development forward significantly. The school now has a very clear sense of educational direction, underpinned by excellent strategic planning and very good systems for monitoring, evaluation and review.
- 51 The headteacher's approach to leadership is based on the creation of a 'team' ethic, with consultation and shared vision, rather than relying on individual flair as a key feature. The school leadership team of head, deputy and three assistant heads, is a cohesive and very effective group. It has been extended, providing a much improved gender balance in senior management, and strengthened by the recent appointment of an assistant headteacher with responsibility for the development of teaching and learning. The team is fully committed to the school's mission of providing for pupils' academic and personal development through a structured, caring and supportive environment. Central to achieving this has been the drive to improve standards, particularly at Key Stage 4, through improved monitoring of teaching. A number of other initiatives have been introduced in the drive for greater effectiveness. Strategic planning is excellent: the process involves consultation with staff and governors and links with the county's overall priorities. The resulting school improvement plan is a detailed and very well-focused document indicating objectives, action required to meet them and criteria for success. The plan includes key development priorities from all subject departments. Support for staff has been enhanced by the school's achieving Investors in People status and its involvement in the innovative Norfolk Well-being Project.
- 52 The quality of leadership and management in subject departments is good overall, but ranges from excellent in English and very good in design and technology and modern languages, to satisfactory with some weaknesses in mathematics and unsatisfactory in music. The learning support department is well managed, with the limited support available being carefully focused on areas of greatest need. There is insufficient time made available for the co-ordinator to meet regularly with the support team to monitor the impact of the support they are giving. Line management for subjects has been restructured this year, resulting in much-improved communication between senior and middle management and more effective support for subject heads, though the full benefit has yet to be realised in all areas. The school's aims, which were revised following the appointment of the headteacher, strike an appropriate balance between academic, personal, moral and social themes, with due prominence given to pupils fulfilling their academic potential. The school is making good progress in achieving its aims, notably those concerned with pupils' personal and social development. In the crucial area of their academic development, review and target-setting are now embedded in school practice, as are the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Results of this year's public examinations, and the extent to which they improve on last year's, will be key indicators of progress. The school predicts significantly better results.

- 53 The governing body is highly committed to the school and plays a very effective role in helping shape its educational direction through its extensive involvement in strategic planning and review. Through an efficient committee structure, governors closely oversee and monitor key areas such as the curriculum and finance. The curriculum committee regularly receives reports from heads of department. The recent strengthening of the role of governors linked to subject and special needs departments has further improved governors' awareness of school issues. It has increased their ability to make informed and constructive comment on progress towards strategic and academic targets. The governors fully understand their statutory duties and fulfil them very effectively. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and fully share its aspirations towards improvement. It was, in part, their response to the previous inspection that brought about much of the improvement in leadership and management of the school.
- 54 A key priority in the headteacher's and leadership team's vision for the school has been staff development. This has been initiated partly through strategies designed to raise morale and commitment, and by a calculated investment in high-quality opportunities for the professional development of staff. These give departments regular times to meet and pursue agendas for practical improvement in teaching and learning. They are now firmly established in departments' work. Teaching is regularly monitored and evaluated. In the best instances, this has proved highly effective in raising standards, but the one in three lessons seen during the inspection which still contain shortcomings, indicate that there is still scope for improvement in the consistency of teaching. The very good work done on establishing systems for evaluation and monitoring has supported the introduction of very good strategies for performance management. The headteacher's performance management review was successfully completed. The school undertook a full self-review, with assistance from the LEA, in the Autumn of 2000. This was an exhaustive and high-quality exercise which illustrates well the culture of self-evaluation, desire to improve and lack of complacency which now characterises the school.
- 55 The school has set itself appropriate priorities for development, with the pursuit of higher academic standards and the improvement of pupils' skills of literacy and numeracy well to the fore. The already very good pastoral structure is to be thoroughly reviewed and the development plan identifies and focuses on improvement in the learning environment and outside facilities. Planning priorities are very well elaborated into action targets for named responsible staff, and clear criteria for success against costings and timescales are established. The school's review of its development plan for 2000-2001 indicated a high level of success, with goals such as language college status unfulfilled for reasons outside the school's control.
- 56 There is a high level of shared commitment to success in the whole-school community. There is committed leadership, very good support from governors and the LEA, improved staff morale and focus on the core business of raising standards. The school has made significant progress in the quality of its leadership and the effectiveness of its management since the last inspection and has the capacity for further improvement.
- 57 Financial planning is very good. The budget is carefully matched to the school development plan, and spending is thoroughly checked and analysed by both the headteacher and the finance committee of governors. The system ensures that the excellent development plan is served by the budget rather than vice versa. Priorities are made clear, and decisions about them made when the actual budget is known. This resulted in very good handling of the financial implications of the decision to standardise the intake number of pupils, and more recently in a quick response to an unexpected shortfall in funding. Specific grants have been very well and appropriately used, for instance to extend provision for pupils with special educational needs and to provide a study support centre for pupils at risk of exclusion. The school has sought to get the best value for money rather than the cheapest possible provision, as evidenced in decisions about catering



and the far-sighted introduction of a fortnightly staff development lesson for almost all departments. Administration is efficient, making good use of new technology and giving effective support to teachers so that they can get on with their work in the classroom. There has been no formal external audit of the school's finances for four years.

- 58 The school has developed very good procedures for the induction of teachers new to the school, including an expanding provision for training new teachers. Staff development is well-structured, and organised with the fortnightly opportunity to meet as a subject team being particularly innovative and beneficial. The provision of staffing is satisfactory overall, but the subject specialism balance within the science team is not right and they have insufficient technical support. The current provision of teaching support hours is broadly average for the size of the school.
- 59 Accommodation is satisfactory, with high quality provision in the new buildings, notably for drama, modern foreign languages and religious education. However, the dispersed nature of the accommodation for science and design and technology, the shortage of preparation areas for the isolated science laboratory, and the isolation of each of the classrooms for mathematics, are not conducive to teachers working as a team and easily sharing good practice.
- 60 Resources are satisfactory. There has been a significant increase in the provision of ICT equipment, but more is still required. In design and technology, the good provision of new technology contrasts with the ageing stock of the commoner items. Resources for English and religious education are good.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61 The school has a very good development plan with appropriate priorities for its present stage of development. This should continue to be implemented. In addition, to improve further standards and the quality of education, the governors and school should:

- (1) address the current underachievement in science in Key stage 4 and in music  
(paras;7,18,19,86,89,91,146,148,150)
- (2) use the outcomes of monitoring to improve the weaker elements of teaching  
(paras;9,17,18,20,22,54,68,69,70,74,78,82,88,90,92,95,105,110,111,113,117,119,121,123,125,141,143,157,161)
- (3) work with the LEA to bring about improvement in the accommodation for science, design and technology and mathematics which would be of benefit to the pupils and their achievement  
(paras;59,82,91,103)

In addition, the governors and school should consider addressing the following less important, but significant, issues in their action plan: meet statutory requirements concerning daily worship (para 35); review curriculum time for ICT, science, German and PE (paras25,26,121,132,137,155); address inconsistencies of practice (paras 24,49); look at moderation of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments (paras 42); improve the quality of targets set and annual report progress information (paras 43,45,48); provide planned time for the SENCO and classroom support assistants to meet (para 52)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	120
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	25	38	29	3	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
Number of pupils on the school's roll	709
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	68

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	72

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	7.7

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.04
National comparative data	1.1

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	70	68	138

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	50	60	58
	Girls	61	54	48
	Total	111	114	106
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (76)	83 (79)	77 (66)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (44)	62 (55)	41 (27)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	48	60	52
	Girls	60	55	52
	Total	108	115	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (78)	84 (87)	76 (78)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	43 (43)	67 (52)	39 (31)
	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	67	62	129

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	33	62	64
	Girls	31	59	59
	Total	64	121	123
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	50 (56)	94 (98)	95 (99)
	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	40
	National	38.4

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

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	709
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	12	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	42
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	168

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.8
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	24.9
Key Stage 4	20.1

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1708827
Total expenditure	1729189
Expenditure per pupil	2439
Balance brought forward from previous year	22072
Balance carried forward to next year	1710

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	712
Number of questionnaires returned	206

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	53	11	5	1
My child is making good progress in school.	35	55	5	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	55	12	7	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	53	20	8	2
The teaching is good.	23	60	7	2	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	45	26	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	44	12	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	47	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	24	46	21	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	19	48	15	10	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	57	10	4	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	46	9	2	20

### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

Twenty-six parents attended the meeting. The parents felt that the head was effective and approachable. They felt that teaching was generally very good, that their children were helped to achieve, and that they were well informed about progress. Extra curricular activities were good, particularly activities week, but there was little music. The school was approachable and welcoming, promoted good values and provided good opportunities to take responsibility. Homework was a concern - too much or too little - but also inconsistencies in its setting. Even where the overall responses were positive, parents identified differences between teachers in their responses and attitudes.

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Thirty parents made additional comments on their questionnaire returns. Three of these offered wholly positive responses to the school and two explained that it was too early for them to answer all questions. Homework was the

most common theme with a feeling that there was too much. Comments on teaching were divided between those who felt it to be good and those who did not. There was a balance in parents' comments on the care provided and upon attitudes being developed. A few respondents had found it hard to get beyond the office staff and a smaller number were critical of the headteacher's personal style. The remaining comments, often anecdotal, were made by individuals and they formed no particular pattern.



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

### **ENGLISH**

- 62 Results, in the national tests in English at the end of Year 9, have been consistent over the last three years. In 2000, they were well above national average and above those for similar schools. Pupils' results were similar to those in science, but below those in mathematics. Teacher assessments were highly accurate. Whilst boys performed less well than girls, they outperformed girls in each of the previous three years.
- 63 The standards of work of pupils currently in Year 9 are likewise well above national average. They are strongest in reading and analysing information which they are presented with, their general competence and confidence in oral work, and writing well-structured pieces of work in varied styles, produced after redrafting. These include very good work in response to literature. Some pupils are less successful in class discussion, where they are too passive and expect too little of themselves. In Years 7 and 8, first drafts of work tend to be too untidy and inaccurate, and there is too little extended writing.
- 64 When compared to their earlier attainment, pupils' achievement is good. When they enter the school in Year 7 standards have been rising and are above national average. From this base line, pupils made good progress because of a strong focus on reading, and the teaching of very good strategies for recognising what a task demands in terms of style and content, and planning a suitable response. For instance, a lower-attaining class made very good progress in understanding the conventions of a word-processed business letter and why they would differ from a handwritten version, when the teacher made them discuss layout and errors in such a letter. A higher-attaining group made very good progress in understanding the importance of layout, language, impact, and awareness of the potential audience when they planned advertising leaflets, eventually to be completed on computer. Pupils of average attainment make good progress in writing to the point and with authority. But, too often, their strong general statements about issues or characters are not supported by sufficiently precise explanation or detail, and there is little variety in their sentence construction.
- 65 English results at GCSE have improved since the last inspection, and are now a little above national average. In 2000, the number of pupils achieving the highest, A\*/A, grades in both examinations was above the national average, largely because of the strong performance by boys. This represents very good achievement, since only a small proportion of the same pupils reached high levels in their end of Year 9 national tests. In 2000, boys overall did as well as the girls and therefore much better than boys nationally. The school entered a higher than average proportion of pupils for English literature, and candidates did better in literature than in most other subjects, including English language. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C in English language has been rising for the last three years, and there has been a significant increase in those gaining A\*-C grades in English literature during the same period. In both examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining at least grade G has remained above national average for the last three years.
- 66 Standards are above average at the end of Year 11. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. High-attaining pupils write with composure, showing skills of empathy, insight, critical analysis, or creating emotion, as appropriate. They benefit from being taught precisely how to demonstrate their ability, and from the imaginative topics encouraged by teachers. Good examples included analysing features of rap poetry, a critique of the martial arts genre, and a creative ending to *The Monkey's Paw* - a horror story. Average-attaining pupils respond particularly well to literature: ideas, though sometimes flawed in expression, are structured and pertinent. Lower-attaining pupils are comfortable writing at length. Essays do not

deteriorate, because structure is sound and language flows. For example, an essay on superstitions began, 'Strictly speaking my family follow no real superstition but do abide by some', before going on to examine and explain examples. Pupils' skills are weaker in note-taking, where too much superficial and mundane detail is included. This was not the case in a very well taught lower-attaining Year 10 class where thoughtful questioning by the teacher encouraged sensitive ideas, and a pupil wrote (of a photograph of Princess Diana), 'Her eyes fix you, but they are gentle'.

- 67 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers and pupils are aware of their needs, and involved in setting targets for improvement. Strategies such as seating and grouping arrangements, praise, and finding ways to raise pupils' confidence and motivation by giving them chances genuinely to succeed, are well and sensitively used. The ideas and explanations of two articulate Year 10 boys were of benefit to a class studying *Julius Caesar*. The teacher then ensured that word prompts and a guiding framework improved the quality of their written work.
- 68 The teaching observed was good overall. In lessons observed during the inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching, and a third of lessons were very good. A scrutiny of files suggests that teaching is most effective in Years 9 to 11, where pupils learn to do their best within a structure which is tightly geared to the demands of national tests and examinations. This is supported by very good marking and teacher comment, from which pupils understand not only what has been achieved and how, but where improvements could be made. Thus, exceptional work by a Year 9 pupil was praised, but detailed suggestions for better strategies on a future occasion followed. Marking in Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory, but there is too much inconsistency in its depth and detail, and the level of correction within it. So pupils have a less clear idea of their level of achievement and what to concentrate on next.
- 69 In all lessons pupils know what the content and purpose of the lesson is because teachers plan thoroughly, and explain the objectives of a lesson and how they relate to previous work or exam requirements. A repeated relative weakness occurs when pupils work on longer-term written tasks in the second half of lessons. The teacher of a higher attaining GCSE class gave very good advice to individuals about their work during one such session, but did not impose sufficient limit on time or noise level on the rest of the class. As a result, pleasant and intelligent chatter distracted a third of the class. When appropriate, lessons have a very good focus on basic skills. As a result, pupils learn to use and improve their close reading skills, and to write well-structured and linked prose in a style suited to purpose. Whilst pupils get good amounts of work done in most lessons, the pace of too many is unvarying, so that important issues do not always get sufficient focus or highlighting. In a good lesson pupils learned how to recognize emotive language by studying stimulating examples by President Reagan, Martin Luther King and Earl Spencer. Their understanding of how and why these techniques worked was, however, imprecise and too generalised. Pupils' learning is increased by the good access to computers, well used to produce, for example, haikus in Year 7, promotional leaflets in Year 9, and media work in Year 10.
- 70 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They are well organised, and conscientious about written work, although too few (especially in earlier years) take sufficient care and pride in the condition and appearance of work in their exercise books. In direct contrast, final versions of work for files or display usually show considerable care. Whilst the majority of pupils are studious and listen well, attitudes in several lessons observed, and often amongst older pupils, were too variable. Up to a third of pupils in some classes can show a determination not to get involved in class discussion, a minority treating directed questions from the teacher as an intrusion into their privacy. On occasion there is deliberate inattention, mildly disruptive behaviour, or an unwillingness to work quietly at written tasks when expected to do so. Whilst teachers show skill in handling difficult pupils, they are not consistent or insistent enough when dealing with others. Nonetheless relationships with teachers are good, and the vast majority of pupils work well together in pairs and groups.

- 71 There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Strengths have been sustained, whilst English literature GCSE results, boys' achievement, the highest grade GCSE results, and the use of computers have improved. Good quality rooms and resources are available; the appreciation of them is evident in the high standard of pupils' work on display in corridors and classrooms. The department is extremely well organised, evidenced by the overall quality of paperwork and assessment systems, and the shared drive for, and commitment to, higher standards. The strong sense of team spirit and shared responsibility stems from the excellent leadership of the head of department, and the desire of all English teachers to do what is best for the pupils. Ambitious future targets have been set; the department has the capacity to reach them.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 72 Results in mathematics, in the national tests at the end of Year 9, have shown an overall upward trend broadly in line with the national trend. In 2000, they were well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Pupils' performance in mathematics was better than that in English and science. On average over the last three years, results have been well above the national average and boys have performed better than girls by a wider margin than that nationally.
- 73 The evidence of the pupils' work and the lessons observed showed that the standard of work attained at the end of Year 9 is above the national average. Results in end of key stage tests are higher because of the effective way in which pupils are prepared for them. Pupils are strong in algebra. Higher-attaining pupils factorise quadratic equations while average pupils solve simple equations. Lower-attaining pupils understand the use of letters in procedures for LOGO. Pupils are less successful in using and applying their mathematics and in investigating within mathematics itself.
- 74 When pupils enter the school in Year 7, the standards they have attained in mathematics are above the national average. In relation to these prior levels of attainment, Key Stage 3 pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is better in Years 8 and 9, where they are taught in ability groups, than in Year 7, where the work does not always sufficiently cater for the range of abilities within the class.
- 75 GCSE results in mathematics have risen slightly since the last inspection but dropped slightly in 2000. In 2000, the results were broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C at GCSE has shown a slight upward trend over time but fell slightly in 2000. The proportion gaining at least grade G was very high. Pupils made relatively better progress in mathematics than in their other subjects. Boys outperformed girls, unlike nationally, and both boys' and girls' results were above the national average.
- 76 The standards of work of pupils currently in Year 11 are above the national expectation. Higher-attaining pupils have the opportunity to enter for GCSE statistics. They find maximum and minimum values of functions. Average pupils use algebraic methods to solve simultaneous equations and lower-attaining pupils draw and use conversion graphs. When compared with the attainment of these pupils at the beginning of the key stage, their achievement is satisfactory.
- 77 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution through their work, mostly supporting statemented pupils. The setting arrangements for mathematics contribute to the satisfactory achievement of pupils with special educational needs or very high ability.
- 78 Overall, the teaching observed was satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is a strength and enables them to give clear explanations. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, the teacher gave very

clear explanations of mean, mode and median, illustrated by an appropriate set of numbers, which enabled the pupils to gain a good understanding of the different types of average. Effective lesson planning is also a strength and most lessons build suitably on pupils' previous learning experiences. In a Year 10 lesson for higher-attaining pupils, the lesson started with a quick revision of the angle facts which would be needed for the main part of the lesson on similarity. In a Year 8 lesson for average pupils, an introductory activity on cancelling fractions reminded them of the skills they would need for the main part of the lesson on probabilities, so that their learning was more effective. Occasionally, for some pupils in Year 7, too much time is spent revisiting work which they have mastered earlier and this limits their rate of progress. Teachers use time within the 45

- 79 lesson efficiently, often planning a three-part lesson, as in a Year 10 lesson for lower-attaining pupils on bearings. This has a positive impact on the rate at which pupils learn. A Year 8 lesson for lower-attaining pupils used a range of suitably motivating practical activities on probability to engage pupils' interest and aid their learning. Overall, however, the range of teaching styles observed was limited.
- 80 As a result of the satisfactory teaching, pupils' learning is also satisfactory. Pupils work at a good pace, as in a Year 9 lesson where higher-attaining pupils were told how long they had to complete a task. This helped to focus their attention and aided progress. Pupils mostly try hard and make intellectual effort, as in a Year 10 lesson where pupils were learning to transform the subject of a formula. Pupils have opportunities to develop their literacy skills. They learn to use LOGO and spreadsheets but have limited opportunities to use ICT to enhance their other learning in mathematics.
- 81 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Pupils are mostly interested in their work and keen to succeed. Only occasionally, where behaviour management strategies are not totally secure, does lack of motivation result in groups of pupils who talk loudly, adversely affecting their own and others' learning. The quality of relationships is a particular strength.
- 82 The department's improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The strengths noted in the previous report in terms of end of key stage results have been sustained. Pupils in Key Stage 3 now have information twice a year about their attainment in terms of National Curriculum levels.
- 83 Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory overall but with some shortcomings. The day-to-day running of the department is sound. Monitoring of the work of the department is underdeveloped, especially the monitoring of standards, the quality of teaching, the quality of marking and ensuring that schemes of work are being implemented. There is inconsistency in assessment practice. The setting of pupils from Year 8 onwards has a positive impact on pupils' achievement as does the quality of the schemes of work at Key Stage 4. The accommodation, in demountables, is sometimes cramped and does not help the sharing of good practice.

## SCIENCE

- 84 In national tests at the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment in 2000 was well above the national average, and above the standard attained by pupils in similar schools. Standards have risen substantially over the past three years. Pupils' science results were as high as in English, but lower than in mathematics in 2000. Boys' attainment was a little higher than that of girls, and to a slightly greater extent than was seen nationally.

- 85 Pupils' work seen in lessons and in a sample made available showed that the standards now are above expectations. Accurate, detailed notes kept by most fourteen year-old pupils, once thoroughly revised, are likely to result in well above average standards being attained in the end of key stage tests. Work is of good quality in each of the four science attainment targets. When pupils enter the school in Year 7, the standards they have attained in science are broadly average. In relation to these prior levels of attainment, pupils' progress and achievement as they move through into Year 9 are good.
- 86 In the dual award science GCSE examinations, average standards were attained in 2000 compared with national figures for all schools. Overall, 48 per cent attained a grade in the range A\*-C. This figure is significantly lower than in the two previous years and lower than that expected using prior test data. Ninety eight per cent achieved a grade in the range A\*-G and the small number not entered gained a Certificate of Achievement in science. Results in science, taking account of attainment nationally, were below those achieved by the same pupils in mathematics and English.
- 87 Standards currently, as seen in lessons for Year 10 pupils and in a sample of work for Years 10 and 11, are similar to those attained in 2000. Module tests, course work and teachers' assessments indicate that GCSE results should improve slightly in 2001. The photocopied sample of pupils' work - the Year 11 pupils needed their notes for GCSE revision - indicate that an appropriate emphasis is given to investigative science. In the sample seen, however, the depth of work in biological aspects of modules was much greater than in other areas, particularly the physics. The pupils' module notes on biological aspects included more explanation, and interesting anecdotal detail, all of which help pupils to understand and achieve. Numerical work was often strong, with a good emphasis on the use of graphs and tabulation of results. Marking was too variable, however. The work in some books was marked in detail, whereas in others, little of the work was marked. An overview sentence, written to value the pupils' efforts, was useful but some were difficult to read because of poor handwriting. These overview statements were of little value, however, where the pupils' work had not been thoroughly read and errors had been missed. Lower attainers' work was sometimes disorganised and unfinished. The missing work was often the conclusion to an experiment, where results should have been interpreted, enabling pupils to understand reasons for events taking place. Achievement overall is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4, particularly for lower attainers and in aspects of the physical sciences.
- 88 The achievements of pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented reflected the quality of teaching in each class. Their progress was satisfactory in Key Stage 3, but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4.
- 89 Teaching was satisfactory in Key Stage 3, resulting in effective learning for the pupils, but ranged between excellent and unsatisfactory. Significant strengths included clear learning intentions for the lesson being shared with pupils, providing detailed notes, and thorough preparation for the Year 9 national tests. Relationships with the pupils were often good. Where an emphasis was given to explaining technical vocabulary, pupils' interest was retained and their learning was effective. Pupils knew what was required to achieve each National Curriculum level in investigative science. Weaknesses often included the inverse of the strengths, for example, teachers did not ensure that pupils understood the technical terms used. Teacher talk dominated in some lessons with insufficient opportunity for pupils to question and discuss issues. In one or two lessons, pupils were noisy and inattentive and teachers struggled to retain their interest, mainly because work was not well explained or appropriate. Learning was usually satisfactory or better because pupils applied themselves, even when teaching was mundane.

- 90 In Key Stage 4 the range in the quality of teaching observed was similar to that in Key Stage 3, between excellent and unsatisfactory, but the overall quality was unsatisfactory. The learning of the pupils was also unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in teaching. Strengths and weaknesses were similar to those seen in Key Stage 3. The anecdotal and interesting biology seen in the pupils' work was apparent in some lessons - only biological aspects are taught in Year 10 in the summer term. In an example of excellent practice, where pupils were taught how animals adapt to their environment, good humour ensured pupils' attention was caught and held. The pace of work was demanding and the tasks challenging, with tight timescales for each activity. As part of the lesson, pupils drew their own animals that exemplified how they had adapted to particular climatic conditions, and then explained their answers to their critical peers. The teacher was aware of pupils' special educational needs and encouraged them to work towards targets within their individual education plans. Learning was excellent in this very well planned and structured lesson. A key weakness in other lessons was the quality of explanation. The work was not made sufficiently interesting to the pupils, with the result that they made insufficient progress. Not enough account was taken of pupils' prior learning and abilities, which resulted in a loss of motivation.
- 91 Pupils' attitudes to learning were satisfactory overall, across the school. Their behaviour was also satisfactory. In the best taught lessons, they co-operated and strove for success, and in some well-motivated classes, effort and good behaviour were maintained even when work was not well explained. In a few classes, mainly smaller groups of lower attaining pupils, pupils were silly and noisy, and behaviour was unacceptable.
- 92 Since the last report, standards at GCSE have fallen, but Key Stage 3 standards have improved significantly. Investigative science is now much better taught, and the use of ICT in science is established. Data-logging and the use of computers for research are embedded in schemes of work and teachers are using this equipment effectively. The teaching quality is better in Key Stage 3, but worse in Key Stage 4. Staffing problems referred to five years ago are more severe today. The school had difficulty finding teachers to cover for maternity leave in recent years, which has affected the pupils' achievements and, although currently fully staffed, there is a poor balance of science expertise amongst the team. The team have very good expertise in biology, but insufficient in physics and chemistry. The accommodation, with a distant temporary laboratory and inadequate preparation area, is unsatisfactory. This situation is compounded by the presence of only one technician, who is very efficient and effective, to service the needs of over one hundred lessons each week, spread over five laboratories and occasional lessons in classrooms. The department is, however, making good progress with the staffing and accommodation resources that it has, as a result of the good leadership and management of the department. The development plan is thorough and detailed, focusing on teaching and learning. The fortnightly staff development lesson is very well used. The current focus on coursework and examination preparation for Key Stage 4 is good and helpful, and likely to lead to improved examination success. The presence of some excellent teaching within the department also provides exemplars for others to emulate. A programme of lesson observation and evaluation is taking place. Progress since the last report has been good in many areas, but the teaching and achievement issues in Key Stage 4 mean that overall progress has been unsatisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 93 Teacher assessments of pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in 2000 showed attainment of the majority to be below expectation. The evidence gathered in the inspection, of pupils currently in Year 9, showed standards to be broadly in line with the expected standard for their age. There are particular strengths in the way pupils write and talk about artists' work. They speak with confidence when expressing their thoughts and opinions and show an awareness of the

different contexts and major influences on individual artists' work. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of artists' work underpins their drawing, painting and much of their other practical work. However, the work of a minority does not reflect the same standard. Sometimes pupils lose the concentration needed to improve their work and this leads to restless behaviour and failure to complete the task adequately. The quality of work done in sketchbooks is variable and in Year 9, not all pupils use them. There are some good examples of carefully completed and imaginatively presented work in Years 7 and 8. Pupils in these classes are inspired and encouraged by what others in their class achieve and this helps raise their expectations and rate of progress. The majority of pupils, when they enter the school, have underdeveloped skills and a high proportion have very limited experiences of using different materials. By the end of Year 7, they achieve the standards expected for their age. High quality work was produced by one class where they used computers to make changes to their photographs and observations of landscape. By the end of Year 9, a significant number achieve standards above expectation. Achievement, overall, is good.

- 94 In recent years, GCSE results have been above the average. Pupils generally do better in the art examinations than in their other subjects. In 2000, the results were broadly in line with the national average. They showed a spread of attainment, including several higher A and A\* grades. There are similar predictions for the current Year 11. No Year 11 classes were seen during the inspection, although the work in portfolios and on display spanned the full range of attainment, including some work of outstanding quality. In Year 10 standards are broadly average, although from the work seen, and from discussions with pupils, standards are rising and results could be higher in 2002. Pupils have made up for lost time and recovered from the variable provision they experienced in Key Stage 3, caused by several changes in staffing. They confidently expressed their opinions, about their own and others' work, and had a good understanding of how visual research could be developed and adapted to realise a personal response. Most used sketchbooks well and presented work imaginatively. Some pupils thoughtfully and critically reflected on the differences between past and contemporary cultures, and applied their developing understanding of art to aspects of their own work. Some pupils were able to apply a high level of intellectual rigour to their practical work and make independent decisions when selecting different materials and methods of working. The achievement of these pupils is good.
- 95 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. They benefit from one-to-one discussions with teachers and from their questions - framed in ways that challenge them. In examination classes, these pupils achieve well.
- 96 Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are experienced and have good knowledge and expertise in the subject. These have been used very effectively to improve pupils' contextual understanding of art and artists' work. In Year 10 there are signs that this is having a very positive impact on pupils' practical work. However, in Key Stage 3, effective teaching and learning strategies need further development to remedy occasional lapses in pupils' concentration and ensure class-work and homework are completed to an appropriate standard. Overall, teachers' expectations of behaviour were clearly communicated, and respected by pupils. Where teachers demonstrated particular skills and techniques and used exemplar materials and resources, pupils made considerable gains in their learning. Teaching was most effective where skilful questioning encouraged pupils to make decisions for themselves and to experiment with combinations of materials and processes, including computer-generated imagery. Key words are beginning to be used very effectively in pupils' annotated work in sketchbooks and in their oral responses. Where teaching was less effective, the objectives for learning were too broad and there was insufficient time allowed for pupils to refine and improve their drawing skills. As a result they did not make sufficient progress, some became restless

and others lost the confidence and motivation to improve. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Most work hard and are keen to improve.

- 97 Management of the subject is sound with a number of strengths. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards in examinations have remained above average and achievement good. A weakness highlighted in the previous inspection was the lack of opportunities for pupils to use computers and, although further work is still needed, for improved systematic planning, pupils now regularly use computers for research purposes and, in some year groups, are taught to manipulate images. Achievement of boys and girls continues to be monitored closely through improved use of data, and teaching strategies have been successful in tackling underachievement in examinations. The planning of pupils' experiences, activities and achievements, year on year, is not sufficiently rigorous. Assessment using National Curriculum levels is in the early stages of development, and moderation, to ensure consistency, has yet to be introduced.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 98 The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were above those reported nationally. Pupils' current work indicates that standards are in line with the national expectation. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in both designing and making, because the curriculum for design technology subjects is well structured and well taught. Pupils develop well their knowledge, communication skills and skills in designing and making. Designing is stronger in food and textiles because, in resistant materials, there is more concentration on the development of communication skills and understanding about the use of materials. These areas had previously been under-developed. The quality of research, analysis, development of ideas and presentation improves in Year 9. For example in the bread project, work in pupils' folders demonstrates very good research, development of ideas and evaluation of the bread made. Practical work is good in all materials and there is good application of knowledge, sound use of tools and equipment and an emphasis on good quality outcomes. Pupils' use of computers is increasing. It includes a good introduction to the use of computers for measurement and control, through using a computer-controlled milling machine. Standards have improved and there are examples of good quality work in both designing and making by higher attaining pupils.
- 99 When compared to their earlier attainment, pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. In Year 7, pupils learn to use the sewing machines and design and make a wall hanging. Pupils, in an extended project on pasta in Year 8, develop a good range of knowledge about nutrients and their effects, and learn how different types are manufactured, before making their own pasta shapes. In Year 9, pupils produce well-made storage boxes with very good illustrated records of the stages of making. Design folders show increasing depth of research, including use of the Internet and CD-ROM.
- 100 GCSE results have fluctuated over the last two years. Overall in 2000, results were broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils taking the full GCSE examination almost halved and the results fell below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades. However, at the same time, the numbers taking the GCSE short course increased and the proportion gaining A\*-C grades increased to slightly above the national average. Results for textiles continued to be above the national average. There were significant improvements in the results in resistant materials, which reached the national average, and in graphics products, where they rose to above the national average. Girls continued to achieve better than boys. Girls and boys achieved a higher proportion of A\*-G grades than the national average but pupils did less well in the design technology subjects than in their other subjects.



- 101 Observation and work scrutiny indicates that Year 11 pupils' attainment is above expectation and their achievement is good. The school anticipates higher grades, this year, in all design and technology subjects. The teachers' structured approach to course work is enabling all pupils to respond well to the requirements of the examination course. In the best folders, the quality of research, analysis, and development and evaluation of ideas is very good. Pupils develop knowledge and skills effectively. They understand how materials and ingredients can be used safely, and sometimes creatively, in the development of their own ideas. Presentation of work is often very good and there is good use of computer-generated work in all subjects. Practical work is often very good because a range of skills is used to produce well-finished products which meet the design specifications. Overall, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils, make good progress because they apply their technical abilities well.
- 102 Overall, the teaching observed was good. It was always satisfactory, and often good or very good. Teachers have a clear focus on examination requirements and the criteria for success. All teachers have very good technical knowledge, which is reflected in demonstrations and their individual support of pupils. They give clear explanations and use focused questioning. This helps pupils to learn. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on pasta, pupils recalled prior knowledge well, learnt how different types of pasta are manufactured and increased their knowledge of nutrition. Overall, lesson planning is good, although some lessons have insufficient detail in the planning to focus pupils' learning effectively. For example, in a graphics lesson, pupils learnt about printing techniques but the subsequent learning activities were not sufficiently focused towards high-quality outcomes, based on clearly identified targets. In the majority of lessons, time is used well. Pupils are managed well and a good range of teaching methods is used very effectively. Language is being developed well through oral work but more could be done to reinforce written technical vocabulary. Pupils use computers for research and presentation of work. Year 9 pupils use a computer-controlled machine to manufacture parts of their work. Good assessment procedures, including good support and discussion with pupils about their work, enable pupils to understand how their work might be improved and helps them to learn. In Key Stage 4, regular assessment, with written comments, very effectively enables pupils to improve their work.
- 103 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They settle to work quickly and there is a positive learning atmosphere in most lessons. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and are keen to do well in their work. Most concentrate very well in lessons and most Year 10 and 11 pupils spend considerable time and effort outside lessons improving their work. The success of lower-attaining pupils is a good reflection of the effort and concentration that they give to their work.
- 104 Leadership and management are very good and standards are rising. Departmental documentation is good and there is a very positive approach to monitoring and improving of the subject. Effective use is made of current staffing. The accommodation is used well, but the overall provision is only satisfactory because there are insufficient food technology rooms, the condition of fitted furniture and worktops is poor and the design and technology rooms are a long way apart. Some resources are of high quality, for example the computer controlled milling machine, but overall they are only satisfactory because much of the equipment is old.
- 105 Improvement, since the last inspection, has been very good. National Curriculum requirements are now fully met. The curriculum is being developed well, with close cooperation between teachers in all areas. Current schemes of work enable pupils to design and make effectively. Skills, including the use of computers, are being developed well. Good use is being made of assessment data to improve pupils' performance.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 106 The results of teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9 in 2000, were above those reported nationally. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is also above average. In relation to their prior attainment, the overall achievement of pupils in Key Stage 3 is good. Pupils know the key facts for the places that they learn about and develop a good understanding of physical and human processes there. Most are able to write at length, explaining contrasts between places and the issues facing people who live there. A few have more difficulty in this. Their writing is of limited extent and patterns and contrasts are not identified. Occasionally, the standard of these pupils' work is diminished by failure to complete it.
- 107 GCSE results have improved since the last inspection. In 2000 they were similar to the national average. The proportion gaining grades A\*-C was slightly lower than the national average, and none achieved A\* grade, but almost all pupils secured at least a G grade. Although pupils did slightly worse in geography than the average for all their subjects, this was by a smaller margin than is the case nationally. The proportion of the year group who choose to study geography is about half the national proportion.
- 108 Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 4 and the standards of their work at the end of Year 11 are above average. Almost all pupils identify links between physical and human processes, in such activities as farming, and most explain the steps taken to reduce adverse effects, such as erosion caused by deforestation. They identify a range of landforms and explain how these are formed. The work of the higher-attaining pupils is distinguished by its good detail, and references to maps and charts to illustrate answers. A few pupils confuse terms such as immigration and emigration and have difficulty interpreting graphs, charts and maps. However, the work of lower-attainers shows that they can achieve well, when, for example, developing a non-stereotypical view of life in Kenya.
- 109 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, because teachers have a good awareness of their needs and ensure that these are met. Good reference is made to individual education plans and, when support assistants are available, they work well with teachers to enhance this provision.
- 110 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They are usually interested in their work, listen well and tackle written tasks with quiet concentration. They work well together in pairs and groups, and participate willingly in whole-class discussions. A small minority of pupils are less well motivated, so that the pace of their work can become too leisurely, if it is allowed to.
- 111 Overall, the teaching observed was good. In lessons plans, there is good integration of knowledge, understanding and skills, and a focus on learning outcomes. Good questioning enables pupils to recall previous knowledge, and tests their developing understanding. There is a strong focus on investigation in the work. Good opportunities are provided for discussion. These enable pupils to pool their knowledge, rather than being told things. As a result, they have a good involvement in their own learning. Full advantage is taken of the potential of topics such as volcanoes and earthquakes to fascinate pupils. Teachers ensure that the subject makes a good contribution to developing key skills. The use of specialist vocabulary is developed well and writing frames provide strong support for individual needs. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply numerical skills, for example, when creating and interpreting graphs and using formulae to rank pebbles, found on field investigations into coastal erosion, in order of roundness. This work is compiled on computer spreadsheets. Opportunities for ICT are well planned and are continuing to develop. A computerised weather station provides good opportunities to use a computer to take measurements. Teachers occasionally fail to secure full attention when explaining things to the class, allowing some pupils to continue to work. This response means that these pupils sometimes miss key points. Homework is generally regular and productive, but it is not always recorded in pupils' planners.

- 112 As a result of the good teaching and their own positive response, pupils' learning is good. They recall previous learning confidently and generally move forward well during lessons. Occasionally, learning is less good during the closing stages of lessons. Many pupils have limited awareness of how well they are doing, or what they need to do to improve.
- 113 Although the head of department carries the considerable extra responsibility of also being an assistant headteacher, the department is well managed and led. There is good awareness of issues that need to be addressed and a strong commitment to high achievement. The department's improvement since the last inspection has been good. The quality of teaching has improved so that progress and achievement are good for all pupils. A major factor in this has been a marked improvement in the quality of monitoring that has taken place and in the systematic collection and use of information about how well pupils are doing. There is now a good department handbook, which continues to develop as a working document. Computers are now used much more regularly and the department is aware of the need to develop this further. Although information is now communicated to pupils about their strengths and weaknesses, many still do not use this well enough as a means of improving.

## **HISTORY**

- 114 The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were above those reported nationally. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is also above average. Most pupils have a good level of knowledge and understanding, so that they can, for example, identify Britain's main colonies in the eighteenth century and explain why India was so valuable. Most pupils interpret sources and use them, for example, to identify conflicting viewpoints on the causes of the American War of Independence. The work of the highest attainers indicates very good understanding of the links between the various aspects of the situations studied, such as the impact of government actions upon the lives of the population of the United Kingdom during the Second World War. In relation to their prior attainment, the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 3 is good. However, a minority of pupils underachieves in some lessons, due to limited opportunities to question sources to the extent of which they are capable.
- 115 GCSE results have improved since the last inspection. In 2000 they were similar to the national average and all pupils gained at least a G grade. However, pupils did less well in history than their average for all subjects, by a greater margin than is the case nationally, and this was particularly so for girls. The performance of boys was better than that of girls: this is the reverse of the national situation. History is a little more popular as an option in the school than is generally the case.
- 116 The current Key Stage 4 pupils continue the good achievement shown in the lower years and the standards of their work, at the end of Year 11, are above the expected level. Almost all have good knowledge of events, which they recall and use with accuracy and relevance in answering questions. They interpret sources well. For example, they can identify different views on social and economic conditions in 1920's America and analyse pictorial sources, such as First World War recruiting posters, and link these to the events and attitudes of the time. The work of the highest attainers shows a good depth of understanding and the ability to present detailed and balanced explanation and argument. For example, they showed how unemployment was not a new problem in the Depression and how it affected different groups of people in different ways. A few pupils have limited understanding of the causes of events. Some work, for example, explains the start of the Cold War in terms of personal relationships between the national leaders, rather than more significant political and economic factors.

- 117 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, because teachers have a good awareness of their needs and ensure that these are met. Good reference is made to individual education plans and when support assistants are available, they work well with teachers to enhance this provision.
- 118 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They respond well to the tasks they are given, usually writing with speed and concentration. They work well together in pairs and groups and participate willingly in discussions, often asking thoughtful questions of their own. In some classes, girls are less interested than boys. Many pupils only have a limited awareness of how well they are doing, or what they need to do to improve.
- 119 Overall, the teaching observed was good. In lessons, teachers are enthusiastic about the subject. Good subject knowledge enables highly effective questioning and responses to pupils' answers. This response supports their learning well. The good use of source material, and of tasks that require pupils to think, are teaching strategies which are regularly used to help pupils increase their knowledge and understanding. Careful planning, which sets clear criteria for the different levels of response expected from a common task, ensures that all pupils are appropriately challenged and make good progress. Homework develops class activities well. The development of literacy skills is well supported by, for example, ensuring that key terms are always understood and providing opportunities to develop extended writing skills. The department is improving its range of opportunities to use computers well, but acknowledges that further development is necessary. The potential of the subject to develop skills in using number is not sufficiently utilised. On a few occasions, teachers fail to include all pupils in discussions. Teachers sometimes do too much for pupils, providing answers to questions that would be challenging and interesting for pupils to tackle. In a small minority of cases, inappropriate approaches are employed, including too much teacher talk when collaborative group work would better suit the task.
- 120 Good teaching and their own positive attitudes result in good learning by pupils. Most tasks lead to them confidently developing knowledge of events, understanding of underlying historical elements, such as cause and effect, and proficiency in appropriate historical skills. Work in pupils' books and in the classroom, provides strong evidence of development as a result of guidance given through marking and conversations with teachers. In a small minority of classes, some activities provide insufficient challenge for more able pupils and their learning in these instances is limited.
- 121 Although the head of department carries the considerable extra responsibility of also being an assistant headteacher, the department is well managed and led. There is a clear understanding of issues that need to be addressed and a strong commitment to develop history. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. There have been radical improvements in the systematic gathering and use of information to guide pupils' progress. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, as have procedures for monitoring and improving this. However, while no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection, it is still necessary to focus on bringing the quality of all up to that of the best. Standards in pupils' work in Key Stage 4 have improved, but GCSE results still compare unfavourably with other subjects. A non-certificated humanities course in Key Stage 4 for lower attainers, which restricted their access to GCSE, has been withdrawn. The accommodation has improved significantly and now provides a stimulating working environment.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 122 The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were well above those reported nationally. However, evidence from the inspection indicates that these assessments were inaccurate, and overestimated what pupils achieved. Current standards are in line with national expectations, and pupils experience the required range of applications. The limited amount of time available for ICT in the rotational timetable in Year 7 limits the standards that can be achieved in lessons. However, there is a good supporting programme of computer use in other subjects which enables pupils to use and develop their ICT skills. For example, in a Year 7 ICT lesson, pupils quickly understood the principles of using a multi media program and confidently produced a series of slides with animated text and sound. Pupils, in Year 8, use a CD-ROM encyclopaedia for researching their work for history and, in Year 9, use word processing for a report on Kenya and a computer-controlled milling machine for making parts of their design in design and technology. Pupils join the school with a varied, but often limited, experience in ICT. From this starting point, they make good progress because the Year 7 ICT programme develops knowledge, confidence and competence in using computers, and this is reinforced through a good range of activities in other subjects. Their achievement is good.
- 123 GCSE results have been generally in line with the national average. In 2000, results were at the national average but with more pupils gaining the highest grades than previously, and all pupils gaining at least grade G. Evidence of pupils' work and from observation of lessons indicates that attainment in Year 11 is at the nationally expected level. Course work indicates that they follow a structured approach in investigating their chosen project, and that pupils are well supported by their teachers. Pupils have researched their topic, considered and selected appropriate software for the task, produced user guides and tested their solutions. Standards vary with ability but all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because they follow the course work requirements carefully and they are well taught. As in Key Stage 3, pupils are using computers to support their work in other subjects, especially in English, science, design and technology, modern foreign languages, history, geography and personal and social education. Pupils make good use of ICT for enhancing the presentation of course work.
- 124 Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and behaviour is good in all lessons. Pupils are very motivated, show considerable interest in their work. Consequently, they remain on task, show confidence and competence in their own work and share their expertise willingly. A good, purposeful working atmosphere pervades most lessons.
- 125 The quality of teaching and learning in ICT lessons is good overall, and sometimes very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and overall planning is good. Because teaching methods are effective, pupils learn quickly and soon develop a good range of knowledge, which they apply with confidence. Pupils and resources are managed well. This creates a very positive learning environment in which all pupils are able to learn effectively and at a pace appropriate to their capability. Teaching was least effective when planning lacked detail of pupils' learning activities and targets were imprecise. The quality of ongoing assessment is good because there is good individual help and advice during the course of the lessons. Assessment and the subsequent feedback to pupils in GCSE groups are very helpful and enable pupils to improve their work. However, more use could be made of homework in Key Stage 3 to develop ICT. Because lessons are generally well-planned and resourced, learning is generally good, in ICT lessons and when pupils are using computers in other subjects. Pupils work at a good pace and demonstrate high levels of concentration in most lessons.
- 126 Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. The school has significantly improved the ICT curriculum and provision. All National Curriculum statutory requirements are met.

However, the programme for ICT lessons in Year 7 provides only a limited amount of time and, because of the rotational programme and pupils missing lessons, there is considerable imbalance in the time received by different classes. The cross-curricular provision for ICT is developing well, but the coordination of cross-curricular ICT does not yet ensure that all pupils receive a similar level of provision as they progress through the school. Assessment of ICT is taking place as part of the school's cross-curricular programme in Key Stage 3. However, currently, these assessments are based on pupils' ICT experience and not sufficiently on standards achieved.

- 127 Good leadership and management of ICT are allowing the school to move towards its aim of using computers effectively to support the whole-school curriculum. Supportive documentation assists teachers in developing ICT.
- 128 Resources are continuing to improve. The number of computers currently available is in line with the national average, but more are needed to enable cross-curricular use to develop as planned. Provision of accommodation and of specialist teachers is good. A significant number of other teachers use computers well in their subjects.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

- 129 Pupils study French in all five years. In Year 9, they all follow a one-year course in German leading to internal certification. A small number opt for a GCSE course in German. Judgements on standards at the end of Year 9 will, therefore, relate to French.
- 130 The results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were well above the average reported nationally. The evidence of the inspection indicates that there is some very high attainment at the end of Year 9, but that standards, overall, are above the nationally expected level. Pupils attain good standards in listening and reading and have particular strengths in speaking and writing.
- 131 In relation to their prior levels of attainment, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 3 is good. They make good progress from the outset in French. For example, Year 7 pupils speak confidently in pairs about sport and leisure and show good understanding of a video programme aimed at older learners. Year 8 pupils speak very fluently and accurately about television and leisure, using a range of verb tenses and performing well above national expectations. The written work of high attainers in Year 9 is of exceptionally high quality and includes journals, autobiography and poetry. Pupils show very good understanding of their teachers conducting lessons in French. Achievement in the one-year German course is satisfactory; pupils gain a useful grounding in the language and there is a high incidence of success in the internally-accredited certificate examination.
- 132 GCSE results in French were unusually high just before the last inspection. This was because of an exceptional cohort and an entry of less than 80 per cent of the year group. Since then, entry levels have been well above the national average and results have been consistently above the national average. Although the results in 2000 were lower than in recent years, they were still above the national average. Boys' results and the proportion of all pupils gaining the highest grades, A\*/A, were above the national average. The school's predictions for 2001 are for results to match the highest levels of recent years. These are supported by the evidence of the inspection. Pupils do better in French than in many other subjects. The small number who do not take GCSE French do well in the Certificate of Achievement examination.
- 133 German results in 2000 were well below both the national average and the school's average in recent years. There is a clear correlation between the relatively poor performance and the

significant reduction in teaching time for the cohort. However, much better results are predicted for 2001 and evidence of the inspection supports this.

- 134 No Year 11 classes were seen during this inspection, but inspection of a sample of work showed high overall standards in the modular GCSE French examination and an intensive drive towards GCSE German, albeit in restricted time. There was a similar picture of very good achievement in French and good achievement in German in Year 10, with very good role-play, listening and reading in French, and good speaking, reading and the use of computers in German.
- 135 Pupils with special educational needs and those in lower-ability sets make good progress. They respond well to an active, communication-based approach and to work and resources which are effectively targeted at their needs. Higher-attaining pupils are equally enabled to fulfil their potential through ability setting and challenging work.
- 136 Teaching is very good. It was very good or excellent in two thirds of lessons observed. There is a high degree of consistency in the quality of teaching which is characterised by, for example, the excellent personal language skills of all staff. The target language is very effectively used as the teaching medium, providing high-quality models of language as well as developing pupils' listening skills. Lessons are well structured with the focus on active learning and pupils participating in a real learning partnership. This engages pupils' interest and lessons proceed at a brisk pace, with a good variety of resources used, including video, satellite television and computers. An appropriate rigour in the teaching of pronunciation and ensuring that pupils grasp the structure of French and German increases their understanding. High expectations of pupils of all levels of ability, linked to support, encouragement, very good relationships and a real commitment to pupils' success, all contribute strongly to pupils' learning. Teaching contributes strongly to pupils' literacy through its emphasis on oral and written communication and the provision of opportunities for reading for pleasure. The use of information technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. The very good teaching promotes effective and successful language learning for pupils across the full ability range.
- 137 Pupils' attitudes to language study and their behaviour are very good overall and sometimes excellent. They are enthusiastic and engaged, and respond well to challenging expectations. They work well in pairs and independently, showing sustained powers of concentration and a willingness to make an effort throughout lessons. The attitudes and achievement of boys are similar to those of girls - contrary to the picture found nationally.
- 138 The languages curriculum is well planned. Setting is used to pupils' advantage and examination syllabuses are chosen to best reflect pupils' learning and aptitudes. Assessment is good, with National Curriculum levels effectively used to track pupils' progress and enhance their motivation. Their day-to-day work is diligently marked, but they would benefit from more explicit guidance as to how to improve. The one issue which emerges in language provision is the place of German. Results are currently being achieved in less than half the time generally recognised as necessary for a GCSE course. The Year 10 option will not run in 2001-2. Given the quality and commitment of its languages department, the school should review its curriculum priorities to make viable provision for two languages.
- 139 All the strengths noted in the last inspection, notably the quality of leadership, management and teaching in languages, have been maintained. The issue of information technology has been successfully addressed. Good improvement has been made. This is a cohesive and committed department which has the capacity for further development and success.

## **PERFORMING ARTS**

## Drama

- 140 Drama is taught to all pupils in a weekly lesson in Years 7 to 9, and is a popular GCSE option. In 2000, GCSE results were well above national average. In the past two years, pupils have tended to gain higher grades in drama than in most other GCSE examinations. All candidates have gained at least grade G in each of the last three years. Over the same period, the number of pupils taking the subject has halved.
- 141 The work of pupils at present in the school shows attainment to be at the nationally expected level in Year 9 and in the Year 10 GCSE group. At the time of the inspection, Year 11 pupils were taking examinations. Predictions, which have been accurate in past years, suggest a fourth successive rise in the results, albeit with a smaller number of pupils being entered. Pupils are strongest in their ability to work together as a class or in groups, to perform confidently, to use hot-seating, and to use their good oral skills to explain and discuss their work. They are less successful in sustaining role, whether as performers or audience, in evaluating their own performance or that of others, and in writing about their work.
- 142 Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. In too many classes, however, pupils do not have a precise enough idea of the importance of the skills they are learning and how they fit into a pattern. For example, a Year 9 group responded sensitively to a reading and discussion about homelessness. They worked well in groups to decide on how to present the situation, but were unable to refine performance because they were insufficiently aware of how to exaggerate posture and position or how to use depths and levels for effect. Achievement is satisfactory in Year 10. A GCSE group made good progress in trusting one another and showing sensitivity to others' feelings and experiences. However, they were not used to putting forward their own ideas in discussion, or to defining the techniques being used and how effective they were. Achievement at GCSE has sometimes been affected by extended teacher absence, but GCSE results over the last two years are an indication of good progress.
- 143 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, gaining considerable benefit from the social skills and confidence which they gain from working in groups where their ideas are valued. High-attaining pupils make better progress at GCSE, where they are more clearly aware of how best to demonstrate and improve their work. In Years 7 to 9 their progress is satisfactory.
- 144 The teaching observed was satisfactory, but too variable in quality. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are skilled in introducing technical terms, such as 'symbol', 'image' and 'freeze frame', to pupils. They manage pupils well in a wide range of situations so that behaviour is good, and the majority of pupils show effort and good sense. Lessons are carefully planned, with what is to be done and learnt made clear. Too often the actual focus of the lesson becomes the activity rather than what pupils will learn from it, and discussion of group performances is too general to give pupils clear insight into how to improve. There is, however, good attention to pupils' personal development. This is shown in thoughtful groupings of individuals, and encouragement to portray and express emotion, whether real or imagined. The latter is often stimulated by the choice of subject, and very effective readings by teachers of passages which stimulate ideas and response. A Year 8 class were entranced by the creation of a world of magic and legend by the teacher. The teacher coupled this with introducing key ideas, such as 'transition', and using the pupils' own knowledge of, for example, the Minotaur myth. They responded very well, rapidly improving their ability to strike and hold dramatic poses, and to convey changes in atmosphere quickly and effectively.
- 145 Pupils have a positive attitude to drama, although some younger girls only partially involve themselves in group practical work, and a minority of younger boys take the opportunity to misbehave in practical sessions. The majority of pupils are thoughtful and responsible, being patient with, and sensitive to, each other. They appreciate the efforts which teachers make, and the excellent drama studio in which most lessons take place.



- 146 There has been good improvement since the previous report, most notably in terms of GCSE results and accommodation. Management of the department is satisfactory. It is well organised, with a useful scheme of work and good resources. Whilst written work is set and marked in Years 7 to 9, there is no straightforward means of assessing pupils' progress until the GCSE course, when assessment is detailed and of good quality. There has been some liaison with the English department, most recently and successfully in studying *Macbeth* in preparation for national tests, but the mutual benefit of this strategy is under-used. Present timetable arrangements preclude formal staff development time for the two teachers of drama.

## Music

- 147 In teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000, results were well above those reported nationally. Inspection findings, however, indicate that these were unrealistic. Because of the absence of the music teacher for part of the inspection week, only two lessons were seen. The evidence of these observations and from a detailed scrutiny of pupils' written work is that attainment in the current Year 9 is below the nationally expected level. Year 9 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of musical notation. They use traditional musical notation competently when composing. They understand the treble clef and basic note values. In the lesson observed, pupils used keyboards, but their skills were below expectation. They employed improvisation as a basis for composing a pop song, but few achieved fluency in this. They understand chord progressions, but used the inbuilt chord facility on the keyboard rather than playing the full versions themselves. Several pupils composed attractive four- and eight-chord phrases, and all understood the structure of the phrases and sections found in a pop song. Overall, however, pupils have not achieved levels of skill, knowledge and musical understanding appropriate to their abilities. They have not developed the elements of music as envisaged in the National Curriculum.
- 148 Small numbers of pupils have taken GCSE in recent years and so comparisons between the school's results and national averages are of little significance. In 1999, results were very high, while they were well below average in 2000. A combined total of 11 pupils took GCSE music in those two years. There were no GCSE candidates in 1998 and there are no pupils taking music in Key Stage 4 at present.
- 149 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress over Years 7 to 9. They listen to a wide range of music from a good range of eras and countries. Most develop well the skill of note taking. In Year 7, pupils made satisfactory progress in developing their listening skills when they heard a descriptive train piece by Villa Lobos. They subsequently composed short, sectional pieces on a variety of tuned and untuned instruments, reflecting titles, such as 'bicycle ride' and 'space rocket'. The pupils planned and collaborated carefully, and devised and performed successful pieces. By Year 9, however, pupils have not developed their composing, performing and knowledge to the levels expected. Pupils' achievement in relation to their abilities is therefore unsatisfactory.
- 150 Pupils are well behaved, responsive and keen to do well. They collaborated responsibly when dispersed for composing, and relationships amongst pupils were friendly and productive. Pupils maintained good levels of attentiveness and courtesy, even in parts of the lesson that were tedious.
- 151 Teaching is unsatisfactory. Lessons have interesting content and suitable resources. Relationships with classes are satisfactory, explanations are clear and discipline is good. However, the expectations of pupils are inappropriately low and this results in unsatisfactory learning. Deadlines are not set for practical work, and lessons lack rigour and pace. There is too little question and answer, and good opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their

critical thinking and expressive oracy. Sometimes, the teacher suppressed interesting views from pupils. The over-riding deficiency is in assessment, as was noted in the previous inspection report. Pupils are unaware of the criteria by which they are to be assessed and therefore cannot evaluate and improve their work. There are at present no subject-specific criteria for assessing pupils' work. Practical work, while interesting in content, is not planned to challenge pupils appropriately or provide progressive development of skills and knowledge. Books are marked almost exclusively with red ticks and there is no evaluation of the quality of pupils' written work.

- 152 The music department mounts various concerts and events in the course of the year, which provide good opportunities for pupils' social and cultural development. The highlight is the annual staged performance, which this year was *Bugsy Malone*. These productions are a source of great prestige to the school and, as parents and pupils indicated, give great pleasure to the participants and audiences. The high standard of performance was well demonstrated in an excerpt during the week of the inspection.
- 153 Resources are generally satisfactory, but provision for ICT is insufficient. There has been a decline in the take-up for GCSE recently and the range of extra-curricular activities has reduced in recent years. Provision for music has deteriorated since the previous inspection, when half of the teaching was judged unsatisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection has been poor. There remains a lack of proper assessment. There has been an inadequate response to encouragement from the senior management team and to monitoring by the Local Authority. For these reasons, the management of the subject is unsatisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 154 The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, in 2000, were above those reported nationally and the evidence of the inspection confirms this. A higher proportion of pupils than is the case nationally, achieved at the expected level for their age and a similar proportion to the national figure achieved above the expected level.
- 155 The evidence of the pupils' work in the lessons observed showed that the standard of attainment at the end of Year 9 is also above the national average. For example, the majority of pupils had acquired sound fielding and striking skills in rounders and applied their knowledge of the rules to select appropriate tactical moves. In relation to their prior attainment, their achievement is good.
- 156 GCSE results have improved since the last inspection and the results in 2000 were in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C has improved steadily during the last three years and all pupils entered have gained at least grade G. The predicted grades for 2001 are higher and, if attained, will represent a significant improvement. The proportion of girls to boys who enter for GCSE PE is very low. The small number limits their opportunities in some activities, such as team games, and since these pupils do not have the opportunity to take part in the activities in the core PE lessons, this has a detrimental impact on their opportunity to improve and achieve well.
- 157 Overall, attainment in Key Stage 4 is above nationally expected levels. Pupils are strongest in fielding and striking skills, and are good at selecting and applying their knowledge of the rules to tactical play in a game. They are generally competent athletes and have acquired a good understanding of the principles of throwing techniques, for example in discus and shot. Higher attaining pupils are able to produce good examples of training programmes for specific sports together with a clear evaluation of the effects of such a programme. Skills are less well developed in tennis in this key stage, but results of GCSE tests in swimming show that pupils

achieve well in this sport. Pupils make good progress in this key stage and their achievement is good.

- 158 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. The progress of pupils, in many lessons, is at least good and occasionally very good or excellent. This matches the quality of the teaching. In most lessons, teaching was dynamic and enthusiastic, expectations were high and challenging tasks were presented at a brisk pace. In these instances, pupils were highly motivated and concentrated throughout the lesson so that good and very good learning took place. In a Year 10 rounders lesson, for example, pupils were seen to be selecting and applying advanced tactics and rules within their game. The teachers' good knowledge of the activities and their understanding of the use of progressive practices, enabled all pupils to achieve success. On the occasions when the pace of the lesson was slower, pupils were not actively engaged throughout the lesson, they were not motivated to take part and their learning was restricted.
- 159 Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress because the teachers know them well and are aware of their individual needs in relation to physical education. Tasks are modified appropriately to ensure lower attaining pupils are successful in fulfilling them and a variety of resources is used, such as low bounce tennis balls, to enable pupils to achieve success.
- 160 The behaviour of the pupils and their attitudes to physical education are a significant factor in their good achievements and standards of attainment. Only a very small number did not participate in the lessons during the inspection, and it was clear that no-one was a regular non-participant. They were generally keen, willing to listen, to concentrate on the tasks set and to try hard to complete them. They were forthcoming in both asking and answering questions. A small amount of inattentive and inappropriate behaviour was seen in a few lessons, when the organisation and management of pupils was weaker and expectations were not high enough. On these occasions, pupils did not improve their skills as much as they were capable of doing.
- 161 The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements and a good range of extra-curricular activities is offered. These include opportunities for pupils to represent the school in a variety of sports and thus reach higher standards.
- 162 The leadership and management of the department are good. The policies and procedures of the department are clear, and schemes of work are detailed and progressive. Monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum has started well, but has not yet been sufficiently followed through to ensure appropriate support is available where it has been identified. Assessment is sound and targets are negotiated and agreed with pupils. However, pupils are not helped to be sufficiently aware of what they need to do in different activities to improve their National Curriculum levels. The departmental improvement plan is too focused on maintenance issues and there is insufficient consideration given to other aspects such as improving teaching styles, or organisation and pupil management.
- 163 Since the last inspection, GCSE results have steadily risen and a good proportion of the cohort is choosing physical education as an option. Tasks are carefully devised and resources appropriately allocated to enable pupils of all abilities to achieve success. Teaching strategies have improved and lessons are no longer teacher-dominated. In most lessons pupils are actively engaged throughout the period and in only a few lessons, compared with previously, were there periods of inactivity. Improvement since the last inspection, therefore, is good.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 164 Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, in 2000, were above those reported nationally. The evidence of the inspection shows that the attainment of the current Year 9 pupils is also above that expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- 165 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 showed good understanding across their study of Christianity and other religions. In their work on burial rites, higher-attaining pupils made links, from their learning of Jewish and Muslim rituals, as well as Christian, to produce good extended writing. The majority described key features and reflected on their personal beliefs. The work of lower-attaining pupils was clearly constrained by the challenge of extended writing, yet still displayed a sound amount of industry, in gathering and knowing basic information.
- 166 The results for the short course GCSE in religious education, in 2000, were above the national average. The evidence gained from the inspection indicates pupils in Year 11 are also working above national expectations, a view supported by the department's close analysis of their assessment records and the pupils' course work submitted for examination to the GCSE examining board.
- 167 Pupils in Year 10 offered good observations on extracts from television of 'religious' programmes. While all made suggestions for categorising these programmes, some higher-attaining pupils combined this with cogent analysis. For example, they distinguished an account of a personal religious response from a quasi-religious search for historical evidence, and offered possible explanations for the intentions of the programme makers. One pupil, in Year 11, considered how EastEnders portrayed Dot Cotton's ethical dilemma over euthanasia, drawing on past learning to bring in, effectively to the argument, a Christian perspective. All examples of pupils' work in Year 11 seen on this topic showed an engagement with the subject and indicated that the department's assessment of the year group was soundly based.
- 168 When compared with their earlier attainment, pupils' achievement is good in both key stages. When they enter the school in Year 7, standards are average. From this baseline, pupils make good progress. For example, all pupils in a mixed ability Year 7 class, working on the significance of prayer in Judaism, had grasped the essentials of where, when and how this takes place. Higher-attaining pupils make comparisons with other religions' practices and employ key terms, such as symbolism, while looking for religious explanations, for example for the wearing of the kippah. Pupils in a Year 8 set learnt the distinction between prejudice and discrimination, going on to apply this well to examples from the life of Martin Luther King as described in their text.
- 169 Pupils with special educational needs made satisfactory progress. The work of lower attaining pupils often suffered from a lack of analysis and explanation but not from a lack of engagement in the topic. The use of different forms of work, such as illustration, allows pupils challenged by the demands of extended writing to demonstrate their understanding, for example in Year 7 work on confirmation. The department's use of the Certificate of Achievement for pupils in Year 11 allows the achievements of lower attaining pupils to be recognised.
- 170 Overall the teaching was very good and sometimes excellent. It was excellent when good subject knowledge joined with teaching skills, acquired through experience, to set appropriate tasks, teasing out knowledge and understanding through a variety of resources and methods. For example, several pupils in a Year 7 class were able to demonstrate they had understood the distinction between a quick answer and a more thoughtful consideration of several factors. Pupils' contributions were carefully considered, and teachers encouraged pupils to higher achievement by making clear the expected outcomes of their work. Pupils, in a Year 8 class, readily offered examples of the courage of Jesus and St Paul as the teacher carefully linked their past learning to the new topic of Martin Luther King and the ideas of prejudice and

discrimination. Emphasis was given to improving literacy skills. Pupils' exercise books contained pertinent advice on presentation and writing skills. This resulted in some excellent work. For example, pupils in Year 9 reflecting on the experiences of Siddhartha, where knowledge of the story was entwined with thoughtful reflection. Web site addresses were issued to extend homework, based initially on text books. Appropriate advice ensured that those who downloaded web pages knew how to use such data. This was demonstrated by pupils who confidently explained how they were putting such data to use, for example by comparing them with other sources and asking pertinent questions. Teaching in the GCSE course clearly demonstrated a focus on the need to incorporate religious teaching into their explorations of issues dealt with in the media and other contemporary topics. The very good teaching, with an emphasis upon a clear understanding of the expected outcomes for learning, engaged pupils' interest and involvement. The value given to their responses encouraged them to contribute further and be willing to think and to speculate. Guidance and advice helped pupils see how to improve and progress. The relevance of the discussions helped pupils' development of their understanding in new contexts. All these factors contributed to the good learning which resulted.

- 171 Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good. The use of Certificate of Achievement accreditation as well as GCSE, reflects teachers' determination to ensure that all pupils have an opportunity to show what they have learned. The public examination results show girls are performing ahead of boys, particularly in the higher bands of GCSE.
- 172 The department is well led by an experienced teacher. There has been a positive response to the recommendations of the last inspection and improvement has been good. Detailed schemes of work reflect the recommendations of the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus. There is a clear emphasis on learning outcomes. The religious education curriculum is managed and taught effectively within a weekly lesson. Resources, such as text books, artefacts and videos, are good and used well. Accommodation in the new teaching block is very good, allowing easy access to all the department's resources, including school-networked computers. These allow access to the research resources of the world wide web, seen in use during the inspection supporting pupils' research activities for GCSE.
- 173 The department has piloted level descriptors based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's recommendations. These have the potential to raise further pupils' achievement when they are adapted for pupil self-evaluation as well as teacher assessment. Educational visits, such as that to Norwich Cathedral, enrich the religious education curriculum. Pupils will benefit further when the full programme of visits, envisaged by the department to support their learning, is in place. A range of software for use on the recently acquired department computers will be a valuable tool in supporting pupils' learning of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and other faiths.