

INSPECTION REPORT

CAISTOR YARBOROUGH SCHOOL

Caistor, Lincoln

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120649

Headteacher: Mr Martin Connor

Reporting inspector: Kathy MacFarlane
3472

Dates of inspection: 11 – 15 March 2002

Inspection number: 190165

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Grimsby Road
Caistor
Lincoln

Postcode: LN7 6QZ

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Arthur Spalding

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3472	Kathy MacFarlane	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements.</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What the school should do to improve further.</p>
11072	Shirley Elomari	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
2779	Jim Billington	Team inspector		<p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>
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24118	Robert Vincent	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
23396	Nick Daws	Team inspector	Science	
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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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31637	Keith Havercroft	Team inspector	Music	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Caistor Yarborough School is a rural, mixed comprehensive school catering for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. There is a Grammar School in Caistor which affects the intake profile of the school. The attainments of the majority of pupils entering the school in Year 7 are around the national average for 11 year olds but there are relatively few pupils who enter at higher levels.

There are currently 560 pupils on roll which is small compared to 11-16 schools nationally. There are more boys than girls overall. In Year 7 there are more boys than girls whilst in Year 9 the reverse is true. Other years are more evenly balanced.

The school serves a rural area of Lincolnshire and has been oversubscribed for the last ten years. Currently up to a quarter of its pupils come from outside the local education authority area. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds.

At 7 per cent, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has a Special Educational Needs Unit which caters for pupils with a variety of needs, some related to learning and some to physical difficulties. There are a total of 69 pupils on the special educational needs register. Twenty of these pupils have statements of special needs, which is above average. There are no pupils in the school for whom English is an additional language.

The school which has been under new leadership since January 2002. It has stated aims to ongoing improvement and taking its place at the heart of the community.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school which provides its pupils with a good quality of education. Pupils achieve well. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with the national average and are steadily improving. The quality of teaching is good and the school is very well led. There is a strong sense of commitment across the school and there has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Attitudes amongst pupils are good. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher and his deputy have complementary strengths and share a clear vision of how the school should develop.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well overall.
- The support and care of pupils are very good because of the high level of commitment of all staff.
- The commitment of all staff ensures that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good
- Relationships with parents are very good and benefit the pupils.

What could be improved

- The monitoring of teaching, particularly through class observation, to further improve the overall quality of teaching.
- The opportunities for pupils' to engage in more discussion and debate in their lessons.
- The arrangements for the teaching and the use of information and communication technology across the school.
- The explicit teaching of writing skills in all subjects, to ensure the accurate use of standard English

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 November 1996. Overall improvement since that time has been good. Standards of attainment and the quality of teaching have improved. The length of the school week has been extended. Marking is now consistent and pupils understand the system. End-of-year assessment is good although there is still some lack of consistency as to how findings from it are used in planning. Policies are now reviewed regularly and are included in the staff handbook. Recently staff have been included in the development of plans, for example all departments have now got a department development plan linked to the school's plan. Progress has been made in the monitoring of pupils' progress and the use of targets to raise attainment. Staff and pupils are now more aware of standards of attainment when pupils enter the school and throughout each year, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Homework is set regularly and contributes to pupils learning.

The school has been less effective in ensuring that all pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons. Although the least able are appropriately challenged, in some subjects the more able are not always presented with activities that require them to extend their thinking. Limited progress has been made with regard to the enhancement of pupils' understanding of our multicultural society and the promotion of their spiritual development through collective worship and reflection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	B

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

Pupils' standards of attainment are broadly in line with national averages at the end of both Years 9 and 11. They are, however, above average when compared with similar schools. The majority of pupils enter the school in Year 7 with standards of attainment around the national average and they make good progress as they move through the school. Results of higher attaining pupils are variable

between subjects. Standards in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall, although writing skills are less well developed. Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. Results at GCSE and GNVQ are around the national average and have improved over the last three years. The school was included in the top thirty most improved schools in England for its GCSE results in 2001. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress overall. Work seen in lessons was in line with national averages. Higher standards were seen in art and design, French, geography, history, music and science. Targets for 2003 have been set for pupils' attainment in national examinations, however, those for GCSE are not suitably challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. They are keen to come to school and work hard. Links with parents are very good and these contribute to pupils' positive attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and out of classrooms is generally very good. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils are polite to adults and to each other.
Personal development and relationships	Many pupils are involved in a wide range of school activities. Pupils see themselves as part of the school community. They support each other well. There are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently.
Attendance	Attendance is good and consistently above the national average. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average.

The good behaviour and positive response of the majority of pupils play an important part in their achievement and progress. Very good relationships contribute to the school's caring ethos and ensure that pupils learn in lessons. The arrangements for pupils' personal development through the work of their form tutors and pastoral staff are good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good throughout the school. In the best teaching seen, teachers have good subject knowledge and used a range of methods. Lessons are carefully planned, with clear objectives for pupils' progress and are conducted at a brisk pace. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils

and used questioning effectively. Teaching has weaknesses where there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively or to talk and explore new learning through class discussion. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good in all years. Across the curriculum the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory but writing skills are not reinforced in all subjects. Overall teaching meets the needs of its pupils well. Opportunities for pupils to demonstrate information and communication technology skills in different subjects are unsatisfactory. Pupils of all abilities are making good progress in their learning as a result of the effective teaching they receive. Pupils sustain their concentration and work hard. Learning is slower where teachers' questioning does not sufficiently challenge and extend pupils' thinking. This is particularly true with regard to high attaining pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of the curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements including the required elements within the National Curriculum. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills in different subjects. The school provides enrichment through extracurricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are clear about what they are trying to achieve. This raises their self-esteem and confidence, and helps them make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils are taught right from wrong and overall they behave courteously towards each other. Cultural development is satisfactory and is seen in curriculum subjects and in extra activities. Spiritual development is less strong with only limited opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others' beliefs and values.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very high level of individual care of all its pupils, including academic support and guidance.

The school works very well with parents and provides detailed information about its curriculum, pupils' progress and school activities. The curriculum gives equality of access and opportunity to all pupils. However, in some subjects there are too few occasions for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills. Curricular and extracurricular opportunities provide a good range of worthwhile opportunities and make an effective contribution to the learning and progress of most pupils at all ages and abilities. Statutory requirements are met, except that there is no provision for a daily act of collective worship. The school provides a very high level of care for its pupils through a highly effective pastoral system. The assessment of pupils' standards of achievement and progress are also effective, teachers know them well and plan work carefully to meet their needs.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a clear vision which has been shared with the school community. He is supported by an able deputy and capable senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and management team and are strongly committed to the progress of the school. However, in order to carry out their responsibilities effectively they need to be more involved in planning developments, and in monitoring and reviewing the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is monitoring attendance and behaviour effectively. The analysis of examination results is good. A programme of monitoring of teaching and the policies and practices of the school is not yet fully in place: and therefore the school has not fully identified strengths and addressed weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	The school is planning its limited budget well to match its identified priorities and to meet its targets for development.

The leadership and management of the school are both very good. In the short time he has been at the school, the headteacher has taken a strong lead in creating a culture where work and people are valued in a caring environment. The headteacher, governors and the management team have a shared commitment to the school and have the skills and experience to ensure its further development. Staff are well matched to the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation does limit the possible range of activities. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. The school successfully applies the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards of behaviour in the school. • The progress made by their child. • The expectation that pupils work hard and become mature and responsible. • The good quality of teaching. • Care is a strength of the school. • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major areas of concern were raised by parents in consultation with inspectors.

Parents and carers of about one fifth of pupils responded to the inspectors' questionnaire and thirty attended a meeting with inspectors. The inspection team agrees with the parents in their positive

judgements about the school. A significant number of parents raised no issues of concern.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Overall, the most recent results in 2001 indicate that the attainment of pupils in National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations are broadly average for pupils in this age range. When compared with similar schools (non-selective schools in Local Education Authorities with selective schools) pupils do well in their examinations. Pupils make good progress overall throughout their time at the school. Since the previous inspection, results in examinations have been steadily improving. The school is doing particularly well considering that a significant number of high attaining pupils from the area attend the local grammar school.
- 2 Standards of attainment in English by the age of 14 are comparable with those of pupils nationally and very good compared to pupils in similar schools. Pupils do particularly well in terms of those reaching or achieving above the national 'benchmark' standard, although they do less well at the higher levels. Test results are well above those achieved by pupils in similar schools. A similar picture is seen in mathematics and science. In mathematics, pupils achieve results that are above national figures for all pupils and well above those achieved by similar schools. In science standards of attainment for pupils at 14 are above the national average and better than the average for similar schools. The results compare well with the national picture and particularly well compared with similar schools. Boys achieve better results overall than girls, particularly in mathematics and science. In all three subjects the performance of boys is steadily improving whilst that of girls is more variable.
- 3 In other subjects of the curriculum, based upon teachers' assessments, standards of attainment are above average in art and design, geography and music and below average in German and information and communication technology. In other subjects standards of achievement are in line with national figures.
- 4 There has been an increase in the GCSE result over the last few years from 36 per cent gaining five or more grades A*-C in 1999 to 54 per cent in 2001. The school was included in the thirty most improved schools in England on the basis of the 2001 results. Girls at the age of 16 have been achieving consistently higher results than boys. The school recognises this issue which is identified in its school development plan. When compared with national results and those for similar schools, the school does well for grades A*-C and very well for grades A*-G. In 2001, many pupils on the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in business attained credits or distinctions and some achieved full marks.
- 5 Results in English at 16 indicate that girls' attainment in English is good compared with girls in similar schools. In English literature their attainment is outstanding and many pupils achieve the higher grades. Whilst boys' achievement in English literature also compares well with that of boys in other schools, it is not as good in English language.

- 6 In the GCSE mathematics examination in 2001 pupils' results at grades A*-C were above the national average although below at the higher grades. Girls achieved higher results than boys particularly with regard to the grades A* and A which are well above the national average.
- 7 In science, pupils' standards of attainment at 16 are significantly above national and similar school averages. In 2001 two thirds of the pupils entered for the double science award achieved the higher grades and all pupils entered for the examination, which was almost all the cohort, achieved a GCSE double award. Girls achieved proportionately more higher grades in science than boys.
- 8 When compared with their performance in other subjects at GCSE, results were good in English literature, French, science and GNVQ business. They are less good in design and technology (particularly food) English language and German.
- 9 From their scrutiny of work, observation of lessons and discussions with pupils, inspectors judge that current standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are similar to those attained in GCSE in 2001, except in art and design, English and mathematics where work seen is of a higher standard than the results indicate. In Years 7 to 9, there is a similar picture with attainment in art and design, design and technology, English, mathematics and physical education where work seen is of a higher standard than results of recent national assessments indicate.
- 10 On entry to the school the majority of pupils are around the national average with fewer than average pupils attaining the higher levels. By the time they reach the end of Year 9 pupils are attaining high levels against other similar schools. By the end of Year 11, pupils are doing well compared to both national figures and those of similar schools.
- 11 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. By the time they are 14 they achieve higher standards than would typically have been expected from their attainment when they entered the school aged 11. Similarly the standards they achieve by the time they are 16 correspond to, or are better than, those anticipated when they were 14. In some cases, pupils who enter the school with attainment well below that expected nationally make excellent progress. By the time they are 16 years old they obtain good grades in GCSE examinations. This is mainly due to the effective procedures for identifying and assessing the pupils and then using the information to plan support for their learning.
- 12 Standards of reading are good across all year groups. There is a whole school approach to the explicit teaching of reading skills that is proving effective in a number of different subject areas. Appropriate literacy objectives are written into units of work and there is some attention to key subject vocabulary. Worksheets in science and music provide structured reading activities that help to develop pupils' understanding of key concepts. The organisation of writing is taught well in English and the humanities and pupils' achieve high standards where support is provided. The ability to sustain independent writing in standard English is much weaker, however, owing to teachers in most subjects failing to develop

consistently technical accuracy and ensure grammatical correctness. Good opportunities are provided across the curriculum for pupils to work orally with others in a variety of groupings. The level of challenge to extend pupils' thinking through speaking is low, although pupils are good at listening to teachers and each other.

- 13 Standards of numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils use their mathematics in a variety of contexts. For example, in business they calculate percentages successfully. In science they can calculate how much air they use in a day and year, but were unable to calculate the mean of a distribution. In history pupils use statistics and timelines well. In physical education and music, there are good examples in the schemes of work but these are not yet developed.
- 14 Information and communication technology skills are poor by the end of Years 9 and 11. This is in part as a result of the long term absence of the head of department, but largely the poor overall co-ordination between timetabled lessons and opportunities to practise their skills in a variety of contexts in many subjects. For those pupils studying GCSE information and communication technology, by the end of Year 11, practical skills are very good and standards overall are broadly in line with national averages. In business, geography, mathematics and music, information and communication technology is used to support learning but the contribution of all subjects towards developing pupils' information and communication technology skills are limited.
- 15 In 2001 the GCSE results exceeded the school's targets by 6 per cent. In 2000 targets were exceeded by 7 per cent. The school has very good data for setting targets based on pupils' achievements over a number of years. These predictions include information about individual pupils' potential gained from the commercial YELLIS system. The targets for 2003 are set lower than the local education authority's suggested targets. By the age of 16, the percentage of pupils predicted by the YELLIS system to achieve A*-C grades is 44 per cent, well below recent results. Although the school does add an 'ambition' target, of around a quarter of a grade, to these predictions, staff need to make more use of national rather than YELLIS data, as these have regularly underestimated pupils' actual performance in recent years. The targets for 2003 need to be reconsidered if they are to be genuinely challenging.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 16 Almost all pupils have a very good attitude to learning and behave very well in lessons. Overall, pupils' attitude and their very high standards of behaviour have a positive effect on their achievement. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards school. They are appreciative of the activities offered to them and of the support they receive from teachers. Many choose to take part in the wide range of extracurricular activities provided by staff which enable them to develop their skills particularly in sport and music. Throughout the school, pupils habitually show good levels of interest in their work. Almost all work hard in lessons to complete the work set, especially when the tasks are challenging and stimulate their interest. This makes a very positive contribution to their learning and achievement in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs share the positive attitudes to learning that

permeate the school, which contributes to the good progress they make. Inappropriate behaviour rarely disrupts lessons. The school has successfully maintained the very positive attitudes to learning reported at the time of the previous inspection.

- 17 Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good. No poor or very poor behaviour was observed. There was a high proportion of exemplary and very good behaviour. Behaviour in all year groups was of very high quality, although the proportion of excellent and very good behaviour was highest in Year 7 and lowest in Year 10.
- 18 In those lessons where behaviour is very good or exemplary, pupils are well motivated to succeed. They listen attentively to their teacher and to other pupils. The pace of work is brisk. Pupils settle to work quickly and concentrate well. In a Year 9 design and technology lesson for instance, pupils listened carefully to the teachers' instructions and carried out the activity enthusiastically, designing appropriate logos for clothing. Similarly in a Year 7 music lesson pupils began the activity purposefully, joining in the initial class activity and then continuing work on keyboards with purpose and enthusiasm. In a Year 11 personal, health and social education lesson pupils behaved sensibly and were willing to contribute ideas to a discussion of the sensitive issue of breast and testicular cancer. They responded very well to the information they were given and listened respectfully to the views and questions of others. In the very few lessons where pupils' approach to learning is unsatisfactory, they do not listen to the initial instructions given by the teacher or they show little interest and do not concentrate on the task in hand because the task set by the teacher failed to stimulate pupils' interest sufficiently to hold their full attention throughout the lesson.
- 19 Almost all pupils work willingly, especially when they find the tasks challenging. However, pupils do not always work with enthusiasm, especially when they have limited opportunities to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning. A minority is satisfied with work of reasonable quality and is not motivated to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs try hard to achieve their best and respond well to the good quality of support they receive.
- 20 Pupils co-operate well in small groups when they are given the opportunity. They enjoy being able to discuss their work in pairs or groups and work purposefully. However, in a significant number of lessons pupils remain dependent on the teacher and are not consistently encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. They are happy to listen while the teacher tells them about the topic and are sometimes reluctant to contribute to discussion. In some lessons teachers limit discussion in order to complete the allotted tasks and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' ability to express their opinions clearly. When using equipment, for example in science and design and technology, pupils co-operate sensibly and pay good attention to safety. Pupils co-operate well together and share resources sensibly in design and technology, art and design and other practical subjects. Most pupils habitually listen well to the teacher and to one another. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take responsibility for their own work and to work independently. However, such opportunities are limited. In particular, the lack of readily accessible computers and the small size of the library limit the opportunities for pupils to undertake independent research in lessons. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on their work in some subjects, such as English, music and physical

education, and undertake self-evaluation of it.

- 21 Standards of behaviour throughout the school are very good overall. The school functions as a very orderly community despite the constraints of narrow staircases and doorways. There is some good-humoured pushing and jostling caused by the weight of numbers but most pupils are patient and pleasant. The level of staff supervision around the building is sufficient to ensure that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with. Behaviour in the canteen is very good, especially given that it is too small for the current numbers and there is only one serving hatch. Pupils queue quietly for their food, often for long periods. Their dexterity in managing trays of food ensures that there are few spillages despite the over-crowding. At breaks and lunchtime behaviour is usually very good, although during the inspection one fight occurred: staff dealt with it quickly and efficiently. Almost all pupils are consistently polite and courteous. They are very willing to offer help to their teachers, peers and visitors to the school.
- 22 There is a high level of respect between pupils, their peers and staff. Pupils also show respect for the school environment and property. There is very little graffiti. Books and resources are kept in good condition. Staff and pupils regularly pick up litter but the windy site means that even litter deposited in bins is often blown out again. The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good and represents a major strength of its work. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with one another, teachers and other adults. Pupils respond very well to the positive role models provided by teachers and other staff both in lessons and around the school. Pupils value the individual support that teachers give to them and respond positively to it. They appreciate the time teachers give to them out of lessons, not only by providing a wide range of interesting activities but also to help them with any problems. Pupils almost always treat others with courtesy and consideration and show appropriate respect for the feelings and values of others, for example when discussing controversial issues in lessons. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils promote a good working atmosphere in most lessons. Pupils report that incidents of bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour are infrequent and that the school ensures that any incidents are dealt with both quickly and effectively. They feel safe in school and are confident that there is always an adult to turn to in times of need.
- 23 Pupils appreciate the time that teachers devote to running clubs and activities. Large numbers of pupils choose to take part in the programme of extracurricular activities and this has a positive impact on their personal development. The programme of personal, social and health education is well planned and relevant to the needs of pupils. Pupils from each form participate in the school council. Staff use the council to gain pupils' views about aspects of the school and pupils to put forward their own concerns and suggestions. However, a significant number of pupils did not feel that the council was successful in achieving change. Pupils are offered a range of responsibilities and respond very positively to them. In particular, the prefects undertake a variety of supervisory roles, both in school and on the buses. House captains are involved in organising some of the extracurricular sports events. However, opportunities for pupils in all year groups to take responsibility are not consistently well developed.

- 24 The school's expectations of behaviour are clear and well publicised. All pupils are aware of, and understand, the code of conduct. Pupils also understand and appreciate the system of rewards and sanctions. Almost all pupils value the rewards that they receive for good work, effort, behaviour and attendance and are well motivated by them. Pupils know what to expect if they misbehave and most state that the sanctions are both fair and fairly applied. Last year there were two permanent exclusions and twenty-four fixed term exclusions. This is broadly in line with the national average. Parents are confident that the school achieves high standards of good behaviour and that incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- 25 Attendance at the school was good at the time of the previous inspection and has been consistently above the national average since 1996. The rate of unauthorised absence is consistently below the national average. Analysis of absence is thorough. The school promotes the importance of regular attendance effectively through the prospectus and newsletters. The good attendance of almost all pupils makes a significant contribution to the good progress they make. Attendance in the first half of the academic year was 91.63 per cent. Punctuality in the morning is generally good. However, punctuality to the afternoon registration session is often unsatisfactory, sometimes owing to pupils' participation in extracurricular activities at lunchtime. Punctuality to lesson three is affected by the long queues in the canteen at break but the majority of pupils arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 26 Overall the quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good in all year groups. Of the one hundred and eleven lessons seen, all but two were judged satisfactory or better. Around two-thirds of these lessons were judged to be good or better and a quarter of these were very good or excellent. More good and better teaching was seen in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Overall this represents an improvement in teaching since the previous inspection.
- 27 In nearly all the teaching seen, teachers had secure subject knowledge and used a range of methods to deliver effective lessons. The most successful lessons were carefully planned, with clear objectives for pupils' progress and were conducted at a brisk pace. Teachers had high expectations of the pupils and used questioning effectively. Where teaching had weaknesses, it was often because there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively or to use discussion to explore new learning. On occasion, teachers' questioning did not sufficiently challenge and extend pupils' thinking. As a result, ideas and concepts were not learned as securely as they should have been and progress was slow.
- 28 Across the curriculum the development of pupils' literacy skills is satisfactory. Teachers ensure that pupils use language and vocabulary appropriately in lessons such as geography, science, music and physical education. Pupils in many lessons show good listening skills and respond well to both their teachers and their peers. However, the development of writing skills is less effective, is not taught systematically across the curriculum and has a negative impact on standards of attainment.
- 29 Teachers support the development of pupils' numeracy skills where appropriate. There

were, for example, some effective instances of developing measuring skills in art and design and of graphical presentation of data in science.

- 30 Overall the teaching of English is good. Of the lessons observed in Years 7 to 11, all lessons were satisfactory or better, with two thirds judged to be good or better. Teachers have good subject knowledge and manage their pupils well. Many English activities are stimulating and well planned. The two principal weaknesses in English teaching are that pupils' oral skills are insufficiently developed in lessons and there is not enough emphasis given to ensuring that pupils' completed written work is grammatically correct and that spelling is accurate.
- 31 The teaching of mathematics is good overall. All lessons observed were judged to be satisfactory or better with two thirds good or very good, which is a high proportion. Teachers' planning is generally good. Where there are weaknesses teachers make insufficient use of assessment information to plan work to meet the needs of all pupils.
- 32 Overall the teaching of science is good. All of the lessons observed were seen to be satisfactory or better with just over half judged to be good or very good. Teachers use their good scientific knowledge to plan and teach effective lessons. The department closely monitors pupils' progress and uses this well to effectively promote learning.
- 33 Of the lessons of information and communication technology observed the majority were satisfactory or better. Information and communication technology is taught mainly through the personal, social and health education programme and other subjects of the curriculum, including the GNVQ business course. In the lessons observed, teaching enabled pupils to use a range of skills effectively, including databases, spreadsheets, word processing and the Internet. Teaching is better in Years 7 to 9 than 10 and 11. The use of information and communication technology to support and enhance pupils' learning is limited.
- 34 All teaching observed in religious education was judged to be satisfactory. During the inspection good use of the final plenary part of the lesson was seen with a Year 7 class where pupils actively reported back on what they had learned, taking on the role of the classroom expert. Teaching develops pupils' knowledge and understanding satisfactorily but too often focuses on emotions and feelings rather than on ideas and argument.
- 35 Teaching in the other foundation subjects of the National Curriculum and in GNVQ business is good. However, the skills of independent learning are not consistently taught and used in many subjects. When pupils are given opportunities, for example in business pupils carry out assignments successfully, learn well and make good progress. Teaching effectively supports learning and pupils respond well to the work of the course, obtaining very good results in the examination and coursework.
- 36 Overall teaching had significantly more strengths than weaknesses. Generally teachers' lesson planning was good and their detailed knowledge of individual pupils enabled them to plan effective work. Most lessons provided challenging materials and activities, delivered using a range of methods, enabling pupils to make good progress. Almost all lessons

demonstrated very effective pupil management so that the good behaviour of pupils contributed significantly to the amount they learned.

- 37 There was variability in the marking of pupils' work by teachers. In the best examples, teachers identified what pupils knew and did well and what they should do to improve. In other examples seen, marking was limited to ticks and crosses accompanied by brief comments. Marking did not always indicate how pupils could improve their work. This impeded learning.
- 38 Despite this variability in marking, overall assessment of pupils' learning is good. The school has a large quantity of data about pupils' performance but this information is not fully used to plan for the needs of individual pupils and ensure more consistent progress for all. Teachers use homework regularly and appropriately to support classroom learning. Pupils' planners are well used by the school and link home and school effectively. Planners keep parents well informed about their child's progress and frequently teachers and parents use the planner to exchange information to keep each other up-to-date. Pupils also have a Record of Achievement that contains information about their successes in the curriculum and in other aspects of school life.
- 39 Overall, teachers and learning support assistants work very effectively together to make sure pupils, including those with special educational needs, know what they are to do during lessons. Where special educational needs pupils follow individual learning programmes, clear records of their progress are kept and pupils receive effective feedback about their work. This ensures that they know clearly what they are trying to achieve and raises their self-esteem and confidence. As a result they make good progress. Where the teaching of special educational needs pupils is less effective, the role of the learning support assistant is not planned as part of the whole lesson and activities are not targeted to the needs of individual pupils.
- 40 Pupils are making good progress in their learning as a result of the effective teaching they receive. Lessons nearly always build upon previous understanding. Well planned plenaries at the end of lessons frequently demonstrate that good learning has taken place. Teachers expect their pupils to concentrate and work hard and they readily respond.
- 41 Provision for gifted and talented pupils is not uniformly well developed, although still at least satisfactory. Teaching for these pupils is less effective because there are insufficient opportunities provided for them to be challenged and to develop the skills of independent learning.
- 42 Although the overall quality of teaching is good, there is a lack of a systematic monitoring programme to share the good classroom practice and identify the weaknesses. This results in both senior and middle managers having little clear evidence about the overall quality of education in the school. Although the deputy headteacher has completed some monitoring, the process has not involved a number of staff.
- 43 Overall, teachers careful planning enables pupils to build on prior learning effectively,

resulting in good progress. Teaching encourages pupils to sustain their concentration and to work hard, but there is too little opportunity for them to develop the skills of independent working.

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

- 44 The curriculum at Caistor Yarborough School gives equality of access and opportunity to all pupils. Statutory requirements are met, except that there is no provision for a daily act of collective worship. The curricular and extracurricular opportunities provide a good range of worthwhile opportunities and make an effective contribution to the learning and progress of most pupils of all ages and abilities.
- 45 There are some constraints placed on the curriculum because of the fixed points at the end of the day imposed by the bus schedules. This makes it difficult for pupils to take part in after-school activities. The school provides a wide variety of lunchtime activities including a range of sporting opportunities, music, art and design, textiles, library activities and 'catch-up' lessons in some core subjects. Teaching time of 25 hours matches government recommendations and this has increased since the previous inspection. The quality of curriculum provision has improved compared with that reported in the previous inspection.
- 46 Curriculum planning is good in all years and ensures that there are opportunities for pupils to make progress. Schemes of work are in place which in many subjects incorporate a number of strategies to meet the learning needs of the pupils. Lessons are well planned. However, there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to engage in their own research and discussion and to practice their information and communication technology skills
- 47 In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum is good, providing a broad and balanced range of subjects that meets the needs of all pupils. Statutory requirements are met and sufficient time is given to English and mathematics to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Sufficient time is given to most other National Curriculum subjects and religious education, with the exception of information and communication technology, to teach the required programmes of study.
- 48 In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is good. The core curriculum provides sufficient time for English and mathematics and for the other subjects required by the National Curriculum. An appropriate amount of time is provided for personal, social, health and careers education. The system of options however, places some constraints on the curriculum pupils can follow in Years 10 and 11. Foundation subjects are divided into two blocks and pupils are required to choose one subject from each block. The result of this division is that a quarter of the pupils do not study design and technology. However, no pupils were denied their choices within the combinations offered. Various other combinations of subjects that pupils might wish to study are not possible within this restricted structure. The school takes great care in providing very good advice and guidance for pupils and their parents in selecting options. Much time is spent in preparing information and the options evening ensures that pupils and their parents receive advice of high quality.

- 49 In Years 10 and 11, some pupils are disapplied from a modern foreign language and study a GNVQ business course. This is a very successful programme. The course enables pupils to develop the skills of research and exercise initiative in independent learning.
- 50 Support for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and delivered. The special educational needs policy is well thought out, follows all recommendations in the national code of practice and is implemented in a very positive way. The special educational needs department provides good support for pupils and this significantly improves the quality of pupils' learning and the progress they make.
- 51 The strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are effective overall. Other subjects make a satisfactory contribution to developing and applying literacy and numeracy skills in pupils' learning, with the exception of writing skills which remain underdeveloped. The provision for teaching information and communication technology skills is unsatisfactory.
- 52 The provision for extracurricular activities for all year groups, given the constraints of the bus schedule, is very good. There is a wide range of activities very well supported by large numbers of pupils. Activities include sports such as basketball, rugby, badminton, netball, gymnastics and football. There are also art and design and textiles clubs, and larger than usual numbers of pupils are involved in a wide range of excellent musical activities. Twilight lessons take place in English, mathematics and design and technology and there are library activities. There are visits to local and national places of cultural and historic interest. Pupils also have the opportunity to visit France and to take part in a skiing holiday. These activities contribute positively to pupils' personal development and learning.
- 53 The provision of time for personal, social and health education and citizenship throughout the school is good. The programme of work covers all the main areas expected, including drugs and sex education. Content and knowledge are covered well, but pupils are not always given the opportunities to discuss and develop skills and attitudes that enable them to make short and long-term choices about the personal and social issues that will challenge them. Some sessions at the beginning of the afternoon are too short to effectively discuss the important and substantial issues contained in the syllabus.
- 54 The provision for careers guidance and for work-related activities is good and the school works closely with the appropriate outside agencies. The arrangements for work experience are very good. A strong feature is the good support and guidance provided for pupils throughout the experience followed by a rigorous evaluation of their work. This helps them to analyse what they have learned. It helps inform them about future appropriate routes to further and higher education and to employment. The school has good links with the local business community and with two very large national companies, Smith and Nephew and Morrisons. They provide direct input into the curriculum through science, geography and business as well as through careers information and advice and the 'Go For It' programme. The co-ordination of all aspects of careers ensures that pupils receive a coherent programme.
- 55 The links with the local educational community are very good and growing. The

arrangements for pupils' transfer at age eleven are good. There are regular meetings between the headteachers of the three schools in Caistor and collaboration between them is improving. Mentoring of Year 6 primary pupils by Year 10 is well established and there are planned subject links with the local primary school in physical education. Links in this subject are also well established with the neighbouring grammar school. There are also strong links with two colleges of further education and other schools with post 16 provision. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education

- 56 The school uses many resources within its locality, and pupils make good use of the Internet as a resource for information from around the world. Good examples were seen in music, science, geography and mathematics.
- 57 The school is committed to promoting an ethos that includes all staff and pupils and does this successfully within the school community. For example, all staff whatever their role are included in staff meetings and staff events. Pupils with special educational needs have equal access to the curriculum and careful use of individual education plans ensures that they make good progress. In both setted and mixed ability classes teachers generally use materials which match the needs of the majority of pupils although there are inconsistencies in some subjects with regard to the more able pupils. In those year groups where there are considerably more boys or girls, the school is working at ensuring that the needs of the minority group are not neglected. There is, for example, on going discussion about appropriate teaching strategies and about the range and content of schemes of work.
- 58 Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities for spiritual development are unsatisfactory. While there are some isolated opportunities provided in English to empathise with others and to create a sense of awe in science, across the curriculum, there are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and other peoples lives and values. The requirements for collective worship are not met and this limits the opportunities for spiritual development.
- 59 Good opportunities for moral development are widespread, and are found in lessons and in most aspects of the daily life of the school. There is an expectation that pupils recognise right from wrong and behave accordingly. This is reinforced consistently by teachers in classes and around the school and makes a noticeable contribution to high standards of behaviour and positive relationships. Some subjects make a good contribution to debating moral issues and to enhancing pupils' moral development. In physical education, for example, Year 10 pupils discussed fair play and in music pupils debated the need to work closely together. In personal, social and health education lessons moral issues form an important part of the programme and give pupils the opportunity to engage in debate.
- 60 Provision for social development is good, particularly because high standards of social behaviour are encouraged and expected at all times. Pupils are courteous and relationships throughout the school are very good. The personal, social and health education programme includes elements on citizenship that promote social development effectively. A high priority is placed on establishing good relations amongst the whole school community. All members are valued and their contributions regularly recognised and praised. Pupils are encouraged

to care for others through charity work and involvement with the local community. Pupils place a high value on the rewards system in school and respond well to it. There is too little opportunity, however, for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative.

- 61 The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. In addition to cultural visits outside school, a theatre company has visited to perform *Twelfth Night*. A number of subjects provide a curriculum that includes a consideration of a range of cultures. In art and design and music pupils are introduced to work from a variety of cultural traditions. In English pupils study literature from a wide range of traditions and cultures while in history and geography, pupils learn about life in other countries. In religious education, world religions including Islam, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism form part of the curriculum in addition to Christianity. However, links between these aspects of the curriculum and preparing pupils for life in multi-cultural Britain are less well developed. Pupils' understanding and appreciation of other cultures is limited. The school is beginning to address the criticism made in the previous report that opportunities for promoting multi-cultural understanding are not well developed. The Global Village project developed by geography and business is an example of one positive initiative

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 62 The quality of pastoral care throughout the school is very high and is a strength of its work. Its success is based on a commitment to provide individual care and support for all pupils. The quality of assessment is good overall. Data analysis is undertaken but as yet this is not always having sufficient impact on teachers' schemes of work or lesson planning to ensure appropriate future learning for groups of pupils, for example, the more able. However, teachers have a very good awareness of pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses and use this effectively to support their learning. The school has built on the good standards reported in the previous inspection.
- 63 Arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, including child protection and first aid, are very good. Procedures for child protection comply fully with requirements: staff are regularly reminded of them. The high level of mutual trust and the very good quality of relationships helps to ensure that pupils trust teachers to deal sensitively with any personal concerns they choose to share. Procedures for first aid are good and appropriate care is exercised when medication is brought into school. Accidents and injuries are recorded and parents informed promptly.
- 64 The school has a comprehensive policy for health and safety based on the local education authority's guidelines. Regular checks are carried out but at present these are not fully documented, which is a weakness. In lessons such as science, design and technology, art and design and physical education teachers pay very good attention to health and safety. Pupils also show good levels of awareness of their own safety in lessons, for example they handle physical education equipment with due care. Pupils are appropriately supervised outside lessons. Prefects help staff to patrol the corridors and supervise pupils on the school buses.

- 65 The systems in place for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils are very well known to their form tutors and to the heads of lower and upper school. Teachers are committed to pupils' well-being and success. Form tutors have daily contact with their form at morning and afternoon registration. They are responsible for delivering the tutorial programme, which complements the programme of personal, social and health education. Overall, the tutorial sessions are well planned but there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching. The sessions are short and pupils' frequent late arrival to afternoon registration further limits the time available: and as a result the effectiveness of the programme. All pupils have one personal, social and health education lesson a week. The quality of teaching overall in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good and the programmes of study are well planned. Pupils generally value the personal, social and health education lessons as they realise that the topics are relevant to their lives. Pupils also benefit from a programme of careers education and guidance, integrated into personal, social and health education, which helps them prepare for life beyond school. All pupils have the opportunity to undertake work experience and are well prepared and supported throughout.
- 66 The school has effective measures in place to promote the importance of regular attendance. Levels of attendance are consistently above the national average. Clear systems are in place to follow up any unexplained absence but almost all parents support the school well by reporting absence promptly. The education welfare service is involved appropriately when absence becomes a cause for concern. Lateness is monitored and repeated instances lead to a detention.
- 67 The school has very effective measures in place to promote good behaviour and to address bullying and other forms of harassment. The behaviour policies, including the code of conduct, the reward systems and procedures against bullying, provide a strong framework for promoting and monitoring behaviour. Pupils understand what is expected of them and usually comply. Pupils are given recognition for achievement and are very well motivated by the merit system, taking a pride in receiving recognition in the weekly award assemblies. The system of sanctions is clearly understood by pupils and implemented with good levels of consistency by staff. Appropriate procedures for exclusion are in place and followed when necessary but the school is committed to avoiding exclusion whenever possible. The work to counter bullying done in assembly, tutorial time and personal, social and health education lessons is effective in ensuring that bullying is reported to staff. Pupils and their parents are confident that reported incidents are dealt with firmly and quickly. Pupils feel safe in school, aware that there is always an adult to turn to in time of need. The very good relationships and high levels of mutual respect between staff and pupils make a significant contribution to the promotion of good behaviour.
- 68 The monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development is good. Assessment arrangements for pupils taking national tests and examinations at ages 14 and 16 meet all the legal requirements. The school has a large quantity of data about pupils' performance and has a clear picture of its overall performance. However, the data on pupils' performance in statutory tests and GCSE results is not fully utilised by all departments to assist long term planning for different groups of pupils. Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils well and the majority plan their lessons with pupils' specific learning needs

in mind. This allows pupils to make good progress. Marking is variable. The most effective marking shows pupils how they can improve their work and indicates to them what aspects are particularly good. In other cases, where marking consists of ticks and brief comments, pupils are not given enough information to be able to improve. Teachers use homework regularly and appropriately to support classroom learning. All pupils have a planner. The school uses this very well. It forms an effective source of information for parents and for staff and is an important line of communication between home and school. Pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11 are set targets for their examinations at the end of Year 11 and are made aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Pupils have a Record of Achievement that contains information about their successes in the curriculum and in other aspects of school life.

- 69 The systems in place to identify and support pupils with special educational needs are effective. The school meets fully the requirements of the national code of practice. The national requirements for the statements of special educational need are fully met. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs provide a firm basis for each pupil's progress. The monitoring and review of statements are effective and pupils and parents are appropriately involved.
- 70 The staff in the special educational needs department have a good understanding of pupils' needs. They ensure that the curriculum is accessible and have carefully thought out strategies to enable pupils with a wide range of needs to cope with school life. The learning support assistants make a very good contribution to supporting pupils in their learning. However, where they are not part of the lesson planning process they are less effective. In the majority of lessons the work is well matched to the needs of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into every aspect of the life of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 71 The parents and those with parental responsibility who made their views known by completing the inspectors' questionnaire are generally very supportive of the school. Those who attended the parents' meeting were unanimously supportive and painted a very positive picture of the school, its work and of the effective partnership fostered between the school and parents. However, relatively few parents chose to respond. Approximately one parent in five completed the questionnaire and one in thirty attended the parents' meeting. Evidence gathered during the course of the inspection indicates that the large majority of parents are supportive of the school. Parents are confident that the school expects their child to work hard to achieve his or her best. They are pleased by the good progress that most children make and by the good quality of teaching. Parents believe that the school is helping its pupils to become mature and responsible. They state that it is well led and managed and that it works closely with parents. Almost all parents would feel comfortable to approach the school if they had any concerns. A very small minority of parents expressed concern about the information they receive about their child's progress and about the amount of homework. A few also stated that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

- 72 Inspection evidence fully supports the parents' positive views of the school. The concerns about homework were not substantiated by inspection evidence, as homework is usually set in a systematic way and helps pupils to learn. Parents are well informed about their child's progress. The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons. However, because the majority of pupils travel on school buses, most of these take place during the lunch break and not all parents may be aware of the full range.
- 73 The school provides a wide variety of useful information for parents. The prospectus is attractively presented and contains the full range of information required, including a brief overview of the curriculum. The annual report of governors provides a good level of detail especially about special educational needs. Regular newsletters give advance notice of events and developments as well as celebrating success. All pupils have a homework planner. This provides a range of detailed information, including the homework timetable and code of conduct. The planner is well developed as a means of communication between parents and teachers, especially the form tutor. Effective systems are in place to ensure that parents are kept informed by telephone or letter of any concerns about attendance, attitude or behaviour. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully informed and involved at all stages. The school is committed to working closely with parents and has developed a meaningful sense of partnership.
- 74 Parents have the opportunity to consult with teachers both at formal consultation evenings and at other times, by request. They receive a full annual report. The quality of reporting is good overall and there is some very good practice. Comments are clearly related to the subject and give parents an insight into the level their child is working at and the progress he or she has made. Targets are set in each subject and are frequently subject specific. However, in many cases the targets provided are insufficiently precise to guide progress effectively, for example 'Work confidently with fractions' but with no indication of how to achieve this. Some targets are not specific to the subject and lack focus, for example 'Keep working hard'. Reports provide a clear indication of attainment, include the national curriculum level or GCSE grade the pupil is working at, or towards. However, the school does not currently report on information and communication technology or personal, social and health education, in breach of statutory requirements. Parents are, however, given the teacher assessment level for information and communication technology at the end of Year 9. Pupils have the opportunity to contribute to their reports but in the majority of cases they need help to focus on appropriate and specific targets for improvement.
- 75 The school has a comprehensive induction programme for new pupils and parents. The school holds a number of open days when prospective parents are able to 'drop in' to see the school at work. They are escorted by a pupil. School staff meet pupils in the local primary schools when they are in Year 5 and on several occasions in Year 6. All pupils are visited in their primary schools. Year 7 pupils value their induction and state that it helped them to settle into school confidently. They particularly appreciated the opportunities to visit the school when they were in Year 6 and enjoyed the 'Sleepover' in Year 7. They also appreciated meeting the Year 10 pupils, who visited their primary schools. Parents are involved effectively in the induction process and have several opportunities to visit the school and talk with staff. Parents of pupils in Year 9 are well informed about the option choice

process and have the opportunity to discuss their child's option choices with teachers. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved very effectively in the annual review process and in the review of individual education plans. In this way they are able to contribute to decisions about how the needs of their child should be met. The special educational needs staff work hard and successfully to ensure that parents are kept fully informed and are able to celebrate their child's successes.

- 76 Parents provide good support for the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association, which raises a significant amount of money annually to support the school's work. The money raised is used to support the school's identified priorities for development as well as helping to fund the reward system. School events are very well attended. An appropriate home school agreement is in place, emphasising the importance of school, parents and children working together. Parents are encouraged to contact the school whenever they have any concerns about their child's work, progress or behaviour. Those parents who made their views known to the inspection team are confident that the school responds both quickly and effectively to any concerns they raise. Teachers ensure that parents are informed by letter of outstanding work and good behaviour as well as about matters of concern.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 77 The leadership and management of the school are both very good. The headteacher and his deputy have an excellent, complementary working relationship that is benefiting the school. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear educational vision for the future of the school that has been shared with the staff and governors. The school has a comprehensive set of aims and values that have clearly guided its policies and practices. The leadership team now has a good grasp of what the school needs to do to improve and these needs are reflected in the recently drafted school development plan for next year. Staff are becoming more involved in the decision-making process and have just produced their first department development plans which are linked to the school's overall plan. There is a shared desire amongst the whole school community, who know the pupils well, to ensure high standards of behaviour and good relationships. All these contribute to the shared commitment that all pupils are successful at school and achieve their 'best'.
- 78 The governing body support the school well, meet twice a term and governors give freely of their time. They have a good knowledge of the community and are largely carrying out their responsibilities, although the statutory requirements for collective worship are still not being met. There is an effective committee structure and the chairpersons meet regularly. Governors require more support to enable them to see what needs to be done to meet the targets and priorities they have approved. The school currently lacks comprehensive systems for monitoring teaching as well as its systems and policies. Although plans are now in place they have not been implemented and this lack of evidence hinders both governors and the school senior management team in carrying out their responsibilities. This issue was identified at the time of the previous inspection but plans are in place to rectify the situation as soon as possible.
- 79 Despite the lack of a well established system of school self evaluation, the deputy

headteacher works extensively on the analysis of data which enables staff to follow pupils' progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The spreadsheets are used well to set the school targets for pupils and for the school. However, not all heads of department use the results of the Year 6 standard assessment tests, alongside other measures, when pupils enter the school in Year 7. As a consequence results are not sufficiently used to plan the Year 7 curriculum. The issues that emerge from the school's thorough analysis of performance data are included in the school development plan, for example the draft plan identifies as a priority reducing the 'discrepancy between the achievement of boys and girls'. There are now clear links between development planning, financial management and the school's asset management plan which will enable a whole school approach to the school's needs.

- 80 Arrangements for performance management of teaching staff are in place and the first year of the new scheme has been successfully completed. During the first year the outcomes of the performance management reviews were not sufficiently linked with the programme for the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers. A review of the process has taken place and a new draft policy for CPD, which is intended to ensure that this process takes place, is now available for discussion.
- 81 The school is very well managed. The headteacher has included additional members on the extended management team, for example the teacher responsible for continuing professional development is now included. The new team meet regularly and are beginning to work well together, in order to meet the school's priorities. Good progress has been made since the school was inspected previously. The overall quality of middle managers and the leadership and support they give to their colleagues is good.
- 82 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed and there is a clear commitment from all staff to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities. The development of the special educational needs liaison group ensures that there are clear links between the department and other subject areas.
- 83 The school budget is very efficiently managed and administered. The school is not entitled to many of the additional grants currently available and as a consequence funding is limited. However, the new headteacher has been charged by the governors to investigate all possible sources of funding. The headteacher and finance officer, supported by the governors, ensure that funds are wisely spent and used for their designated purpose. The school is funded to provide a unit for pupils with a diverse, and sometimes complex, range of special educational needs. Although the unit does not exist as a separate entity, funds are used well to support pupils in different ways to ensure that their needs are met in the mainstream classes.
- 84 Finances are now being targeted towards the school's priorities as set down in the development plan. The principles of best value are applied. The school's performance is compared with that of similar schools, and the senior managers look carefully at the quality of the services provided, reviewing and challenging provision that is less satisfactory, for example, the provision for information and communication technology. The views of parents indicate that the school provides what they want for their children and all staff are beginning

to be a crucial part of the decision-making process. The costs of decisions are considered and there is a mechanism to ensure that services to the school are economic and effective. Recently the school telephone system was changed in accordance with these principles.

- 85 The quality and expertise of the teaching and learning support staff are both good. The arrangements for the induction of new members of staff are very good. The school has a strong commitment to the training of new teachers. Support staff are assigned to specific pupils, the majority of whom have a statement of special educational needs. When used to best effect, teachers ensure that the additional support is clearly planned and focused and that appropriate tasks are set to meet pupils' needs. Currently there are too few technicians to meet the needs of the curriculum and to ensure that teachers are able to concentrate on their lessons. All staff, whatever their role, are an important part of the school community and are valued by the headteacher and governors.
- 86 Resources are satisfactory and are used effectively overall. Resources for music are excellent and they are very good for physical education. However, there is a lack of artefacts to support the curriculum in religious education. The librarian is working with subject staff to develop an appropriate stock of non-fiction books to support the work of departments. The provision of information and communication technology equipment needs review. Currently many subject rooms have out-dated machines which are not compatible with the computer network.
- 87 The accommodation is just about satisfactory overall but has a number of shortcomings that impact on the activities available to the pupils and as a consequence the standards of attainment achieved. The school has sufficient classrooms overall and the staff make particularly good, imaginative use of the available accommodation especially in English, design and technology and music. Subject classrooms and form rooms are grouped together so that staff can support one another or discuss issues concerning the year groups. Accommodation for mathematics, science, geography and history is good. In physical education it is very good. However, some rooms are too small and others, like the science laboratories, are in need of refurbishment. For example the accommodation for music, although very well used, is too small to allow effective group work. The special educational needs accommodation is inadequate given the diversity of need. Pupils with physical and medical conditions have limited access to appropriate facilities that can provide the privacy that is often required. The library is accommodated in a mobile building that is too small, is unsuitable for its present purpose and apart from the rest of the school. The school canteen is inadequate and pupils queue, often for long periods of time. The long queues affect punctuality to lesson three and, as a consequence, learning time. The school hall is too small to enable a whole school assembly to be held and there is no suitable performance space for music and drama. The school is also short of office and storage space.
- 88 The school is effective and provides a good quality education. Pupils achieve well and standards of attainment are steadily improving. The quality of teaching is good, pastoral processes are very good and the school is very well led. There is a strong sense of commitment across the school and there has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Attitudes amongst pupils are good. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 89 The school governors in conjunction with the headteacher and staff, should take the following actions to further improve the quality of education by:
- 1 Ensuring that the quality of teaching in all departments is evaluated systematically and consistently by:
 - Improving the quality and consistency of classroom observation; [78, 79, 136, 165, 175, 187, 200]
 - Co-ordinating the findings to evaluate the quality of teaching, and then address identified weaknesses. [78, 29]
 - 2 Providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their oral skills in order to:
 - Improve their understanding of their new learning; [27, 169]
 - Discuss important ideas, and talk purposefully in a range of different contexts; [140, 193, 197]
 - Explain their understanding of things they have already learned. [103]
 - 3 Developing pupils' skills and levels of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
 - Ensuring that the full National Curriculum programme for ICT is taught; [47]
 - Ensuring that all subjects identify opportunities for ICT in their schemes of work; [14, 129]
 - Identifying and sharing best practice in using ICT within the school and within other schools; [158]
 - Improving the access to computers; [86, 117, 134, 143]
 - Developing strategies to monitor and evaluate the implementation of ICT and its impact on learning; [78]
 - 4 Ensuring that the skills of writing are taught systematically across the curriculum to enable pupils to present work in standard English. [12, 28, 51, 112]
- 90 The school governors, in conjunction with the headteacher and staff, may also wish to address the following areas in their action plan:
- Ensure a consistently high level of challenge for more able pupils. [41, 91, 115, 132, 148, 185]
 - Encourage pupils' to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning within the curriculum and the wider school community. [35, 43, 49, 60, 113]
 - Ensure that pupils develop more effective thinking skills in all subjects. [103, 197]
 - Ensure there are opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. [58]
 - Ensure that a daily act of worship takes place. [58]

The numbers in brackets relate to the main paragraphs of this report where these issues are

mentioned.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	111
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	54

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	25	39	41	2	0	0
Percentage	3	23	35	37	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	560
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	37

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	20
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	109

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	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.0
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	59	52	111

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	47	51
	Girls	41	37	36
	Total	84	84	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (68)	76 (59)	78 (63)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	27 (23)	46 (32)	43 (29)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	50	44	49
	Girls	44	33	41
	Total	94	77	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85 (72)	69 (80)	81 (79)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils	School	41 (23)	32 (29)	40 (44)

at NC level 6 or above	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)
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Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	61	57	118

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	25	59	59
	Girls	39	56	56
	Total	64	115	115
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	54 (46)	97 (93)	97 (95)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	39.4 (35.7)
	National	39 (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	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	559
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	24	2
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)	35.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.9

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	262

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26.1
Key Stage 4	19.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	1,625,405
Total expenditure	1,594,001
Expenditure per pupil	2,802
Balance brought forward from previous year	-19,960
Balance carried forward to next year	11,444

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	16.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	18
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	560
Number of questionnaires returned	167

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	51	9	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	45	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	53	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	51	15	2	1
The teaching is good.	50	45	2	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	31	16	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	26	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	25	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	51	40	7	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	37	1	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	39	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	42	13	2	7

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

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- The outstanding performance of girls in GCSE English literature.
- The explicit teaching of reading skills.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge.
- The high quality of materials that support pupils' learning.
- The quality of comments on pupils' work.
- The leadership of the head of department

Areas for improvement

- Boys' underachievement in GCSE English.
- The level of inaccuracy and clumsiness of expression in pupils' final written work.
- Pupils' oral skills in explaining their thinking.
- The lack of an adequate performing space for the development of drama skills.

- 91 By the time pupils are 14, their attainment in English is at least comparable to national averages. Average and below average pupils develop their English skills particularly well, although the progress of higher attainers is less marked. The achievement of boys has been steadily improving.
- 92 By the time pupils are 16, girls have made good progress and their attainment in English compares well to the national average for girls. In English literature, it is quite outstanding, not only in terms of overall achievement but also with regard to the number of higher grades. Boys' attainment in English literature compares well with that of boys nationally but is disappointing in English language. GCSE attainment overall has improved significantly in the past three years. This is a result of teachers keeping their practice under constant review and being pro-active in instituting changes to improve teaching and learning. Improving the achievement of boys in English remains an urgent priority.
- 93 Overall the quality of teaching in the department is good. A great strength is the teaching of reading skills, which in several respects is exemplary. The structure and language of different types of texts are taught explicitly and thoroughly, through a variety of teaching strategies that meets the learning needs of different groups of pupils. Whole class teaching is accompanied by different forms of group work, supported by the department's excellent written materials. By re-writing all schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 in order to align them with the objectives of the National Literacy Strategy, the good practice in the teaching of reading has been improved further. This practice is rooted in strong subject knowledge, so that teachers know how to take pupils from simple to more complex understanding. In a lesson on *Twelfth Night*, the teacher's careful planning enabled pupils to develop an understanding of the subtle manipulation of Malvolio by Sir Toby and his companions.

Equally impressive was the linkage made between this early scene and Malvolio's farewell speech. The range of reading material provided for pupils is imaginative and thoughtful, a great improvement on the previous inspection. Non-fiction material is much more in evidence and the richness of different cultures is acknowledged through, for example, work on African Caribbean poetry. Poor library facilities severely limit efforts to develop independent wider reading.

- 94 Teachers are also effective at teaching pupils how to order and structure different types of writing, again reinforced by high quality support materials. They use national assessment criteria to help pupils to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses, with clear targets set to help pupils improve. Through careful grouping strategies, lower achieving pupils make good or very good progress and higher achieving pupils welcome the range of activities. Pupils undertake an appropriate variety of written tasks in Years 7 to 9, but the level of challenge for more able pupils needs to be linked more closely to their levels of attainment in writing on entry to the school. This in turn entails more rigorous use of information about pupils' prior performance in national assessments when they enter the school in Year 7. The lack of detailed intervention by teachers in pupils' writing during the drafting process means that too much clumsy grammar and general inaccuracy remain. This significantly hinders the development of more advanced language skills.
- 95 When given opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, pupils rise to the challenge. In a Year 8 lesson on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pupils were asked in groups to discuss how the first Mechanicals scene could be rendered in modern English. In the process, the pupils discovered the wit, humour and irony in Shakespeare's writing, which they then conveyed successfully through dramatic presentation. Much of this was achieved through autonomous learning. It is very difficult, however, for teachers to build on these strategies for developing dramatic skills owing to the lack of any suitable performing space in the school, despite the considerable flair evident in many pupils. There is in general too little challenge in the development of pupils' oral language. They need to be given more opportunities to develop an idea or to clarify a point that they have made, in the process of refining their own use of language, by making the valuation of the pupils' responses by teachers more explicit. Even in Years 10 and 11, dialogue with the teacher is limited. When working in paired or larger groupings, pupils are unfailingly courteous with each other. They listen to each other's point of view and collaborate amicably on joint tasks, although zest and initiative are in short supply.
- 96 In Years 10 and 11, teachers' excellent grasp of the assessment criteria for English literature enables them to support pupils' study of key texts in a highly effective way. A great strength is the insistence on pupils attending to the ways in which writers use language to create effects. This also applies to dramatic texts, so that in a Year 10 lesson on *An Inspector Calls*, pupils showed real understanding of dramatic irony and were alert to the interplay of character. Support for pupils' course work is very good and shows great skill in being adaptable to pupils of all abilities, so that they know exactly what is required of them. This represents excellent progress since the previous inspection. Homework was another weakness that has now been transformed into a strength, so that the quality of its integration into the learning process represents very good practice. At the same time, support needs to

be balanced with developing pupils' confidence to think for themselves, initially through more explicit valuation of pupils' responses by teachers. There is occasional good practice in this respect, for example, a Year 11 lesson that led pupils towards their own evaluation of two GCSE poems, but too often opportunities are missed. The identification of pupils' strengths and weaknesses is very good and this is used to inform future planning. A key issue from the previous inspection still remains, however, namely the level of inaccuracy in final drafts. This needs to be addressed from the beginning of Year 7, so that GCSE pupils become more skilful at handling the grammar and conventions of standard English. Although a number of subjects support the development of aspects of pupils' literacy skills in a variety of ways, currently this does not consistently extend to the development of standard English.

- 97 The department is led very well by the head of department. She provides a model of the teacher as reflective practitioner, placing teaching and learning at the forefront of everything that she does. She maintains a clear focus on achievement and seeks constantly to improve and develop practice. There is good practice within the department in identifying strengths and weaknesses, in particular, from the analysis of pupils' performance.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils' results at both the end of Year 9 and Year 11 were above the national average in 2001 and well above average when compared with similar schools.
- The good quality of teaching and learning.
- The positive relationships, attitudes and behaviour.
- The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy for Years 7 to 9.
- The good classroom management, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- The use of information and communication technology to enhance learning.
- The good leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in classrooms.
- The providing of tasks appropriate to pupils' varying attainment.
- Marking which helps pupils to identify how they can improve.
- The development of basic number work and regular opportunities for the review of previous work in Years 10 and 11.
- More opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and reasoning

- 98 In the National Curriculum tests at the age of 14 in 2001 pupils achieved results that were above the national average. Results were also above the national average for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. The results are all well above those achieved by similar schools. Boys achieved higher results than girls unlike the national results where boys and girls achieved similarly. Boy's results have improved steadily since 1998 whilst girls' results have varied.

- 99 In work seen during the inspection, pupils in Years 7 to 9 are achieving standards that are typical for their age. Pupils of all abilities use information and communication technology including LOGO and spreadsheets. They have opportunities to use and apply their mathematics, for example recognising and extending number patterns and using algebra to generalise a solution. Pupils' basic number work is good. They use strategies for calculating that are based on logic and common sense, for example calculating VAT at 17.5 per cent by calculating 10 per cent then 5 per cent and then 2.5 per cent. Also, pupils with special educational needs find a quarter of a quantity by 'halving, then halving again'.
- 100 In the GCSE examinations in 2001 pupils' results at grades A*-C were above the national average, but below at the higher grades A*-A. Information published by the local education authority comparing the school's 1999 results at the end of Year 9, with the 2001 GCSE results, indicates that the GCSE results overall are significantly above the results of pupils of similar abilities in other schools in Lincolnshire. Girls achieved results at grades A*-C that were higher than for boys. Also, girls achieved 14 per cent grades A*-A which is well above the national average and very much higher than for boys who achieved just 1.7 per cent. Results have improved slightly since 1999.
- 101 In work seen during the inspection, pupils in Years 10 and 11 were achieving standards that are typical for their age. The more able pupils can solve very challenging problems in algebra and geometry. Pupils of average attainment use more straightforward algebra to solve equations. Both average and lower attaining pupils use statistical concepts and graphs to solve problems. Pupils' basic number work, however, is not always secure. Also, they have insufficient opportunities to constantly revise previous knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 102 Pupils' attitudes are very good in all years. In Years 7 to 9 there is an orderly start to lessons. Pupils respond positively to oral and mental mathematics questions and activities. They commence work immediately when presented with a task and all become involved in the topic. Pupils work well together, for example in pairs on computers. Relationships are good. Pupils listen well to each other and to the teacher. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 also settle well as lessons commence. They are prepared to answer questions from the teacher and to ask their own. They show mutual respect. Pupils show interest in their work and sustain concentration. They are patient and listen to other pupils. They work responsibly when the teacher focuses on other pupils in the class following a different GCSE course. Teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships are very good. Sometimes small numbers of pupils in all years do become disengaged and their behaviour has to be corrected, but overall the pupils' positive attitudes contribute significantly to their progress and achievement.
- 103 The quality of teaching is good. At both key stages teachers use methods that are effective in building pupils' confidence and understanding. Teachers know their subject well and have high expectations of pupils. Lessons are well planned. The overhead projector is used well to convey information and also to help pupils to visualise concepts. All lessons commence with mental mathematics activities. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 write their answers to questions on small white boards, and then hold them up so that the teacher can easily assess the responses, praise correct solutions and rectify errors and misunderstandings. Some pupils

may be asked to explain briefly their answers. In general, however, pupils have too few opportunities to explain their thinking and reasoning. Pupils are taught sound strategies for mental and written calculations that are founded on common sense rather than technical methods that tend to be forgotten. Activities are pitched to engage the majority of pupils but at times, there are too few activities to extend and challenge the more able. Lower attaining pupils sometimes need more straightforward examples to enable them to make progress. Teachers use information and communication technology well, for example, demonstrating how to use a spreadsheet to solve a problem or a graphic calculator to draw graphs from values. Pupils develop increasing proficiency in using these information and communication technology tools, too. Good pace is maintained in lessons. However, during summaries at the end of a lesson, pupils do not always have the opportunity to explain what they have learnt.

- 104 The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 covers all aspects of the national curriculum and the department is implementing the National Numeracy Strategy well. There is particularly good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants support these and other pupils to a high standard. Practical mathematical activities and games are used to improve pupils' understanding and mental dexterity. In Years 7 to 9 pupils undertake projects that help to develop their cultural awareness, for example, 'Global Village Week'. In Years 10 and 11 GCSE courses are well organised and coursework is a strength. However, pupils in Years 10 and 11 have insufficient opportunities to keep their basic number skills sharp.
- 105 The department is very well led and managed. There is clear vision and direction for further improvement. The head of department monitors and evaluates the work in the department by a range of processes but these do not include systematically observing teaching and learning in classrooms.
- 106 The department has made good progress since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils reach above average standards at the ages of 14 and 16.
- Teachers' knowledge of pupils as individuals underpins effective working relationships.
- Pupils on the register of special educational needs are included in all activities and make good progress.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress in both key stages.
- The support from teachers which maximises pupils' coursework achievements at GCSE.
- The very good leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- The development of pupils' skills to effectively tackle more challenging learning activities.
- The provision of more opportunities for pupils to learn through discussion, debate, and oral explanations of their views.
- The further development of formative assessment strategies to support pupils in effectively reviewing their progress and setting targets for improvement.
- The reduction of the variation between the attainment of boys and girls at the end of both Years 9 and 11.

- 107 Standards in science at the end of Year 9 are above the national average. Overall attainment in national tests is better than the average for similar schools, and has been above national averages for the last four years. The average points score was declining, until 2001 when there was marked improvement. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in Years 7 to 9. Over the last two years boys' average attainment has been greater than girls. This is a reversal of the difference in attainment between the two groups identified in the last report. The average performance of both groups over the last three years has remained above national comparisons. Boys' average attainment over this time has steadily improved, whilst girls' average attainment has varied, but has not improved.
- 108 Overall attainment at the age of 16 is above average. GCSE results are significantly above national and similar school averages. In 2001 65.2 per cent of pupils achieved the higher grades in double award science GCSE, a proportion which is significantly above that achieving five A*-C grades overall, which was 54 per cent. All pupils entered for the exam, which was high at 97.5 per cent of the cohort, achieved a GCSE double award. The average point per pupil in science was the second highest of all subjects. Girls achieved proportionately more higher GCSE grades in science than boys, however, boys' average attainment in science significantly exceeded their average attainment in their other subjects. County analysis indicates that pupils' average attainment was 0.3 of a grade higher than for pupils with similar prior attainment in other schools in the authority.
- 109 The overall standards of attainment in lessons observed, and work seen, during the inspection are good. In Years 10 and 11, a thorough and systematic programme of support for coursework ensures that pupils' skills of scientific enquiry are effectively advanced. Throughout all years pupils' understanding of key science concepts is reinforced by well planned and interesting activities. The development of pupils' writing and numeracy skills are also supported in lessons.
- 110 Teaching is good and often very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in the lessons observed and this is an improvement since the last report. Where teaching is strongest learning objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson to provide a overview of the learning, referred to during the lesson to ensure that pupils understand the purpose of activities, and used to provide a sharply focused plenary that effectively consolidates learning. Homework tasks direct pupils to apply the learning of the lesson and this helps broaden and deepen their understanding. Pupils' books are marked regularly and marking follows whole school policy. This motivates pupils and ensures that they know the

standards they are achieving. Marking of homework is most effective when teachers' written comments include short-term targets for improvement and monitoring ensures that pupils achieve them.

- 111 Teachers know pupils as individuals and tailor their teaching to effectively meet pupils' learning needs. Teachers plan lessons with learning support assistants and this helps to ensure that pupils on the register of special educational needs participate fully in all activities.
- 112 Pupils' science understanding is improved by effectively developing their writing skills. This aspect of teaching has improved since the previous report. Strategies observed included sentence sequencing activities, matching key words to definitions, the use of writing frames and mind maps. Challenging data analysis activities, and an emphasis on pupils graphing their data from science investigations, effectively develop pupils' science enquiry skills alongside improving their numeracy skills.
- 113 Interesting activities make learning memorable. Year 8 pupils experienced satisfaction and amazement when observing the action of a model lung which they had made. Science learning is placed in interesting contexts and this motivates pupils. A video showing how the long cells in nettle fibres enabled the fibres to be made into fabric for fashionable clothes effectively supported Year 7 pupils' understanding of cell specialisation. By summarising information from up to date Internet sources on the potential affects on health of fats in diet Year 10 pupils' understanding of saturated and unsaturated fats was improved. Information and communication technology is used effectively to promote learning. Year 9 pupils selected and then cut and pasted information from Internet sites on global warming. In their following lesson the pupils incorporated these into presentations which included additional information which they derived from a range of library books. Pupils' skills of independent learning are fostered and this is an improvement in teaching since the previous report.
- 114 The monitoring of pupils' progress, recommended for improvement in the last report, is now a strength of the department. As a result, the setting of pupils into teaching groups has become more refined, discussions with parents are more informative, and support is targeted to the minority of pupils who are identified as underachieving. Monitoring will impact more powerfully on learning when a departmental development plan to support pupils in evaluating their work and to set targets for themselves is fully implemented.
- 115 Teachers' questions to individuals and groups do not support learning through discussion in which pupils explain their views. As a result, opportunities to improve pupils' learning by sharing ideas, and dispelling misconceptions are missed. Teachers do not always plan questions to elicit whole sentence answers in which pupils explain or justify their views. Whilst teachers provide challenging activities, they do not always provide the support necessary to ensure that pupils successfully tackle higher levels of challenge. For example, a Year 8 group were not prompted to explain how the actions of the model lung they had made demonstrated the operation of the lungs during breathing, which would have advanced their skills of linking cause to effect. Similarly, Year 11 pupils do not explain their reasoning when answering past test questions, and so advanced problem solving methods are not effectively developed and shared.

- 116 The progress of pupils is good overall, including pupils on the register of special educational needs. Higher achieving pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Years 10 and 11. Behaviour in lessons is very good. Teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships support learning. They remain a strength of the department as identified in the last report.
- 117 Accommodation and learning resources are adequate to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum. The technician support is very effective and valued. Currently the lack of sufficient computers and software in the laboratories does reduce the use of information and communication technology to enhance science teaching and further improve standards.
- 118 The head of department provides very good leadership. He ensures that the science department works very effectively as a team and so maintains a strength identified in the previous report. Areas identified for improvement in the previous report, which included increased use of information and communication technology in teaching, ensuring effective monitoring of pupils' progress, and feedback of performance to pupils in terms of National Curriculum levels have been tackled systematically. All teachers have contributed to the rewriting of the schemes of work for all years and these provide effective support to lesson planning. Examinations data is rigorously analysed in Years 10 and 11 and this helps to ensure that support strategies improve all pupils' performance.

ART AND DESIGN

The quality of provision in art and design is **very good**.

Strengths

- Skills in drawing provide a secure foundation for pupils' work in all aspects of art and design.
- Sketchbooks are very well used in all years.
- Skills in printmaking are very well developed.
- Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Pupils are helped to improve their work as a result of very good teaching.
- Pupils in all years make good progress and achieve a high standard.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for all pupils to work with a range of three-dimensional media are limited by inadequate provision for ceramics.
- Pupils make some use of information and communication technology for research purposes but further development is needed in this area.
- Pupils lack opportunities to share ideas with each other through class discussion.

- 119 Standards of attainment in all years are high. Very few pupils produce work below the standard expected for their age and a significant number produce work which is above the national average and, in some cases, of a high standard. Skills in drawing and printmaking are particularly well developed.
- 120 The standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 9 are above the national average.

They make very good use of sketchbooks to record the development of their work and to collect source material. This helps them to understand the process by which artists develop their ideas from initial starting point to finished work. Pupils develop good skills in drawing and learn to apply these skills using a range of different media and materials, including various kinds of printmaking. They have a good knowledge of the work of artists from different periods and cultures and are able to relate this to their own work. They are able to use appropriate vocabulary to talk about art and design. Skills in three-dimensional work are less well developed because the school does not have adequate accommodation or facilities to enable all pupils to work with ceramics and other three-dimensional media. Standards overall have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection.

- 121 All pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress. There were no differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls in the lessons observed or in the work seen. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as a result of the close attention which the teacher gives in lessons to all pupils. The tasks set provide a level of challenge which enables the most able and talented pupils to make good progress and achieve high standards.
- 122 Pupils following the GCSE art and design course achieve results which, in the last three years, have generally been above the national average. The relatively small number of pupils opting for GCSE art and design results in some fluctuation in results from year to year. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the standard of work ranged from below average to well above average. In some cases, pupils were reluctant to experiment with different media and styles, preferring to work on a small scale using familiar techniques. This resulted in work which was competent but lacking in flair. Pupils who were more confident of their own ability produced work which was both skilful in execution and imaginative in concept.
- 123 Girls generally achieve better results at GCSE than boys. The difference in achievement between boys and girls varies from year to year but is broadly similar to the difference nationally. In the lessons observed and the work seen during the inspection, there were examples of work of a high standard produced by both boys and girls. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most able pupils, make good progress.
- 124 Pupils in all years learn the basic skills of drawing, which provides a secure foundation for their work in other aspects of art and design. They use equipment and materials with confidence and learn to use different media to achieve particular effects. In a lesson on water colour painting, Year 7 pupils mixed and applied paint with care and control, achieving results which were generally good and in some cases very good. In a Year 10 lesson on print making, pupils handled tools with great care and precision to achieve impressive results. They went on to annotate their prints, identifying areas which could be changed and improved. This encouraged pupils to be self-critical and to achieve higher standards in successive prints.
- 125 Pupils generally lack sufficient opportunities to take part in class discussion as a way of exploring ideas. This limits progress for pupils who are less confident and are unwilling to take risks in their work.

- 126 The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons begin with a clear introduction, so that pupils know what they are expected to do and what they are aiming to achieve. Practical demonstrations are used to teach new skills and techniques. Pupils are very well supported in practical work, with individual attention which helps them to improve their work. Homework tasks are well integrated with classwork, enabling pupils at all levels of ability to consolidate and extend their skills. Year 7 pupils working on a painting of an open mouth were given the task for homework of sketching out a composition based on the face of a patient in a dentist's chair. This sketch would then form the basis of their next class project.
- 127 Pupils respond very well in lessons, where behaviour is invariably very good and attitudes very positive. Practical routines are well rehearsed, so that no time is wasted getting out and putting away equipment. Pupils handle materials and equipment carefully and responsibly. They look after their own work well and show respect for other pupils' work.
- 128 Art and design lessons make a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural awareness, introducing them to the work of a range of artists from different cultural backgrounds. Opportunities for pupils to go out of school to visit art galleries or take part in activities led by professional artists are limited by lack of provision in the local area. This means that pupils have a relatively narrow experience of art and design in its wider social and cultural context. In spite of these limitations, pupils are encouraged to relate their work in art and design to social and moral issues. In Year 8, for example, pupils included reference to the events of September 11 in a design project, combining words and images to create a piece of art and design work reflecting their own experience of the modern world. Pupils are also given the opportunity to explore the spiritual dimension of art and design and architecture, for example, in work based on Lincoln Cathedral. There are good links with other subjects, including history, religious education and English, which also help pupils to understand art and design in a wider context.
- 129 Issues raised in the last inspection report included the use of information and communication technology and provision for ceramics. Pupils are now making more use of information and communication technology, for example using CD-ROMs and the Internet for research purposes, but opportunities for pupils to explore other uses of information and communication technology in art and design are still limited. There has been no change in provision for ceramics, which is still inadequate because the pottery room is too small for whole class teaching.
- 130 The subject is well led by an experienced and able head of department. As there is only one art and design teacher in the school and no structured monitoring programme, opportunities for professional dialogue are limited and there are few opportunities for discussion. This could be addressed by making more use of professional artists, building on the valuable contribution made by the freelance designer who works on a voluntary basis with GCSE pupils. The head of department has a clear vision for the subject and a strong commitment to the achievement of high standards and continued improvement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall the provision for design and technology is **satisfactory, and improving rapidly**. It should be noted that during the inspection a departmental member of staff was absent on long-term sick leave, with his lessons being taken by a supply teacher.

Strengths

- The quality of leadership and management of the head of department, with particular reference to the initiatives she has undertaken to raise standards.
- The match of the scheme of work to the requirements and expectations of the National Curriculum.
- The hard work of the departmental staff to ensure excellent relationships with pupils and a good understanding of their individual learning needs and achievements.

Areas for improvement

- The arrangements for access to GCSE courses.
- The access to information and communication technology within the department.
- The assessment procedures at the end of Year 9.

131 Standards of achievement by age 14 and 16 are average, and improving. In 2001 by the age of 14, according to teachers' assessments, over three-quarters of pupils achieved the national benchmark Level 5 or higher, which is above national averages. Work observed during the inspection however suggests that these figures are inflated, reflecting some weaknesses in the department's assessment arrangements. At GCSE in 2001, the A*-C pass rate across all material areas was slightly below the national average. Results in graphic products were higher than the national average, and in resistant materials showed a significant improvement over recent years. All pupils entered achieved A*-G grades, compared to 96 per cent nationally. Pupils are able to use a wide range of media and materials; and their skills in designing and communicating their ideas and intentions is improving rapidly. Pupils make particularly good progress on entry to the school, and in Year 11. In a lesson observed during the inspection, Year 7 pupils very effectively analysed and discussed the methods used on instructional leaflets to communicate information. Meanwhile coursework folders produced by Year 11 pupils confidently told the story of the development of their projects using a good range of visual techniques.

132 Teaching across all years is consistently at least satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. In the best lessons, the pace is extremely brisk and expectations are high. Instructions are clear and concise, and pupils are encouraged to think and act for themselves. For example, during a lesson observed one Year 9 textiles group worked extremely hard and efficiently to successfully meet production targets for a fashion garment. All lessons seen were well planned and managed. Resources are effectively organised in classrooms and workshops. Teachers' understanding of and attention to the specific learning needs of pupils with special educational needs is a developing strength of the department. Each year a number of pupils with special educational needs are successfully entered for GCSE courses. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the various material areas of design and technology are very good. However, pupils are not always made sufficiently aware of the longer-term learning objectives involved in the activities they are

undertaking and the specific ways in which they need to improve. Marking of projects and homework does not include detailed comments and advice on how pupils can improve. Opportunities are often missed to provide extended challenges for the more able.

- 133 Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and work co-operatively in organising and sharing resources and in assisting each other. They sustain good levels of concentration and application throughout the lesson. Pupils respond well when given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own actions and learning.
- 134 Opportunities for learning in all years are good and appropriately broad and balanced. Pupils work in a wide range of two- and three-dimensional media and materials including food, textiles, graphics and resistant materials. In 2000 the department was one of six national pilot schools to trial a scheme of work and resources for the Young Foresight national initiative to develop creativity and teamwork in schools. A project undertaken at the end of Year 9 focuses on anticipating people's needs in the year 2020. This work is on-going and a developing strength of the department. However, at GCSE about a quarter of pupils do not follow the current statutory requirement to take a GCSE in design and technology, although the opportunity for them to do so does exist within the constraints of the option system. In terms of information and communication technology, in a Year 8 lesson observed pupils were fully absorbed in using a two-dimensional CAD-CAM package to produce a design for a puzzle. However, while the schemes of work for the department identify extensive opportunities for the appropriate use of information and communication technology, access difficulties when needed by the department, prevents most pupils maximising the use of the technology within the subject.
- 135 Assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory. The current scheme of work successfully ensures that pupils progress appropriately across each year and the various areas of design and technology. However, assessment procedures at the end of Year 9 do not currently ensure the validity and accuracy of using them to report final levels of attainment.
- 136 The quality of leadership and management of the department is excellent. The head of department is highly motivated and has a firm grasp of the issues involved in the delivery of the subject. She is committed to raising standards through activity that promotes the development of pupils' design and technological capability through personal response, creative problem-solving and the production of high quality outcomes. Currently there is no formal monitoring to ensure that department procedures and policies are being implemented.
- 137 Improvement since the previous inspection has been generally good. There have been appropriate developments in on-going assessment procedures and marking systems and examination results have improved considerably in recent years. There is however still no provision for technician support. The current accommodation is outmoded in terms of the requirements of the National Curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is mainly very good and teachers establish high expectations of their pupils.
- The geography curriculum is planned in detail with very good provision for field work.
- Pupils' attainment is generally above that achieved by all schools nationally.
- Standards of GCSE coursework are high and GCSE results are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive and their behaviour very good.
- Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and are well supported.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of boys needs improving to reduce the gap between the attainment of boys and girls.
- Library provision for geography is poor and needs improving.
- There are insufficient opportunities for discussion and questioning in some geography lessons.

138 By the end of Year 9 standards achieved are above those found nationally. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 show that standards are improving with the proportion of pupils reaching national benchmarks for the subject well above national averages. The observation of pupils in lessons, and scrutiny of their work, confirm that standards are above average. In geography lessons, higher and middle attaining pupils are stretched, while lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receive very good targeted support resulting in very good gains in their learning.

139 Results in the GCSE examination in 2001 were very good. Standards achieved were high with all pupils entered achieving at least a grade F, and above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher GCSE grades of A*-C was in line with the national average. Data shows that the majority of pupils made very good progress in their GCSE geography course, achieving GCSE grades above statistical predictions based on their earlier attainments. The standard of GCSE coursework is particularly high. Pupils are provided with very good support and opportunities to achieve well in their independent studies for GCSE coursework. In 2000, GCSE results were very high with no pupil achieving less than grade E, and the percentage achieving higher GCSE grades well above the national average.

140 Pupils are very secure in their understanding of geographical concepts, terms and vocabulary. In lessons seen, attitudes to learning and behaviour were never less than satisfactory and often very positive. In Years 7 to 9 most pupils can explain geographical patterns and processes. In Year 7, most pupils can explain patterns of urban land use and are able to relate these to a conceptual model for urban areas and apply this to local settlements. In Year 8, pupils have a very good understanding of river processes and this is reinforced by field study investigations. Pupils in Year 8 and Year 9 have good place knowledge and most can describe in detail the geography of Kenya and Japan. In Year 11, most pupils understand the impact of globalisation on modern industrial location and can explain why industrial location factors change over time. The department is promoting and

supporting the development of literacy standards. Good opportunities are provided for developing the skills of extended writing, but opportunities for speaking and listening through extended discussions and more open questioning techniques are relatively limited.

- 141 Geography lessons are well planned, and tasks are often differentiated to suit the needs of particular groups of pupils. Homework is effective and set regularly, and again this is often differentiated to suit the needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons as teachers are aware of their individual learning needs. As a result pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in lessons. Pupils of all abilities use geographical vocabulary confidently and develop good understanding of places and associated geographical themes. Lessons are generally well structured and teachers set high expectations in terms of behaviour and work rates. As a result, pupils work hard and display positive attitudes towards their work. Pupils respond very positively to the field study activities provided and to group tasks established in lessons. However, teachers give relatively few opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and respond to more open questioning.
- 142 In a third of lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was very good. Teaching was never less than satisfactory. In the very good lessons, teachers explain the activities to be undertaken, link the work back to previous learning and engage pupils in a range of learning activities that make them think for themselves and develop their understanding. Teachers' lesson planning is a strength and tasks are well matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Teaching focuses on place knowledge and case studies and this is very effective in enabling pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers manage their classrooms well and set high expectations. As a result, pupils make very good progress and attainment is high. A very good system of assessment has been developed which focuses in on key extended pieces of work. Assessment procedures are very effective in identifying individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and targets for improvement. Pupils are also increasingly involved in self-assessing their work and thinking about ways to improve. Work in exercise books is also effectively assessed, with developmental comments provided for each pupil. As a result pupils know how to improve and make good progress in the subject.
- 143 The geography department is well managed. Planning of courses for each year is very detailed. It effectively identifies stages of learning and appropriate learning resources for each unit of study. Provision and use of information and communication technology remain a strength of the department but some limitations are set by the unavailability of the information and communication technology suite at times. A detailed departmental development plan is produced annually, but this does not link closely to whole-school priorities. Effective use is made of pupil performance data in Years 10 and 11, but analysis of performance data for Years 7 to 9 is weaker and fails to explore the differing performance of boys and girls. Geography rooms are of a good standard and the provision of learning resources is generally satisfactory. Library provision for the subject is poor with very limited match between library book coverage and the taught geography curriculum in the school. Information and communication technology based library facilities are very limited for the subject.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **very good**.

Strengths

- Management of the department is very good – all issues raised in previous inspection have been successfully addressed.
- There is effective use of assessment.
- Data from a variety of sources, departmental and school, is well used to determine progress and set targets.
- Teaching is good in both key stages.
- There are a good range and variety of written work.
- Teaching of historical skills and concepts is good.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is good.

Areas for improvement

- Marking of spelling and punctuation needs to be improved.
- The numeracy policy has not been fully implemented and monitored.

- 144 By the end of Year 9 attainment is at the national average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards of work seen in lessons in Years 7 to 9 are in line with national expectations for history. Pupils with special education needs are making good progress. Both boys and girls are making satisfactory progress, their teachers ensuring that they participate equally in class discussions.
- 145 By the age of 16, standards at GCSE grades A*-C in 2001 were well above the national average. Standards at grades A*-G were slightly above the national average. Over the last three years, all pupils entered for GCSE history have obtained grades A*-G - a 100 per cent pass rate. Since the previous inspection, the numbers of pupils achieving Grades A*/A and A*-C has risen steadily. Numbers of pupils choosing to study history at GCSE has risen steadily over the last three years. Attainment by girls and boys is evenly matched. The department analyses carefully the GCSE results in terms of achievement by both boys and girls. It also uses data acquired from Key Stage 3 national test results, together with history assessments and marks, to predict GCSE grades and set targets for each pupil. All of this is contributing to the good standards achieved by the department.
- 146 Teachers' expectations of pupils' ability to succeed in learning are consistently high and this is reflected in the purposeful learning atmosphere in lessons. Learning activities are well matched to pupils' abilities and all pupils are given work that challenges and extends them. Their progress is carefully monitored and tested. Inspection of samples of pupils' work shows that higher attaining pupils are achieving well and making good progress in knowledge of the historical periods studied, understanding of ways in which the past is investigated and judgements arrived at, and developing the skills needed for analysing evidence. Pupils have access regularly to a good variety of sources that include written sources, pictures, photographs, posters, artefacts and data such as census returns. For example, in Year 7 pupils studying Islamic civilisation evaluated possible sites for establishing a new capital city,

gave reasons for their final choice, and wrote a report supporting their conclusions by reference to the facts. Year 9 pupils used written sources including a Wilfred Owen poem, photographs and a artefact (a rifle) to describe how warfare was changing in the First World War and what this meant for ordinary soldiers. For homework they wrote letters, drawing on research, as though from frontline soldiers to their families at home.

- 147 Progress is assessed regularly throughout Years 7 to 9 by formal tests and assignments, with levels of attainment awarded according to National Curriculum guidelines. Results of these assessments are shared with pupils, and, together with class and homework, used to identify strengths and weaknesses which teachers use when planning and teaching lessons. Pupils' exercise books include explanations of what marks mean. Pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their own progress and attainment against the formal tests and assignments.
- 148 Written work is of a good standard for most pupils in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9 most are able to write detailed essays and can make their own notes. Their writing includes letters, diaries, reports, imaginative reconstruction of life and events in the past, and newspaper accounts of important events. For example, Year 8 pupils have written imaginative accounts from the point of view of a royalist boy being questioned by Parliamentarians about his father. Year 9 pupils have created front pages of newspapers to describe the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in 1914 at Sarajevo and how this contributed to the start of the First World War. Others have written diaries as though African slaves, describing experiences and feelings, and written reports on conditions in 19th century factories. Pupils are required to write personal studies based on research using books, libraries, CD-ROMs and the Internet. Work is well organised and presented, reflecting their interest and enjoyment of the subject. Lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special education needs benefit from information sheets which have been adapted to their needs, writing frames to help them answer questions to and write longer pieces of work. Extensive support and advice is provided by teachers and learning support assistants who work together closely to meet pupils' needs. Higher attaining pupils are provided with additional tasks that challenge and extend them.
- 149 In Years 10 and 11 standards in lessons are in line with those found nationally and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils build on the good foundations of skills established in Years 7 to 9. All are carefully guided by their teacher on how to construct an essay and are encouraged to show personal initiative when writing. Year 11 pupils applied previous learning on the Hungarian uprising of 1956 to a comparative study of events in Czechoslovakia in 1968. After a careful introduction by the teacher and an appropriate period of individual work followed by class discussion of emerging themes, pupils were able, if they wished, to work in pairs to produce a table of comparisons. Teacher support for lower-attainers ensured that they did not get frustrated and maintained interest, keeping on task. A learning support assistant gave good support to pupils. Pupils interviewed during the lesson commented positively as to why they had chosen to study history in Years 10 and 11 and how relevant they felt the subject was to fostering a fuller understanding of the world today and current affairs. More able pupils produce very detailed and well-written essays and notes, expressing their ideas clearly. Most pupils' work is well organised and presented, reflecting their interest and enjoyment. All benefit from their teacher's written

comments and advice on standards of work achieved and ways of making further progress.

- 150 Despite the significant contribution made by the department to the improvement of pupils' literacy skills, teachers' marking does not always include the highlighting of punctuation and spelling errors. Although a numeracy policy is in place, as yet strategies have not been implemented and monitored.
- 151 The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed; and the quality has improved since the previous inspection. Both history teachers are subject specialists with a very good knowledge of the subject and of the National Curriculum. They keep up to date with new ideas on teaching and learning. Their own interest and enthusiasm for the subject is communicated in lessons, contributing to the progress made by pupils, many of whom commented on this. Planning of lessons is thorough. All lesson plans contain learning objectives and indicate appropriate learning outcomes. Lessons are carefully structured to ensure progress is made by all pupils. All lessons observed included a balance of teacher's explanation and pupils' activities, with a strong emphasis on independence and pupils taking responsibility for managing their own learning. This is carefully checked during lessons by class discussions and feedback, especially at the end of lessons. Discussion is a regular feature of lessons and all pupils are encouraged to participate. Activities are differentiated by the teacher's support, adaptation of source materials, a variety of textbooks and use of extension tasks. Time is very well planned and used, and the pace of work is a significant feature contributing to pupils' motivation and positive attitudes. Pupils work individually, in pairs and as a class. They work harmoniously, co-operatively and constructively, respecting each other's ideas and opinions. Classes are very well managed. Behaviour is very good and pupils' contributions and ideas are valued by teachers.
- 152 Learning matches teaching. All pupils are making good progress and both boys and girls contribute in lessons. Attention is given to ensure that the performance of both groups is developed. Pupils work hard and productively.
- 153 The head of department, appointed three years ago, provides a clear sense of direction to teaching and learning. His management is very good and he has achieved a great deal in a short time. Noteworthy is the attention given to revision of the scheme of work, changes to assessment, use of data, and sharing of good ideas and good practice through departmental meetings. Teaching, marking, assessment and pupils' work are monitored and there is a good level of involvement by senior management in the process. There is direct liaison with feeder schools. Year 7 pupils visit Lincoln and Year 9 pupils go to a Holocaust Museum at Newark. Use of information and communication technology is satisfactory – the department has regular access to information and communication technology facilities in school, opportunities for use is indicated in the scheme of work and pupils are encouraged to use computers and the Internet wherever possible.
- 154 All issues identified at the time of the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The quality of marking and assessment in GCSE helps pupils to identify strategies for improving their work.
- The increased use of information and communication technology in a range of subjects provides opportunities for pupils to apply their practical skills.

Areas for improvement

- The co-ordination of information and communication technology across the school does not enable systematic progress of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The insufficient time and lack of planning for progression within the personal, social and health education programme fails to ensure pupils to have access to the higher attainment levels identified in the National Curriculum.
- There is no policy for marking information and communication technology work in Years 7 to 9, and assessment at age 14 does not include all aspects of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology.
- Information and communication technology hardware in some subjects areas is out-of-date and not compatible with the networked system.

- 155 The department has experienced difficulties over the last year. The head of department has been on long-term sick leave and the school has had problems in finding supply teachers with appropriate information and communication technology skills. In Years 7 to 9, information and communication technology is taught as a ten week unit within the personal, social and health education curriculum. In Years 10 and 11 those pupils who do not study GCSE in the subject are dependent on other subjects, as well as personal, social and health education for their information and communication technology experience. During the inspection information and communication technology was observed both as timetabled lessons as well as in other lessons.
- 156 The standard attained by pupils in information and communication technology by the end of Year 9 is below average, and their achievement from Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. Attainment is lower than expected because there is insufficient planning for pupils to progress to the higher levels of attainment identified by the National Curriculum for the subject. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work in 2001 was too generous and did not take account of the full range of skills and knowledge in work done in other subjects. For example, control in design and technology and data logging in science.
- 157 In the GCSE examinations, results are broadly in line with national averages despite staffing problems. The achievement of girls was better than boys in 2001. In information and communication technology lessons, pupils' attainment of practical skills is very good, but their theoretical knowledge is below average.
- 158 The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is developing, particularly in science, geography, business, music and mathematics, where it is used to

support learning and enhance presentation of work within those subjects. The school has started to gather data on the contribution by all subjects towards pupils' information and communication technology capability, but the process is not yet sufficiently co-ordinated in a way which will ensure that pupils make progress in all the strands of the programmes of study for information and communication technology.

- 159 In Years 7 to 9, pupils are introduced to new techniques and new software in their information and communication technology lessons. For example, in Year 7, pupils consolidate the spreadsheet work begun in primary school, and made very good progress in lessons. They were also observed successfully using data found in a local newspaper to produce a spreadsheet for the preparation of graphs and charts with the inclusion of appropriate titles and relevant statistical data. In Year 9 pupils make good progress in personal, social and health education in making *PowerPoint* slides on the topic of the European Union. Pupils inputted data, which they researched and selected from a range of magazines, the Internet and previously prepared word processed documents and charts. They were encouraged to use a growing range of presentation techniques such as bullet points, images and titles using enlarged and different coloured fonts. In a Year 9 science lesson, lower attaining pupils are able to access specific Internet sites to select information on global warming and acid rain. They made good progress in developing their ability to import this information into their own documents. However, in Year 9 work does not build on the achievement in Years 7 and 8. In addition, there is insufficient progress made towards the higher attainment levels specified in the National Curriculum, which require more sophisticated layouts and techniques to communicate effectively to different audiences.
- 160 In GCSE lessons in information and communication technology, Year 10 pupils are developing good practical skills and can produce their own graphics and combine text and images, using all the facilities of a word processor to high standards. In Year 11, pupils have experienced some lack of continuity in lessons through teacher illness, although examination coursework shows a high level of technical ability, with developing skills in making queries and selecting specific information from their database. However, only the most able pupils make good progress in developing techniques of analysing and evaluating their work, with the majority of pupils producing only descriptive content. A small minority group of boys are reluctant to apply their efforts towards an understanding of theoretical perspectives when required by their teachers.
- 161 Pupils with special educational needs across all years make good progress, enjoy using information and communication technology and grow more confident in enhancing the presentation of their work. They benefit from the guidance of their learning support assistants who help with the reading of lesson activities and enable pupils to remain on task.
- 162 Overall the quality of teaching in timetabled information and communication technology lessons for developing pupils' skills in using new software is satisfactory. In Year 7, the very good use of questioning techniques maintains pupils' attention, and helps them to generate ideas, for example on rural crime. There are high expectations of pupils and, when opportunities are given, pupils work independently; but overall this aspect of learning needs more development. Pupils' class work throughout Years 7 to 9 is unmarked so pupils do

not know how well they are doing, or how they can improve their work.

- 163 In GCSE lessons in Years 10 and 11, the teaching of theory fails to stimulate interest; as too often pupils are engaged in straightforward copying activities from textbooks and they lack the opportunities to apply knowledge to new contexts. By contrast, the standard of marking of GCSE coursework is very good, with information on what has been achieved and comments on pupils' work, clearly showing what is yet to be done.
- 164 In all lessons observed, pupils are keen to use information and communication technology. They enjoy the activities, sustaining high levels of concentration, and poor behaviour is rare. Where pupils share computers, they collaborate well both in the planning and production of work and this has a positive effect on progress.
- 165 Overall, the raising of standards of attainment, the analysis of results, and monitoring of teaching have been affected by the long-term illness of the head of department. The school has experienced difficulty in finding supply teachers with appropriate information and communication technology skills and knowledge and some teaching at GCSE level is carried out by inexperienced or supply teachers with limited knowledge of teaching information and communication technology at this level. This has a negative impact on standards. There have been good developments in teacher confidence where information and communication technology is taught in other subjects. However, there is a lack of co-ordination and planning to ensure appropriate progress in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in timetabled information and communication technology lessons in Years 7 to 9, and in other subjects. The situation is similar for those pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do not take an information and communication technology option. This is unsatisfactory.
- 166 There have been some improvements since the previous inspection but overall there has been insufficient progress. There continues to be insufficient time for information and communication technology within the short module of work within the personal, social and health education timetable. In Years 8 and 9 the scheme of work is unsatisfactory and planning does not ensure the continuous development of expertise using increasingly demanding activities to enable pupils to apply their skills in order to reach higher attainment levels identified in the National Curriculum. Two rooms have been re-equipped with networked computers, and these rooms are well used at lunchtimes by pupils who continue with work started in class. There is no allocation of responsibility for carrying out risk assessment for health and safety. A third computer room is planned, however several computers available in subject areas are incompatible with the networked software and out-of-date. Technical support is available two days each week for software installation and daily maintenance of hardware, and this ensures that equipment is ready for use. Planning is well developed to increase technician time through liaison with a group of local primary schools.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision overall in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The standards of attainment in French is good by the time pupils reach the age of 16.
- The quality of teaching in French is good.
- Standards of written coursework in Years 10 and 11 in French are high.

Areas for improvement

- The standards of attainment in German by the age of 16.
- The assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9, which are not effective.
- Pupils' insufficient progress in German between Years 7 and 9.

167 Standards of attainment are in line with national averages in French by the end of Year 9 but below in German. By the end of Year 11, standards are above national averages in French but still below in German. By the age of 14 pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in French, but unsatisfactory progress in German. By the age of 16, pupils in French continue to make good progress. In German, some improvement in standards means that most pupils make satisfactory progress, though for a significant minority of boys progress is unsatisfactory.

168 In GCSE examinations, results in 2001 show that attainment was above average in French but below average in German. Results for pupils gaining A*-G were above average in both languages. For pupils gaining A*-C, results were well above average in French but well below average in German. Pupils comparative performance was better in French than in most other subjects in the school but in German, their performance was worse than in other subjects. Compared with pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9, these results show that they made good progress in French but unsatisfactory progress in German. Girls performed marginally better than boys in French and much better than boys in German but, in both subjects, the difference between girls' and boys' performance was not as great as is the case nationally. Since the previous inspection there has been a steady improvement in French results until 2001 when the improvement was spectacular. German results have, however, declined.

169 Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in French are in line with national averages by the end of Year 9. Pupils develop good writing skills. In Year 7 they learn to write accurately. In Year 9, high attaining pupils can write in paragraphs and use the three main tenses with confidence. They understand and use grammar rules well. Pupils in one Year 9 class, for example, were able to use the comparative and superlative of adjectives with confidence. Low attaining pupils do not have a secure grasp of grammar but are able to write personal responses with a good degree of accuracy. Standards of oral skills are below average. Pupils have not developed a secure grasp of pronunciation and intonation so that even high attainers do not communicate well orally. In Year 11 standards of work seen are for pupils at this stage of their GCSE course. Standards of written work remain high. One high attaining pupil in Year 10 was able to write at length using the present tense of regular and irregular verbs with very good accuracy and introducing a variety of expression into her work. By Year 11 most pupils produce extended writing using tenses accurately. Although oral competence has improved, speaking remains the weakest skill.

- 170 Work seen in German indicates that standards are below national averages by the age of 14. High attaining pupils develop an acceptable understanding of grammar. Most, for example, are able to construct sentences using the verb followed by the direct object accurately but they have not developed the secure grasp of tenses which would enable them to achieve the higher National Curriculum levels. Low attainers, mainly boys, have little commitment to the subject and make little progress in lessons. By Year 11 standards of work seen have improved for the majority. High attaining pupils can write and speak accurately with the help of prompts. One Year 11 pupil, for example, was able to write accurately using the main tenses. His work contained complex language though it lacked variety of expression. A significant minority, mainly boys, showed a lack of understanding of basic grammar which often made their writing unintelligible.
- 171 Pupils have a positive attitude in French. They contribute well in lessons, cooperate well with each other and their teachers and can be relied on to work well independently. In German while the majority demonstrate acceptable attitudes, a minority of pupils are uncooperative and often make it difficult for others to learn.
- 172 Teaching is good overall in French, satisfactory in German. Teachers have good subject knowledge and all are confident in the languages they teach. They present a good model of the target language but often do not use the target language to full effect in all lessons. This inhibits the development of pupils' listening skills. Teachers plan lessons effectively. Well-structured lessons allow pupils to acquire a secure basis of vocabulary and to develop listening, reading and writing skills. Teaching methods are usually effective. The introduction of new vocabulary and structures is usually lively and varied, so that pupils concentrate and contribute well in this key part of the lesson. However, group oral practice of new vocabulary is often not sufficiently thorough. As a result, pupils' pronunciation is often below expectation. Support material developed for pupils, to aid their learning is a strength of the department. Teachers introduce good variety into their lessons and usually achieve a good balance between teacher-led and pupil-centred activities. Pupils are encouraged to work in groups to produce dialogues which they then perform in front of the class. Pupils develop good dictionary skills and are able to work independently on reading texts. As a result reading skills are improving. However, teachers in mixed-ability German classes in Years 8 and 9 are not meeting the needs of the most and least able. As a result, these pupils make limited progress. In both languages, information about pupils' previous attainment is not yet used effectively to identify and set targets for groups of pupils of different abilities. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good in French lessons. Teachers are effective in creating a supportive atmosphere in which pupils are happy to contribute without fear of failure. In German, relationships are satisfactory but inexperience often limits teachers' ability to manage pupils effectively.
- 173 Teachers have a good grasp of GCSE criteria and are able to show pupils what they need to do to improve their performance at this level. They do not, however, have the same clear understanding of National Curriculum levels and often do not use them when assessing pupils' work. As a result pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not know the National Curriculum level at which they are working and do not have guidance on how to improve the standard of their work. Marking is conscientious but is not consistent. Teachers do not always make

the targets of individual lessons clear to pupils. Targets for lessons are not stated clearly in terms of what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of each lesson. This also limits their understanding of the progress they are making.

- 174 The 70 minute lesson is too long for effective learning in modern foreign languages. The time allocation of two lessons a week for all years makes it difficult to introduce a second language for all pupils to enrich their linguistic experience.
- 175 The head of department is providing good leadership. He has a clear vision about future direction and is supportive of his colleagues. The department is making good use of new technology to store and generate information about pupils. The analysis of recent examination results was thorough and effective and has generated clear strategies for improvement. Schemes of work for both languages are at a basic stage of development, and are not yet effective in raising standards because they do not ensure appropriate continuity throughout all years. The formal monitoring of the work of the department, including the monitoring of teaching, is not yet established within the department.
- 176 Since the previous inspection progress has been good. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and in GCSE results, particularly in French.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is excellent.
- Skills, knowledge, understanding and professionalism of the music teacher are outstanding.
- Behaviour of the pupils and their attitude to the subject is excellent.
- The use of resources, and particularly the use of technology is exemplary.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient exploration of pupils' ideas and thoughts both orally and in extended writing.
- There is insufficient use of percussion instruments and computer sequencing software to support creative work in Years 7 to 9.

- 177 At the age of 14 pupils are assessed by their teachers to be working at a higher standard than average for pupils of the same age. This was reflected in work seen during the inspection. In GCSE examinations, all pupils gained grades in the range A*-C, a result which is above the national average. This high level of attainment has been maintained consistently for nine years.
- 178 In work seen during the inspection, pupils aged 14 were achieving standards at least in line with those expected for their age despite in some cases an insecure base of musical skills and knowledge upon entry to the school. This is as a result of careful and detailed planning related to baseline assessments and a good match of activity to the individual ability of pupils. For example, pupils have regular and frequent opportunities to develop their keyboard skills. By concentrating on the development of practical skills, including learning

to read conventional notation, progress in performing is good and allows pupils to access other aspects of the music curriculum with greater ease.

- 179 In lessons seen during the inspection, pupils in Years 7 to 9 engaged in the practical musical tasks with enjoyment and determination. Their concentration was maintained for the duration of the long 70 minute lessons as a result of very good pace and variety of relevant musical activities. These pupils can perform melodies, which in some cases include complex rhythmic elements, from conventional notation. Although there is some use of percussion instruments, including the drum kit, to add instrumental accompaniments using untuned percussion, there is insufficient use of percussion instruments to support creative work in Years 7 to 9. Some pupils can add a harmonic part to melodies by selecting appropriate notes from the chord progression without the use of the automatic accompaniment feature on the keyboards. All pupils keep a note in their files of their own progress and a list of their current performing repertoire. It is usual for pupils to move onto new work with regularity and the progress made by all individual pupils heard in the inspection was good and often very good. Performances by pupils who do not have the additional benefit of instrumental tuition were particularly impressive.
- 180 Attainment by the age of 16 is higher on GCSE courses than that typically found nationally. Some pupils perform music of a level of difficulty much higher than that normally expected for this age and some performances of complex works heard during the inspection were flawless. Pupils studying GCSE make good use of the resources of the department, including the use of music sequencing software, to develop their musical ideas. Software is made available at home so that appropriate homework can be set to allow the development of composition folios. Recorded examples of solo performances, of work in progress and of completed compositions, showed good work over the whole ability range for all years.
- 181 Pupils make good progress in all years and this progress is recognised in clear assessment records as well as in pupils' own self-assessment notes. A comprehensive archive of the performances and compositions of pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 tracks progress in these activities and can be quickly recalled for use by teacher and pupils as a result of exemplary use of technology by the innovative teacher. Progress made by pupils who are more able and those with special educational needs is good, because there is a high level of personal knowledge of the abilities of individuals in the department. This results in work of appropriate challenge being set on a regular basis. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Assessment data suggests that pupils do better in music than in many other subjects. In lessons observed during the inspection there were insufficient activities which would enable pupils to develop their communication skills in oral work and in extended writing.
- 182 In the majority of lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was excellent. Lessons are well planned and engaging, and expectations are high. The teacher's own excellent performing and improvising skills are used to good effect to illustrate teaching points or to provide an appropriate stimulus. This often calls for a high standard of improvisation and draws on an immense reserve of musical knowledge. This impacts both on the way that pupils view the subject and the progress they make. The lessons observed

during the inspection began with a period of immediate involvement in real musical activity from the whole class, followed by a range of carefully planned and well presented teaching points related to clearly stated learning objectives. A warm and often humorous approach encourages a positive atmosphere of learning in the small but well resourced music room. The further development of the rather limited percussion stock would allow opportunities for an even wider range of practical activities.

- 183 Learning is good for pupils in all ability groups. There is a notable concentration on the raising of the level of instrument performance of all pupils. Every child in the school learns to play the keyboard using well-prepared resources. All pupils have an opportunity to practise for periods of time during most lessons and have access to the music room and instrumental resources at other times during the day. Pupils compose short pieces of music; some are presented using conventional notation, and all are recorded digitally for future appraisal and assessment. Although pupils use music-specific software on the computer for whole-class activities, there is insufficient use of computer sequencing software to support creative work in Years 7 to 9. Music at the school is an enjoyable subject and pupils respond positively to the charismatic leadership and youthful approach of this highly experienced teacher.
- 184 Attitudes to learning are excellent in all years and this has a notable impact on progress and levels of attainment. A noteworthy example was the enthusiasm that a Year 8 class displayed in a singing activity where all pupils took part in a recording of work with confidence and appropriate sense of style.
- 185 Instrumental lessons are available, some with financial subsidy from the school, from the county music service. 7.8 per cent of the school take the opportunity to learn an orchestral or band instrument. This figure is lower than the national average. Extra-curricular opportunities are good. The school orchestra provides a regular performing experience and is supported by other musicians from the teaching staff of the school. Some more-able pupils also take advantage of ensemble opportunities at county level or through work with local community bands. The music room and small practice rooms are available at lunchtimes for the pupils to use in a supervised atmosphere. Vocal music is prepared prior to concerts but there is a need to develop opportunities for vocal work as an extracurricular activity throughout the year. Music clubs are supervised during the lunchtime for pupils to work using music room equipment and many advantage of this opportunity.
- 186 Accommodation for individual and group performance is barely adequate and the acoustically poor school hall is the only place that the orchestra can use to perform. It is very difficult to develop good listening skills in this space. Although this inadequacy is not currently impacting on progress and the quality of work seen during the inspection, it is having a detrimental effect on the range of activities which are possible in Years 7 to 9. The department makes a contribution to the wider aims of the school in the way it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 use musical examples for performance and for stimulus for composition from around the world. For example, pupils learn about gamelan from Bali and ragas from India and well as many examples of music from the Caribbean and America which underpin the popular culture of today.

187 Management of the department is excellent. The vitality and dynamism of the charismatic music teacher should be acknowledged. He has undertaken an immense amount of work to equip the department in a technologically vibrant way. This is used for direct teaching, for demonstration and to allow pupils to work in aural isolation or when paired, as a group, or as a whole class through an elaborately wired sound system. This has a direct impact on the achievements and overall attainment of all pupils. Currently there is no structured monitoring process in place to enable the teacher to review the department alongside a senior manager, and for the very good practice to be shared more widely.

188 The department has made good progress since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall the provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- The clear and effective planning.
- Good subject knowledge and understanding.
- The breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and enjoyment of physical education.
- The wide range of extracurricular clubs and opportunities.

Areas for improvement

- Greater use of assessment data to check pupils' progress.
- More specific monitoring of the subject to inform priorities in the subject's development plan.
- Improved range of teaching methods in both practical and theory lessons.

189 Standards of work seen during the inspection were average by the end of Year 9. However for GCSE practical work in Year 11, they are above average. Teachers' assessments in June 2001 for pupils at age 14 were above national averages. GCSE results up to 2001 were rising and were above the national averages. Present GCSE pupils demonstrated attainment above average in practical lessons and average in theory work. Standards in the basic course followed by all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are average. Pupils' experience and attainment in physical education activities on entry to Year 7 are varied, for example attainment is below average in net games, but by end of Year 9 and 11 most pupils are attaining average levels in a wider range of activities; and this represents good achievement. This achievement is a result of good teaching and the positive attitudes of pupils. Lower attaining pupils make average progress. They are not always supported by specific teaching interventions to ensure they make similar progress to other groups of pupils. Progress overall is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11

190 Pupils show satisfactory levels of performance in games such as basketball and football and both boys and girls show a clear understanding of the rules and tactics used in these games. Most pupils in a basketball lesson were able to select a 'man to man' marking system and change when appropriate. Given the task of refereeing the game, most pupils could call appropriate infringements and support their call with the correct hand signals. In Year 11, boys performance in football demonstrates skilful application of techniques such as dribbling

and passing. They play together very co-operatively, ensuring that players of all abilities are included. In preparing for activity, all pupils show a good understanding of basic anatomy and the effects of exercise on the body. Pupils are always willing to take the stretching session for the whole class and can readily name all muscle groups and demonstrate an appropriate stretching exercise. Girls have good observation skills and can make comments to help themselves and others improve performance. All teachers use technical language to good effect and this is reflected in pupils' responses. When asked to evaluate performance, for example in Year 7 dance, they used appropriate language such as action and reaction, dynamics and formation.

- 191 All pupils benefit from good classroom management demonstrated by all teachers. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive and are a response to high teacher expectations of activity levels and behaviour. Pupils with identified learning needs are particularly well integrated into lessons, and take a full and active part due these high expectations. All pupils benefit from access to a wide extracurricular programme, which further supports their progress with curricular physical education and demonstrates their enjoyment of the subject. There are high levels of participation in extracurricular activities and good collaborative ventures for pupils, such as the opportunity to play in the joint local schools' rugby team. This makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development as they learn to work together and understand the principles of fair play.
- 192 The quality of teaching is consistently at least satisfactory. Where it is good and very good, teachers show clear links in their planning from lesson expectations to final outcomes and pupils are clear about what they are learning and the expected end results. Explanations and instructions are clear and short. Teachers' observation skills are good and lead directly to improvements in pupils' performance. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 7 dance lesson where a teacher/pupil demonstration of action and reaction and subsequent individual support produced some quality movements. Teachers show good knowledge and understanding of the subject through useful questions. They employ a range of methods to ensure that all pupils progress in their learning, for instance allowing constant discussions to take place throughout a lesson to improve skills of evaluation. Where teaching is only satisfactory there is not enough variety in the methods employed. In both practical and theory lessons, to ensure that all pupils stay interested; planning is not clearly linked to lesson expectations; and explanations are too long. Where this happens, some pupils become distracted and do not listen to teaching points or instructions, and so progress is slower. All teachers ensure they use key words appropriately in their teaching. These are displayed boldly around all of the physical education areas. They also incorporate numeracy skills where possible, as highlighted in the department's scheme of work. This was demonstrated when pupils were encouraged to discuss 180/360 degree turns in dance. This helps to support the learning of key skills and needs further development to have a greater impact.
- 193 Leadership and management are good. The head of department leads by example both in her teaching and pupil management. There is a very good scheme of work in place which, when used well, supports teachers' good short-term planning. The work of the department is well organised and supported by a hard working and committed team of teachers. This has a good effect on attitudes and standards. The recording of pupils' progress is thorough but as yet is not used to track pupils' progress overall. Too little use is made of information

when pupils begin Year 7 alongside prediction tests and teachers' assessments. As a result areas for development at individual and Year group level could be identified. Although some standardisation work is usefully done at Years 7 to 9, there still needs to be greater checking for consistency of judgements between different teachers. There has been some useful monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning but this now needs to become more focused to ensure it appropriately identifies priorities for the department development plan. The monitoring of teaching takes place currently and needs to remain a high priority in order to support the two newly qualified teachers in the department. The very good accommodation contributes to the wide range of activities in the curriculum, which are both strengths of the provision.

- 194 Since the previous inspection the average standards in physical education have been maintained, as have the good teaching and attitudes and behaviour. The refurbishment of the gymnasium is complete and is now well equipped to deliver a full gymnastics programme.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils' show good behaviour during the lessons.
- The specialist team are dedicated and hard working.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

Areas for improvement

- An increase in the use of strategies which engage and stimulate the pupils.
- The extension of and opportunities for pupils to evaluate, think and reflect on their work..
- The challenge for the more able.
- The raising of the levels of boys' achievement particularly in Years 10 and 11.

- 195 Most pupils make satisfactory progress so that, by the end of Year 9 the attainment of pupils is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In Years 10 and 11, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress so that by the end of Year 11 they are also in line with local expectations. Most pupils are entered for the GCSE short course. Two years ago, the standards achieved by pupils entered for the short course were below national averages. This was largely due to the temporary lack of leadership which existed at the time and has since been resolved. The most recent results show a substantial improvement although the figures remain slightly below national averages. Last summer a small number of pupils were entered for the GCSE full course. This proved to be extremely successful with all candidates entered achieving an A*-C grade. However, the girls' GCSE results are significantly better than the boys.
- 196 By the end of Year 9 most pupils have a reasonable grasp of Christianity. However, their knowledge and understanding of other religious traditions is a good deal less secure. What knowledge they do have is usually confined to recall, for example, pupils are able to recall the Sikh 'five K's' but are unable to explain what they mean or why they are important to Sikhs.

- 197 In response to religious ideas, many pupils are able to express their basic feelings and emotions, for example, through poetry and creative writing. However, most pupils are a good deal less secure at making judgements in response to religious claims. They also find it difficult to identify reasons to support their judgements. At the end of Year 11, relatively few pupils have a secure grasp of Christian principles, like the sanctity of life or Christian love, in order to use such ideas when discussing contemporary moral and social issues. More opportunities to discuss and explore their own thinking are needed.
- 198 Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned in detail. The pace and use of time are usually good. The management of pupils is also good. In some lessons, particularly effective teaching takes place when time towards the end of the lesson is used for pupils to act as 'class experts' to report on what they have learnt, thereby reinforcing learning. Where teaching was less effective, teaching strategies tended to rely on reading, writing, listening and responding to questions. More engaging and memorable strategies like role-play do take place but opportunities for pupils to be more actively involved in lessons are insufficiently developed. Less effective teaching also took place when the aims of lessons tended to be too broad, resulting in only a limited encounter with one of several complex themes, any one of which could form the basis of the lesson on its own. For example, pupils in Year 7 were invited to consider, in one lesson, what interpretation of story implied, what was meant by the nature of myth and whether they believed it to be appropriate to have a Sabbath day of rest.
- 199 The support given to pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. However the more gifted pupils are not effectively challenged by the majority of activities, particularly written activities, which require pupils to recall information rather than analyse, explain, justify or compare. Satisfactory support is given to developing pupils' literacy skills. Strategies for engaging boys, particularly in Years 10 and 11, are also insufficiently developed.
- 200 The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory. The two key members of staff who teach religious education are dedicated and hard working and support each other well. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has not significantly changed; and pupils' attainment and progress remain similar. Although the department now has a small collection of artefacts, there is still an insufficient range of resources, particularly with regard to contemporary textbooks and video material. Currently there are no formal arrangements to monitor the work of the department in order to review progress and share practice.
- 201 The response to the previous inspection has been satisfactory and there have been a number of improvements. Following a set back, some two years ago, the status of the subject has been substantially restored. The documentation within the department has been developed and the scheme of work has been rewritten to better meet the needs of the pupils. Provision for a GCSE full course is now being provided for a small number of motivated pupils. Last year's GCSE short course results indicate a dramatic improvement on the previous year. Finally, more formal assessment procedures using the levels in the local agreed syllabus are being developed.

