

INSPECTION REPORT

CHATSMORE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Goring by Sea, Worthing

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126096

Headteacher (acting): Ms Anne Ward

Reporting inspector: Graeme Clarke
1547

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 June 2001

Inspection number: 192287

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Goring Street Worthing West Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Anthony Woodard
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

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1547	Graeme Clarke	<i>Registered inspector</i>		What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12387	Dianne Willson	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
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21866	David Tracey	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.	
18638	Christopher Shaw	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and design.	
2728	Roderick Passant	<i>Team inspector</i>	Drama.	Special education needs.
1990	Graham Preston	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology.	
11300	Barry Smith	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chatsmore Catholic High School is a co-educational voluntary aided school for pupils aged 11 to 16 years in Goring by Sea, to the west of Worthing. It is situated on a single site with extensive playing fields. New buildings were added in 1990 that modernised the facilities. The art and science laboratories were recently refurbished and the computer network is being extended. The school has been without a permanent headteacher since February 2000, but a successor is to take up post in September 2001. The school serves the Worthing deanery, which is a wide area around Worthing from Littlehampton to Shoreham. The area is mixed socio-economically, but overall higher than average. However, central Worthing is designated a national area of deprivation. There are 561 pupils on roll and about two thirds come from Catholic families. The school has worked to increase parents' confidence and the school is oversubscribed for Year 7 in 2001. At present, 73 students are on the Special education needs register and 15 have statements of special need. Eight point two per cent are eligible for free school meals. There is a very small minority of pupils, less than 4 per cent, from ethnic backgrounds, such as of black-African, Indian, Bangladeshi and Chinese heritage. Most pupils move on to Post-16 education, in either the local sixth form college or further education college.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Chatsmore Catholic High School is a good and improving school. Pupils' attainment when they join the school in Year 7 a little below the average both nationally and of West Sussex. At the end of Year 9 attainment is above national averages, especially in English, where there has been a steady improvement in boys' attainments in recent years. Attainment is a little above but close to national average in GCSE. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' behaviour so that learning takes place. Teaching quality is good in many aspects, and most pupils make good progress. Some important aspects are not developed consistently school-wide, especially literacy and numeracy, and using assessments to set individual pupils' targets. There are good relationships developed throughout the school: pupils clearly show care and respect for people and property. The acting headteacher has given the school clear direction and conscientious and dedicated leadership during an extended period. The potential for improvement in the school is good: governors and senior staff are determined that it should continue to improve. The school has managed to recover from a budget deficit. When taking all these factors into account the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Helps pupils attain well in English, drama, art and in design and technology.
- Fosters an ethos of care and respect and sustains improvements in good behaviour.
- Makes good provision in the performing arts, in drama and musical performances, and offers an effective careers education programme particularly.
- Provides effective leadership and senior management, and supports professional development through effective induction and training.
- Promotes worthwhile links with parents.
- Improves and maintains the environment for learning and makes good use of its resources.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The development of pupils' numeracy skills throughout the curriculum.
- The consistency of the personal, social and health education curriculum.
- The effective use of assessment information: particularly by simplifying assessments in line with National Curriculum criteria; ensuring consistent use for setting pupils' targets, and support for achieving them.
- Girls' achievement in Key Stage 3 mathematics and science, and boys' achievement in GCSE.
- The range of effective procedures to improve attendance.
- The statutory requirements for design and technology in Years 10 and 11.
- The further development of practice for identifying and making suitable provision for gifted and talented pupils.

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 March 1997. The governors and senior management team, well led by the acting headteacher, have given the school a clear vision and direction. New performance management arrangements effectively incorporate monitoring and evaluation of the school's work on improving teaching and learning. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. New arrangements are in place to track pupils' performance and support improvements. The school has worked well to put a policy of *assertive discipline* in place. Behaviour in lessons, and around the school, is good, and sometimes very good. Some incidents of bullying do occur but pupils feel the school deals with them well. A new curriculum policy, based upon the local education authority's model, is in place. The school now makes good provision in modern foreign languages but only some progress has been made with remedying statutory omissions, because the National Curriculum requirements for design and technology are not met in Years 10 and 11. The school's performance management policy, now in place, effectively incorporates the earlier appraisal regulations. Collective worship meets requirements, and health and safety matters have been addressed. There is significant improvement in provision for pupils with Special Education Needs. Their progress, and individual education plans, are monitored and reviewed regularly. Good co-ordination and appropriate learning support ensure all aspects of the code of practice are in place. Good progress has been made on raising boys' attainment. As a result of determined action, boys' attainment in Key Stage 3 has improved markedly over girls, in English particularly and to a lesser extent in mathematics and science. In GCSE, however, the girls are attaining more highly than boys. The level of learning resources is now satisfactory in most subjects.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	B	C	C	D

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

In 2000, 14 year old pupils attained well above the national average in the statutory English tests as a result of successful teaching, but they were close to the national average in mathematics and below it in science. Average scores in English were very high, but were well below for mathematics and science, compared with similar schools. The English results have improved markedly since 1996, from close to the national average to well above the national average. The English results for boys have improved more than those for girls. However, mathematics and science results are falling below the national trend of improvement. The proportions of pupils that gained five or more A* to C grades in GCSE last year was a little above but close to national averages, and in line with the averages of similar schools. All candidates achieved at least one pass. Although the overall average results at GCSE were below those of similar schools, pupils attained well above the average of a group of schools where the candidates all had similar results in the Key Stage 3 tests in 1998, reflecting good progress in Key Stage 4. The proportion of more able pupils achieving the highest grades of A* and A was very high compared with national averages in art, design and technology, English language and English literature. The school met its target for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades last year. The average points score target was not reached, as the trend has not been improving year on year as fast as the rate nationally. The targets for 2001 represent a clear challenge. There were noticeable differences between boys' and girls' results last year. Boys attained better results than girls in English, mathematics and science in the tests for 14 year olds, and in GCSE, girls achieved better results than boys on average. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils are generally achieving as expected in both key stages. Standards in English lessons and in art and design, design and technology, drama and music are well above the norm. There have been notable improvements in modern foreign languages. Standards in other subjects, including mathematics and science are about as expected. Pupils' language skills in English improve because there are opportunities to develop speaking and listening in each unit of work. The school has taken action to improve mathematics achievement, but pupils' numeracy skills are weak for their age, inhibiting progress for many.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils usually settle quickly to work, involve themselves in lessons, and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority are polite and courteous to each other and to adults, and respect property. Bullying has declined and is dealt with well.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are willing to take responsibility, contribute to school life and in extra-curricular activities. Relationships are good throughout.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Punctuality to school and lessons is satisfactory. Attendance is below the national average.

There has been a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils follow the code of conduct well, and it is implemented consistently. They look after the building and work on display. However, there are still a few instances of poor behaviour that slow progress in a very few classes. Pupils take opportunities for personal development well. They take part in activities such as drama, music and sport, help in the library, contribute to the school magazine and school council, and help younger pupils with reading. The school and local authority identify persistently poor attendance by a small number of pupils, and are working to improve it.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is now better in the school than during the previous inspection. Overall, 14 per cent of lessons were of a very good standard or excellent and 42 per cent of the others were good. Only 4 per cent were unsatisfactory compared to 12 per cent during the last inspection. In turn, pupils in Years 7 to 9 made good or very good progress in their learning in just over half of their lessons, and in Years 10 to 11, nearly two thirds made good or very good progress. They learn necessary skills and develop relevant knowledge and understanding. The great majority of pupils settle quickly and eagerly to work. They listen attentively and sustain concentration well. Pupils did not make sufficient progress in seven per cent of lessons; nearly all in Years 7 to 9. English teachers use methods from the National Literacy Strategy in a recovery scheme to help pupils who join the school with low levels of literacy. They offer consultancy to help other teachers. Teachers in English, drama, geography, history and art support pupils' reading and use writing frames to help structure and develop their written work, but the development has been inconsistent and in consequence standards of literacy are below expectations. Numeracy is a focus for improvement. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is unsatisfactory, as the extent that numeracy is used in the curriculum is not known. As a result, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to apply basic numeracy skills, or to develop them, satisfactorily throughout the curriculum. There has been greater attention to managing pupils' behaviour to get conditions for learning right. Concentration on planning,

setting high expectations and challenging tasks, and lively, skilful questioning that focuses pupils' attention have led to improvements in art, English, modern foreign languages, design and technology, and geography. Teachers use good subject knowledge and expertise to contribute to the pace of learning. Emphasis on celebrating achievement, good class management and good relationships leads to a good working atmosphere in lessons. Homework is usually well selected to promote interest and support learning and is most effective when it is closely integrated with the class work. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are always at least satisfactory, good in art and science, and very good in modern foreign languages. Day-to-day marking is carried out well but often lacks comments to foster improvement. There are some inconsistent aspects of teaching that require further attention. Slower learning results from a lack of challenge, particularly in those lessons taught by non-specialist teachers, and from a failure to provide pupils with information which would help them improve. Where there are too few opportunities for group work, and a narrow range of methods such as in mathematics, pupils' thinking is not extended, they do not learn from each other, and they become over-reliant on the teacher. The school supports pupils with special educational needs well but some teachers use their individual education plans, and help from learning support assistants, more extensively than others. A lack of overall co-ordination of the needs of gifted and talented pupils leads to inconsistencies in their performance in lessons even though, in some subjects such as English, art and design and technology, they were particularly successful at the highest level in GCSE.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, but statutory requirements for design and technology are not met in Key Stage 4 because some pupils do not study any aspect of design and technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4 where work-related arrangements are very appropriate for some.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout curriculum is good overall. Personal, social and health education programme is unsatisfactory because allocated time and complementary activities are not well co-ordinated.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are valued. Care towards others encouraged. Setting attainment targets and supporting achievement is developing.

Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study the National Curriculum together with religious education, information and communication technology, and drama. German is introduced in Year 8. The school does not meet National Curriculum requirements in Years 10 and 11 because not all pupils study an aspect of design and technology. There is a tutorial lesson that includes personal, social and health education. The requirements for drugs and sex education are met but the programme is not co-ordinated well. It is inconsistent between classes and lacks continuity between year groups. GNVQ intermediate Leisure and Tourism is now introduced in Year 10, and is providing valuable information for the development of vocational courses in the future. Overall, there is a secure provision for pupils with special educational needs

including, in Year 10, a work related group which follows a useful course in partnership with Northbrook College. The school's provision for extra-curricular opportunities is widening with many different activities available. Pupils' spiritual development is good through important contributions made in assemblies, religious education, art and English. Moral development through following the code of conduct, good relationships, and work in English and history, is good. Social development is good through opportunities to work together in and out of lessons. Cultural development through lesson activities, exchanges and visits is also good. There is a caring environment reflected well in the school ethos. Child protection, and health and safety arrangements are satisfactory. Monitoring behaviour, and acting appropriately, is very good. Monitoring attainment is satisfactory overall, but while assessment information is used well to set targets and support pupils is very good in places, such as in art and English, it is underdeveloped in others. The partnership with parents is very well developed through a very good prospectus, wide consultation on important issues, frequent meetings to discuss progress, and involvements in school life.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Clear direction and leadership from acting headteacher, senior management has a good team spirit. Together they encourage other staff and contribute to life and work of school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory - Committed to school. Have appropriate committees for work. Not meeting National Curriculum responsibilities for design and technology in Key Stage 4.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Governors well informed by senior management and know strengths and weaknesses. Priorities for improvement identified well.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Delegated funds and grants used well. Educational priorities are linked to careful planning maintaining balanced budget. <i>Best value</i> applied very well.

There is a clear willingness amongst governors and senior staff to take decisions and there is a clear potential for improvement. Nevertheless there were understandable uncertainties about the extent that strategic leadership could be given during the extended period without a permanent headteacher. The commitment and dedication, enthusiasm and determination of the acting headteacher have been significant factors in improving key aspects of the school. Governors are very appreciative of the extent of work that the reduced senior management team has undertaken and the recent development of openness in working relationships. They recognise they have to develop a more proactive strategic role, in partnership with the senior management, for further improvement. The school development plan focuses appropriately upon raising achievement and aims to address important related issues. The qualifications and experience of teaching staff and support staff satisfactorily supports the school curriculum. Arrangements for their performance management, professional development and the induction of new teachers are very good. These are responsibilities of the head of mathematics, who, with other members of the senior management team, carries a very heavy load. It has adversely affected the standards attained in mathematics. These are weaknesses which the school is currently addressing. The quality and condition of the accommodation has been improved significantly. Resources are mostly satisfactory but there are shortages of text

books in history and of powered equipment in design and technology. The school applies principles of *best value* well. As well as making prudent spending decisions when placing orders, there are comparisons made with other schools about pupils' attainments, internal challenges to improve provision, and effective consultation with parents and parishes to improve perceptions and work more effectively together to obtain and show *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"> • Their children like the school. • Their children make good progress. • Teaching is good. • They are well informed about progress. • They are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children getting the right amount of work to do at home. • Behaviour in school. • The school working closely with parents. • The school providing an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team concurs with parents' views on those aspects that please parents most. In those areas where more than 15 per cent replying wish improvement, inspectors have found that the amount of homework set is about right even though some of the work lacks challenge. Behaviour in lessons and about the school is good, often very good. The school has made clear progress in consulting parents on important issues, and meets with them regularly each term to discuss and foster their children's progress. The range of out of school activities is widening noticeably, but there are limits in sports, especially for boys. The school knows it needs to keep parents and pupils up-to-date with what is available.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When pupils join the school in Year 7, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is a little below the averages for 11 year old pupils, both in West Sussex and nationwide. As a result of successful approaches in English teaching, the proportion of 14 year old pupils attaining the national expectation of Level 5 or higher in the statutory tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000 was well above the national average. Pupils' attainment was close to the national average in mathematics and below it in science. The proportions of more able pupils reaching the higher Levels 6 and 7 were well above the national average in English, and close to them in mathematics and science. English results were very high when compared to results in similar schools, but those for mathematics and science were both well below average. The English results have improved markedly over the past five years, from close to national average in 1996 to well above in 2000. Boys' performance has improved more than that of the girls. Although the results in English are improving faster than the national trend, those for mathematics and science are falling below it, particularly because of a clear drop in girls' attainments.

2. The proportions of pupils that gained five or more A* to C grades and A* to G grades in the GCSE examinations last year was a little above, but close to national averages, and in line with the averages for similar schools. The proportion of pupils with one or more A* to G grade was below both national averages and those of similar schools, but all candidates achieved at least one pass. Each grade is allocated a points score: A* is highest. The average points score of the candidates was close the national average but below that of similar schools. However, pupils attained well above the average for a group of schools where the GCSE 2000 candidates all had similar results in the Key Stage 3 tests in 1998.

3. The proportion of more able pupils achieving the highest grades of A* and A is very high compared with national averages in art, design and technology, English language and English literature. However, their attainment is below the national averages in geography, German, information and communications technology, and religious studies.

4. Pupils' average points scores have not been improving year-on-year as fast as the rate nationally. This table below shows the GCSE targets for the years 2000 and 2001.

	2000 target	2000 achieved	2001 target
5+ A* TO C	49%	49.5%	52%
1+ A* TO G	100%	93%	99%
Average points score	41	38.2	41

5. The school met its target for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades last year, but the average points score target was not reached. The target for 2001 of 52 per cent candidates achieving five or more A* to C grades, and maintaining the target of an average points score of 41, represent a clear challenge.

6. There were differences in the average results obtained in some subjects compared to the national picture. For example, overall results in information and communications technology and physical education, and boys' attainments in French, German and geography, were all very significantly below national averages. Overall results in art, boys' English literature, and girls' religious education were significantly above. When making comparisons of results between different subjects within the school, pupils obtained results which were very significantly below average in French, German and in information communications technology particularly. Boys' religious education results were also below average. The results in English, English literature, and art and design were well above the average of other subjects.

7. There were some other noticeable differences between boys' and girls' results. At the end of Key Stage 3, boys' attainments were better than girls' in English, mathematics and science. As a result of successful work to improve boys' attainments, especially in English, boys are about one to two terms in advance of girls at the end of Year 9. Girls' attainments have declined, mainly due to higher than average girls' absence on days of the tests. In the 2000 GCSE, girls achieved 11.1 points more than boys on average. The overall attainment of pupils at GCSE in 2000 was adversely affected because boys, whose performance was below that of girls, outnumbered girls in the ratio of two to one. Maintaining the work that has improved boys' performance at Key Stage 3 so that it feeds through to GCSE is an issue that the school must address.

Standards seen during the inspection

8. By the end of Key Stage 3, Year 9 pupils' overall standards of work are in line with national expectations. Notably, standards in English are well above the average, whereas in mathematics and science they are close to national expectations. It was difficult to assess the work of pupils currently in Year 11, because of the GCSE examinations taking place at the time of the inspection. By the end of Year 10 in Key Stage 4, the standards in English continue to be above expectations, and in mathematics and science they remain close to expectations. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils are generally achieving as expected in both key stages but they are making good progress in English by making significant strides in what they know and can do.

9. Pupils' language skills in English improve because there are opportunities to develop speaking and listening in each unit of work. They learn to write creatively, critically, and to give information. By age 14, lower-attaining pupils, for example, show appreciation of the conventions used in local tourist information brochures whilst more able pupils add to this by incorporating wit and irony well to reflect a personal experience. All pupils show clear development in their reading. For example they understand the key features of narratives, and theatre and film texts, and the more able show perceptive understanding of character and theme. Pupils in drama can research and competently present a piece of theatre on a social issue for a Year 7 audience. In Years 10 and 11, pupils show further improvement in speaking and listening skills, and clearly understand text and nuances of language. For example, in English some high-attaining pupils gave brilliant and sophisticated monologues on the model of *talking heads*, and in drama, pupils worked in pairs to show how they can sustain a character in a performance. Lower-attaining pupils are strongly supported in practising and consolidating key skills to write with reasonable accuracy.

10. From Year 7 to Year 9, achievement in mathematics is satisfactory because the school has taken action taken to improve pupils' behaviour and endeavour. By the time they are 14 years old, high-attaining pupils are able to use algebra to solve equations and use trigonometry accurately, and lower-attaining pupils can handle data involving positive and negative numbers. Year 7 pupils transpose fractions and decimals accurately, and handle simple ratios to create scale plans. In Year 8, the highest attaining pupils, for example, demonstrate greater understanding of algebraic rules, solve linear equations and inequalities and lower attaining pupils manipulate positive and negative numbers competently. In Year 9 pupils more able pupils use trigonometric functions and ratios correctly, middle ability pupils with support, but lower attaining pupils find difficulty with concepts of probability and chance. However, for most pupils throughout Years 7 to 9 there is a lack of challenge in much of the work set. Mathematical skills, such as manipulating formulae, are weak, inhibiting progress for many. By the end of Year 10, the more able pupils have a wide range of competencies that allows them to handle formulae and work at high levels, and less able pupils understand elementary statistics and have improved their grasp of mental arithmetic.

11. In Years 7 to 9, standards of work in science lessons are broadly average and lead to satisfactory achievement by the time pupils are 14 years old. More able pupils have a good understanding of processes, such as respiration and photosynthesis, and can recall facts well. Other pupils know the basic principles but do not find it easy to grasp how the processes take place in living things. Practical investigative work is satisfactory, for example more able pupils in Year 9 investigating the water content of apples made predictions, selected appropriate apparatus, modified it to suit, and drew scientific conclusions from their results. Middle ability pupils make observations and handle apparatus competently and use prior knowledge to draw inferences from fair tests. Less able pupils can follow instructions accurately to carry out simple practical enquiries such as soil testing. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to build on their knowledge and understanding to make satisfactory progress. For example, more able pupils have a good grasp of rock formation in geology, middle ability pupils understand how the water content of the body is regulated, and less able pupils understand the use of chemical symbols and formulae.

12. Standards in art and design are above expectations by the end of Year 9 with pupils having a good grasp of skills to use a range of media effectively. Attainment is well above average at the end of Year 11 with pupils able to combine research, study of natural forms, experimentation with media and evaluation to improve to their work. There are noticeable improvements in design and technology, especially in Years 10 and 11. Pupils achieve varying, but overall average standards in different aspects of the subject by the age of 14. Pupils use tools with confidence and can analyse and evaluate products in food technology; they are beginning to use computer aided design skills with competence in graphics; but when working with resistant materials, their practical making skills are less well developed leading to products that are not sufficiently well-finished. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average in food technology and graphic products. However, they are average in work with resistant materials, because pupils lack the skills to give sufficient care to the quality of accuracy and presentation of their products. Geography standards in Years 7 to 9 are in line with national expectations. Pupils have competent mapping skills and can use relevant information in graphs and writing. For example, lower ability pupils in Year 8 are helped to improve their literacy and use writing frames well to produce an information brochure on the River Rhône. In Years 10 and 11 pupils can gather, analyse and draw conclusions, for example, about tourism and formation of deserts but although their achievement is as expected, standards are below average. In history, standards are in line with national

expectations at the end of Year 9, and also by the end of Year 10. For example, Year 10 pupils are able to handle and evaluate source materials well and show understanding of principles such as democracy and dictatorship. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are a little below average, but pupils' achievement is as expected at the end of Year 9. Pupils develop a range of useful skills in a taught course they later use throughout the curriculum. This foundation leads to an overall satisfactory standard of work by the end of Year 10. Pupils use the Internet to good effect, for example to provide appropriate graphics to illustrate coursework. However, many do not have more advanced skills to exploit software such as the sort function in spreadsheets. Pupils develop their information and communication technology skills further, and use it in an exemplary and well-recognised way in English to help improve their work. It is also effectively used in art, design and technology, and geography, but not in science where a clear contribution should be made. Attainment is improving in both French and German as a result of determined initiatives to address underachievement. In Year 9, pupils respond quickly using the target language and attain standards in line with national expectations. At the end of Year 10 pupils competently use written and spoken language, with good pronunciation, to achieve well and reach a level that is close to average. In music, pupils have an understanding of a range of musical styles and have shown progress in performance skills in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9. Class work and recordings of musical performances and compositions show attention to accuracy, style and harmony that represent above average standards of work in Years 10 and 11. Overall achievement in physical education is satisfactory by the end of Year 9 with pupils having securely established basic skills, but observing and evaluating, to improve techniques needs further development. Standards in Year 10 games are in line with expectations, but the work for GCSE lacks depth and its quality is below expectation.

13. The school has introduced a commendable initiative to improve literacy awareness. English teachers, trained in the content and methodology of the National Literacy Strategy, teach in a useful summer school to help pupils between Years 6 and 7 who have low levels of literacy. Teacher training has been given by a small group consisting of senior managers, English and special educational needs teachers, who have also made themselves available, as consultants, to provide additional help for teachers throughout the school. Most departments display key words, and teachers in English, drama, geography, history and art effectively support pupils' reading and the use of writing frames to help structure and develop pupils' written work. However, there are many missed opportunities for enhancing pupils' language skills elsewhere and, in consequence, standards of literacy are below expectations. The strategy is being developed successfully but is not yet fully in place throughout the school. What is missing is a school-wide management framework to ensure that good provision becomes entirely general.

14. Standards of numeracy are well below those expected for the age of pupils in the school. Pupils neither have sufficient opportunity to apply basic numeracy skills, nor to develop them, satisfactorily throughout the curriculum. Numeracy skills are developed through work in some subjects, but developments are not related in a planned way. For example, in science, pupils use graphs and tables, and handle formulae competently. Pupils are able to measure line and angle and use co-ordinates for map-work, and handle data graphically in geography. In design and technology, pupils make use of numerical skills for measuring, especially in food technology and graphics, but less so in work with resistant materials where accuracy suffers. The development of numeracy skills in other subjects is unsatisfactory. The school has not determined the extent to which numeracy is used throughout the curriculum, nor is there a policy and guidance available. Numeracy has already been identified as a focus

for improvement and the school will be taking part in a local education authority initiative to extend its numeracy strategy from primary to secondary schools. There will be training for teachers arranged later next year, but this is a matter that needs urgent attention. The need now is for numeracy to be actively promoted by a planned programme throughout the school.

15. Pupils with special educational needs make at least steady progress against their targets. Some pupils show good progress in aspects of their work through the nature and quality of the support. For example, two pupils in Year 10 gained an A grade in an aspect of their physical education course-work. Almost all pupils are entered for, and achieve a pass grade, in GCSE English mathematics and science, reflecting significant personal success.

16. There has been significant improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs to address the inadequacies indicated in the last inspection. Overall, there is a secure provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the provision well and has very good knowledge of the pupils and monitors their progress carefully. There is good partnership with parents. Staff are kept informed about pupils requiring support. The amount of support has increased since the previous inspection and all staff see the support of pupils with special educational needs as their responsibility. There is good practice in some departments such as the humanities area but not all departments make as effective use of individual education plans or learning support assistants. Very good relationships between staff and pupils lead to pupils developing in confidence as they move through the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. There has been a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour since the last inspection. They responded well or very well in nine out of ten lessons seen. The great majority of pupils settle quickly to their work and are eager to learn. They appreciate the opportunities provided by staff, and involve themselves fully in lessons. They enjoy opportunities for creativity, such as in art, English and drama. They work well together, for example in practical science where they collaborate well and show initiative. Overall, within all areas of the curriculum, pupils listen attentively and sustain concentration well. However, there are a few pupils who display negative attitudes to their work and who behave in an unsatisfactory way. In a few lessons this slows the pace of work and limits the progress of the class. Where attitudes are unsatisfactory in lessons, it is usually because the work lacks challenge and does not foster interest. Pupils lose concentration and their attention strays, leading to minor disruption such as talking to a neighbour. At worst, on rare occasions as in a Year 9 low ability mathematics class, time is wasted when pupils will not settle to their work. Pupils with special educational needs generally have good attitudes to their work. They want to do well and are involved fully in all aspects of the school, for example individuals representing their school in sports. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils do not display derogatory attitudes to those who either find the work difficult or those who do well. The very good quality of relationships between adults and pupils is a very significant factor in the development of pupils' confidence. Pupils' attendance at lessons after school for extra support is good, and they show much enthusiasm for their school productions.

18. Overall, in lessons, the standard of behaviour is good and often very good. The great majority of pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and towards adults. Movement around the school between lessons is at least good. Pupils respond positively to the high

expectations of the code of conduct, which is implemented consistently by all staff. Pupils are very aware of the impact of their actions on others. Some good examples of this are to be seen during English lessons where they show consideration for others. The drama lessons which Year 9 pupils present to Year 7 raise awareness about drug-related issues. The school's programme of assertive discipline is effectively used to deal with pupils who challenge the teacher, for example in a Year 9 science lesson where escalating attention seeking behaviour was dealt with promptly and appropriately. There is no graffiti or litter evident around the school and the good condition of displays, and care of equipment and materials, show a good respect for property. However, some older floor coverings are permanently marked by discarded chewing gum. Wherever pupils are on the site, before and after school, and during break and lunchtime, their behaviour is good.

19. Although incidents of bullying have declined since the last inspection, some still do occur. However, pupils and parents feel that the school responds quickly when notified and deals with individual incidents well. Heads of year and form tutors foster open discussion of issues in tutorial time. There were no instances of bullying or physically threatening attitudes seen during the inspection.

20. During the previous year, there were three permanent exclusions, and thirty-five pupils were excluded for fixed periods. The number of exclusions is higher than at the time of the last inspection. This reflects the school's increased expectations of standards of behaviour described in its code of conduct. There is an effective policy for managing behaviour, incorporating both rewards and sanctions, which is strongly supported by parents and pupils.

21. Pupils' response to opportunities for their personal development is good. They take advantage of a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, which include drama, music and sport. Pupils are willing to take on responsibility, and carry out their duties well, whether contributing to the school magazine, helping in the library, or taking part in the school council. This is especially true of prefects who provide good support for younger pupils in particular. The head boy and girl show confidence, sensitivity and maturity in the way they conduct themselves as ambassadors for the school.

22. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils show openness and respect for each other. The older pupils take part in reading sessions with the younger pupils who have difficulties with their reading. Visitors to the school are made to feel very welcome by helpful staff and responsive pupils. Visitors are well received and their enquiries are dealt with quickly and courteously.

23. The attendance rate for the year ending in May 2001 has dropped to 88.6 per cent, and is unsatisfactory. Figures for the previous two years show that the school's attendance rate was broadly in line with the national average, at around 91 per cent, about the same as at the last inspection. However, analysis shows that the very poor attendance of four pupils has had

a significant downwards effect on the overall statistics. The school and the local education authority (LEA) are aware of the situation and are seeking ways to deal with it, and to improve attendance generally in the future. The great majority of pupils arrive at school on time but on occasion, when trains are delayed, a significant number of pupils are late. Pupils are usually punctual to lessons and only late with good reason.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. Teaching is now better in the school than during the previous inspection. Of 113 lessons seen, all but four in Years 7 to 9, were satisfactory or better. Three lessons were unsatisfactory and one was poor. This is a clear improvement because 12 per cent were unsatisfactory at the last inspection. Throughout the school, 14 per cent of lessons seen were of a very good standard or excellent with half of the others being good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 made good or very good progress in 52 per cent of their lessons where 53 per cent of the teaching was good, very good or excellent. In Year 10, pupils made good or very good progress in 62 per cent of lessons where 65 per cent teaching was good or very good. Pupils did not make sufficient progress in only a few lessons, eight in Years 7 to 9, and one in Year 10.

25. Since the last inspection, when unacceptable behaviour undermined lessons, the school has worked effectively to implement a policy to improve teaching and learning. There has been an emphasis on managing pupils' behaviour to get conditions for learning right, and concentration on planning and adding variety to teaching methods. These improvements, noticeable in art, English, modern foreign languages, design and technology, and geography for example, are making a clear contribution to pupils' progress and achievement.

26. The strong teaching seen during the inspection, supported pupils' learning in very clear ways. Generally, well-organised and energetic teaching enables pupils to make good progress. There are many features of the better lessons that contribute to good teaching. Very good class management contributes to the pace of learning. Teachers maintain good order in the classroom. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and these contribute to a good working atmosphere in lessons. For example, in a Year 8 art lesson, the teacher's infectious enthusiasm inspired pupils to work hard and improve their drawing. Thorough lesson planning matches work to the abilities of pupils. For example, in information and communication technology, short-term goals, good individual support and a review of progress towards the end, helps them to learn. The inclusion of opportunities to develop speaking and listening, in English, leads to improvement in key skills in literacy. In history, pupils are encouraged to debate with confidence and overcome uncertainty when testing their ideas in public. For example in Year 8, where they considered the morality of executing King Charles I. Teachers have high expectations and set challenges for pupils that enhance their interest and understanding, as in food technology where the purpose and outcomes are clearly introduced. Because teachers of modern foreign languages celebrate achievement, pupils experience immediate success which leads to increased confidence in experimenting with the language. Pupils in Year 8 lesson think in French when asked, '*Ça va?*' and can answer quickly and accurately, and in Year 10, pupils enjoyed challenging each other with increasingly difficult questions during a role-play about reserving a room in a German hotel. Teachers are well organised and use time and resources effectively to contribute to the pace of learning. Teachers also use their good subject knowledge and expertise in lively, skilful questioning that focuses pupils' attention. For example in drama, where Year 8 pupils, exploring murder in

Macbeth, were helped to establish how murderers would be influenced by Banquo's reputation as a warrior. Teachers also make good use of subject specific language where, in geography, work on climate and geology for example, pupils are led towards the use of relevant technical terms in their spoken and written work.

27. Although there are no general weaknesses, there are some inconsistent aspects of teaching that require further attention. Information that is gathered about pupils' performance is recorded carefully, but is neither analysed and used rigorously enough to set challenging targets, nor used to plan appropriate activities in lessons. Tasks sometimes do not give pupils enough challenge, especially when a class has to be taught by non-specialist teachers. When this arrangement is necessary, time is needed for joint planning to share expertise to support non-specialist teachers. There are missed opportunities to inform pupils of how to raise their standard of work, for example in science, music and physical education, where the aims of lessons are not always clearly conveyed to pupils, resulting in slower learning. Teaching sometimes misses opportunities for pupils to learn more effectively when there is a narrow range of strategies. For example, in mathematics and history, where there are too few opportunities for group work that allows pupils to extend their thinking, to learn from each other, and to become less reliant on the teacher. There are many examples of successful teaching that deserve to be shared to foster improvements throughout the school.

28. Teachers regularly set homework, which is well selected to promote interest and support learning. For example, in geography pupils investigated volumes of paper in junk mail to reinforce their study of a topic on natural resources. However, the value of homework is diminished in some subjects, such as mathematics and science, because marking is not rigorous enough, without suggestions for improvement. Pupils make the best progress when homework is given which challenges them appropriately, and which relates directly to class work. For example, it is an integral part of each project in art.

29. The facilities for information and communication technology have been improved since the previous inspection. Teachers make good use of them to improve pupils' learning in many different subjects. The use of information and communication technology is strongly encouraged in English where pupils are motivated and their work extended, as shown in the excellent writing on display and in assessment folders. In Year 9 drama, pupils evidently use the Internet to research some of their presentation work and many use word processing for their homework and assessment pieces. Nearly all pupils use computers for research in art, and some produce entirely digital solutions to homework tasks. All design and technology teachers make increasingly effective use of information and communication technology in ways that develop pupils' research and presentation skills in both class and homework. Modern foreign languages teachers use information and communication technology to emphasise independent learning, and this strength is having a most positive effect on boys' performance. In humanities subjects, information and communication technology is playing a growing part and the priorities for development are now the consistent integration of skills into programmes of study. Teaching helps pupils make effective use of search, retrieval and presentation techniques in the religious studies coursework. In music, teachers' use of information technology to support pupils' work on composition is being developed. However, the infrequent use of information and communications technology in science hinders the development of pupils' skills in recording scientific data electronically.

30. The school has fundamentally improved the way it supports pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. Teachers are fully responsible for teaching all of the pupils in their groups. They value and welcome the additional help of a learning support teacher and learning support assistants. For example, in history there is an established pattern of discussion between the teacher and learning support assistant prior to the lesson. The assistant is able to contribute effectively, ensuring that the pupil for whom she provides support makes good progress. However, support assistants do not always have a positive impact on the learning of pupils with special educational needs, because joint planning by the subject teacher and support assistant is lacking. Teachers have an improved awareness of the needs of individual pupils through the distribution of individual education plans and regular staff briefings. However, the use of individual education plans is further advanced in some subjects than others. For example in English, art, humanities subjects and science, teachers use the information to plan learning in small steps, or choose resource material with suitable language content. In modern foreign languages success is encouraged through a reward system (the *vedette* approach). In some lessons individual education plans are not clearly used although teachers give support when pupils are working on their own, such as in a Year 9 mathematics group. The school is trying a new arrangement in Year 10 for a small group of pupils, all with specific learning difficulties, known as the *work-related group*. They are taught for most of the time by one teacher, with the help of learning support assistants, who through good, skilfully fostered, relationships, helps them make significant progress. At other times, focused specialist teaching, as in a Year 10 science lesson, with useful learning support, helped the group make good progress in designing an efficient loudspeaker and to improve their knowledge.

31. A survey has been carried out, aimed at identifying those pupils for whom learning is easy, or who have particular skills or aptitudes. The school has discussed their views about school work with them. In some subjects, such as art and design, design and technology, English language and literature, teachers were particularly successful in ensuring that pupils obtained the highest grades in the 2000 GCSE examinations. There are extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in, for example, the performing arts, especially music, and sport. Some pupils from the school have external support through the Local Education Authority's arrangements for enrichment activities, for example music master classes, mathematics challenges, and county hockey and tennis. At present, teachers are yet to be made aware of the particular needs of gifted and talented pupils in a co-ordinated way throughout the school. The school recognises the need for a common strategy to provide an appropriate level of support and extension work, for example sharing and exploiting expertise amongst the staff. The school should press ahead with incorporating the information from the identification survey with opportunities available into a school-wide management strategy for making appropriate provision for its gifted and talented pupils.

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

Statutory Curriculum

32. The school makes satisfactorily broad provision for pupils in Years 7 to 9 comprising the ten subjects of the National Curriculum together with religious education, information and communication technology, and drama. History and geography are effectively taught within a humanities framework. A second foreign language, German, is taught to pupils in Years 8 and 9. Careers education begins in Year 9. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, a basic curriculum is provided but it is unsatisfactory because it does not meet the statutory requirement that all pupils study design and technology. All pupils study religious education, English, mathematics, double science, a technology subject, but not necessarily design and technology, a modern foreign language, physical education, careers and citizenship. Pupils can also choose to study art, music, history and geography. All pupils have equality of access to all areas of the curriculum. The school's policy for developing pupils' literacy skills is based upon contributions from all subject departments. It is implemented well in English, art, drama, geography and history but inconsistently elsewhere. A policy and programme for developing numeracy skills is awaiting development.

33. There is a tutorial lesson that includes personal, social and health education. However, co-ordination of the course is unsatisfactory because there are inconsistencies between classes within a year group and a lack of continuity between years.

34. Since the last inspection a lack of curriculum policy and some omissions in the provision of modern languages, technology and information and communication technology have mostly been addressed. The new curriculum policy, based on an LEA model, has involved the majority of staff and governors at different levels in its development. The school appointed a systems manager for information and communications technology, purchased hardware and undertook staff training. There have been difficulties staffing modern foreign languages, but the problems are now well resolved. However, the issue that all pupils in Years 10 and 11 study design and technology, other than those formally allowed to follow an alternative programme, has not been resolved. The school planned that design and technology subjects would be available to all pupils in Years 10 and 11 by September 1999, but these obligations have not been met.

35. The school now offers a single GNVQ course at intermediate level in Leisure and Tourism. An evaluation of the course is not yet complete but is already providing valuable information for the development of vocational courses in future. The school is investigating the value of alternative courses to GCSE. These include GNVQ vocational courses and the Pathways courses provided by Northbrook College. A small number of Year 10 pupils in the *work related group* have been properly disapplied from the requirements to study design and technology and modern foreign languages. These pupils follow specific course, in partnership with Northbrook College, which leads to enrolment on short taster courses in Year 11. They study English, mathematics, science and religious education, and choose two other subjects. The remaining curriculum time is made up from an extended period of work experience, which leads to an improvement in self-esteem, and from time spent working at Northbrook College. Pupils, in informal discussion, said they liked the system. They felt they were

receiving useful help when they needed it. The special educational needs co-ordinator is much involved with this initiative. The school is aware of the limitations of time for other work required for this extra work. However, it is felt that the investment is justified because it ensures that the pupils involved do make steady progress at a critical period.

36. The curriculum is not always in balance because of a limited range of provision in some subjects. In design and technology, the new National Curriculum requirements for the content of courses in Years 7 to 9 have not yet been introduced, and projects using resistant materials are not sufficiently challenging. At the time of the last inspection, the allocation of time for art and music was not enough to meet the demands of the national curriculum. The school has an enhanced programme for religious education as part of its distinctive nature. This, and the introduction of a second modern foreign language in Year 8, leads to an imbalance of time allocations. Teaching time in art and music is still low and is below the government's recommendations. In art, time is limited for work on printing, ceramics and textiles. Pupils' progress in music is limited by short time, despite group sizes being reduced by a small number of pupils. The humanities subjects have less curriculum time than that recommended by the Government but there are plans for additional time for Years 7 to 9 next year.

37. The school's provision for extra-curricular opportunities is widening. There is more fieldwork in geography but is not yet available for all years. Provision is very good in music where pupils participate in lunchtime clubs, a successful choir and in musical productions. There are performances in local old people's homes and the local church. Pupils visit France and Germany and go to the foreign language theatre as part of modern languages provision, as well as joining voluntary additional sessions in French and German after school. In English there are bridging courses for literacy, a summer school, theatre visits, and sessions with visiting authors. There are house events, table tennis championships and homework clubs. Most departments offer catch-up and revision classes. Pupils have the opportunity to use computers in the library at lunchtime and after school. The shortage of out-of-school physical education activities for boys is a weakness that the school recognises, but it has recently introduced a residential week for Year 8 pupils at Lodge Hill Activity Centre.

38. Overall, there is a secure provision for pupils with special educational needs. There is limited withdrawal and most support for these pupils is through the work of the learning support assistants and learning support teacher who work alongside pupils in the classroom.

39. The school is proposing to adjust the timetable in the next academic year to allow for more setting across subjects. Pupils in Year 7 are taught in mixed ability classes. Currently, whilst there is some movement from one group to another, pupils in Year 8, for example, are in the same group for all their work regardless of their ability in a particular subject. Classes in English and mathematics are based on ability in each subjects. Teaching groups are mixed abilities, but sizes are smaller, in music, drama, and art, and a carousel arrangement operates for the separates aspects of design and technology. There are concerns that organising classes by overall ability is significantly grouping disaffected boys together, and the school needs to maintain awareness to deal with any difficulties that follow.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

40. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Strengths in provision reported at the previous inspection have been maintained and good progress has been made with improving pupils' behaviour.

41. Provision for spiritual development is good. School assemblies make significant contributions towards enabling pupils to develop their spiritual awareness, empowering staff, and building the Catholic ethos. In religious education, very good teaching and a curriculum that focuses on values and beliefs, as well as giving time to examine other religions, provides many opportunities for pupils to consider their faith and the faith of others in modern society. In art, pupils are encouraged to explore their feelings and emotions to help understand the beauty of natural phenomena. In history, pupils have the opportunity to consider major human experiences, for example through the study of the holocaust. Studying themes in English such as the Catholic ethos and the sacrament of marriage, also provide opportunities for spiritual development. Further opportunities could be provided through a more consistent approach in the registration period at the beginning of the day. There are some examples of very good use of this time, but only a minority of teachers use it effectively.

42. Good provision is also made for pupils' moral development through the general ethos of the school and relationships in the school. The school is very orderly and there is a consistent and strong emphasis on mutual respect. Adults exemplify this well in their friendly and attentive relationships with pupils whilst taking opportunities to teach pupils about right and wrong. Although some opportunities are missed in registration periods, in many lessons pupils have several opportunities to think about moral issues, for example in drama where issues such as bullying, relationships and capital punishment are explored. In English, where the notion of consideration for others is a strong feature of most lessons, there are also many opportunities to think about moral issues in much of the literature studied. History lessons also provide opportunities to consider moral issues, and the examination of racism is particularly instructive. The pastoral system in Years 7 and 8 offers a unique and effective opportunity for those pupils displaying consistently anti-social behaviour to come together and discuss their reasons for it with heads of year.

43. The school is also successful in providing for pupils' social development. Group work is a feature of many lessons including drama, physical education, history and English. Working well together though, is a feature of most lessons and there is also a sound range of extra-curricular activities when pupils have opportunities to engage in teamwork. Many opportunities exist especially for older pupils to exercise leadership, particularly through the prefect system with its emphasis on care rather than control. Older pupils also contribute through their involvement in a paired reading scheme with Year 7 pupils. A student council, with representatives from all year groups is also successful in discussing and contributing to decisions on many school issues.

44. Although there is no concerted whole curriculum approach to teaching pupils about multiracial Britain, provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. Both art and music draw many of their examples from beyond western culture but also appropriately emphasise the more local origins of much that pupils experience. Through day-to-day

teaching of history, geography and modern foreign languages, pupils' cultural horizons are broadened. Similarly, they are extended through religious education by its teaching of the major world religions represented in Britain. A range of visits and exchanges also contribute, particularly in modern foreign languages and art.

45. Statutory requirements are met for sex education. The local police liaison officer makes a helpful contribution to enhance drugs education. The *Tacade* programme is used to support pupils' personal development, but it is not implemented consistently in all year groups. Tutorial sessions are timetabled for once a week in the fortnightly cycle but too often these lessons are shortened as assemblies frequently run late. Those pupils who are representatives on the school council usually miss tutorials, as this is the time when they meet. Time during morning registration is not always used to best effect. Although there are many activities that make a complementary and valuable contribution to personal, social and health education, the taught programme and use of timetabled sessions is not sufficiently well co-ordinated, and hence inconsistencies in provision are unsatisfactory overall.

46. There are particular lessons for careers education. The quality of careers education and guidance continues to be very good at both key stages. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of different career paths from Year 9 onwards. The school is well supported by effective links with the Careers Service, and the careers information given to pupils is very comprehensive and up-to-date. Year 11 pupils also benefit from a well organised work experience programme, which is enthusiastically co-ordinated by the Head of Careers. The very good links that have been established with the local colleges enable pupils to have plenty of information to guide them in their choices for their further education and training.

Links with the community

47. The school's links with the community are continually broadening. The school works with the *Maybridge Group*, a multi-agency forum including police and Learning and Skills Council representatives, to improve opportunities for young people in and out of school. Effective links have been made by the geography department using the local tourist service for project work and visits to local places of interest. Good links have been established with the Local Education Authority to arrange visits from French and German native speakers in an information technology project. Links via the Internet with other schools and cultures are limited. Links with the community contributes well to pupils' progress in music, with concerts in old people's homes and contributions to performances in churches and the diocesan festival. The work-related curriculum is supported through work experience arranged to promote mutual knowledge and understanding with the community. There are productive relations with Northbrook College and with Worthing Sixth Form College that admits most pupils moving on to study at advanced level. The partnership with primary schools is developing as a result of visits made by the head of Year 7. Prospective pupils spend one and a half days at Chatsmore as part of effective induction arrangements. The heads of music and art are also very much involved in liaison with their counterparts in primary schools, and meetings to extend liaison for English, mathematics and science are planned for next term.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school provides a caring environment where pupils are valued as individuals and are encouraged to show care, concern and respect for others. The school's arrangements to ensure child protection are good. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and follow the correct procedures. Any pupils who are causing concern are monitored very carefully. The appointment of a part-time counsellor offers very good support for pupils who are in need of additional help. Pupils who are injured or feeling ill are well supported by qualified first-aiders. The school has had several changes of school nurse recently, and although the present nurse only joined the school in January 2001, she has already established a good relationship with the school and pupils. The school has satisfactory policies and arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of its pupils.

49. The school's arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory overall. The requirements for reporting and recording attendance are met. Registers are monitored regularly and any concerns are followed up first by the school and then by the educational welfare officer. The school's analysis of pupils' attendance in Years 10 and 11 has shown that regular attendance makes a significant contribution to pupils' attainment in their final examinations. A good initiative by the school has been to hold an evening for Year 10 parents to inform them about arrangements for the GCSE courses, and to highlight the importance of regular attendance. The school, in conjunction with the educational welfare officer and the local authority's pupil retention unit, are planning to work together to find ways of improving attendance.

50. Since the last inspection, the school has made great strides in its efforts to improve and monitor behaviour. These procedures are now very good. There is now a clear and well-understood code of conduct which, through the *assertive discipline* procedures, is implemented consistently across the school. A 'Social Skills' group has been established for certain pupils in Years 7 and 8 to improve their confidence and work on assertiveness rather than aggression. Parents are very pleased with the new behaviour management systems. Pupils and parents place great value on the positive reinforcement, such as achievement certificates, and telephone calls and letters home praising good work.

51. An anti-bullying policy is now in place which is being implemented very effectively. The school makes it clear to pupils that it is their right not to be bullied. An atmosphere of openness has been developed where pupils feel that they can approach their teachers if they feel threatened in any way, and other pupils can report any concerns that they may have about another pupil who they think may be being bullied.

52. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good; this is mainly based on the good knowledge that all staff have of their pupils. Subject teachers make judgements each term about each pupil's attitudes to work and behaviour. Heads of year and form tutors collate and analyse the information. The information is useful, both for any action form tutors need to take to support pupils' personal development, and for reporting to parents when their help may be enlisted.

53. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans which identify specific targets for the pupil to work on. These are reviewed regularly. The progress of pupils is monitored and the fact that all pupils are well known to both the special educational needs co-ordinator and their learning support teacher means that issues are identified and

acted on quickly. Staff briefings are used to alert all members of staff to issues relating to individual pupils. The register of pupils with special educational needs is up-to-date and Local Education Authority annual audits of the register indicate that pupils are accurately placed. All aspects of the code of practice regarding special educational needs are in place.

54. The school's assessment policy allows significant freedom to subject departments. This results in differences of approach across the school as a whole but procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are always at least satisfactory. They are good in English, art and science, and very good in modern foreign languages. Day-to-day marking is carried out well but not many departments make use of National Curriculum Levels in so doing. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is satisfactory overall although it falls below this in physical education and design and technology, and is very good in modern foreign languages.

55. The school has appointed an assessment co-ordinator who works alongside another teacher who has a temporary responsibility for raising pupils' attainment. A potentially very powerful database has been created which uses core subject assessments from tests at the end of Year 6, coupled with data from cognitive ability testing in Year 7, to predict GCSE grades. Information is made available to departments so that they can set annual targets, and use their own assessments during the year to track pupils' academic and personal development. Form tutors usefully incorporate information about pupils' personal development for reporting to parents. However, variability in practices for assessing and recording attainment levels in Years 7 to 9 results in a lack of clarity and consistency across the school as a whole. Although the staff handbook offers guidance on how to use the school's own system, there is a need to avoid confusion and simplify assessment information in accordance with National Curriculum Levels. The potential of the approach is yet to be realised. It will need careful management to ensure procedures and practices are consistent throughout so that all pupils are helped to achieve their best. Monitoring and evaluation will be needed to judge pupils' progress and show the effectiveness of teaching and mentoring support in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. There has been a significant improvement in the school's partnership with parents since the last inspection. It is based on very good information, real communication at all levels, and a genuine desire to make the partnership work. Overall, parents' views of the school are very good and they value the improvements that have been made.

57. A clear majority of parents, 325 out of 561, responded to the parents' questionnaire and 42 attended the meeting held for them prior to the inspection. A high proportion, over 80 per cent who replied have a very positive view of the school. A significant minority of parents, 15 to 30 per cent, replied expressing concerns about pupils getting the right amount of work to do at home; behaviour in school; the school working closely with parents; and the range of activities outside lessons, particularly sport. Inspectors concur fully with parents' views on those aspects that please parents most. In those areas where parents' replying wish improvement, inspectors have found that the amount of homework set is about right even though some of the work lacks challenge. They found behaviour in lessons and about the school is good and often very good. Since the last inspection the school has made clear

progress in consulting parents on important issues, and meets with them regularly each term to discuss and foster their children's progress. The range of out of school activities for pupils is widening noticeably, but there are limited opportunities in sports, especially for boys. The school knows it needs to keep parents and pupils up-to-date with what is available.

58. Parents receive a school prospectus of very good quality and an informative governors' annual report. Communication and consultation with parents is very good. Regular newsletters and the termly 'Chat' magazine keep parents very well informed about school events and day-to-day matters. Parents have been very well supported by a series of three evenings on: 'Troubled and Troublesome Young People'. Outside agencies came together to help parents to cope with issues such as anger management, behaviour problems, truancy, and recognising the signs and dealing with stress. In July, each year, parents of prospective Year 7 pupils are invited to a meeting for all parents and also can meet personally with a senior member of staff. Year 7 parents meet in autumn to discuss settling-in matters. At the appropriate times, parents of pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 have opportunities to discuss their children's options at GCSE, the demands of the GCSE courses, and careers. Last year, the school consulted parents to seek their views on developments. A very successful evening for Year 7 parents was held to discuss perceptions of the school, and ways in which they felt it could improve. Parents of pupils felt to benefit from being in the Year 10 *work related* group were informed and asked about the proposal. The school gained valuable insights which it has put to good use in both cases. These initiatives enable parents to make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.

59. Annual written reports meet statutory requirements, but they vary in quality; information about attainment and progress is not always specific and targets for improvement are often rather general. However, parents appreciate the many opportunities a year to discuss their children's progress, which follow two interim reports and a full annual report. They also value the on-going feedback about their children's progress in the form of either a letter or a telephone call. The combination of frequent written reports, associated meetings and on-going feedback together provide very good quality information for parents about their children's progress. There is very good communication with parents regarding pupils with special educational needs and parents are invited to attend the annual reviews.

60. Parents are very involved in the work of the school. Parents feel there are many opportunities to take part in the life of the school, such as celebrations of mass and other sacraments, school productions, concerts and sporting activities. The parent teacher association works hard to support the school and pupils. For example, they are presently engaged in raising funds towards the cost of a new surface for the tennis courts.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The acting headteacher is providing a clear direction and steady leadership for all the staff of the school. She is conscientious and actively shows commitment and dedication. These qualities, together with enthusiasm and determination, have been significant factors in improving key aspects of the school. She successfully draws staff with many different jobs into becoming involved, and in working collaboratively, to contribute to the work of the

school. There is a good team spirit. Others in the senior management team, of acting deputy, an assistant head and a pupil performance manager, are equally dedicated. Together the team is successfully maintaining the school by giving encouragement and support to other staff with managerial responsibilities.

62. The school is in transition from the time of its previous senior management to one of looking forward to establishing new ideals and practices under a new headteacher who, at the time of the inspection, has yet to take up post. The governing body and acting headteacher have contended well with changes in the leadership caused by the illness and absence of the permanent headteacher over the past four to five terms as there were understandable uncertainties about how strategic leadership could be given during this time. Nevertheless, there has evidently been a clear willingness amongst governors and acting headteacher to be decisive, and to act well in their desire to improve the school. There is a clear potential for further improvement.

63. Middle managers in academic and pastoral roles carry out their responsibilities efficiently and effectively. There are some especially good and productive working relationships established within subject departments. Of particular note is the clear definition of roles and responsibilities in English where strengths are sensibly deployed. Expertise, vision and commitment contribute to imagination and inspiration in the work in art. There is a successful focus on developing the staff team in design and technology to establish a more coherent and shared subject approach. The value of a good team spirit is also evident too, in for example geography, where working together as a united force is improving standards, and in modern foreign languages where effective corporate management is working very well. In music, there is a clear vision about the future development of the subject. Staff are committed and work very hard, and many have extra responsibilities in addition to teaching. There are two particular areas requiring review for improvement. Heads of department who are either a member of the senior management team or the year head team carry a very heavy load in other critically important areas of the school's work. The demands of day-to-day administrative matters, recent training initiatives and pastoral work has particularly affected the leadership of mathematics and physical education, and the standards attained.

64. The governing body is committed to the school's well-being. Governors are successful in contributing to developing its Catholic ethos, and to the goal of helping all young people become well-rounded individuals. Their mission statement and school aims are published widely, such as in the prospectus and handbook for parents. They help foster good relationships with parishes that the school serves, and with other schools in the local deanery. Governors value training activities that help their own development, for example through the Local Education Authority's induction programme and newsletter, and through the diocesan programme.

65. Governors are actively involved in the work of the governing body. There is a well-defined committee structure, with clear terms of reference. Governors contribute actively to an appropriate programme of meetings that embraces the development of their role in monitoring the work of the school. The acting headteacher and other members of the senior management team keep governors well informed. Each governor is identified with a specific subject area, although contact is variable because of availability of time. In turn, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses relating to key information about the school, aided by their own informal contacts and discussions. The curriculum sub-committee, for example, is informed about the significance of test and

examination results, targets for each year group, and how they relate to the Local Education Authority's targets. The finance sub-committee is much involved with budget projections and the related recruitment of pupils. Governors have clear perceptions that improvements in pupils' behaviour and a more acceptable uniform policy have led to more parents choosing the school. They are very appreciative of the extent of work that the reduced senior management team has undertaken and value the recent development of openness in their working relationships.

66. However, as well as receiving and discussing information about the school, the governing body recognises it has to develop a more proactive strategic role, in partnership with the senior management, in their drive for further improvement. They want to develop their association with subject departments, for example, to see the work of the school themselves, and talk about how well targets are being achieved. In this way the governing body can extend its knowledge of the quality and standards of work in school, and have greater confidence in its opinions. The need now is for governors to build upon their strengths to improve and evaluate the quality of strategic development planning, whilst always basing decisions on the principle of contribution to the standards and quality of education in the school.

67. The governing body does not fulfil all its statutory obligations at present. Specifically, the arrangements for design and technology do not meet the National Curriculum requirements for all pupils in Key Stage 4.

68. The school was last inspected in March 1997. The governors and senior management team, well led by the acting headteacher, give the school clear direction in implementing an action plan to address the issues that were raised. Very good progress has been made with developing strategic vision through monitoring, evaluating and supporting teaching and learning. Good progress has been made on establishing a whole school behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy. The school has made clear progress on devising curriculum policy but has only partially dealt with its statutory obligations for meeting National Curriculum requirements. Other omissions, such as appraisal, collective worship, health and safety, have been remedied. There is significant improvement in provision for pupils with special education needs. Improvements in Key Stage 3 show the school has made satisfactory progress on raising boys' attainment. The level of learning resources is now satisfactory in most subjects with improvements made in art, design and technology, music and physical education.

69. The school development plan focuses upon raising achievement and aims to address important related issues. They include linking the teaching and learning policy to the new arrangements for the performance management of teachers, improving consistency in the pastoral and welfare arrangements, increasing the use of target setting, developing the work-related curriculum, making more environmental improvements, and improving the school's image to boost recruitment. However, the patterns of expenditure and the time-frame are unclear. The plan lacks detailed costings and, because the evidence indicated for success is very general, monitoring to ensure value for money is poorly described. These shortcomings have been recognised and the school is already re-organising its improvement plan to take account of the national agenda and to ascribe time and funding to development activities.

70. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages learning support well, particularly in ensuring that all aspects of the code of practice are in place. There has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection particularly in developing all members of staff accountability to teaching pupils with special educational needs. There is a liaison group with representatives from departments across the school which meets regularly to discuss issues relating to special educational needs.

71. The responsibilities of the governing body, the headteacher and other staff in relation to financial management are clearly defined. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the preparation, monitoring and control of the school budget share. The standards fund budget and earmarked funds are being effectively applied. Good use of information and communication technology gives the headteacher and other senior staff ready access to financial information.

72. The school has considered how the number of pupils on roll will, in future years, affect the level of basic budget it receives and is aware of the financial difficulties that will arise if the roll cannot be sustained. The school has successfully managed to recover from a budget deficit so that it is now in credit, but the surplus is nearly fully committed to pay bills and salaries for the next school year. At present governors are increasingly having to look very carefully at spending plans in order to maintain the balance of the budget they have set.

73. The information and communication technology action plan and vision statement, drawn up by the information and communication technology management group, has ensured that good progress is being made in many areas since the last inspection. New arrangements for the co-ordination and monitoring of information and communication technology use are to be implemented at the beginning of the autumn term following some staffing difficulties this year. The recent, well-considered improvements in information and communication technology resources have had a positive impact upon learning and achievement in all years. The extension of network cabling has provided access to more machines, a wider range of software, and the Internet. This, and the current programme of information and communication technology training for staff, has enabled many subject areas to make greater use of computers across the curriculum.

74. Overall, the number, qualifications and experience of teaching staff and support staff satisfactorily support the school curriculum. However, there are some weaknesses, which the school is currently addressing. The school has improved its position since the last inspection by increasing the average number of lessons taught by the teachers, by improving the ratio of pupils to teachers and by providing more qualified staff in art and modern foreign languages. The mathematics department is still short of suitably qualified teachers and this year there have also been problems with the retention of good teachers in science and modern foreign languages. New teachers have been appointed and will join the school shortly. In all other areas, including administrative staff, the match of experience and qualifications to the demands of the curriculum is good. The school makes every effort to alleviate these staffing problems, which are partly due to the fact that the school is small and the high cost of housing in the area.

75. The teaching benefits from the good support provided by the non-teaching staff. Technical support staff have been increased, in particular for science, and the support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is now appropriate. Administrative, clerical and technical staff work closely with teachers to enhance the day-to-day smooth running of the

school. Premises staff maintain high standards in the care of the building. Pupils, staff and the community groups that use the very good facilities recognise the contribution this makes to the positive atmosphere within the school

76. In the past year the school has introduced a performance management policy that meets national requirements. The very effective approaches will add further momentum to the successful work already in place, for example attaching members of the senior management team to subject departments, monitoring and evaluating teaching, and promoting professional development to implement the teaching and learning policy. Structures for the induction of new staff and newly qualified teachers are very good. The school operates a six-week induction period, offering training and advice on information and communication technology, use of resources, pastoral care, the computer network, reporting systems and the spiritual life of the school. In addition to school mentoring, newly qualified teachers attend an LEA induction programme.

77. The school has made significant improvement in the quantity and condition of accommodation since the last inspection. The overall appearance of the school is now good with public areas well maintained. Art and science rooms have already been refurbished and changing rooms will be completed next. The gymnasium floor and tennis courts have been resurfaced. Flat roofs and old window frames have been replaced. Display areas are much improved across all subjects particularly in art, design and technology and English. Accommodation in all subjects is at least satisfactory and the serious health and safety issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed. In some subjects the rooms are small in relation to the growing pupil numbers, particularly in English and information and communication technology, though the staff has worked hard to ensure an effective learning environment. There are still some outstanding issues such as the desirability of suitable accommodation for modern foreign languages and design and technology.

78. Resources are mostly satisfactory in the subject areas and good in information and communication technology, geography, music and English. However, the lack of textbooks in history limits the development of a coherent learning programme. In design and technology too, the ageing facilities are only adequate with the lack of powered equipment and specialist furniture particularly evident. The information and communication technology facilities have continued to be updated and are in line with national average in terms of ratio of pupils to each computer. The designated computer suite is cramped but there are good facilities as in English and geography with improving facilities in other areas such as science, music and design and technology. These should help to support more specialist applications such as music composition, data logging and computer aided design and manufacture. The library is well managed, with pupils involved in its day-to-day running, and is regularly used by most subjects. It is sufficiently well funded and is able to provide a wide range of books and good information and communication technology facilities. Overall, it is a valuable and developing school resource constrained only by some limits on accommodation and staffing.

79. The level of income and expenditure per pupil is significantly above the national average for secondary schools and lies well within the top quarter of the range. In addition to the basic budget delegated to it, the school also benefited from additional funding from the local education authority to support the senior management during the prolonged absence of the headteacher. There is a small income from community use of school facilities and services. In common with similar schools, funding is also received and appropriately used for specific purposes such as curriculum and professional development and support for pupils with special

educational needs. Financial planning is well matched to the school's priorities. The systems for financial administration are efficient and detailed records are maintained. The governors receive clearly presented information and the school has taken appropriate action in response to a minor issue in the most recent auditors' report.

80. As well as rigorously applying the principles of *best value* when making spending decisions before orders are placed, the school applies other principles of *best value* very well. The school makes comparisons using information about similar and local schools' performance, and in the drive to raise attainment has established the target setting initiative that is now being implemented throughout. The school challenged itself regarding an appropriate curriculum for pupils with special educational needs in Year 10, and is able to justify, and is evaluating initiatives such as the establishment of the *work-related group*. For example, once the need for the group was identified, parents were invited to discuss the proposal, and it is now being evaluated so that problems, pitfalls and benefits can be taken into account with similar groups emerging in future. The school has undertaken some important consultations with parents. Examples include, the parent teacher association's involvement in a review of uniform; and meetings with the parents of troubled and troublesome children on working together to help. Notably, as an aspect of consultation and competition, the school surveyed parents' views and perceptions of its strengths and weakness to see if they felt the school provides *best value*. The results have been successfully used to promote its work in the parishes and community.

81. Overall the school is giving satisfactory value for money at present, when the ability of pupils on entry and resources available to it, are measured against the standards it achieves. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the impact of important initiatives on raising standards are much stronger than of late. There is a high level of commitment to school improvement amongst the staff. There is a shared determination and the capacity to succeed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. The school should consider and act to:

- Actively promote the development of pupils' numeracy skills throughout the curriculum:
(Paragraphs: 14, 32, 109, 124, 127)
- Improve the consistency of the personal, social and health education curriculum by greater co-ordination:
(Paragraphs: 33, 41, 45)
- Improve the quality and effective use of assessment information by:
 - * Simplifying the recording of assessments so they match National Curriculum criteria;
(Paragraphs: 54, 55, 89, 128)
 - * Ensuring consistent use in all subject areas for setting pupils' targets, and for achieving them;
(Paragraphs 55, 91, 120, 143, 167)
- Improve girls' achievement in Key Stage 3 especially in mathematics and science, and boys' overall achievement in GCSE;
(Paragraphs 1, 6, 7, 39, 84, 111, 131, 134, 143, 152, 165, 166)
- Continue to investigate and implement procedures to improve attendance;
(Paragraphs 23, 49)
- Meet the statutory requirements for design and technology in Key Stage 4:
(Paragraphs 32, 34, 67, 68, 123, 129)

83. Other issues for consideration:

- Further develop the policy and practice for identifying and making suitable provision for gifted and talented pupils.
(Paragraphs: 3, 31, 90, 145)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	113
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	13	42	40	3	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7- Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	561	0
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	46	0

Special educational needs	Y7- Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	15	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	73	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	40
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	48

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.9
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	57	60	117

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	47	39	34
	Girls	47	34	27
	Total	94	73	61
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	80 (67)	62 (68)	52 (46)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	55 (17)	37 (33)	26 (10)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	42	42	37
	Girls	44	37	31
	Total	86	79	68
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	74 (72)	67 (65)	59 (59)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	36 (23)	31 (34)	29 (8)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	61	36	97

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	24	54	58
	Girls	24	34	35
	Total	48	88	93
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	49 (46)	91 (91)	96 (99)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	38
	National	38.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	13
White	540
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	32.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff:

Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	238

Deployment of teachers:

Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.4
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Average teaching group size:

Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	23.6
Key Stage 4	21.4

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	34	3
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	1,645,600.00
Total expenditure	1,618,319.00
Expenditure per pupil	2895.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	52837.00
Balance carried forward to next year	80118.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	561
Number of questionnaires returned	325

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	54	10	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	33	55	9	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	60	14	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	58	16	5	2
The teaching is good.	22	62	9	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	48	12	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	42	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	41	4	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	53	15	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	27	55	8	6	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	60	6	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	42	23	8	12

Other issues raised by parents

A significant number of parents (55) wrote additional comments. Most gave further information about points raised in the questionnaire. For example:

- * concerns about disruptive behaviour by a few pupils added to question 3;
- * there were mixed views about question 4 - the amount of homework – about half felt there was too little and half there was too much;
- * too many supply teachers, in mathematics and information and communications technology particularly, caused worry;
- * a lack of opportunities for sport was mentioned in relation to the last question.

Many parents were complimentary about support given to pupils experiencing difficulties, but in two cases parents felt the response to the call for help took too long. Even though some expressed uncertainty about the school's management (the appointment of the new headteacher was yet to be made when the questionnaire was completed) there was a great deal of support for the interim arrangement and development of the catholic ethos.

There were individual concerns expressed about a lack of both revision classes for Year 11 and induction for pupils joining the school in Year 8.

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

ENGLISH

84. Key Stage 3 English results in the 2000 Standard Assessment Tests, at the national expectation of Level 5 and the higher Levels 6 and 7, were well above the national average and very high in comparison to similar schools. The improvement in standards in English was well above the national trend, particularly so for boys. At GCSE the percentage of pupils gaining A* to C grades in English language and literature was well above the national average, with particularly strong performance in literature, and broadly in line with the national trend of improvement. A* to G results in English language precisely matched the national average, and were slightly above in literature. Girls' achievement was better than boys' in both subjects. Boys and girls performed significantly better in English language and literature when compared with the results for other subjects.

85. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening are included in each unit of work. Pupils are required to present information, debate, and express opinions. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve good standards in group discussions and in oral presentations on a variety of topics. Pupils write successfully for critical, informative and creative purposes. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities make significant strides in what they understand and can do. By the age of 14, pupils are able to handle a variety of genres well. For example, lower-attaining pupils show an appreciation of the conventions of travel writing in word-processed brochures setting out the attractions of Worthing. Higher-attaining pupils do similar but more extended and confident work, and additionally present pieces giving the actual experience of a visitor in witty, ironic and well-managed ways. All pupils recognise the essential features of narrative, theatre and film texts and can analyse intention and effect in talk and writing. Reading diaries record and comment upon individual programmes of reading. Development is as clear for lower-attaining pupils as for the more able, moving from simple and sometimes ungrammatical comment about plot, to perceptive understanding of character and theme. For example, in a Year 8 top set, pupils studying the *Merchant of Venice* were clearly able to draw inferences about Portia's character and feelings from their reading, and then to consider Christian acts towards those of other religions. Pupils read aloud confidently and with good intonation. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported through practice in pairs and small groups, and sometimes through the well-managed interventions of Learning Support Assistants. In speaking and listening, reading and writing, attainment ranges from Level 3 to Level 8 with the majority of pupils at Level 5 and above. In Years 10 and 11, the range of writing is partially determined by the requirements of the GCSE syllabus. Again, good progress is clear across all levels of ability and equally for boys and girls. By the age of 16, for example, some high-attaining pupils are producing brilliant monologues on the model of *Talking Heads*: psychologically convincing and technically sophisticated. Lower-attaining pupils are able, strongly supported by regular practice of key skills, to write with reasonable accuracy and clarity about stories, films, plays, current affairs and their own experience. For all pupils, the programmes of study in English integrate reading, writing, and speaking and listening so that pupils are required to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. There is a spread of attainment ranges from A* through to grade F. Attainment is good with, again, the majority of girls and boys achieving towards the top end of the range.

86. The strong teaching seen during the inspection supported pupils' learning in very clear ways and suggests that the history of good results in English should continue. In lessons observed in Years 7 to 9, 28.5 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, 28.5 per cent good, and 43 per cent very good. In Year 10, 20 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, 40 per cent good, and 40 per cent very good. This generally well-organised and energetic teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. For example in a Year 9 poetry lesson pupils were helped, through the teacher, to grasp concepts mentioned and use the knowledge to analyse and comment effectively. Lessons are well planned with a good variety of approaches and have a lively pace that helps foster pupils' interest. Information and communication technology in English is very well developed. Pupils are motivated and extended by its use, as shown in the excellent classroom displays of writing, and pupils' assessment folders. Teachers use questions skilfully to develop extended answers from pupils across the ability range. Information concerning past achievement supports planning and target-setting. Homework is integrated into the planning and delivery of the English curriculum. Pupils complete it conscientiously and it helps to develop their reading and writing. Above all, teachers know their pupils well, encourage them to aim high, and treat them with the courtesy and respect that they receive in return.

87. A feature of the planning and conduct of English lessons is the inclusion of procedures specifically to develop the key skills of literacy. Pupils' achievement in these areas is good and is further promoted by the attention given in some other subject areas to comprehension, interpretation and organisation. Most departments display key words. Teachers in drama, geography, history and art effectively support pupils' reading and use of writing frames effectively to help structure and develop their written work. However, there are many missed opportunities for enhancing pupils' language skills elsewhere and, in consequence, standards of literacy are below expectations. The school's literacy strategy is being developed successfully, but is not yet fully in place throughout.

88. Teaching groups for English are based on ability and take account of the needs of learners of differing levels of attainment. There is a range of strategies therefore to support carefully focused teaching. Pupils at every level are challenged. Lower-attaining pupils are well served by such high expectations, but on occasions they are faced with texts and materials too complex for their current abilities.

89. Pupils' strong achievement is supported and recorded through well-understood assessment procedures. Pupils are helped in their reading, speaking and writing by a clear explanation of the school's grading system by which their work is marked. They would be helped further by a more precise explanation of assessment criteria, which made clear how grades relate to specific skills and abilities. They would also benefit from more consistency in the amount and detail of marking and comment.

90. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They expect to work hard and concentrate in English lessons. They are generally courteous and appreciative. They willingly take up extra-curricular opportunities, attending revision classes and keenly support drama productions. Older pupils help younger children through paired reading arrangements. Year 8 pupils (an element of the department's provision for gifted and talented pupils) take responsibility for the production of the *Chat Magazine* distributed to the whole school.

91. The department is very well led. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The strengths of the department are known and sensibly deployed. The head of department's own practice exemplifies good teaching. It is energetic, well planned and challenging, yet alert to the needs of individuals. Schemes of work are comprehensive and well structured. Planning and target setting are informed by very detailed scrutiny and interpretation of pupils' past and potential achievement. The head of department has substantial whole-school responsibilities. He is developing a school-wide literacy strategy, for instance, in which members of the English department are closely involved in supporting colleagues in other subject areas. He has oversight of a system of target setting to raise standards of achievement across the school. Two members of the department are heads of year who find it sometimes difficult to balance priorities to departmental concerns with such substantial additional commitments.

92. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are rising. Learning Support Assistants are appropriately deployed to encourage the attainment of pupils with special needs. The arrangements for forming teaching groups allow for concentrated and effective support of pupils of differing abilities. Points for action in the last report have been largely addressed therefore.

Drama

93. Standards in drama, as reflected in the GCSE results, are very high and well above national averages and have been so for the past few years. The results in 2000, using the average point score per pupil, are amongst the highest in the school. The previous report made only a brief mention of drama, and comparison between then and now is difficult. At the least, very high standards in drama have been maintained.

94. Pupils in Year 10, who take the optional GCSE drama course, are able interpret a text and develop and sustain a character in a performance. For example, in one lesson observed, pairs of pupils performed extracts from *Blood Brothers* as part of an assessment. Standards were in line with the expectations for the GCSE course they were undertaking. Year 10 pupils build on the clearly established foundation developed in the subject during the first three years in school and make consistently good progress during their time in the upper school. Pupils in Year 9, for some pupils the culmination of their drama work in school, are able to research and develop a theatrical presentation given to a Year 7 audience on a particular social issue. Overall, standards by the end of Year 9 are at least comparable to work seen in other schools where there is a similar commitment of one period a week to the subject. In some aspects, such as the way pupils work together and their general maturity and awareness of the disciplines of the subject, they show good achievement.

95. A relatively small sample of lessons was seen during the inspection. In these, the quality of teaching was never less than good and often very good. The key to the very high achievement in GCSE and the consistent good progress that pupils make in the subject lies in the consistent high quality of teaching. Units of work are interesting and relevant and the course is structured carefully. The teacher has a good knowledge of all the pupils. Whilst the ethos in lessons is very disciplined, it is also very inclusive and lower-attaining pupils are supported well so that they too achieve a sense of success.

96. The teacher has very high expectations of pupils and the subject has high status within performing arts in the school. The reputation of the subject is well earned through the high standards set in the curriculum and in the quality of extra curricular productions. The school and the pupils see it as a subject as important as any other. Accordingly, pupils come to lessons prepared to work, knowing that they will enjoy them and, from them, gain a considerable sense of personal success. The teacher demands maturity from the pupils in the way they respond to the material, in the way they work together and in their demeanour in the classroom or studio. Pupils respond accordingly. This allows the teacher to negotiate aspects of the work effectively, for example settling the dates of their next assessment. Relationships between teacher and pupils are very good. The teacher listens carefully to pupils, valuing their contribution and there is an easy friendliness based on mutual respect, which fosters an atmosphere where pupils can make mistakes safely. She seldom needs to assert herself to reinforce her expectations, but challenges and follows up any misbehaviour to maintain consistency. Achievement is recognised and praise is used effectively to reinforce good work or motivation. The result is that pupils develop self-motivation and engage with the work, developing their self-discipline and an ability to work independently in groups or with a partner. They want to do well and are consistently encouraged to develop and to aim higher.

97. The teacher has very good subject knowledge that encompasses a broad range of interests and techniques. There is good emphasis on pupils developing a subject-specific technical vocabulary which allows them to discuss aspects of the work. Because lessons often start with a whole class discussion of what they were doing before, pupils understand what they are doing and why and how this fits into the particular unit of work. Very effective feedback after an assessment piece also ensures that they know what to do in order to improve. There is time for the class to reflect and think about what they are doing rather than just generating activity. Very good questioning skills are used very effectively to make pupils think about the work they are undertaking. One group was examining the role of the murderers in *Macbeth*. Careful questioning established Banquo's reputation as a warrior and then identified how this information would influence the murderers' approach to their task. The combination of the teacher's professional skills and personal qualities helps pupils develop self-motivation, and leads to a very disciplined ethos and work of rigour and quality which ensures good progress in lessons.

98. Homework is set regularly, often requiring pupils to undertake some form of self-assessment of their work. The use of information and communication technology is encouraged. Pupils evidently used the Internet to research some of their Year 9 presentation work and many pupils word-process their homework or assessment pieces. Help for assignments, such as writing frames, which help pupils structure their essays is also available on the school's internal network. Year 10 pupils use video recordings to record their assessment work for discussion later and theatrical productions involve the pupils in stage lighting and using sound equipment.

99. Those pupils who show particular skills in the subject are encouraged to participate in the extra-curricular opportunities to extend these skills. The school productions have a very good reputation within the school community and the subject makes a very good contribution to the school's range of extra-curricular activities. At the time of the inspection, preparatory work was being undertaken for a production of *The Merchant of Venice*.

MATHEMATICS

100. In the 2000 national tests at the end of Year 9, the pupils' attainments were a little below, but close to the national average for their age group at both Level 5 and above, and at Level 6 and above. The trend in results over the last 3 years is slightly down when compared with the national trend. The performance of boys was slightly above the national average whilst the performance of girls was slightly below. Compared with similar schools, results were well below average. By comparison of the average point scores in national tests, the school was close to the national average but well below that of similar schools. The school has taken action to remedy this.

101. In 2000, results at GCSE were approximately in line with the national average. The percentage of all pupils attaining grades A* to C was 44.1 per cent compared with the national average of 47.1 per cent, with an average point score per pupil of 4.1 compared with 4.2 nationally. In contrast with the results of the Year 9 pupils, boys' results were just below the national figures but the girls' results were above. However, the boys' results in mathematics were in line with those for other subjects within the school whilst the girls' results were significantly below.

102. The inspection of lessons and pupils' work showed that by the end of the current Year 9, pupils' attainment is now close to the national average as a result of the improvement work undertaken. For most pupils the understanding and retention of their knowledge and skills is satisfactory. Year 7 pupils could transpose fractions and decimals accurately, handle simple ratios to create scale plans, and solve simple linear equations. In Year 8, the highest attaining pupils could, for example, demonstrate an understanding of algebraic rules, solve linear equations and inequalities and lower attaining pupils could manipulate positive and negative numbers and use the 'less than' and the 'greater than' mathematical symbols competently. In Year 9, more able pupils could use trigonometric functions and ratios correctly, middle ability pupils were able to apply the formula using the tangent function, and they learned to manipulate formulae correctly with support. Lower attaining pupils had difficulty with concepts of probability and chance. However, for most pupils throughout Years 7 to 9 there is a lack of challenge in much of the work set.

103. By the end of Year 10, pupils demonstrate a satisfactory level of attainment. The highest-attaining pupils were coping satisfactorily with the transposition of formulae requiring the use of complex concepts, and working at the highest levels. The work-related group demonstrated a good level of skills in mental arithmetic and have a good level of understanding of probability outcomes. Girls are attaining at a better level than boys but the latter are showing an improving trend.

104. In Years 7 to 9, pupils with special educational needs make varied progress, depending on the teacher and the use made of the classroom assistant when present. In Year 10, the work-related group makes good progress, commensurate with its ability.

105. Pupils are taught in mixed ability groups in Year 7, and in sets based on ability in Years 8 and 9. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 was satisfactory or better in 12 out of 14 lessons seen, and of these, 3 of the 14 were good. One lesson was unsatisfactory and one poor. The strengths of the teaching include: specialist teachers having a good command of the subject; lessons being well planned; teachers setting clear objectives for the lesson and beginning it with a quick and effective revision of the previous work. Correct mathematical

terminology is used to challenge pupils through a skilful blend of step-by-step explanation and different questioning techniques. The white board is used effectively to hold information so that pupils can follow the work. Individual help is given to support pupils when they practise examples. These aspects, together with good relationships, help pupils make progress by sustaining attention, maintaining good order and promoting learning. However, there were weaknesses evident elsewhere. The progress of pupils in some lower ability groups is generally not in line with their prior attainments, often because the teachers' expectations of these pupils are low. The content of the lessons tends to be unchallenging without enough care being taken to ensure that the work is well matched to pupils' prior learning. Pupils' overall progress in the subject is not always smooth because too many lessons lack pace and rigour. To rectify these matters the planning and structure of the teaching programmes needs further development. When non-specialist staff are needed to teach mathematics, they require time and specialist support to plan activities so that the extent of challenge and demands are at an appropriately high level for the class. Otherwise, as in a Year 9 class on probability, the work was boring, and pupils became disinterested and disruptive.

106. The quality of the teaching in Year 10 is better than that in Years 7 to 9. All three Year 10 lessons seen were satisfactory or better and of these, one was good. Attainment is in line with national expectations. The specialist teachers have a good command of the subject and lessons are again well planned. Lesson objectives are clear and the board is well used to illustrate worked examples, for example in a lesson on transposing formulae which involved complex concepts of algebraic manipulation. However, although work for more able pupils has rigour, there is a lack of pace and challenge for some. Pupils often work in pairs, but there are insufficient opportunities for interactive learning in group-work and to enable pupils to extend their thinking and to learn from each other.

107. The majority of pupils arrive at lessons ready to work. They have a positive attitude towards mathematics and their behaviour is generally good, but there were a few incidents of misbehaviour stemming from inadequate control. Most teachers engender a good working atmosphere. Relationships amongst pupils are good.

108. Homework is set regularly but is usually just ticked, sometimes by the pupils themselves, and provides no comment or guidance to help them improve their work. Reporting on attainment and the use of assessment and marking to assist in the planning of future lessons are unsatisfactory.

109. Throughout the school, pupils' standards of numeracy are well below those expected. The development of numeracy skills is unsatisfactory because pupils neither have sufficient opportunity to apply nor are they emphasised in a co-ordinated way throughout the curriculum. There are some unrelated examples of work that contribute to pupils' numeracy skills. For example, in science, pupils are helped to interpret information in graphs and tables, and handle formulae competently. In geography they are taught to use measurements and co-ordinates for map-work, and also handle data graphically. In design and technology, pupils make use of numerical skills for measuring, especially in food and graphics, but they do not give close attention to accuracy in their manufacturing work reducing the quality of the finished product. The development of numeracy skills in other subjects is unsatisfactory. However, The school has already identified numeracy as an area for development, and is working with the local education authority to make the matter a priority.

110. The time available for mathematics is within the government's guidelines. The scheme of work provides continuity and progression from one year to the next but does not clearly indicate how provision for pupils with identified learning difficulties, or for gifted and talented pupils, should be made. However, all pupils do have equality of access to the mathematics curriculum. The departmental handbook should be brought up-to-date to support curriculum planning. There have been shortages of specialist teachers that raised parents' concerns although the situation has very recently been improved. Whenever non-specialist teachers are needed, time is required for support and to help them plan so that their methods are appropriate and work for pupils has challenge and rigour. The head of department is dedicated and committed and, as a member of the senior management team, deals very effectively with considerable additional management and administrative responsibilities. However, these may impinge on the more strategic management of mathematics. These issues need to be resolved, and support should be considered, in order to take mathematics forward.

SCIENCE

111. The results in the 2000 national tests in science at the end of Year 9 were below the national average at Level 5 and above, but close to the average at the higher Level 6. They were well below the average for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. Over the last three years there has been a steady improvement in test results which is a little better than the national trend. Boys performed much better than girls in the 2000 tests. The girls' performance dipped sharply but can be accounted for because a significant proportion of the small cohort of girls was absent for the tests in 2000. Test results in science were similar to those for mathematics but much lower than those for English. In 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in GCSE double award science was in line with the national average. Virtually all pupils achieved at least A* to G grades, which is similar to the national picture. Overall results have remained static year on year whereas there has been an improving national trend for science results. In 2000 girls did better than boys but in previous years both performed similarly. GCSE results in science were similar to those in mathematics but lower than in English.

112. Inspection evidence from lessons and pupils' work indicates that standards of work in science at the end of Year 9 are broadly average, representing satisfactory achievement. For example, higher-attaining pupils can recall scientific facts well and have a good understanding of scientific concepts such as respiration and photosynthesis. Average-attaining pupils have a less secure understanding of these scientific concepts. They understand that respiration results in the release of energy, but struggle with the idea of how this occurs in cells. Lower-attaining pupils can assemble and use apparatus to carry out simple practical work, for example they can successfully test soil samples for their acidity. Standards in investigative work are also average, but improve across this age range due to the focus placed on this attainment target at the end of Year 9. Pupils' literacy skills are developed satisfactorily due to the use of word lists and writing frames. In Year 10, pupils make satisfactory progress in their lessons. They continue to achieve satisfactorily, building on their previous knowledge and understanding of physics, chemistry and biology. For example, higher-attaining pupils have a good understanding of the rock cycle and how igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks are formed. Middle-attaining pupils have a sound understanding of biology, for example they can explain how hormones regulate the level of water in the body. Lower-attaining pupils have a basic understanding of chemical symbols and formulae. Pupils throughout the school do not use information and communications technology frequently enough to help their learning in

science, especially for recording scientific information electronically. Learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Throughout the school they are acquiring the skills, knowledge and understanding of science at a satisfactory rate.

113. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them as a result of satisfactory support for their learning in their lessons, for example the *work related group* in Year 10 made good progress in a lesson on designing a loud speaker. Here well -focused teaching and good additional support ensured that the pupils maintained interest and motivation at a good level and this led to good gains in their knowledge of this topic.

114. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall. The majority of pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes towards their work. Pupils are generally interested in the subjects they are studying. They usually concentrate well in class. They collaborate with each other satisfactorily in practical and investigative work. There are generally good relationships between pupils and teachers that support the learning process effectively. However, there are instances where pupils take too long to settle down to work, resulting in a loss of curriculum time and a lower rate of progress. In some lessons pupils lose concentration due to work that is not well matched to their capabilities. Some pupils have much more positive attitudes to their work. For example, a higher-ability group of Year 9 pupils worked well independently in a self-assessment exercise in investigative science. Very positive attitudes led to good progress.

115. Teaching is satisfactory overall with no unsatisfactory teaching. Good teaching was seen in about two fifths of lessons, which is rather low when compared to the national picture. Well-qualified teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. They have established good working relationships with the majority of pupils, a factor which helps pupils learn better. Management of behaviour, especially in practical lessons, is generally good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of behaviour. However, teachers employ only a limited range of teaching styles and allow too much variation in group sizes for practical work, which restricts pupils from taking a more central role in their own learning, and results in uneven progress. Marking does not highlight strengths and weaknesses or show them how to improve. Lesson aims, although present in plans, are not always conveyed to pupils, resulting in slower learning. Work does not always match the ability level of pupils and this results in de-motivation when the work is too difficult.

116. Since the previous inspection the department has made satisfactory improvement. It has improved the schemes of work in Years 7, 8 and 9, behaviour in lessons and the quality of teaching. Management of the department is satisfactory. However there is insufficient focus on the monitoring of teaching and learning to share good practice. The monitoring of homework and marking is not rigorous enough. Marking needs to be more relevant to the needs of the pupils. However there is good liaison between members of the department and it functions well on a day-to-day basis. Health and safety requirements are met and teachers ensure that pupils work in safety in the laboratories.

ART AND DESIGN

117. The standards attained by pupils in the 2000 GCSE examination in art and design were well above the national average. 87 per cent of pupils gained a grade in the A* to C range and all the pupils passed. The standards have steadily improved since the time of the last inspection, when they were below average.

118. Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 9. Most pupils have a good grasp of the skills and techniques needed to express themselves effectively in a range of media. Their use of collage is particularly good and they create three dimensional work in rich colours and textures. Pupils draw well from life and use sketchbooks very well to collect ideas and experiment. Nearly all students use computers for research and some produce entirely digital solutions to homework tasks. At the end of Year 11, attainment is well above average. Both the assessed coursework and the sketchbooks are of a very high standard. These show that the highest-attaining pupils are able creatively to combine research into the work of other artists with their own personal studies. For example, they link the work of Matisse with their study of natural forms, or with experiments with wire, tissue and adhesives. They are able to evaluate their work and develop it imaginatively. Although the drawing skills of the lower-attaining pupils are limited, their work is colourful and expressive and often witty and individual in approach. An excellent abstract sculpture using glass, wire and plastic by a Year 11 student showed a very high level of skill and understanding of form and structure.

119. Pupils make good, and sometimes very good, progress at both Key Stages 3 and 4 because the teaching is of a consistently high standard. Teaching is never less than good. 5 out of 7 lessons were very good or better. In an excellent lesson with Year 8, the teacher's interest and enthusiasm was infectious, inspiring the pupils to work hard to achieve the drawing objectives. Pupils also achieve well in lessons due to the challenging and stimulating tasks that the teacher sets and the high standards that are expected. The imaginative resources the teacher provides and the very good models to which the pupils can work, also inspire commitment. This shows in the time and the care which pupils give to their homework. Teachers set this regularly as an integral part of each project. The good attitudes towards art lessons are also evident in the good behaviour and the relaxed, good-natured relationships. Lessons are stimulating. In Year 9 lessons, the teacher showed the pupils not only reproductions of the work of Aboriginal artists, plus maps, aerial photographs and photocopies, but also work that she had done herself and examples of older pupils' work.

120. The GCSE pupils build well on the knowledge and understanding they gained in Key Stage 3. They learn how to use their researches to good advantage and how to evaluate their own work critically in order to improve it. Teachers plan and organise lessons very well. Lessons include work for pupils of different ability levels and teachers continually assess the pupils' progress. This means that they can provide individual support and guidance. The very good records of prior achievements and test scores, help the teachers to set individual targets for learning in each year group throughout the school. Work is marked regularly and GCSE students keep a record of grades and comments in their sketchbooks.

121. The care with which the department assesses and records pupils' attainment and progress is typified by the outstanding process which is employed to help pupils who do not hand in homework regularly. The teacher draws up individual task sheets, keeps the sketchbooks in school so they cannot be lost, and provides opportunities for pupils to catch up. The head of department analyses GCSE results and other data to provide insight into

areas for development. Assessment done during lessons is used to inform the planning of future lessons. The curriculum is rich and varied, providing good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Topics include discussions of Aboriginal beliefs, Indian art and culture, drugs and alcohol in modern society as well as delightful forays into pop art, shoe design and genetic structure! The department organises visits abroad for Year 11 pupils, most recently to Paris and Barcelona. These inspire some wonderful diaries indicating the social and cultural activities, as well research and source material for future projects.

122. Since the last inspection, the art department has improved standards of attainment and progress as an outcome of committed and conscientious management. It has introduced personal folders for all pupils and information and communication technology at all levels. Pupils at both Key Stages are now encouraged to evaluate and discuss their work and consider personal targets. The department's development plan is based on broadening the syllabus and raising attainment. Effective planning and teaching is characterised by inspiration and imagination coupled with continual evaluation to help improvement. A new art room has improved the accommodation, which now provides much better opportunities. Because of the care taken with display and organisation, it is a stimulating place for pupils to work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. Design and technology is an improving subject in the school particularly in Years 10 and 11 where the teaching is good and standards in current examination courses are above national average. Although some pupils do not study design and technology, just over half of the pupils took a GCSE design and technology course in 2000 with a half of those pupils gaining grades A* to C which is at least in line with national average. Pupils taking food technology gain above average results and most pupils do a little better in design and technology courses when compared with their other GCSE subjects.

124. Standards at age 14 vary between the different strands of the subject though overall are in line with national average. In food technology, pupils use tools with confidence to combine materials and understand the main forms of analysing and evaluating food products. The higher-attaining pupils work with considerable independence and display stronger organisational and research skills with increasing use of information and communication technology. Developing strengths in information and communication technology are also evident in the other areas, particularly graphics, where pupils are beginning to use aspects of computer aided design and manufacture with some competence. Literacy, in terms of developing an understanding of technical language, is improving. Measuring skills, however, as part of numeracy, while being largely secure in food and graphics, are less well developed in resistant materials. In resistant materials, pupils demonstrate improving presentation but practical making skills are limited and this is reflected in less well-finished products.

125. In work seen, standards at age 16 are above average in food technology and graphic products and in line with national average in resistant materials. Across all three courses, pupils demonstrate a largely secure understanding of the design and make process and make effective use of information and communication technology to research and present their work. Higher attaining pupils in graphic products have strong modelling skills shown through the use of computer-aided design equipment. Most pupils taking food technology have particular strengths in their use of tools and materials, organisation and research and level of

independent working. In work with resistant materials, pupils can generate and develop their initial design ideas and often present them well. Higher-attaining pupils are also able to evaluate effectively against clearly identified design criteria. However, practical making skills and knowledge of different manufacturing techniques, are more limited and therefore the final products show less accuracy and finish.

126. In terms of long term progress over Years 7 to 9, most pupils do as well as they should in the way they develop their knowledge and skills in food technology, acquire sound graphical and information and communication technology skills and improve design awareness and presentation. Pupils make more modest progress in their understanding of structures and systems and in the development of their practical making skills using resistant materials such as timber, plastic and metal. Some of this will be addressed with the introduction of new National Curriculum schemes of work. The arrangement for rotating groups around different areas will continue to slow the development of practical skills. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress particularly in Year 7 where pupils benefit from both smaller groups and additional staff support. However, learning and assessment activities are not well matched to pupils and do not reflect the arrangements for grouping pupils by ability. GCSE pupils significantly improve on the standards they showed at the end of Year 9. The good progress they show over Years 10 and 11, particularly in the completion of projects is largely the result of more challenging teaching and effective assessment practice. Pupils with special educational needs make similarly good progress. Almost all of the pupils with special educational needs who have been entered for GCSE in food technology are on target to achieve graded results.

127. Pupils are positive in their approach to the subject and particularly enjoy the opportunities for practical work. Occasionally, that enthusiasm is not always matched with sufficient accuracy and care. However, behaviour is generally good, with pupils co-operating where necessary and working with safety and consideration.

128. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is never less than satisfactory with nearly half of teaching good and in a fifth of lessons very good. Teaching in the GCSE courses is good overall, and contributes to the rising standards. The very good teaching, evident in food technology, is based on well-planned lessons with clear learning outcomes succinctly introduced. This enables pupils to share a clear lesson purpose and build on their existing knowledge. Class management is good with effective support ensuring that pupils are involved in their learning. The best teaching varies the class activities to maintain a good pace, and uses praise well, to sustain interest particularly with the lower band groups. A focus on using technical language and frequent question and answer, helps develop understanding and literacy skills. Support for numeracy is more variable, particularly in some lower band groups where pupils measure and cut materials with less accuracy and care. All teachers make increasingly effective use of information and communication technology in ways that develop pupils' research and presentation skills in both class and homework. Pupils' progress in the subject is sufficiently well monitored and GCSE project assessment is clear and helps pupils improve their work. Assessment practice is less strong in Years 7 to 9 where insufficient use is made of National Curriculum Levels to set targets for different pupils and involve them in the assessment process.

129. The school has not resolved the issue raised in the last inspection that all pupils, other than a number allowed to follow an alternative programme, are required to study an aspect of design and technology in Years 10 and 11. In other respects, the subject has made good

progress since the last inspection, particularly in raising standards in teaching and examinations.

130. The head of department is well organised and provides a strong role model as a particularly effective teacher. She has coped well with changes in the team and the focus on developing the staff and establishing a more coherent and shared subject approach is now proving successful. Accommodation and resources are only adequate with clear deficiencies in furniture and equipment, particularly powered equipment. The staff has worked hard to maintain the appearance of the workshops and new information and communication technology facilities will provide some enhancement. The current schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 meet National Curriculum requirements but have yet to reflect all recent changes though plans are in place.

GEOGRAPHY

131. In the 2000 GCSE, 41.6 per cent of pupils gained A* to C grades. Although this was well below the national average of 54 per cent, A* to C grades have steadily improved over several years. The downturn in 2000 was due entirely to a poor performance by boys who only gained 30.5 per cent A* to C grades. Girls, on the other hand, have continued to make steady progress year on year and gained 65 per cent A* to C, well above the national average. Pupils taking geography do better than in other subjects except art, English, design and technology, and history. Boys, despite poor results in 2000, are doing better than in a majority of other subjects they take. Teachers are considering strategies to improve boys' performance.

132. Teachers' assessments of pupils in Year 9 indicate that 57 per cent of pupils are at Level 5 and above which is close to the national average. Inspection of lessons and pupils' work shows that by age 14, pupils' attainment overall is in line with the national average, but above the average in upper ability groups.

133. Basic geography skills are put in place in Year 7. Pupils are able to measure line and angle, use co-ordinates, latitude and longitude and present data in graphical form. They use mapping skills effectively, for example to plot a route from Rectory Farm to Addenbrookes hospital. Year 8 pupils demonstrate an understanding of information and communication technology skills in their enquiries into pollution and the water cycle. Standards of literacy are improved through the use of word banks and information sheets on essay writing. Pupils in lower sets make good notes and use writing frames well to assist extended writing as in an information brochure on the River Rhône. There is a good volume of written work and pupils produce plentiful examples of extended and imaginative writing, such as *The story of Mr. & Mrs. Endo* and *Am I living in a developed World*.

134. In Years 10 and 11, written standards continue to improve and standards of spelling and grammar are generally good. Many pupils produce good examples of well-structured investigations, supported by information and communication technology skills, in which they hypothesise, gather and analyse data and present conclusions, for example in coursework on *Worthing as a suitable environment for Tourists* and *Desertification in the Sahel*. Pupils develop an understanding of geographical patterns and processes, in work on tectonics and climate. Pupils speak well and give thoughtful responses. They are developing a good vocabulary, but would benefit from more opportunity to read. Girls' presentation is better

than boys and their achievement is greater than boys. Overall at age 16, attainment is below the national average, but above average in upper ability groups.

135. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and is good or very good in four out of five lessons. Lessons are well prepared, with clear aims that are understood by pupils and reviewed at the end of lessons. Attention is sustained by good pace, high expectation and constant reinforcement. Questioning is good and everyone is involved in giving thoughtful responses. Teaching is energetic and enthusiastic, with plenty of humour. Pupils gain confidence, which is strengthened by the use of appropriate learning materials and good constructive marking. Teachers' knowledge and individual styles enliven lessons and help lower attaining pupils to make good progress, for example in a Year 9 lower set preparing an essay on *The forest feeds on itself*. The best lessons use a combination of varied techniques and audio-visual aids, but levels of expectation and challenge are not always universally high and the effectiveness of teaching methods needs to be constantly reviewed. Interesting homework, such as an exercise on weighing junk mail as part of a study of natural resources, is set and reviewed regularly.

136. The behaviour of pupils is very good. They have a positive attitude to work and are eager to contribute to lessons. Relationships are good and pupils work well together, regardless of gender. Pupils are thoughtful and constructive, as in a lesson in which pupils identified negative sides to success. Good teaching enables the majority to concentrate on their work, however, some Year 10 boys are not fully engaged and make insufficient progress.

137. The department is well managed and there is a growing team, working together as a united force to improve standards. Teachers are well qualified and well supported through performance management based on appropriate observations of their work. The department is committed to improvement, and is tackling aspects of organisation and record keeping. Accommodation and resources, especially for audio-visual work, are good. Equipment for information and communications technology has recently been enhanced.

138. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement and the points raised in the last report have been addressed. Fieldwork has been increased and examination results are improved. Literacy standards have risen through use of a range of strategies, and pupils understand and complete work at a higher level than before. The pace of lessons and use of materials appropriate to levels of attainment are both much better and information communication technology is playing a growing part in the department's work.

HISTORY

139. By age 14, the majority of pupils have completed a good quantity of written work covering selected aspects of the National Curriculum. Pupils express their views clearly and with some confidence, and undertake a fair amount of extended writing. There is considerable concentration upon the skills to handle sources of information. More able pupils have a good understanding of bias and can analyse and evaluate sources well, for example in considering romanticised views of the domestic system when compared to the factory system of industrial organisation. In work seen, the majority of pupils showed a thorough understanding of turning points in the Second World War and could explain the strategic significance of the Battle of Britain. There are some weaknesses in the technical accuracy of written English,

which in the case of the least able pupils impairs effective communication, but overall, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations.

140. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations over recent years has fluctuated, but overall has been slightly below the national average. In 2000, however, results were well above average which is a marked improvement. Pupils outperformed their national counterparts by almost three-quarters of a grade, and did better in history than in any other subject, except English Literature. Judging by the most recent results, girls out performed boys but only by a small margin. The department has not monitored their relative performances in the past. By the end of Year 10 pupils have completed a considerable quantity of written work and have a good understanding of the realities of democracy and dictatorship and their interaction during the twentieth century. No Year 11 work was seen but current Year 10 work reflects that attainment is at least in line with the national average.

141. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is never less than satisfactory and in one half of the lessons seen, it was good. Teachers plan thoroughly, choose materials carefully and manage pupils well. There is good use of question and answer to explore, extend and consolidate knowledge. In a low ability set, including many pupils with special educational needs, the teacher's skill, directness and consistency pre-empted disruption and enabled pupils to make good progress in learning about the causes of the English civil war. At the same time her patient and supportive approach encouraged pupils to test uncertain knowledge publicly, and permitted even the least able to debate the morality of Charles I's execution. In another Year 8 class, a pupil with English as an additional language could explain clearly the meaning of parliament and defend her choice of the relative importance of factors contributing to the outbreak of the Civil War. Pupils' independence in, and knowledge of their own, learning would be enhanced by a greater variety of teaching and learning styles and less reliance on entirely teacher directed lessons. Inadequate resources result in programmes of work for half the Year 7 pupils, and the lower sets in Year 9, which are in the wrong order, and undermine learning. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is good; detailed subject knowledge of the modern world syllabus, close monitoring of pupils' work and consistent attention to improving examination skills underpin last year's commendable GCSE results.

142. History lessons are characterised by good relationships; pupils respect each other and their teachers and respond positively to the demands of the subject. Behaviour in lessons seen was all either good or very good, which represents marked improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' personal development could be further enhanced by affording them more opportunities to assume responsibility for their own learning, as they do in GCSE coursework.

143. The eradication of unsatisfactory teaching, arrangements to support pupils' literacy, and improved attitudes and behaviour in Years 7 to 9 are all areas in which the subject has made progress since the last inspection. There is clear focus on raising attainment in the department. Action has begun on aspects of literacy, such as the use of writing frames and subject specific keywords, and the use of data from standardised tests on entry to the school, to set pupil targets. Monitoring pupils' performance in the subject is improving, but some aspects are under-developed, such as an analysis of the differences between boys' and girl's results. However, a good beginning has been made in the use of test and examination information to set pupils' targets and to put arrangements in place to monitor achievement. History is taught in spacious rooms with attractive displays of work that contributes to pupils' learning. There

are some shortages of textbooks for pupils in Years 7 to 9 that sometimes force topics to be taught in the wrong order of history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144. Attainment by age 14 has shown an improvement this year and overall is now close to the average. Results in GCSE information and communication technology were significantly below the national average last year. A scrutiny of examples of Year 11 GCSE work and observations of GCSE pupils in Year 10 indicates that the standard of work has improved recently.

145. All pupils follow a discrete information and communication technology course in Years 7 to 9 which provides a range of information and communication technology skills that they can use throughout the curriculum. Many pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making good progress. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils were using presentational software to convey written safety messages. Some pupils were experimenting with more advanced features including animation and were able to incorporate them into their product. Higher attaining pupils aimed their work successfully at specific audiences and demonstrated some good literacy skills. There are activities aimed at pupils' different abilities in many lesson plans, but the scheme of work in Year 9 should provide greater challenge to higher attaining pupils in order for them to achieve the higher National Curriculum assessment levels.

146. The overall standard of work observed in Year 10 was satisfactory, although few pupils demonstrate a range of higher-level skills and knowledge. In a Year 10 GCSE information and communication technology lesson most pupils used the Internet to good effect to provide appropriate graphics to illustrate their coursework, but some lacked the skills to use the *sort* function of their spreadsheet appropriately. There is no assessment of information and communication technology capability for those pupils who do not take the GCSE course. Thus makes it difficult to gauge their needs and ensure progression in the development of information and communication technology skills and knowledge, when they use computers in the subjects of the curriculum. The use of information and communication technology, in science particularly, to measure and record events through the use of data logging equipment needs to be developed further in all years.

147. Most pupils are interested in their information and communication technology work, apply themselves diligently and are keen to answer questions in class. However, the progress of a small minority of boys in both key stages is hampered by a lack of sustained concentration.

148. The recent improvement in information and communication technology resources has had a positive impact upon learning and achievement in all years. The extension of network cabling has provided access to more machines, a wider range of software, and access to the Internet. This has enabled many subject areas to make greater use of computers across the curriculum, well assisted by a training programme for all teachers, supported through the New Opportunities Fund.

149. Teaching in information and communication technology lessons in all years was often good and characterised by clear objectives, good individual support for pupils, short-term goals during lessons to maintain pace, and a review of progress at the end. Pupils would

benefit from more whole class skills teaching, and the availability of prompt sheets, to enable them to make more effective use of computer software. Different versions of software have to be used on some computers in the main information and communication technology room, and does cause some problems for pupils.

150. The information and communication technology vision statement and action plan and has ensured that good progress is being made in many areas since the last inspection. New arrangements for the co-ordination and monitoring of information and communication technology use are to be implemented at the beginning of the autumn term following some staffing difficulties this year.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

151. In 2000, the A* to C grades for the GCSE examinations, in both French and German were disappointing. In French, 29 per cent of pupils achieved the higher grades compared to 46.1 per cent nationally. In German, 26.4 per cent of pupils reached grades A* to C in comparison with the national figure of 51.8 per cent. Girls outperformed boys in both languages.

152. The department has made significant improvements since the last inspection in the introduction of practical measures to combat the underachievement of boys in particular. Staffing in the department is now much more stable and there are well-founded initiatives to address underachievement. Because of the teachers' emphasis on improving pupils' performance, using a variety of motivational strategies and also increased use of the foreign language during lessons, standards of work seen during the inspection were better than last year's examination results indicate.

153. There were many examples during the inspection, of work which was above average. Pupils in Year 10 are quite at home using authentic written, spoken and visual material in German to answer questions about train timetables, television adverts and shopping. In French, pupils use cassette tapes to complete comprehension exercises on restaurant visits and the food they would choose if they visited France. In both languages, pupils pronounce difficult words with the minimum of an English accent. There is no doubt that attainment is improving. At the end of Year 9, pupils attain standards in both French and German which are in line with those expected nationally. They assimilate new words quickly, can respond to instructions spoken at speed in the target language and imitate the accents of native speakers in French accurately.

154. The high quality of teaching is a major strength of the department and is characterised by pace and varied methods to meet individual learning needs. Moreover, teachers treat their pupils with dignity and with respect. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in nearly three-quarters of lessons it is good and very good. Because teachers place emphasis on the celebration of achievement, especially by use of the *vedette* system for rewarding good work, pupils experience immediate success and are, therefore, becoming more confident in experimenting with the foreign language. Pupils in Year 8, for example, can think in French when asked, 'Ça va?' and they can answer quickly and accurately, often giving reasons. In a Year 10 German lesson, pupils completed a role-play, reserving a room in a German hotel, and they took a delight in challenging each other with increasingly difficult questions. Good relationships between teachers and pupils are a strong feature of lessons and these ensure that

pupils are invariably engaged and that they like the subject matter. The use of information and communication technology is a strength. It emphasises independent learning and is having a most positive effect on boys' performance. Furthermore, teachers expect much from pupils, offering them a wide variety of opportunities to learn in the ways they enjoy. Pupils, including those who find the work difficult, are now making good progress in both languages. The teaching in the department is most effective in promoting higher attainment.

155. Important features in the department's tenacious efforts to improve standards are the impressive assessment arrangements which teachers use to predict outcomes and to inform pupils of what they need to do in order to experience even more success. Teachers demonstrate how much they care for their pupils in so many ways: they organise a variety of visits to France and Germany, they have good contact with parents and they never cease to question their methods and whether they are relevant to the needs, both academic and social, of all their youngsters. Pupils respond to their teachers well, behaving sensibly in lessons and approaching their studies with maturity. In addition, members of the department are highly committed to professional development, and student teachers in England and in Germany benefit regularly from their advice and from their talents.

156. The department is a very good example of effective corporate management. Teachers are industrious, work very well as a team, and speak highly of each other. The head of department leads and manages the subject area with skill, verve and sensitivity. Resources for modern languages are only adequate, but teachers work long and hard to augment textbooks with materials which are well thought out and challenging. Teachers share a vision for the teaching of modern languages, evaluate performance well, and have introduced effective strategies to improve attainment. They are now looking at ways to increase the extent of the French and German spoken in class and are still concerned to match methods to learning needs. The department is well placed for future development.

MUSIC

157. The results of the 2000 GCSE examination show that seventy three per cent of the pupils achieved an A* to C results and all the pupils achieved an A* to G grade. These results are above the national average. There was no significant difference in the attainment between boys and girls.

158. By the time pupils reach 14 years old their attainment is at the level expected. Pupils have good rhythmic qualities. This was most noticeable in a Year 9 rhythm lesson. Here, in a group ensemble, playing in a Bolero style, pupils played a variety of independent rhythms on percussion instruments, successfully maintaining a steady beat. Pupils make good progress with their performance skills. In a Year 7 performance of *Love Me Tender* pupils accurately play the melody on keyboards, reading from formal notation. Pupils have an understanding of a range of musical styles, using the correct language when describing the music. Pupils' composition skills are not as well developed as their performance and their progress in this element is slower. Although many of the pupils start with a low level of understanding they are however beginning to develop an understanding of composing skills, using such techniques as an 'ostinato and note clusters with effect. Pupils have an appreciation of a smooth melody line but few use their knowledge of primary chords to support their creative work. The use of information technology to support composition has yet to be developed and is unsatisfactory. The standard of singing is very good. Pupils in the choir sing with a pleasing tone, good

extended phrases, accurately maintaining good pitch when singing a harmony line. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons and make satisfactory progress. The overall attainment has improved since the previous inspection.

159. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 10 and 11. Listening to individual taped performances of compositions and other pieces of music, coupled with the observations of pupil's composition and other work, indicates that by the age of 16, attainment is above the national average. Pupils' standard of performance is good, performing complex pieces with accuracy and with a musical style. Composition is well developed with clear form, a structure and harmonically well established. Compositions are in a variety of styles to include songs, solo instruments, ensembles performed confidently by pupils reflecting good quality teaching. The standard of attainment has been maintained since the previous inspection.

160. The overall quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Of seven lessons observed, four were satisfactory, one lesson unsatisfactory, and two good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this knowledge is used well to demonstrate styles of music and to accompany class performances. Pupils respond well to these demonstrations, helping them to maintain a steady pulse, resulting in them making good progress with their performance. Planning of work is generally thorough but there are occasions when there are too many activities within a lesson, resulting in pupils having insufficient time to consolidate their learning and slowing progress. Although planning identifies higher attaining pupils by providing different tasks these activities often lack challenge and are quickly completed by pupils, resulting in modest progress. Teachers have good discipline insisting on quiet when explaining skills, ensuring that lessons move with pace.

161. Good teaching is underpinned when planning has activities that are closely linked to provide progression, together with a clear explanation at the beginning of the lesson. This was most noticeable in a Year 8 composition session. Before starting their practical work pupils had a clear understanding of the compositions techniques needed to develop their creative work. The outcome of this was that pupils were quickly on task, displaying a good level of interest, anxious and confident to perform their work leading to good overall progress with their creative work. Teaching is unsatisfactory when the planning is unsuitable to meet the needs of the pupils and insufficient explanation about the task. The outcome of this was that pupils did not understand the aim of the lesson. Pupils quickly lost interest, become restless leading to unsatisfactory progress and behaviour. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are often rushed. The outcome of this is that pupils have insufficient opportunity to perform their work and teachers are unable to assess progress.

162. The management of the subject is good and the head of department has a clear vision about the future development of the subject. His enthusiasm of the subject and the open access of the department at lunch times and after school are having a positive effect on pupils' progress. The scheme of work for music has been successfully developed to reflect the current National Curriculum requirements. The range of extra curricular activities contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development. The annual music productions are of a high standard and pupils talk with enthusiasm about their involvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

163. The standard of work most pupils attain by the end of Year 9 meets the national expectation in all areas and exceeded national standards for some classes in both rounders and athletics. Most pupils are able to apply techniques and skills to several aspects of the

curriculum including athletics, rounders and tennis. The majority of pupils have sound basic skills which provide a good platform for future development. In athletics both boys and girls have sound overall mobility and co-ordination skills, while in rounders many girls have accurate throwing, tracking and striking skills which they are able to apply to a game. However, the ability of pupils to observe and analyse performance is below national expectation. Achievement was at least satisfactory in most lessons observed and was unsatisfactory in only one lesson. In three lessons there was good achievement as pupils were successfully encouraged to develop skills and also an understanding of technique. For example, in athletics, boys developed a good basic javelin throwing technique and a very good understanding of why specific aspects of the technique were particularly effective. This was achieved through a careful focus on aspects of technique that led to improvement, and a subsequent sequence of activities to develop specific skills. In a rounders lesson, batting skills developed when the teacher identified footwork as a critical factor and pupils were able to work on this aspect of their technique.

164. GCSE results for pupils with five A* to C grades in 2000 were below the national average and below overall school results. However, an analysis of results indicates that they were a good reflection of the candidates' ability. In a Year 10 games lesson, standards overall conformed to national expectation. They were better in track athletics, but in tennis they were below national expectation.

165. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Many at Key Stage 3 are enthusiastic, well behaved and co-operative, and most are attentive and able to sustain concentration. However, the attitude of a minority of boys in Year 8 was not as positive. Non-participants were not consistently set appropriate tasks to engage them effectively in the lesson. Relationships are sound although opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to undertake different roles such as coach or official were rarely seen. Analysis of Year 10 work identified poor organisation and presentation, and it lacked rigour. Pupils did not produce enough written work given the amount of time available and their achievement through the year was unsatisfactory. These are issues that need attention.

166. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all except one unsatisfactory lesson. It was good in one third of all lessons. When teaching was good, secure knowledge was regularly conveyed to pupils through perceptive observation of performance, appropriate intervention and good question and answer sessions. Planning was thorough and incorporated varied teaching strategies that led to an appropriate sequence of activities involving both individual and collaborative learning. Objectives were clear and made clear to pupils who were then able to focus effectively on developing required skills, knowledge and understanding. Discipline and class management were also good. In the lessons where there were unsatisfactory aspects of teaching, objectives were often inappropriate and unclear to pupils. The teaching did not always address specific targets to ensure progress. In these lessons not nearly enough was expected of pupils to reach standards that reflected the level of their potential nor were pupils being asked to analyse their own performances, or those of others, in order to improve learning. The organisation of the games afternoon is not providing the necessary continuity to ensure appropriate progress in activities.

167. Although assessment is systematically recorded there is very little effective target setting in lessons. Teachers are not setting targets that are linked to schemes of work, or involving pupils in the process; nor is prior attainment consistently used to establish the potential for progress.

168. The range of activities at Key Stage 4, where pupils are able to use a local leisure centre, is beginning to provide a sound preparation for Post 16 leisure activities. There is a satisfactory and improving range of extra-curricular activities for girls although the range of activities for boys is not yet providing enough opportunities for them to extend and develop their skills or interests.

169. Communication within the department and day-to-day organisation of the department is good. Both staff are good role models and are respected by pupils. However strategic planning is unsatisfactory. Although there has been some development planning for next year, none existed for this year and neither was there a clearly identified plan for addressing issues identified in the last inspection report. There are no scheduled departmental meetings and no observation of lessons by the head of department to monitor the effectiveness of the department or to share good practice within the department. Schemes of work are now developing but are still incomplete and the department handbook lacks clarity and is not yet a good working document. Accommodation is barely adequate and bad weather restricts access to the playing field limiting provision of appropriate activities at certain times of the year.

170. There has been satisfactory progress in addressing several of the issues raised in the last inspection report. For example most boys in Years 7 to 9 are now able to sustain concentration in lessons; resources are satisfactory and the changing rooms are being refurbished. There has been very little progress in formalising planning meetings and development strategies. The head of department has extensive and critical roles in other important areas of the school as a head of year which restricts the amount of time she can devote to her role in physical education.