

INSPECTION REPORT

TAVERHAM HIGH SCHOOL

NORWICH

LEA area: NORFOLK

Unique reference number: 121181

Headteacher: Mr G Porter

Reporting inspector: Mr W Keast
1522

Dates of inspection: 17 - 21 September 2001

Inspection number: 192415

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 12 - 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Beech Avenue
Taverham
Norwich
Norfolk

Postcode: NR8 6HP

Telephone number: 01603 860505

Fax number: 01603 261525

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Garwood

Date of previous inspection: January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject	Aspect responsibilities
152 2	W Keast	Registered inspector		The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught?
953 7	C Marden	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
224 23	J Lovgreen	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
129 2	V Foster	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
177 99	A Stoddart	Team inspector	Science	
186 74	R Green	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
250 1	R Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art and design Equal opportunities	
250 73	S Jordan	Team inspector	Geography Religious education	
107 61	P Willan	Team inspector	History Special educational needs	
150 75	B Stephens	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
117 46	R Coulthard	Team inspector	Music	How well is the school led and managed?
372 6	M Bean	Team inspector	Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
275 01	V MacRae	Team inspector		The work of the specific learning difficulties unit

The inspection contractor was: e-Qualitas Ltd

Langshaw
Pastens Road
Limpsfield Chart
Oxted
Surrey
RH8 0RE

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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Taverham High School is a mixed comprehensive school for 12 to 16 year old pupils on the western edge of the village of Taverham to the north west of Norwich. With 922 pupils on its roll, it is of average size. The proportion of pupils (5.3 per cent) known to be eligible for a free school meal is below the national average. The school operates a unit for pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). This is part of the local authority provision for pupils with statemented special educational needs in the local area. The proportion of pupils (14.9 per cent) on the special educational needs register is below the national average while the proportion with statements of need (4.3 per cent) is above the national average. These proportions include the 13 pupils in the Unit. Other pupils with statements of need, or for whom it is necessary to seek support from outside the school, have varying needs but are mainly pupils who have moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. A very small proportion of pupils (1 per cent) is of ethnic minority origin. An even smaller proportion speaks English as an additional language and none is at an early stage of language development. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave during the course of a year is small. In the main, the school draws pupils from three local middle schools. Within the generally advantageous area from which pupils come, there are pockets of deprivation. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school, as shown by the outcomes of national testing at the end of Year 6 and of standardised testing undertaken by the school, is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. The standards reached are above the national average and broadly in line with those of similar schools. They are little different from the time of the previous inspection. Teaching continues to be good and the welfare and care of the pupils remain very good. Staffing issues at a senior level, previously impeding leadership and management, have recently been resolved and the current team is strong and developing well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- provides good teaching which leads to good learning
- achieves standards above the national average
- provides a good range of learning opportunities
- establishes excellent relationships and provides a very good standard of care for its pupils
- develops good attitudes to learning and achieves very good behaviour
- provides very good opportunities for pupils' social and moral development

What could be improved

- the focus on the raising of standards within development planning
- the information and communication technology curriculum in Years 8 and 9, and the development of these skills across the curriculum
- the overall provision for history, information and communication technology (ICT) and music
- the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
- the reporting of pupils' progress to parents
- the accommodation

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 January 1997. Improvement since then has been satisfactory. Overall attainment at the end of Year 9 has been above the national average and remained steady. The average total point score at GCSE, again above average, has been rising in line with the national trend. The strengths reported last time have been maintained. Previous key issues have been addressed and progress made on all but the requirement for collective worship. Appropriate curriculum modifications have been made and assessment procedures and some weaker aspects of teaching tackled well. The previously static nature of the small senior management team, and health related problems of some of its members have now been remedied and significant developments have taken place in the management of the school in the last twelve months. These include the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the collation and analysis of assessment data. The school now determines the priorities in its planning more effectively and the capacity for further improvement is good.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The standards reached in 2000 are used for reporting and comparative purposes because, at this stage of the year, they are the most recent, confirmed results.

Results, in 2000, in the national testing at the end of Year 9, were above the national average and below the average for similar schools. Results in English and mathematics were above national and in line with similar school averages. Results in science were in line with national and well below similar schools averages. Overall, boys performed as well as girls. The trend over the last five years is below the national trend. That is, static compared to a slow rise. Most pupils have only two year's experience in science laboratories compared with the national experience of three. This adversely affects their comparative attainment. The achievement of this group of pupils was good overall. Unconfirmed results for 2001 indicate an increase in each subject and particularly so in science.

GCSE results continued their upward trend in 2000. Boys and girls performed equally well in comparison with the national picture although, when averaged over the last three years, girls have outperformed boys. The proportions of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-G and at least one grade A*-G were in line with the national average. They were well below and below the respective similar school averages. These comparisons are lower because the school policy is to offer alternative accreditation more appropriate to lower attaining pupils. In the majority of subjects the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C and the average point scores were above the national averages, many significantly so. Results in history were below the national average. The achievement of this cohort of pupils was satisfactory. Unconfirmed results for 2001 indicate a fall back to the 1999 position but all measures that the school has suggest results in 2002 will be higher than those reported here.

The school exceeded its targets for 2000 but will not have reached its 2001 target for the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A*-C, although nearly reaching its target for the total average point score. The school has not held sufficient data to set targets with any degree of precision. This situation is rapidly improving.

Overall, standards of the current Year 9 pupils are at nationally expected levels and they are above expected levels in English, mathematics, science and languages. When compared to their attainment on entry, this is good achievement overall. Standards of pupils currently in Year 11 are above national expectation overall. They are well above in art, at expectation in

design and technology and music, and below in history. Achievement overall is good but there is underachievement in history.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and work hard when they are there.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. No evidence of graffiti or vandalism. In the last year, no permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusion in line with the average for schools of this size.
Personal development and relationships	Very good with excellent relationships. Pupils show they can be trusted, understand the effect of their actions on others and show respect for others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance and unauthorised absence are in line with national averages.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 8 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching, in Years 8 and 9, in English, mathematics and science and most other subjects is good. It is satisfactory in art, music and design and technology. In Years 10 and 11, it is good in English, science and most other subjects. It is satisfactory in mathematics, music and design and technology and it is very good in religious and physical education. The fundamental strength is teachers' subject knowledge and knowledge of the pupils they teach. This results in well planned lessons using teaching methods which engage and challenge pupils. Lessons move at a good pace and pupils are well supported. A very small proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory because pupils made insufficient progress due, in one case to the poor behaviour of a minority affecting the learning of all and in the others to inappropriate teaching methods. The pupils generally learn well. They respond well to the teaching, concentrate and work hard and so increase their knowledge and develop appropriate skills.

Skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in English and mathematics but are not systematically developed across the curriculum.

The school meets the needs of its pupils well. Teaching in sets allows work to be matched closely to pupil needs. Teaching boys and girls separately is trying to address differences in the way they learn best. The special educational needs department and the unit support their pupils well enabling them to access the full curriculum. Alternative accreditation and vocational courses meet the needs of some Year 10 and 11 pupils well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum has breadth and is relevant for the needs of the pupils. It does not meet statutory requirements in ICT in Years 8 and 9.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported in mainstream lessons and when withdrawn for focused small group work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This is not an issue for the school as the very small proportion of these pupils speak English well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Opportunities for social and moral development are very good and for cultural development are satisfactory but those for spiritual development are unsatisfactory. Community service in Year 10 and the personal and social education programme make important contributions.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Good support and guidance are provided for academic and personal development as a result of careful monitoring.
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The working partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school seeks and responds to parental opinion but has not always made this sufficiently clear.

The curriculum has particular breadth in Years 10 and 11. The allocation of time between subjects is appropriate. The provision for personal and social education is very good. So too is the provision for careers education and guidance. Few subjects are able to meet their requirement to develop pupils' ICT skills in a subject context because of a lack of access to computers. The extra curriculum learning opportunities are good. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for daily collective worship.

Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, to monitor pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of strategies to eliminate bullying and other oppressive behaviour are very good. Assessment procedures and the support to help pupils make academic progress are good. Attendance is monitored well. Information on pupils' attainment is now becoming fuller and is being collated well and this weaker, though satisfactory, aspect of care is improving rapidly.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The head's commitment to developing the whole child within a supportive environment is clearly implemented in the school. The school has been insufficiently focused on raising standards in the recent past but the new and enlarged senior team is making rapid progress.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. They monitor developments closely and have a good input into shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching through performance management has begun in earnest and the collation of data to enable more detailed analysis and self evaluation has made rapid progress recently.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Specific funding is clearly used for its intended purpose. Planned developments are suitably resourced.

The reorganisation and increase in size of the senior team, made twelve months ago, has made significant inroads into the backlog of developments that have been needed. These are having noticeable impact on management strategies and will continue to do so as they work over time. The induction procedures for newly qualified teachers, and teachers new to the school, are very good. Heads of department generally manage their departments well and are now receiving greater support in this role. The school is well staffed with a good mix of qualified and experienced teachers. Learning resources are generally adequate. However, the great

shortage of computers means subjects are unable to fulfil their requirements to contribute to developing pupils' skills or to make best use of new technology to support subject and pastoral management roles. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Hard work by a committed body of teachers is minimising the impact of this on pupils' education.

The school makes satisfactory use of the data it has to compare and evaluate its performance. It consults parents and makes use of the advice provided by the local authority staff. The school's ability to set realistically challenging targets is improving as more information is becoming available earlier in the process. Resources are prudently committed. Increasingly the principles of best value are being satisfactorily applied.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the teaching is good • that their children are expected to work hard and achieve • that their children make good progress • that they feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have worries or concerns • that the school helps their children to develop and mature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information which they receive about pupils' progress • the extent to which the school works with them • the homework that pupils receive

The inspectors endorse the parents' positive views of the school. Parents' concern about homework was to do with variability in the regularity with which it was set. This was not apparent during the short time span of the inspection where appropriate homework was being set and subsequently collected. The inspectors believe that the school does try very hard to work closely with the parents and has evidence of seeking and responding to their views. The inspectors agree with parents that the school does not provide them with sufficient information about the progress that their children are making and this is an issue the school should address. The way the school organises the opportunity for parents to discuss the annual report is a balance for the school to achieve. It is appropriate for parents to expect to be able to speak to subject teachers. There is currently the opportunity for this to happen although few parents have taken the opportunity.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 In this report, early in the school year, comparison is made between the school results and the national results in 2000. This is the most recent year for which there is confirmed data both for the school and for national results.
- 2 The attainment of pupils when they come to the school, as indicated by the results of the national testing a year earlier and of a nationally moderated test used by the school, is broadly in line with the national average. It has varied slightly over recent years and is currently rising.
- 3 Results in 2000, in the national testing at the end of Year 9 were above the national average but below the average for similar schools. Similar schools refers to those schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be entitled to a free school meal. Results in English and mathematics were both above the national average and in line with the similar schools' averages. Results in science were close to the national average but well below the similar school average. Averaged over the last three years pupils' performance has been above the national average in all three subjects, most notably in mathematics. The school trend over the last five years has been below the national trend in that the school's results have remained static against a slowly rising national average. On average, over the last three years, the overall performance of both boys and girls has been equally above the national averages. In English, girls have been further above their national average than boys, while the reverse has been the case in science. When compared to their attainment on entry, these results represent good achievement.
- 4 Pupils enter the school, at the age of 12, having followed the first of their three years between national testing in different primary schools. The progress they make in science, in this year, is heavily influenced by the facilities which are available. These are variable. Their attainment is then compared, at the end of Year 9, with that of all pupils, the majority of whom have experienced the full secondary provision for three years. The unconfirmed results for the 2001 tests indicate an increase in English and mathematics and a great increase in science.
- 5 In 2000, the proportion of pupils who gained five or more grades A*-C (58.1%) was above the national average, the proportion who gained five or more grades A*-G (91%) was close to the national average and the average total point score (41.8) was above the national average. The results averaged over the last three years show the same comparisons. The average total point score for both boys and girls, in 2000, were equally above the national averages. On average, over the last three years, girls have performed better than boys. The results were in line with those of similar schools both for the proportion of pupils who gained five or more grades A*-C and for the average total point score. They were well below the similar school average for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-G. In comparison with schools that achieved similar average point scores in the end of Year 9 testing in 1998, the proportion gaining five or more grades A*-C was close to the average while the total average point score was below the average. The lower comparisons reflect the school policy that pupils should follow courses which are most appropriate for them. These courses do not result in GCSE grades or contribute to the pupils' total point scores.

- 6 The trend, over the last five years, has been in line with the national trend. That is, a gradual rise in the average total point score. The unconfirmed results for 2001 indicate a drop back to the 1999 position although all indicators that the school has suggest that at the end of this year (2002) results will be better than those reported here. When compared to their previous attainment, the results of the pupils in 2000 represent satisfactory achievement.
- 7 In nearly all subjects, at GCSE in 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C and their average point scores were above national averages. They were significantly above in English language and literature, mathematics, science, art, information and communication technology (ICT), German and the overall design and technology results. The school entered a similar proportion as nationally in all subjects except in art and German, where the proportion was lower, and in French and geography, where the proportion was higher. Entering a larger cohort may reduce the A*-C rate or the average point score because pupils of a wider range of ability are being examined. Results in history were below the national average. Overall, pupils' achievement, relative to all the subjects they took, was better in English language, English literature and mathematics. It was worse in science and history.
- 8 The school exceeded its targets for 2000, for both the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C and the average total point score. The unconfirmed results for 2001 show that the school did not meet its target for the proportion gaining 5 or more grades A*-C and just failed to reach its target for average total point score. The school has not held sufficient data to enable targets to be set with any degree of precision. The analysis of outcomes, against predictions based upon Year 10 examinations and subsequent testing, shows that the 2001 cohort of pupils achieved a little better than anticipated. However, school and individual targets need to be set earlier than this. The rapidly improving database of assessment information, both in terms of completeness and validity, should enable more realistic individual targets and, by aggregation, more appropriate and challenging school targets to be set.
- 9 From scrutiny of work, classroom observation and the outcomes of testing, the standards of work of the pupils currently in Year 9 are, overall, at nationally expected levels for pupils of their age. They are above national expectation in English, science and mathematics, French and German. When compared to their attainment on entry, particularly as seen in the current Year 8, this is good achievement, overall, for these pupils. Their achievement is satisfactory in design and technology, history and music. The standards of work of pupils currently in Year 11 are, overall and in most subjects, above nationally expected levels. They are well above nationally expected levels in art, at nationally expected levels in ICT and music and below expected levels in history. This is, overall, good achievement for these pupils. Compared with their previous attainment, their achievement is very good in art and physical education and it is satisfactory in mathematics and design and technology. There is underachievement in history.
- 10 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress from their clearly recorded starting points. Pupils are supported in subject lessons, in the main, with small withdrawal groups in Years 8 and 9 for mathematics and literacy. Where pupils are set for subjects, teachers give careful thought to pupil groupings and in all subjects they ensure that pupils are guided towards appropriate accreditation. In 2001, pupils' examination successes included GCSE and Entry Level certification. There is a good record of early intervention being successful. For example, just under half of the cohort which, in 1997, had been identified as having special educational needs was subsequently able to come off the register by the time they left in 2001. The social inclusion unit has ensured that permanent

exclusions are reduced, and has maintained educational provision for those who might otherwise have been excluded.

- 11 Pupils have good literacy skills. In answer to a criticism in the previous report, the school has successfully encouraged wider reading by having quiet reading sessions in some registration time. Literacy has figured in several subject development plans, but progress has been slow and inconsistent because the initiative has had too low a priority, and planning has been laborious. The current emphasis on 'key words' and their spelling is not understood by all teachers and pupils, and the school has no means of checking what is taking place in departments. Practice is haphazard. Generally, there is lack of opportunity for pupils to extend and debate ideas in class discussion.
- 12 Standards of numeracy are good. Pupils learn and develop their numeracy skills in their mathematics lessons. They recall number facts and manipulate fractions, percentages and decimals. They give results to a required degree of accuracy and use correct mathematical vocabulary. Number skills, including knowledge of tables, are underdeveloped in lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11. There is no whole school numeracy strategy. Pupils have opportunities to represent data in other subjects such as geography, modern foreign languages, English and food technology. However, overall they have limited opportunities to develop and practise the skills learnt in their mathematics lessons in different subjects across the curriculum.
- 13 Standards in information and communication technology are at the national average. Work in the taught course covers most aspects of the programme of study at an appropriate level and pupils are particularly confident in communicating information. Control and measurement should be taught by the design and technology and science departments, but insufficient equipment means that this is not done fully. Therefore skills in these areas, and their application, are under-developed. There are virtually no opportunities for other departments to use ICT to enhance their subject teaching or to consolidate the teaching of the ICT department. This is because of an overall lack of resources in the school and lack of opportunity for departments to make use of network facilities in the library now that this room is frequently timetabled to deliver the GCSE ICT courses in Years 10 and 11.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 14 The school has maintained the pupils' good attitudes to school and their very good behaviour. These contribute to the good achievement of the pupils.
- 15 A large proportion of parents report that their children enjoy coming to school and this is confirmed in discussion with pupils. They work hard and apply themselves diligently to their lessons. In many subjects, pupils make sensible contributions to class discussions and listen attentively to their classmates' contributions. In geography lessons, for example, they show interest in topical matters as well as curiosity about other countries and the people who live there. Many pupils join the good range of clubs the school offers, especially, the sports clubs.
- 16 Pupils behave very well in all areas of school life. They move sensibly between lessons, showing patience when congestion occurs. At break times, they are allowed in most areas of the school and the trust put in them by the teachers is justified. Those who remain inside talk sociably to each other in small groups or do their homework. Other pupils play football outside. There was no evidence of graffiti or vandalism in the school. During lessons, pupils behave well and this allows them to gain maximum benefit from the good quality teaching. Pupils report that bullying is not an issue at the school but, when an isolated incident occurs, it is effectively dealt with by teachers. There were no permanent exclusions in the

last school year and the school works hard to ensure all pupils continue to receive an education. The number of fixed term exclusions was similar to the national average for schools of this size. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is also in line with the national average.

- 17 A strength of the school is the excellent relationship between staff and pupils. The pupils respect their teachers and value both the academic and pastoral support the teachers provide. Pupils work well together and value the opinions of other pupils. When working together in practical lessons, for example science, they organise themselves well and work collaboratively. Pupils are very supportive of each other. For example, in a physical education lesson they deliberately ensured that everyone was fully involved in the activity.
- 18 All pupils in Year 10 take part in community service. They take their responsibilities very seriously and the school has received many letters of praise for pupils' response and contribution in the different placements. A large proportion of parents feel that the school helps their children to mature and show responsibility. Pupils demonstrate through their relationships, their behaviour around the school and their behaviour and response in lessons that they are developing a very good understanding of the effect of their actions on others and a very high respect for others.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 19 The quality of teaching is good and of a similarly high standard at both key stages. Ninety-seven per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better and thirty per cent of lessons were very good or excellent. Only four of the 135 lessons observed were judged to be unsatisfactory. This good teaching leads to good learning by the pupils.
- 20 Across the curriculum teaching and the subsequent learning were good in the majority of subjects at both key stages. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in art in Key Stage 3, in mathematics in Key Stage 4 and in music and in design and technology at both key stages. Teaching and learning were very good in physical education and religious education in Key Stage 4. Lessons were sampled across the range of non-National Curriculum subjects in Years 10 and 11; business education, classical studies, ASDAN supported self study course and the vocational course in brick laying. The teaching observed was at least satisfactory and most was good or better. Teaching and learning in the personal and social education course were satisfactory with more than half being good or better. Teaching was very good in classical studies.
- 21 The fundamental strengths within the teaching are the good subject knowledge that teachers have and their knowledge of the pupils they are teaching. This shows through in the good planning leading to lessons which are appropriate to the particular group of pupils, use teaching methods which include and support all the pupils, move at a good pace and which challenge pupils. This teaching motivates and interests pupils so that they concentrate and work hard, increasing their own knowledge and understanding, developing their skills and learn.
- 22 For example, in a lower Year 11 group in English studying *Of Mice and Men*, the teacher's knowledge resulted in the varied phrasing of questions according to the ability and confidence of the pupil who was asked. Good subject knowledge enabled the teacher of an upper Year 11 mathematics group to give a clear introduction to the idea of irrational numbers and another, in an average attaining group working on simplifying in algebra, to use good questioning to build successfully on pupils' responses. In a Year 10 history lesson, the teacher used the escalating price of an egg in Germany after the First World

War to bring to life a general point about inflation. Pupils' enthusiasm and involvement were encouraged as he was able to respond to their interested questions with similar background details.

- 23 Good progress was made by pupils in a Year 10 graphic products lesson where the strategy used, of dividing into short activities interspersed with demonstrations and explanations, allowed pupils to practise skills before moving on. In a mathematics lesson, giving pupils sitting in pairs different questions to answer ensured that each pupil was working individually and learning. In a Year 9 food study lesson, referring pupils to previously given information sheets to find an answer, rather than providing it, encouraged pupils to be more independent in their learning. Pupils' independence was also encouraged in a Year 11 physical education lesson where a pupil led his class through their warm up routine. Within this lesson the teacher's clear understanding of the way a skill could develop led to good progress, and the recognition of the contributions of all pupils, including those who were physically challenged, resulted in motivated and hard working pupils. In a Year 8 science lesson, the clear instructions allowed pupils to work quickly and safely. Requiring pupils to observe carefully and record a previously unknown and exciting reaction helped them to learn independence and accuracy, and to be open-minded.
- 24 In a Year 9 personal and social education lesson on relationships, the strategy used by the teacher engaged the pupils' interest and involvement through an impersonal, non-threatening exercise. Pupils were then ready and willing to work as hard and as openly when the transition to considering their own similarities, differences and reactions occurred. Pupils were clearly learning tolerance, respect for others and contributing to their own, personal development. Pupils' personal development was also supported in a Year 8 religious education class where they considered the poem *The Blind Men and the Elephant*. Teaching points were drawn from pupils' own response to the introduction of the poem. Pupils were well managed. The teacher succeeded in obtaining the pupils' full involvement by carefully encouraging and valuing their responses and then deepened their understanding through increasingly searching questions.
- 25 The most effective teaching happened in lessons where many of the separate features came together. For example, in a Year 9 German lesson, the target language was used from the start, requiring pupils to listen carefully and develop their understanding. New vocabulary on garments was introduced through good use of an overhead projector where the use of pictures only again required careful listening. Pupils learned more than twenty new words very quickly. Pegging the actual garments on a washing line maintained the pace of working, consolidated new vocabulary and practised previously learnt grammar. Encouragement and praise led to all pupils having confidence to respond and a concentration on careful pronunciation supported their language development. The challenge to pupils was maintained through the introduction of adjectives relying initially on pupils' careful listening to recognise the differences in ending and then expecting them to deduce the appropriate grammatical rule. The teaching maintained an excellent challenging pace, pupils were fully involved and applied themselves very well. The variety of tasks increased their knowledge and practised the skills of speaking, listening and writing in the foreign language.
- 26 Higher attaining pupils are generally well challenged and lower attaining pupils are well supported. For example, in a lower Year 8 English group who were writing a horror story, the teacher used the appropriate technical language throughout. Pupils' contributions were celebrated and guidance given on how they could make improvements. The good support for a pupil from the unit and for others on the special educational needs register allowed them to increase their knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of this type of

narrative. In both English and modern foreign languages, pilot work is being undertaken in teaching single gender groups as a strategy to raise boys' attainment. In observed instances, this arrangement was working well.

- 27 Pupils with special educational needs are clearly identified. Staff receive information from the special needs coordinator, including targets for each pupil's individual education programme. An experienced team of teachers and learning support assistants is used throughout the school to support learning in lessons. In withdrawal groups, for example for mathematics and literacy, good, focused teaching was observed, designed to improve the pupils' basic skills with a view to their return to mainstream classes. For example, at the end of a short lesson designed to improve the literacy skills of some new pupils, all six Year 8 pupils had learned to identify different topics in a written passage and explained to the class why they should be in separate paragraphs. Overall, in other teaching throughout the school, teachers and learning support assistants worked well to ensure pupils achieved good outcomes from their lessons and matched the progress made by their peers. In a small minority of observed lessons, teachers missed opportunities to adapt materials.
- 28 The higher quality teaching occurred across the subjects of the curriculum and within all year groups and groups of different attainment. A number of lessons, while satisfactory overall, nevertheless had some weaker features. In comparison with the many strengths, some teaching lacked inspiration or excitement, or provided little challenge. While the assessment of work gave pupils a clear understanding of the level at which they were attaining, it did not always provide sufficient guidance about what was necessary to improve this. The very small number of unsatisfactory lessons occurred in different subjects. They were all unsatisfactory because pupils did not make sufficient progress. This was due to a variety of reasons. In one lesson a new teacher had insufficient strategies to manage a minority of the pupils whose behaviour reduced the learning of the whole class. In a language lesson, teaching, predominantly in English and providing too little time for pupil response, made little contribution to the learning of the foreign language. In a music lesson, pupils were given little opportunity for any musical experience and, while they generally understood the task, their musical knowledge and understanding were not developed or strengthened.
- 29 Numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics and pupils have opportunities to practise them in other subjects. The school does not yet have a strategy to develop and contribute to these skills through the teaching within other subjects. Literacy skills are similarly well taught in English and, for some pupils, this is supported by the teaching within the support unit. There are examples of good contributions to the development of these skills within individual lessons, particularly in religious education and personal and social education. The current emphasis on key words is not consistently understood and practised. Wider reading skills are successfully developed through quiet reading during some tutor time. The skills to use information and communication technology are taught adequately through the ICT lessons but are not developed within the subjects of the curriculum because access to computers is severely limited.

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

- 30 Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are good. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in information and communication technology in Years 8 and 9 nor are the majority of subjects able to meet the most recent requirement that they should contribute to the development of pupils' ICT skills within a subject context.

- 31 Pupils in Years 8 and 9 study the full National Curriculum as well as drama, religious education and social education. They have opportunity to follow a classical studies course or a second modern foreign language. The curriculum has breadth but the aspects of control and measurement are missing from pupils' experience of information and communication technology. The amount of time allocated to each subject is broadly similar to that reported nationally. The length of a lesson, fifty minutes, means that increasing or decreasing the allocation to a subject by a single period represents a proportionally large change. The overall balance is successfully achieved by having different allocations in Year 8 and Year 9. As pupils move into Year 9, their drama course becomes an expressive arts course. Initially conceived as an important introduction to allow pupils to make an informed choice for Year 10, it is currently an ineffective rotation between separate music and drama experiences and rarely leads to a performing arts group in Year 10.
- 32 In Years 10 and 11 the school continues to offer a broad curriculum which meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils. Pupils study English, mathematics, science, ICT, a language and a design and technology choice, an humanities choice and two free options. Within this latter choice most pupils increase their science time to study dual award science. The choices include a number of link courses with two local further education colleges and allow many combinations. For example, pupils studying double science can also study two modern foreign languages and it is possible to study both art and music. Classical studies continues as an option choice. In addition to the link courses, the needs of pupils for whom a GCSE course is not appropriate are met by alternative certification courses within subjects and the option to follow an ASDAN supported self-study course. Business education is included as an examination option while business administration is offered as a certificated course. An overall appropriate time allocation is again achieved by differing allocations in Year 10 and Year 11. This year an attempt has been made to provide additional time in Year 10 for ICT by including it within the rotation of social education groups. A problem of continuity has arisen because these additional groupings are different from the main teaching groups.
- 33 Learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs are good. The school's focus is inclusion and most teaching is undertaken within the normal curriculum. The programmes for pupils withdrawn for small group work are designed to help them catch up and then return to mainstream lessons. The school operates an effective alternative curriculum for a small group of potentially disaffected pupils and successfully maintains an appropriate educational experience for most of them. Equality of access to appropriate and challenging learning opportunities is good and is additionally achieved both through the provision of effective classroom support, the piloting of single gender teaching groups in English and languages and in the careful setting arrangements in many subjects in all years.
- 34 The school does not meet its statutory requirement of providing a daily act of collective worship. Accommodation constraints prevent full assemblies from taking place. Those which take place are rarely acts of worship.
- 35 The school's existing literacy strategy is limited and is ineffective because of inconsistent practice across departments. A new draft policy has been developed and is a developmental priority. There is no whole school strategy for numeracy.
- 36 The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The curriculum is enriched by outside visits to museums and art galleries. Visits overseas include a German exchange programme and a ski trip to Austria. Pupils have the opportunity to complete the bronze

level of the Duke of Edinburgh Award and begin the silver level. School teams operate for all the major sports, with matches being played after school and on Saturday mornings. A range of clubs, mostly for sport and music is offered mainly at lunch-time. There is regular support for learning at the end of the school day in ICT, science and modern foreign languages. Support is also offered to Year 11 pupils in a range of subjects following their mock examinations.

- 37 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. The planned programme is shared between the form tutors and a team of specialists. It is clearly set out, it is progressive in nature and ensures that topics are sufficiently well covered at appropriate times, having regard to the maturity of the pupils. Drugs and sex education are both covered well and are taught by appropriate people. The course is well taught. Where outside speakers are used, they are integrated into the programme and are fully aware of where they fit into the scheme. The issue of bullying is approached in a variety of ways, with very strong emphasis on the fact that it should not be tolerated. Some work on citizenship is already in the planned programme and will provide a very good starting point for future work. The programme is enhanced by the module of community service which is followed, in rotation, by all pupils in Year 10. Links with the daily tutor period are made within the written scheme. Generally this time makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development although a few periods were seen when time was not used productively.
- 38 Provision for careers and vocational education is very good. Careers education starts in Year 9 as part of the PSHE programme and continues through Years 10 and 11. All Year 10 pupils engage in a week on work experience. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have access to a range of vocational courses at other institutions. The school organises an annual 16-plus conference attended by representatives of commerce, industry, the armed forces and some of the local colleges. Full and open guidance and advice is provided.
- 39 Pupils can progress to a wide variety of A Level and vocational course providers. The school operates a joint sixth form with a neighbouring secondary school and maintains strong links through the management team and through members of staff who teach there. Regular contact is maintained with the institutions who provide courses for Year 10 and 11 pupils and they are always represented at the conference.
- 40 Satisfactory links are maintained with the main schools from which pupils come and these contribute to the smooth transfer of pupils at the end of Year 7. Pupils from beyond the usual intake area are visited individually. These links are strong in the pastoral area and special educational needs concerns but under-developed in curriculum aspects.
- 41 The school has maintained the good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are still considerable strengths in the provision for moral and social development.
- 42 Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Teachers effectively plan and teach social and moral education in personal and social education lessons. Assemblies explore both moral and social issues, often relating to current affairs. Moral and social education are fundamental to the ethos of the school and are evident throughout the curriculum. Pupils raise money for three charities each year. During English and religious education lessons, pupils discuss moral issues in depth. In a drama lesson there was a very good exploration of the moral and social issues around bullying. While in religious education, pupils were faced with the moral dilemma of making decisions regarding the mercy killing of a loved one.

- 43 Teachers ensure pupils work together in many different groupings in order to support their social development. The community service and work experience in Year 10 develop pupils' confidence and give them very good opportunities to take responsibility. At present, there are limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school. The school has recognised this and has put in place a school service programme for Year 11 that will start this term. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the residential school visit also make a good contribution to pupils' social development. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to take decisions about issues concerning them. For example, the school provided basketball nets for pupils' use at break times. The school sports teams promote fair play and sportsmanship.
- 44 Cultural provision is satisfactory. Pupils explore their own culture through literature, drama and art. In religious education, they learn about different cultures through the major religious festivals. School visits make a strong contribution to this provision, with pupils visiting museums, art galleries and theatres.
- 45 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Religious education lessons offer pupils excellent opportunities to reflect on moral values and on different beliefs. For example, pupils consider their own values and beliefs in establishing a personal creed as a precursor to viewing the creeds of major religions. However, there are insufficient opportunities across the curriculum and in assemblies. In some English lessons, teachers missed opportunities for developing pupils' spirituality. Tutor group sessions make little contribution and are inconsistent in their use of a *thought for the week*.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 46 Child protection arrangements are very good and comply with locally agreed procedures. The names of the designated people are well known to teachers and relevant information and guidance are published in the staff handbook.
- 47 Health and safety procedures are good. All recommendations in a recent health and safety audit have either been dealt with or are in the process of being carried out. Some minor safety issues which came to light during the inspection have been brought to the attention of the headteacher and governors. The number of adults with first aid qualifications has increased to four. External contracts are maintained for the regular checking of the safety of electrical and physical education equipment.
- 48 Procedures for monitoring attendance are sound. Assistant heads of year monitor the registers weekly and check for patterns of absence. The educational social worker visits the school on a weekly basis and deals with persistent absence. Attendance has not been a problem in the past but recent figures show a rising trend as the school expands.
- 49 Form tutors and heads of year move through the school with their pupils and so they know them very well. The role of the form tutor has recently been enhanced so that all information about the pupils' academic progress and personal development is passed to them and then to the heads of year. This ensures that the form tutor has a rounded picture of a pupil's progress and is a co-ordinated approach throughout the school which ensures very effective monitoring of pupils' personal development. Heads of year maintain full and careful records for pupils in their year but not all are able to make effective use of computer technology in this process.

- 50 A very effective anti-bullying policy plays a major role in eliminating oppressive behaviour and bullying. Pupils and parents are confident that any reported instances of bullying will be investigated immediately and pupils are comfortable in reporting any such instances to an adult within the school. For example, during the inspection a girl reported to the office staff that her friend had been the subject of a bullying attack that morning and appropriate steps were taken immediately to investigate and resolve the matter. This aspect of care is very good.
- 51 The school employs a counsellor to work with individual pupils when necessary. This system is providing very good, targeted support and guidance. The school works hard to ensure that pupils experiencing difficulties of whatever nature are enabled to continue taking a full part in school life.
- 52 Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are good in most subjects, particularly in the special educational needs department, modern foreign languages, English and physical education in both key stages and in maths and science in Years 10 and 11. They are unsatisfactory in design and technology, history and music, in Years 8 and 9, where there is insufficient tracking of pupils' progress. All the assessment requirements of the National Curriculum at the end of Year 9 are satisfactorily met, and similarly the public examination requirements during Year 11. A comprehensive, school assessment policy provides a good framework within which departments devise subject-specific policies and strategies. The implementation of this assessment policy is now being effectively monitored through the subject line manager link with a member of the leadership team. Assessment data is now being regularly collated and used to inform form tutors and heads of year. This information is increasingly used by tutors and year heads to monitor each pupil's performance and progress in all areas of the curriculum. Underachievement, recognised after Year 10 examinations, leads to effective focused mentoring of pupils by form tutors and other senior teachers.
- 53 Heads of subject maintain records of the attainment and progress of all pupils. They make good use of this information in order to place pupils into sets according to their previous attainment and to agree subject specific targets with individual pupils. In Years 10 and 11, form tutors and year heads use assessment data to discuss and agree examination targets with all pupils. These targets are then shared with parents. The school does not have a full set of data for the oldest pupils because the collection and collation did not begin four years ago. However the system is now evolving rapidly and the use of computers for this is allowing much more detailed analysis to be carried out. There is good potential for continued development of this process.
- 54 The special education needs coordinator maintains a comprehensive record of pupils with identified need. While information on pupils with special educational needs is disseminated to teachers, pupils carry with them in their planners details of their individual education programmes, including their targets. These are reviewed regularly and in some cases, for example mathematics, very precise targets are set to fit in with progression in the curriculum. Occasionally, targets for pupils whose basic skills need to be improved are phrased in language more appropriate for adults. Ensuring targets are in language easily understood by pupils should become part of the review process. Teachers and learning support assistants value and support pupils in their social as well as educational needs. Their skill in this area being demonstrated, for example, by the success of the Inclusion Programme, and the use of the special educational needs base by pupils outside planned curriculum time. Extensive links are maintained with outside agencies and the local authority, for example the Norfolk Traveller Education Service, whose team of advisory teachers has a successful record of working to support pupils in the school. As previously,

the school is currently looking forward to providing education for children from the travelling Moscow State Circus when it visits the area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 55 Overall the school works satisfactorily with parents but the partnership is not as strong as was reported in the last inspection.
- 56 Parents are generally supportive of the school. The majority feel that the school has high expectations for their children and that there is good quality teaching, resulting in their children making good progress. The inspection team supports these views. The school provides parents with good information about the curriculum through the upper and lower school curriculum booklets. In addition, there are parents' meetings to help pupils choose their options for Years 10 and 11. Newsletters are regular and provide up to date information about events in the school.
- 57 The school has a good relationship with parents. Parents are happy to bring any concerns to the school. The parents' involvement in their children's education is satisfactory. There is a good home-school contract that emphasises the importance of teachers, parents and pupils working together to the same goals. Parents encourage homework and sign the student planner weekly to show they know what homework the teachers have set. They support sporting events and the drama and music productions staged by the school. In addition, the Friends Association raises a significant amount of money that the school uses to help run the school minibuses and purchase additional resources for departments.
- 58 The special educational needs department maintains good relationships and communication with parents. This contact is valuable when pupils' annual reviews take place. There are good links between the teachers in the unit and the parents of the pupils involved.
- 59 A significant minority of parents feel that the school does not keep them well informed about pupils' progress nor does the school work sufficiently closely with them. These two expressions of concern are related. A decision was made two years ago to change the format of the annual progress report to parents and the operation of the subsequent parents' evenings. A survey of the very large majority of parents attending the first of these evenings was overwhelmingly supportive of the change. A questionnaire, following a similar event a year later, was much less positive. Parents expressed concern that they had been unable to meet subject teachers, only form tutors. Parents have the opportunity to meet subject teachers at a monthly clinic but none has taken the opportunity. Additionally the school introduced more choices of technology courses in Years 10 and 11 in response to parental and governor opinion. The school does seek to respond to parents' expression both of support and concern and is in the process of reviewing consultation arrangements.
- 60 The information that the school provides for parents prior to the consultation evening does not meet statutory requirements. While providing parents with some useful information about their children's responses, it does not report the progress being made in each subject or provide an overall assessment. The target sheets which are shared with parents provide information about the current level of attainment and the level the pupil might reasonably reach. Neither help parents to identify potential problems or how they might support or encourage their child.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 61 The head implements a worthwhile philosophy founded on providing pupils with a secure school in which each pupil can flourish as an individual. He is dedicated to educating the whole person within a supportive environment, and to fostering pupils' academic development by providing suitable courses and setting achievable goals. Pupils' excellent attitudes provide a strong endorsement of the effectiveness of the head's vision for the school's ethos.
- 62 Following reorganisation of the senior management team a year ago, senior staff now have detailed job descriptions and a clear understanding of their roles in developing the school. The school has not been sufficiently focused on raising pupils' attainment in the recent past, but has made good progress towards establishing appropriate systems for improving standards in the near future. A thorough analysis of recent examination results has been carried out to monitor pupils' achievement and to provide valuable information for use in predicting future attainment and setting challenging targets.
- 63 After thorough consultation with staff, a new system for the performance management of teachers has gained their full support and all teachers have now followed these very good procedures for the first time. Appropriate training has taken place to enable staff to identify areas for development and to secure suitable training for achieving their intended professional development. At this early stage, performance management is having a good impact on the effectiveness of teaching.
- 64 Heads of department lead and develop their subjects well. Leadership and management in religious education are excellent and very good in modern foreign languages and physical education. New heads of department have taken up their posts this term in history, music and information and communication technology. In all three subjects there has been instability for more than a year. Routine monitoring of teaching by heads of department has not been used consistently across the school as a means of raising standards of teaching and learning. Some departments, including English, art, physical education and religious education, however, carry out effective and purposeful monitoring. Departmental planning is inconsistent in quality, but as a result of recently improved procedures for line management, a greater consistency of approach is being introduced, and departmental planning is more closely reflecting whole-school priorities.
- 65 The special educational needs coordinator has considerable experience and expertise. She has worked successfully on new programmes such as Inclusion and Catch Up literacy. The team of teachers and learning support assistants is managed well. The senior learning support assistant has benefited from additional training and is now in a position to support and advise the others in the team.
- 66 Governors carry out their statutory duties conscientiously. They are well informed about school developments through the work of an appropriate range of committees. Staff make occasional presentations to inform the governors of new developments, for example in teaching literacy. Individual governors are linked with subject departments but this does not extend to classroom monitoring. Governors have a detailed schedule for monitoring many aspects of the school's management and provision. However, they rightly feel that their role in evaluating their findings is under-developed. Governors challenge and influence the draft school development plan. A governor is subsequently linked with each initiative to monitor its development. Governors play an effective role in planning the school's future development. Overall, their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is satisfactory.

- 67 The school's plans for development are appropriate but timescales for implementing initiatives, such as the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are too protracted. The development of the required use of computers throughout the curriculum is overdue. Nevertheless, teachers are strongly committed to the further development of the school. Their unanimity of purpose was clear in the positive approach of heads of department, in a meeting, in which they considered extending the use of performance data to predict pupils' performance and to set targets. The school has a good capacity for further development.
- 68 The school has made good provision to ensure equality of opportunity and has been active in tackling areas of weakness. For example, information on pupil performance has highlighted a gap between the achievements of boys and girls that is wider than the average. In order to address this, and aware of the need to adopt different teaching and learning styles, some heads of department have grouped boys and girls separately. Once the school is able to make greater use of the data it receives from linked schools, alongside the assessment information leading up to and at the end of Year 9, it will be in a better position to analyse its own strengths and weaknesses and to monitor its effectiveness in ensuring all pupils achieve their potential. There are more effective strategies for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs. They are generally well provided for both in terms of the accessibility of the building and through a modified curriculum. Personnel have been appropriately deployed to support their educational and social needs.
- 69 A teacher has been appointed with specific responsibilities for overseeing the implementation of the school policy on social inclusion. This aspect of the school is working well and can point to notable successes. A number of pupils, who in previous years would have been excluded from school have been withdrawn for short periods and then successfully reintroduced into lessons having spent time in a special unit. Their progress is routinely checked and monitored.
- 70 Specific grants are used appropriately. Governors monitor this process in order to ensure that the outcomes of the expenditure match the objectives of the particular initiative, for example the specific learning difficulties unit.
- 71 The school has adopted the principles of securing best value for money. Benchmarks are used increasingly to facilitate comparison. Governors require that requests for funding are justified and apply their financial expertise to the scrutiny of tenders.
- 72 Changes over the past year have increased the effective use of the new technology for administrative purposes. Lessons in the lower school ensure that pupils have the skills necessary to use information and communication technology in their learning. However the overall provision is unsatisfactory as there are insufficient opportunities for the application of these skills in the context of subject teaching. Few heads of subject or year heads have unrestricted access to computers for storing information.
- 73 The level of staffing is good. There is an appropriate match of qualified teachers to their curriculum responsibilities, and non-teaching staff to the various demands of the school and its curriculum. A comparative weakness is in physical education where a timetabling necessity results in a significant minority of lessons being taught by willing, but non-specialist teachers.
- 74 The school has very good arrangements in place for the induction of newly qualified teachers and other staff new to the school. It offers a very good level of subject guidance

and support, complemented by the school's high standard of provision for professional development.

- 75 The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The expansion of the school has stretched the accommodation which was already tight at the time of the last inspection. The number of mobile classrooms has increased from eight to sixteen. The building programme which is now underway will provide a new science laboratory, computer network room and an extended sports hall but will make limited impact upon the amount of temporary accommodation.
- 76 The buildings themselves, and the surrounding grounds, are well maintained and include some good features. The mathematics teaching rooms are all located close to each other and this helps promote effective departmental working. The physical education department makes good use of the astroturf pitch, gymnasium, sports hall and other outdoor facilities.
- 77 However, there are too many aspects which are unsatisfactory, even though teachers work hard to minimise the impact on pupils learning. A tenth of science lessons are taught in classrooms rather than in laboratories. Mobile classrooms are cramped and often have inadequate facilities for specialist teaching. For example, textiles lessons are taught with no access to running water. Changing facilities in physical education are too small for the number of pupils who have to use them and they are not being increased in the new build. The English and geography departments have to teach in rooms dispersed about the site and staff have constantly to move resources and equipment between rooms. There is no specialist equipment in the second music room and several departments have insufficient office and storage space.
- 78 The overall level of resources in the school is satisfactory. Some departments, such as special educational needs and modern foreign languages, make very effective use of a good range of resources to ensure pupils make good progress. Most departments have sufficient resources to teach the National Curriculum. The library is small but provides an interesting and welcoming environment, with a satisfactory number and range of books.
- 79 The weakest aspect of the school's resources is the number of computers available for pupils to use. The computer to pupil ratio is half the national average at 1:16. Within some departments, such as design and technology, music and art, the lack of ICT resources is hindering curriculum development and few subjects are able to meet statutory requirements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80 To improve standards and the quality of education further, the governors and school should maintain the current developments and:

- (1) ensure that the school development plan has a very clear focus on the raising of standards. The strategies to achieve this should be clearly set out and should be supported by the planned development in subject areas
(*Paras:3,5,8,62*)
- (2) meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology. This will require modification of the Years 8 and 9 curriculum and much greater access to computers by subject departments
(*Paras:30,32,72,102,112,119,137,138,141,148,153,160,162,174,177,195*)
- (3) improve the provision for history, information and communication technology and music
(*Paras:9,13,29,30,67,72,79,153,156,157,159,160,161,162,176,177,178,181*)
- (4) develop and implement strategies for the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the subjects of the curriculum
(*Paras:11,12,29,35,104,112,126*)
- (5) ensure that the annual reporting to parents meets the statutory requirements to report the subject and general progress made by the pupil
(*Paras:60*)
- (6) work with the LEA to bring about improvement in the accommodation, both of a more permanent and of a specialist nature, which would be of benefit to the pupils and their achievement.
(*Paras:75,77,102,123,181,190,198*)

In addition, the governors and school should consider addressing the following less important, but significant, issues in their action plan: current non-compliance in collective worship (*para 34*); monitor and address aspects of consistency across all teachers (*paras: 27,28,37,52,64,100,102,103,120,121,123,148,156,191*); increase opportunities for spiritual development (*para 45*); the expressive arts course in Year 9 (*para 31*); greater curriculum links with middle schools (*para 40*); classroom support in religious education (*para 196*).

THE SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES UNIT

81 The unit makes good provision for its pupils. It is one of 4 specific learning difficulties units (SpeLD) in the county and is funded by Norfolk LEA. The County policy sets out clear criteria for entry into the units. All pupils have statements of need for specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). The resource is provided to enable these pupils to access the main school curriculum through a combination of specialist and integrated provision. The unit complies with the County policy except for the exit strategies that identify when pupils can work independently in main school lessons without the need of specialist support; these need more detail.

- 82 The unit leader is part of the middle management team and has two, soon to be three, learning support assistants. There are currently thirteen pupils, all boys, in the unit. These pupils are in main school lessons for the majority of the time with specialist support provided wherever possible and especially for the lessons which have a high literacy content. Pupils are withdrawn for small groups sessions in the unit for several lessons a week.
- 83 The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are very good. The unit leader's planning is thorough. Careful records are kept on a weekly, sometimes daily, basis of all aspects of the pupils' progress in subject areas, behaviour, confidence and self esteem. A notebook for subject teachers' comments and a simple tick sheet that records homework, attendance, effort, organisation and the level of behaviour are maintained. The staff in the unit meet weekly to discuss pupils' progress and set new individual learning targets. The classroom use of the learning support assistants is targeted to those subjects with a high literacy content.
- 84 Annual reviews are good. They take place at the appropriate time. The subsequent reports include the views of parents, pupils and subject and unit staff. Pupils are deliberately involved in the monitoring of their own progress through regular discussion and by encouraging them to set their own targets in areas such as the organisation of work, time allocation for subject homework and standards of behaviour. This encourages them to take some responsibility for their own education. The individual education plans (IEP)s are good. They are well focused and relevant to pupils' specific learning difficulties and show a step by step progression to meet the appropriately set learning targets
- 85 In the small group sessions pupils in Years 8 and 9 develop strategies to improve competence in oral and written literacy. Pupils make good progress from their levels of attainment on entry. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to make good progress in the withdrawal sessions as they build on the strategies acquired previously. In addition, they work on subject assignments and practise examination techniques.
- 86 In main school lessons the evidence obtained from observation and their written work show that pupils make good progress. They play a full part in tasks and discussions especially when support staff are present. Progress in pupils' learning is enhanced by good working relationships between unit staff, pupils, subject teachers and the special educational needs (SEN) department. In one subject area, when support staff are not present and with SEN pupils in the class, progress is occasionally impeded because of the lack of individual attention
- 87 The quality of teaching in the withdrawal sessions is good. Lessons are thoroughly planned and suitable learning targets set. The pace is good and lessons flow without interruption. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 work independently. All pupils use ICT regularly and some use lap top computers in the main lessons. One pupil used a tape recorder to prepare a short talk to present in his main class lesson. This helped with the structure, encouraged clear speaking with expression and helped his awareness of sentence construction. Most pupils word process their work and write for a variety of purposes, including letters, diaries and narrative.
- 88 Teaching is good in the main school lessons. Subject teachers are aware of the nature of specific difficulties, liaise with support staff and use the IEPs for planning different tasks or levels of work. For example, one teacher highlighted the key areas of a text to enable the

pupil to establish the main points, whilst another used diagrams and pictures instead of text to convey information.

- 89 The unit pupils follow the main school curriculum and the withdrawal sessions complement the work in subject areas. The unit leader is very effective in promoting with pupils, parents and staff, an understanding of the difficulties that people with specific learning difficulties may experience. The unit pupils are fully integrated into school life. They are entered for the end of Year 9 tests and no pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum. Most are entered for the GCSE examinations and alternative certification is available.
- 90 The unit is very well led and effectively managed. It is based in a mobile classroom attractively furnished and decorated. The resources are well organised and pupils have ready access to their own work. Displays are of high quality with eye-catching pictures and good examples of pupils' work, sometimes word processed.

COMMUNITY LINKS

- 91 The school has good links with the local community. There are some good and innovative links that are seldom found in other schools but fewer that directly contribute to the subject curriculum within school.
- 92 Pupils in Year 10 take part in community service. The school arranges placements at local schools, playgroups, nurseries, with senior citizens and at a centre for young adults with severe learning difficulties. This service is very effective in promoting pupils' personal skills. Letters from these placements show that pupils have contributed well to the local community and that pupils take their responsibilities very seriously.
- 93 The school has good links with local colleges and through these has provided vocational educational courses for groups of pupils in Years 10 and 11. These courses have made an excellent contribution to these pupils' confidence and personal development. It has also encouraged many of them to want to go into further education when they leave school.
- 94 The Saturday music school, run by the school, demonstrates a commitment, and makes a good contribution, to the life of the local community. It offers music lessons for children in the area and the opportunity for them to learn to play an instrument, to play in ensembles and to perform in public. Involvement in the music school makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and to their confidence. It complements their school experience.
- 95 The school works with the parish council and local hockey club in the joint management of the adjacent astroturf pitch. This is to the common benefit of the school and local organisations.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	135
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	65

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	31	48	43	4	0	0
Percentage	7	23	35	32	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y8 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	922
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	49

Special educational needs	Y8 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	55
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	137

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	107	114	221

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	67	85	79
	Girls	92	83	67
	Total	159	168	146
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	72 (58)	76 (79)	66 (67)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	38 (25)	49 (54)	30 (25)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	64	89	87
	Girls	69	87	82
	Total	133	176	169
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	60 (57)	80 (83)	77 (75)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (27)	50 (51)	38 (37)
	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 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	92	87	179

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	47	82	89
	Girls	57	81	84
	Total	104	163	173
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	58 (47)	91 (93)	97 (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	42 (40)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	912
Any other minority ethnic group	6

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y8 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	55.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.2

Education support staff: Y8 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	374

Deployment of teachers: Y8 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.7
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Average teaching group size: Y8 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21
Key Stage 4	19.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	17.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	79	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	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	2289642
Total expenditure	2232670
Expenditure per pupil	2684
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	56972

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	895
Number of questionnaires returned	154

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	56	9	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	37	54	5	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	10	62	14	5	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	55	18	8	3
The teaching is good.	23	67	5	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	51	26	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	47	11	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	49	4	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	16	48	28	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	24	59	5	5	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	59	6	4	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	45	13	3	14

Other issues raised by parents

Letters and comments on questionnaires were few and generally raised individual comments and concerns. Two letters and six comments said how good the school was. One letter and five comments expressed some concern over the new reporting arrangements.

The parents' meeting was attended by 24 parents. The meeting was supportive of what was agreed was a good school. Individual parents expressed individual concerns. The changes in reporting and consultation raised greatest concern by some parents although others expressed satisfaction. Relationships were felt to be a

strength as was the care for pupils. Parents at the meeting felt behaviour was good and that bullying was not an issue as they were confident that occurrences would be dealt with firmly and effectively.

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**

Strengths

- Good teaching leading to good achievement, and examination results which are consistently above national average
- Tasks, including homework, that are challenging to pupils of all ability levels.
- Teachers manage and organise classes well.
- Very good relationships between teachers, teachers and pupils, and amongst the pupils. There is a good atmosphere for learning to take place in.

Areas for improvement

- Some teaching methods which are too predictable, lacklustre, or teacher-led. As a result pupils have too few opportunities to be involved in class discussion.
- Assessment practices and the scope and quality of marking, which are too variable.
- The time allocated to drama in Year 9 and the inconsistency of drama accommodation, which inhibit pupils' achievement.

- 96 Results in the 2000 national tests at the end of Year 9 were above national average and in line with those achieved in similar schools. Unconfirmed results in 2001 show further improvement. In recent years English results have been better than those in science, but not as good as those in mathematics. Girls outperformed boys by more than is the case nationally. Teacher assessments were accurate. The attainment of the current pupils in Year 9 is above average. This represents good achievement by pupils who were at the national average on intake.
- 97 English GCSE results in 2000 were well above average, and pupils tended to do comparatively better in English language and literature than in the other subjects they studied. The gap between boys' and girls' performance matched that nationally and both did better in literature, where over half gained grades A*-B, than in language. There has been a three year trend of improvement in results. Unconfirmed results show a drop in 2001, but with results in both subjects remaining above previous national averages. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 11 is above national average and their achievement is good as they maintain their higher standards. A small proportion of pupils take GCSE drama. There was no entry in 2000, but unconfirmed 2001 results are close to the previous national average.
- 98 Most pupils are able to write extended lively English, a particular feature being the quality and appropriateness of vocabulary used. All pupils learn how to analyse character and relationship, as evidenced by the ability of a Year 11 boys' class to understand how the interplay of characters created dramatic conflict and interest in *The Long, the Short, and the Tall*. A strength in all year groups is the confidence and ability which pupils display when asked to read text, which they do well. A relative weakness seen in the work of a number of pupils was in writing a detailed factual report or, prior to Year 11, a sustained and well reasoned statement of opinion. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills, but the former are under-used. Teachers do not give them enough experience of brisk, focused, demanding class discussion where they are expected to explain, explore and debate ideas in depth. In drama, pupils show good skills in working together and discussing in groups how best to tackle the work they are given. They use drama conventions well. But

only the more able are confident enough to perform without self-consciousness by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11 pupils are very effective in groups, assessing individual strengths quickly and accepting tasks appropriately. Whilst most are good at evaluating their own work and that of their peers, pupils of average attainment spend too long on minutiae and tend to act to stereotype.

- 99 The progress which pupils make is good, particularly in the case of boys on GCSE courses. In contrast, the stress on creative writing in Years 8 and 9 and the lack of detail and specific targets in some marking are factors inhibiting the progress of some boys. The stress on quality literature in Years 10 and 11 and the technical terms and techniques needed to analyse it effectively, leads to good achievement by all pupils, including some lower attaining pupils who are able to gain very creditable GCSE grades in the English literature exam. Progress in lessons during the inspection was good in both key stages, because pupils appreciated the care which teachers had given to preparing work which was demanding yet accessible. Setting and the provision of some single sex groups enabled this to be done with precision. One Year 11 class made very good progress in understanding the precise nature of Macbeth's early reputation in the play by working in pairs on a 'jigsaw' of some key speeches. Lower attaining pupils, including some with special needs, gained good insights into character and atmosphere in *Of Mice and Men* because the teacher varied the phrasing of questions according to the ability and confidence of the pupil who was asked. A top set Year 10 class made very good progress in understanding the craft and techniques used by writers because the teacher insisted on technical vocabulary being used and quotations given. He also encouraged pupils to respond to the language by visualising what was described and expressing their responses.
- 100 Teaching is good in both key stages. A stress on basic skills, technical correctness and precise vocabulary teaches pupils techniques and approaches which enable them to approach examinations with confidence. In most lessons the speed and quality of learning are good because teachers plan challenging work, and manage classes in such a way that pupils work hard and productively. They especially benefit from homework tasks which are carefully designed to follow up previous work, or prepare for future work. Pupils see the value of this, and their knowledge and understanding of English improve because of the efforts which they make. The amount and depth of learning deteriorate when teachers speak for too long, spend too much time in restricted whole class discussion, or use methods which do not engage attention sufficiently. Where this happens too regularly, there is the potential for pupils to underachieve because they are insufficiently engaged in thinking about their work. An effective technique used by teachers to counter this is the use of their own knowledge of language and literature to enliven lessons and provide new insights for pupils. Thus allusions to the Bible and mythology took place in literature lessons, and to the texture and imagery of vocabulary in the study of language. In a particularly good GCSE lesson studying a play on the theme of war, the teacher increased the pace and scope of pupils' learning by asking questions which enabled them to share their own knowledge of army ranks, jargon, and attitudes during the Second World War. Drama teaching is good. Circle, group and whole class methods are well managed and there is an effective balance between generating enthusiasm and insisting on disciplined routines.
- 101 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in all years. Behaviour is good; relationships very good. Pupils' enthusiasm for English is seen in their willingness to listen and follow instruction, and the quantity and quality of their written work. The same can also be the case in practical drama. A mixed ability Year 8 class made excellent progress because they responded very well to the teacher's brisk but entertaining setting up of a lesson on bullying

and intimidation. In a number of lessons pupils were too receptive and unquestioning, a minority becoming quietly inattentive. On occasion, some pupils, including more able ones, can become involved in subtle inattention, which leads them to a superficial understanding of the task in hand.

- 102 Poor access to equipment means that the department cannot fulfil its responsibilities for teaching information and communication technology skills. Some display work and occasional pieces of GCSE coursework apart, pupils are not able to learn how to edit and manipulate text, nor to use computers in their study of media and its techniques. This partly explains why the study of media in Years 8 and 9 is limited. The dispersed nature of the accommodation means that teachers constantly need to move resources from room to room. Pupils' drama skills, too, are underdeveloped at Key Stage 3 because too little time is available in Year 9 to build on the work done in Year 8, and to build towards the GCSE course. The situation is made worse because not all groups can use the drama studio, which at various times of the year is used for other purposes. Assessment of pupils' standards in English is regular, accurate, and well recorded. This helps teachers and pupils to review progress and see potential. A weakness in the system is that most teachers use their own systems so that comparison is difficult and the best practice is not shared.
- 103 There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Results, especially those gained by boys at GCSE, have improved. A philosophy of inclusion has resulted in demanding work being well matched to pupils' abilities. Assessment is of better quality and the monitoring of teaching and evaluating pupils' progress are regularly undertaken. Good and intelligent leadership has created a committed, positive and harmonious department which is determined to raise standards further. Given more consistency in assessment practices and some teaching methods, and more rigorous monitoring of marking, the department has the capacity for further future improvement.
- 104 On intake, pupils have literacy skills which are good for their ability. Whilst the teaching of literacy skills in English lessons and for pupils in the support unit is good, the strategies for encouraging the use and development of literacy skills across the school are unsatisfactory. Literacy has figured in several development plans, but progress has been slow and inconsistent because the initiative has had too low a priority, and planning has been laborious. The current emphasis on 'key words' and their spelling is not understood by all teacher and pupils, and the school has no means of checking what is taking place in departments. Practice is haphazard. A draft policy has now been prepared and the school development plan accords it 'high priority for implementation'. There is very good work in religious education and personal and social education.
- 105 In answer to a criticism in the previous report, the school is encouraging wider reading by having quiet reading sessions in spare registration time. This is successful. The library is satisfactory in terms of its size and the number of books. The newly-appointed librarian has withdrawn outdated stock and is aware that some subject sections are inadequate whilst others would benefit from an injection of more attractive books. She assists English teachers in giving valuable induction lessons to all Year 8 classes. Access to the library, and the space for use within it, are restricted by the number of timetabled lessons which take place using the computers located within it.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards in end of Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations are above national averages
- Teaching is good overall and as a result pupils learn effectively
- Relationships are very good
- The department is well managed and there is a shared commitment to raising standards

Areas for improvement

- Some pupils at the start of Years 8 and 10 would learn more effectively if there was better continuity and progression in their learning experiences
- Pupils, especially in Years 8 and 9, would benefit from the implementation of the key ideas from the National Numeracy Strategy

- 106 Results in mathematics, in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000, were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. They have remained steady over the last three years while nationally there has been an upward trend. Pupils' performance in mathematics was similar to that in English and better than in science. On average over the last three years, results have been above the national average and boys have sometimes performed better than girls as in 2000. Unconfirmed results for 2001 indicate an improvement.
- 107 The evidence of the pupils' work and the lessons observed showed that the standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is above the national average. Pupils are strongest in algebra where they manipulate algebraic expressions, use formulae and where higher attaining pupils solve simultaneous equations. Pupils' investigative skills are less well-developed. When pupils enter the school in Year 8, the standards they have attained in mathematics are broadly in line with the national average. In relation to these prior levels of attainment, pupils' achievement is good.
- 108 GCSE results in mathematics in 2000 were above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C at GCSE has shown a slight downward trend over time but remained steady in 2000. The proportion gaining at least grade G was very high. Pupils made relatively better progress in mathematics than in their other subjects. Results for boys and girls were similar overall and broadly in line with the national average but girls outperformed boys in terms of A*- C grades. Unconfirmed results for 2001 are broadly in line with those for 2000.
- 109 The standards of work of pupils currently in Year 11 are above the national expectation. Pupils do best in algebra. They solve equations of increasing levels of difficulty, with the most able solving quadratic equations by use of a formula. They routinely use formulae, for example, when finding the volume of a solid of uniform cross-section. Most pupils develop their investigation skills well through extended tasks. Pupils apply written routines and standard procedures accurately and with understanding. Some lower attaining pupils are weak in their knowledge of tables and other basic number skills. When compared with their attainment at the beginning of the key stage, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- 110 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. For example, pupils with specific learning difficulties are effectively supported and enabled to learn as in a Year 11 lesson on fractions and a Year 9 lesson on reflection. The setting arrangements for mathematics in Years 9 to 11 contribute to the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs or very high ability.
- 111 Overall, the teaching observed was good. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. This enables them to give clear explanations as in a Year 11 lesson for high attaining pupils lesson on irrational numbers and enables effective learning to take place. It also enables

teachers to use question and answer appropriately as in a Year 11 for average attaining pupils on simplifying in algebra where the teacher was able to build on pupils' responses and thereby increase their understanding. Most teachers set a brisk pace as in Year 8 lessons where pupils were given a time limit within which to complete their investigation. This helped them to remain focused and to learn effectively. Overall planning is a strength. Suitably motivating activities such as a loops activity in a Year 10 lesson for low attaining pupils increase motivation and aid learning. The weakness observed was mainly in some aspects of planning. For example, planning for continuity and progression in learning experiences for pupils in Years 8 and 10 does not always take sufficient account of their previous learning experiences. Learning is less effective where the learning objectives are not made clear and planning is in terms of activities to be carried out. As a result of the good teaching, pupils' learning is also good.

- 112 Pupils are mostly well-behaved, well-motivated, remain on task and sustain concentration. They have good opportunities to develop their numeracy skills. A focus on key words in mathematics contributes to the development of their literacy skills. Pupils sometimes use graphic calculators but have limited opportunities to use computers in their mathematics lessons.
- 113 Attitudes and behaviour are good overall. The quality of relationships is a particular strength. Relationships are very good. Pupils collaborate well in groups, for example, when working on tasks related to number sequences in Year 8. They take pride in their work and this shows in the high standard of presentation of their written work.
- 114 Leadership and management of the department are good with a clear focus on raising standards. Staff collaborate well, aided by the close proximity of the classrooms, and share a commitment to improvement of the subject. Less experienced staff are well supported.
- 115 The department's improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The quality of teaching improved and the subject is now taught by specialist teachers.
- 116 Standards of numeracy are good. Pupils learn and develop their numeracy skills in their mathematics lessons. They recall number facts and manipulate fractions, percentages and decimals. They give results to a required degree of accuracy and use correct mathematical vocabulary. Number skills, including knowledge of tables, are underdeveloped in lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11. There is no whole school numeracy strategy. Pupils have opportunities to represent data in other subjects such as geography, modern foreign languages, English and food technology. However, overall they have limited opportunities to develop and practise the skills learnt in their mathematics lessons in different subjects across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **satisfactory**

Strengths

- Relationships are good
- Lessons are well prepared and teachers' have a good knowledge of their subject
- There is a wide range of subject expertise within the department

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring that the use of worksheets does not reduce challenge to the higher attaining pupils

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further reducing the variability in marking• Accommodation to allow all lessons to be taught in specialist rooms |
|---|

- 117 Results, in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000, were in line with the national average but well below average when compared to similar schools. For the last three years the results have been above the national average but slowly falling. Boys' results in the 2000 tests were a little better than those for girls, as they have been when averaged over the last three years. The unconfirmed 2001 results indicate a very significant increase. The standards of pupils currently in Year 9 are above national expectations. Results in the 2000 GCSE examinations were significantly above the national average. Boys' results were better than girls' for the double award but girls' results better than boys' for the single award. The boys' results at double award and the girls' at single award were both significantly better than the national average. The unconfirmed results for 2001 indicate an increase in the double award and decrease in the single award. At the same time a greater proportion of pupils is taking the double award. The standards of work of the pupils in the current Year 11 is at national expectations.
- 118 Higher attaining pupils in the current Year 9 are working well above national expectations. They show a good knowledge of scientific terminology, draw straight-line graphs to a good standard and understand that a graph indicates a relationship between the quantities being plotted. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, cooperate well in practical sessions, work safely and carefully and understand the meaning of a 'fair test'. In Year 11, higher attaining pupils understand the need to make practical results more reliable by averaging several readings and to repeat experimental work to ensure the accuracy of doubtful values. Much of their work is neat, diagrams are drawn with care and they have a good understanding of a wide variety of scientific topics. Many lower attaining pupils produce work that is neat and carefully done but graphs are generally a weakness with frequent errors in choosing suitable scales, plotting points correctly or drawing the graph line. Pupils with special educational needs and others working with them make good progress in practical sessions where they have support from a learning support assistant.
- 119 Pupils get regular opportunities to practise their skills in numeracy, for example when choosing suitable graph scales to fit a range of experimental results, but little use is made of information and communication technology in science lessons. There is almost no equipment available for the department's use and pupils do not have the opportunity to use data logging or to use a computer as a source of supplementary information in the laboratories. There is only limited evidence of pupils using word processing to present homework or assignments.
- 120 Overall, pupils make good progress in science throughout their four years in the school. Their practical skills are poorly developed when they arrive at the school, but by Year 11 most pupils show good manipulative and observational skills, and work safely and methodically. Some lower attaining pupils, and some with special educational needs, find measuring instruments difficult to use or read and need assistance. Progress in lessons is at least satisfactory and often good. Where teaching is brisk and interesting pupils learn quickly and make good progress. An over-reliance on work sheets, while providing structure for the lower attaining pupils to learn, at times hinders the progress of the more able as they are insufficiently challenged.
- 121 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They interact well socially amongst themselves and with their teachers in a mature and relaxed fashion so that the atmosphere in classrooms is quiet and businesslike. Pupils are generally keen to answer their teacher's questions.

- 122 Teaching is good. All teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. This allows them to plan lessons carefully so that pupils experience a range of activities with all necessary resources ready in advance. Pupils quickly get into the lessons, enjoy their work and the best use is made of the time available. Questioning is generally used well to draw out pupils' developing knowledge and understanding and to move them forward. Explanations and instructions are clear. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to provide tasks and work which are well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Occasionally teachers miss opportunities to involve pupils of a range of abilities by asking questions of a whole class instead of targeting individuals. Relationships within the classroom are good and this gives pupils the confidence to answer questions without fear of being wrong and to ask questions to clarify their understanding. Lessons move at a brisk pace as teachers manage their classes well and set tight time limits for the completion of tasks. Pupils work hard and with care. They work cooperatively in small groups when carrying out practical work and discuss well when, for example, clarifying their ideas about covalent bonding. The good teaching leads to good learning by the pupils. A significant number of lessons take place in classrooms instead of laboratories and teachers have to plan lessons accordingly. Although teachers cope quite well and plan activities which do not need laboratory facilities it is not always possible to show demonstrations, charts or displays to the best advantage and pupils' progress is slower than it might have been.
- 123 The department is well managed. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. GCSE results have improved. There is little evidence of a difference in performance between boys and girls either in test scores or in the classroom. The work of teachers within the department is now monitored more closely. There is still no improvement in the information communication technology provision in the department. Since the previous inspection the school has grown in size and there is now insufficient laboratory space to accommodate all science lessons. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory although it remains variable. The best marking provides helpful comments and suggestions on what pupils need to do in order to improve their work but some is cursory and teacher comments give little indication on how pupils could improve.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

Strengths

- Significant improvement in GCSE results - the percentage of pupils attaining the higher grades was well above the national average in 2000
- Attainment of boys has significantly improved over recent years
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with particular strengths in Years 10 and 11, and the management of pupils in all years is very good
- Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn and their behaviour is very good
- Management is good and has been active in identifying weaknesses and taking steps to tackle them

Areas for improvement

- Resources are inadequate to meet fully the requirements of the National Curriculum, for example, to provision of sketchbooks and regular access to computers
- There is insufficient monitoring of pupils' progress against clearly stated learning objectives and assessment criteria in Years 8 and 9
- To continue the work that has begun to improve pupils' literacy skills by providing more opportunities for them to talk about their own and others' work.

- 124 The results of teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2000 showed standards overall to be well above those reported nationally. Inspection evidence suggests that these were overestimated. The work of pupils currently in Year 9, shows standards to be similar to those expected for their age with a significant number of pupils working at a higher level.
- 125 Standards on entry are lower than expected for pupils aged 12. It appears that most have experienced a narrow art and design curriculum in their previous schools and standards of basic skills across a range of two and three-dimensional materials are generally under-developed.
- 126 Achievement and progress across Years 8 and 9 are good. Work produced by pupils two weeks into their Year 10 art option course shows they have learnt to draw accurately and expressively from observation and imagination and are confident in tackling work on a large scale. Like pupils in younger age classes they too were less confident when questioned or invited to make critical observations of their own work and the work of others. Teachers have taken steps to address this and introduced several strategies to improve standards of literacy, for example by using word banks and focused research tasks. Although pupils hear teachers using a technical language there are too few opportunities created for them to practise using the language themselves. In one Year 9 class pupils generally gave one or two word answers to questions and were not prompted to give extended answers. The quality and presentation of work in sketchbooks are variable. Some examples are very good, especially where pupils use a combination of materials and annotate their drawings, but others do not fully reflect what pupils are capable of. Displays show very good standards of two-dimensional, mixed media and graphics based work, and pupils learn from the examples they see around them. In contrast there is little three-dimensional modelling and computer generated work.
- 127 Results in 2000, in GCSE examinations, were significantly above the national average. They have shown a significant improvement and a rising trend. Although girls achieve particularly well, the gap between the attainment of the girls and boys has narrowed considerably in the last three years. Pupils achieved better results in their art examinations than in many of their other subjects.
- 128 The majority of pupils currently in Year 11 are working well above national expectations. Pupils enjoy working on open-ended tasks and the opportunities created for individual responses. Significant numbers of pupils have work of high quality with the depth of thinking and level of skill required for the higher grades. They benefit from having a good understanding of the examination requirements and marking criteria.
- 129 Pupils in Year 11 are achieving very well. Good teaching leads to high quality research and investigation. For example, in one class pupils were taught about colouring and textural techniques on clay and went on to try-out different relief and etched patterns for themselves. Pupils were able to explain with increasing understanding how they would adapt and refine the techniques to suit their own purposes. In another class, as pupils reviewed the work of past pupils and a professional designer, their comments showed an increasing understanding of how ideas and starting points had developed and the importance of being able to communicate this with originality and creativity. The task was very successful in developing their critical decision-making. In both classes, the quality of research and investigation that pupils were compiling provided very good preparation for the work that was to follow.

- 130 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good in Years 8 and 9, and very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils benefit from demonstrations given by teachers and the one-to-one feedback as they work.
- 131 Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 10 and 11, teaching was consistently good with some very good teaching strategies that led to considerable gains in learning. Teachers manage pupils' work and behaviour very well and have established a good rapport that leads to positive working relationships. Pupils are cooperative, keen to learn and do well and they work hard. Teaching was very effective where, through demonstrations and experimentation, pupils learned new skills and techniques and where exemplar materials were used to demonstrate styles of presentation. References to the aims and purposes of the work, to help teachers and pupils negotiate what needs to be covered next, enables pupils to work independently.
- 132 The good practice that has led to such improvements in Years 10 and 11 has yet to be used in the earlier years. Learning intentions and criteria for assessment need to be made clearer to pupils. Their progress and attainment at the end of Year 9 needs to be more closely monitored.
- 133 Management of the subject is good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. There has been a considerable improvement in the GCSE results, particularly in the numbers of boys and girls gaining higher grades. There has been good progress in tackling the areas for improvement identified in the last report, notably to provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in Years 8 and 9. The subject makes a valuable contribution to these aspects of pupils' development, for example through visits to local and national galleries and places of interest in the locality. The overall time allocated to lessons in Years 8 and 9 is close to the average. However, single, 50 minute, lessons continue to restrict the work and experiences offered.
- 134 Some aspects of resourcing are unsatisfactory. The capitation is insufficient to provide ready access to computers and for pupils to use them in the context of the subject. In addition, pupils buy their own sketchbooks. Since they are essential for fulfilling National Curriculum requirements they should be provided by the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching - teachers have good subject knowledge covering a wide range of material specialisms
- Pupils develop good making skills and theoretical knowledge

Areas for improvement

- There needs to be improved co-ordination between all the material areas contributing to design and technology. This should focus particularly on how and when generic design skills are taught; and ensuring that end of Year 9 assessments are consistent and moderated against national exemplification materials. The development of a portfolio of assessed work would help in this process

- 135 The standards at the end of Year 9 in 2000, as indicated by teacher assessment, were well above those reported nationally. Inspection evidence suggests that these teacher assessments were overestimated because no use was made of national exemplification materials to standardise the judgements. Work from pupils who were in Year 9 in 2001, and the work of pupils currently in Year 9, indicate that standards are at national expectation rather than above.
- 136 The overall results for all design and technology courses at GCSE in 2000 are just above the national average. This masks variations between the different courses offered. Food technology results were well above the national average whilst systems and control and the combined graphic products/business studies courses were well below. Graphic products and resistant materials results were just above the national average. The unconfirmed results for 2001 indicate that results have risen in all but the food course. The food results have fallen as a result of a positive departmental decision to encourage the less able candidates to strive for a GCSE qualification even though a Certificate of Achievement award may have been more appropriate for some. Overall, the standards of pupils currently in Year 11 are just above the national expectation.
- 137 GCSE results over the last three years have fluctuated. The main reason for this was the introduction in 1997 and 1998, in response to parental and governor request, of an increased number of courses designed to provide pupils with more choice in Years 10 and 11. The courses selected were those which parents and pupils requested and which best matched teacher's expertise at the time. They were, however, courses which tended to be the most difficult. Consequently, results on all courses dipped significantly in 1999. Since then there has been a gradual recovery as teachers have familiarised themselves with the course requirements.
- 138 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress during both key stages. Although the school does not check attainment on entry, inspection evidence indicates that pupils come into Year 8 with attainment in line with national expectations. Pupils experience a wide range of designing and making experiences in a variety of materials. By the end of Year 9, pupils have made good progress with their practical skills and theoretical knowledge. However, the development of designing skills is unsatisfactory as they have few opportunities to make critical design decisions. The presentation of design work is also frequently untidy and does not indicate careful thought and decision making. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are guided carefully through the syllabus requirements. Coursework design folders are usually well presented with thorough analysis

and research into problems such as the packaging of soap, charity information packs and healthy food products. However, pupils frequently fail to develop this good initial design work into creative design ideas. They lack the skills and confidence to communicate, model and develop ideas quickly by sketching. Pupils on an individual basis use information technology to enhance their work, for example word processing text and using spreadsheet software to produce graphs and charts. However, there are insufficient ICT resources in the department for it to be an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

- 139 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in both key stages. They are well organised, for example completing homework on time and bringing in the correct ingredients for food technology. In lessons, they are attentive and responsive and there is usually a good rapport and working relationship between the teacher and pupils. They are keen to practise and develop their skills and several Year 8 pupils in one food lesson had already repeated at home the recipe learned in the previous lesson.
- 140 The quality of teaching was satisfactory. About one third of the lessons being good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to give clear demonstrations and to provide quick answers to questions. Pupils made most progress in lessons which were divided into short activities interspersed with demonstrations and explanations. For example, in a Year 10 graphic products lesson drawing and rendering skills were introduced systematically during the lesson giving pupils a chance to practise before moving on. Good pace and challenge in the lesson were maintained as a result. In a Year 11 food lesson high quality work from pupils in the previous year was used effectively to establish high expectations. This was then followed up, as pupils began to produce their design ideas, by effective questioning techniques. These encouraged pupils to develop their thinking about the requirements of the food product they were designing without giving them the answers. Where teaching was less effective pupils were quiet and acquiescent rather than actively engaged because the pace of the lesson was too slow. For example in a Year 10 resistant materials lesson, although the aims of the lesson were met and the pupils' knowledge of wood joints was developed, they were not actively involved and towards the end became restless. In a small number of lessons, insufficient consideration was given to planning activities which would help achieve the desired objectives. In a Year 8 graphics lesson, for example, pupils were expected to produce sketches of cardboard gift boxes they were designing without being given clear guidance on the types of sketches or how to produce them. Consequently progress was less than expected.
- 141 The Years 8 and 9 curriculum is good. The time allocation in all years, allied to appropriate group sizes, provides time to cover a wide range of knowledge and practical skills. It also allows teachers to work effectively with pupils on a one-to-one basis and contributes to their progress. Less able pupils benefit particularly from this individual support. The years 10 and 11 curriculum is satisfactory. The department is rationalising the range of GCSE course offered to ensure staff expertise is used most effectively. However the curriculum does have two weaker aspects. In both key stages the full implementation of statutory requirements relating to the use of ICT in the subject are being hindered by inadequate access to modern computers. Even though the department has most of the necessary software and equipment to teach control technology and CAD/CAM, they lack the appropriate computer hardware. Secondly there is a lack of co-ordination in the overall planning of the younger pupils' curriculum. Opportunities to save time and prevent repetition, by delegating the teaching of generic design skills to individual material areas, are lost. Assessment procedures are also inconsistent with examples of good practice not being shared and developed. In the earlier years, assessments are not passed on quickly enough to help teachers plan effectively and this means that the problems of continuity and progression on rotational courses have not been fully addressed.

- 142 The management of the department is satisfactory and the improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The strengths noted in the previous report have been maintained.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The attainment of boys in GCSE is in line with that of girls.
- The teaching in both key stages
- The practising and development of number skills
- The response of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Inconsistencies in assessment practice and the setting of targets.
- Dispersed accommodation that impacts on the teaching and learning.
- Limited opportunity for higher attaining pupils to choose the subject.

- 143 The results of teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9 in 2000, were above those reported nationally. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is certainly in line with national expectations. In both written work and in response to questioning pupils show an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the places and themes studied. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils investigating the quality of life of people in different countries could name indicators, comment on their reliability and give examples. Pupils are developing an appreciation of processes and their effect on the human and physical world. For example, Year 8 pupils recalled and explained technical terms, and described the processes involved as they studied convergent plate boundaries. They apply map skills with confidence and construct accurate graphs using, for example, climatic data.
- 144 GCSE results in geography have improved since the last inspection. In 2000 the results were above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C rose and the proportion achieving at least grade G increased to above the national average. Pupils made as much progress in geography as in the other subjects they studied. Unconfirmed figures for 2001 show a fall. There have been changes in the options available to Year 9 pupils and this has meant that fewer of the higher attaining pupils choose the subject. A particular strength is that the attainment of boys is as good as that of girls.
- 145 The evidence of the pupils' work and the lessons observed showed that Year 11 pupils' attainment is in line with the nationally expected level. They pose relevant geographical questions and use a range of techniques in gathering, interpreting and presenting data in completing their coursework. Pupils studying Mount Pinatubo were aware of the impact that such an eruption could have on the people of the area – both short and long term consequences. Another group, reviewing the needs of people, showed an equally good knowledge and understanding as they applied indicators to two chosen countries very effectively. Subject skills are well developed at this stage.
- 146 When compared to their earlier attainment, pupils' achievement in geography is good, in part, a result of the good continuity and progression in their learning. They enter the school in Year 8 with different experience and levels of understanding in the subject and, by the end of Year 9, standards are at or above expectation. In Years 10 and 11, pupils build upon this learning, for example in the interpretation and presentation of data, and make good progress.
- 147 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because resources and tasks meet their needs. Teachers have a good understanding of their difficulties drawn from the information provided by the specialist staff. The progress of such pupils was further

enhanced when learning assistants were present in the classes, as in a Year 9 lesson on National Parks. The department takes care to ensure the inclusion of all pupils.

- 148 Overall, the teaching observed was good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and so gave clear and accurate explanations drawing upon up to date information. As a result they were able to enthuse pupils by showing how processes have particular outcomes. For example, in a Year 10 lesson where pupils, deciding on the site of a reservoir, constructed flood hydro-graphs. In all years, pupils are required to use the correct terms to describe features and processes. Teachers questioned pupils skilfully to check their understanding in all lessons. A range of experiences and resources is used to stimulate and extend pupils' learning as well as to link theory and practice. For example, since the last inspection, fieldwork has been introduced in all years. Teachers have high expectations in map, graphical and written work, with pupils having frequent opportunities to practise number skills. The most serious weakness is the failure to exploit information and communication technology because it is difficult to gain access to the computer suite. In some lessons, resources were limited, for example, access to sets of atlases, as a result of the dispersed accommodation, The department has drawn up a comprehensive system for the marking and monitoring of pupils' work, but there are inconsistencies in assessment practice.
- 149 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. In the lessons observed they were frequently very good. They are interested in the work and at times enthusiastic as a result of some inspirational teaching. For example, when Year 9 pupils considered the conflict of use within the National Parks and worked diligently and co-operatively to seek solutions. Their concentration is good, but pupils were inattentive in a lesson when the work was repetitive and insufficiently demanding. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are constructive.
- 150 The improvement since the last inspection has been good. The strengths noted in the last report have been sustained and standards have improved. Schemes of work are full and provide good guidance, for example the detailing of attitudes and values supports the significant contribution the subject makes to the pupil's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The improved evaluation of teaching and learning ensures that the department has a clear view of where further improvements need to be made. The accommodation for teaching geography is unsatisfactory and affects the teaching and learning. The team has the commitment to achieve further improvement.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Good subject knowledge of teachers
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils
- Clear identification of pressing issues by new head of department

Areas for improvement

- A clear assessment and monitoring process, with criteria for success shared with pupils, to support the goal of raising achievement across the years, and particularly that of boys
- Improve core text resources for the full range of ability

- 151 Results for teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 for 2000 were broadly in line with those reported nationally.
- 152 From the evidence of lessons observed and pupils' work, the standards of pupils currently in Year 9 are in line with national expectations. Year 9 pupils are strong in oral responses, for example confidently reporting what they had found out in previous lessons about the great changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Higher attaining pupils write sustained narratives, for example about the Atlantic slave crossing, and apply their past use of sources to new topics, noting similarities in accounts between different sources relating to the English Civil War. While most pupils respond well to the challenge of a straightforward narrative account of developments, lower attaining pupils found such a challenge rather demanding. However, when varied tasks were set, for example ideas for a musical piece (such as a blues) about slavery, pupils were able to show the knowledge and understanding they had acquired.
- 153 GCSE results for 2000 were below national expectations and pupils made comparatively less progress in history than in the other subjects they studied. Unconfirmed results for 2001 show no improvement. This has been the trend since the last inspection. There is no evidence to suggest that this has been the result of different cohorts opting for history over this period. Overall throughout the last few years, girls have out-performed boys
- 154 Lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work suggest a potential improvement. Although pupils continue to work below expectations, the focus placed by teachers on the outcomes of their work, clearly relating them to GCSE criteria, is beginning to produce improvement.
- 155 Higher attaining pupils wrote sustained narratives outlining the dark side of the 1920s. They drew inferences from source material exemplifying attitudes to prohibition. For example, they offered a range of possible motives for Al Capone's cover page spot on Time magazine, and people's attitudes towards him. Average attaining pupils in Year 11 did not show as much confidence in sustaining their narrative accounts. Very few extended their discussion of source materials to include issues of bias and reliability.
- 156 Pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers, especially when adult support is at hand and care has been taken to differentiate the learning materials and tasks of a lesson. For example, in one lesson, pupils with reading difficulties were placed carefully in groups in order to support their reading and understanding. Then they used helpful writing frames. With these, the pupils proved better able to produce statements demonstrating that they had acquired a sound understanding of which groups in a village had benefited from the enclosure of land and which had not. In a few lessons observed, however, teachers missed opportunities similarly to adapt materials, although they ensured that they were on hand to support all children verbally.
- 157 Overall, teaching is good. A great strength is teacher knowledge. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, the teacher was able to use the escalating price of the humble egg in Germany after the First World War to bring to life a general point about inflation. He encouraged pupils' enthusiasm by responding to their interested questions with similar background details. All teachers are confident in their knowledge and skills. A positive and recent development is the direct focus and emphasis, seen in Year 11 lessons, on the demands of the examinations the pupils will be sitting. This was seen to have an impact on the responses the pupils were making to specific questions. Classroom management of time and pupils is always of a high standard. Resources were seen to be wanting on occasions, with the use of photocopied material rather than texts, and the sharing of texts. Throughout

the inspection, there was little sign of the use of information and communication technology. Opportunities were missed to make more effective use of the classrooms' overhead projectors, for example to provide a class focus on the graphs being studied of Germany after the war, or the cover page photograph of Al Capone, rather than rely on photocopies. Teachers' knowledge of pupils in their classes with identified special educational needs is good

- 158 Pupils' attitudes to history are good. They are industrious and often take considerable care in their presentation of work. For example, a Year 10 class writing about the effect on Germany of the Treaty, of Versailles combined thoughtful suggestions with an imaginative presentation in the style of an indignant front page national newspaper article.
- 159 The management of the subject has been unsatisfactory and insufficient improvement has been achieved since the last inspection. A new head of department has taken careful stock of his subject's recent disappointing examinations performance. He has a clear understanding of the inadequacy of the department's learning resources. For example, insufficient appropriate text books to support all pupils in their learning, and the need to develop the department's use of information technology. A strategy has been identified to improve teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11, supported by more formal and detailed monitoring of pupils' attainment from Year 8. With the current team of teachers and a renewed focus there is now a good capacity to improve the provision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The teaching of basic skills on taught ICT courses
- The knowledge and commitment of teachers in the department

Areas for improvement

- Modify the Years 8 and 9 curriculum to meet statutory requirements
- Provide subject departments with access to ICT facilities to help integrate the subject into the curriculum
- Develop strategies for monitoring and evaluating cross-curricular ICT
- Improve the accommodation and facilities available for courses in Years 10 and 11

- 160 The results of teacher assessment, at the end of Year 9 in 2000, were well above those reported nationally. However, work seen during the inspection indicates that the teacher assessments were overestimated because no use was made of national exemplification materials to standardise the judgements. Work from pupils, who reached the end of Year 9 in 2001, and of pupils currently in Year 9, indicates that standards are at the national average rather than well above it. Work in the taught course covers most aspects of the programme of study at an appropriate level and pupils are particularly confident in communicating information. Control and measurement should be taught by the design and technology and science departments, but insufficient equipment means that this is not fully implemented. Therefore skills in these areas, and their application, are under-developed.
- 161 Results in GCSE full course in 2000 were well above the national average. GCSE short course results in the same year were well below the national average. Both course are taught on the same time allocation with the more able pupils entered for the full course. This tends to increase the full course

results whilst decreasing those on the short course. When taken together, the average A*-C results for both courses are in line with the national average. Again weaknesses are in control and measurement which are taught theoretically as part of the GCSE courses. Pupils' strengths are demonstrated in good use of standard office applications on projects such as the design and development of business cards and letterheads as part of GCSE coursework.

- 162 Overall progress in both key stages is good. Work seen during the inspection suggests that pupils come into Year 8 with attainment below national expectations, although the school does not check attainment on entry. In the limited time available, and because there are so few opportunities for ICT to be used in other subjects, pupils make good progress to reach national averages by the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to make practical use of ICT. They remain on task and co-operate when required to share resources, such as when using the computers in the library.
- 163 Teaching is good. All the teaching was satisfactory or better, with three-quarters being good. Where the teaching was effective there was good planning with clear objectives and activities matched to the abilities of all the pupils in the group. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, the teacher ensured that pupils achieved the objective of drawing block diagrams by not allowing them to be distracted into editing and formatting other text. Good subject knowledge allowed teachers to make quick interventions, to answer questions and to maintain the pace of the lesson. Well-designed worksheets guide pupils' learning and allow the teacher to focus support on pupils who need it most. The worksheets allow pupils to work at their own best pace. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of these strategies. Short course GCSE project booklets have a mark scheme on the cover and a clear indication of what is needed to achieve a grade C or better. This provides good support, guidance and challenge for the pupils. The department's technician makes a significant contribution to the progress of pupils by his willing and effective responses to their requests for help.
- 164 The curriculum in Years 8 and 9 is unsatisfactory as it does not include the use of ICT for data-logging or fully cover its use for control. Therefore it does not meet statutory requirements. There are virtually no opportunities for other departments to use ICT to enhance their subject teaching or to consolidate the teaching of the ICT department. This is because of an overall lack of ICT resources in the school and an inability of departments to make use of network facilities in the library now that this room is frequently timetabled for GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory and the taught courses are very efficient in terms of results achieved compared to the teaching time available. However there is a trade off in the pressure that this imposes on the teaching staff. GCSE short course arrangements in Year 10 are unsatisfactory, in that the groups within the personal and social education rotation system, in order to provide an extra period for 16 weeks, are different from the groups being taught in the other timetabled period. This creates problems of continuity for both teachers and pupils. Although assessment of the taught ICT in both key stages is satisfactory there is no monitoring of the use of ICT by other departments. This is unsatisfactory.
- 165 The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The head of department is new to the post but is already beginning to make an impact. A new scheme of work for Years 8 and 9 is being implemented. It makes appropriate links to other subject areas; for example, literacy skills are revised and reinforced through a text editing activity in Year 9. It is also linked to an effective assessment and record keeping system. The strategic vision for the development of the subject is outlined in a sound development plan. The positive culture for the implementation of ICT in subjects, created through professional development supported by the New Opportunities Fund, is in danger of losing teachers' enthusiasm unless the school can provide departments with access to ICT facilities.

- 166 Resources are unsatisfactory. The ratio of computers to pupils is very low and will remain below the national average even after the completion of the new network room. This is seriously hampering the integration of ICT into the curriculum. There are insufficient resources, such as digital cameras, scanners and data projectors, in a school of this size.
- 167 Since the last inspection the school has provided training for staff and technical support for the department. Examination results at GCSE remain broadly in line with national averages and teaching is good. However, the school has failed to address the fact that the curriculum for Years 8 and 9 does not meet statutory requirements. There are insufficient resources for ICT to have an impact across the curriculum. Consequently, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good at both key stages, especially with the higher and lower attaining pupils.
- Relationships in lessons are very good
- The management of the department and the monitoring and recording of pupil's achievement and progress are very good
- Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are above national expectation in French and German, and results in German GCSE are significantly above the national average

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation is unsatisfactory

- 168 The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 have risen over the last three years. In 2000 they were above the average of those reported nationally. Girls did considerably better than boys. The 2001 assessments show a further increase. These standards are confirmed by the inspection evidence of what pupils, currently in Year 9, achieved in lessons and from a scrutiny of their written work and recorded oral work.
- 169 When compared to their earlier attainments, pupils' achievement in French is good. The attainment upon entry in French is uneven. Higher attaining pupils are average in speaking, listening and reading but below average in writing. Many pupils have a basic knowledge of numbers, days, months and colours and give simple personal details. Some pupils have more limited knowledge than this and a few have no experience of the subject. At the end of Year 9, standards of attainment in French and German are above the national average in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening skills are well developed. For example, in a Year 9 class of lower attaining pupils, they understood a lesson conducted entirely in French and in a Year 8 German beginners' class pupils coped with the whole lesson in German and successfully picked out most of the details in a recorded text. Most pupils can repeat words and phrases with good pronunciation and intonation. Many pupils reply confidently and with good accents to questions in both French and German and practise short dialogues in pairs. There was, however, little evidence of pupils using the foreign language spontaneously, although, in a few lessons, pupils gave reasons for absence or lateness, made requests or gave the results of marks in tests in the foreign language. In several lessons, pupils read out aloud with confidence and used dictionaries, and the more able pupils deduced the meaning of unknown words from their context. All pupils make good progress in their writing skills. By Year 9, most pupils have good basic writing skills and higher and average attaining pupils write accurate texts containing present and past tenses in both French and German. High attaining pupils write more complex compound sentences when stating opinions or giving reasons. In general, higher attaining pupils have a good awareness of grammatical patterns.
- 170 GCSE results have improved since the last inspection. In 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining grades A*-C in German was well above the national average and in French was just above the average. The unconfirmed results in 2001 are similar to these in both subjects. The performance of girls was above the national average whilst the performance of boys was below average. The evidence of pupils' work and the lessons observed

showed that the standards of the pupils currently in Year 11 is above the nationally expected level in both French and German. They do best in listening. Most pupils understood lessons in the foreign language and listened attentively to recorded and spoken texts to extract details. In one Year 10 French group of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, they listened intently to recordings of young people talking about where they lived and reported back orally with great accuracy. Pupils' speaking skills are well developed. In a Year 11 German group, pupils related a story using several past tenses and some complex structures with accuracy and fluency. The higher attaining pupils, in French and German, use a range of tenses and structures, state opinions and give reasons. They use previously learned material in new situations and cope with the unexpected. In writing, lower attaining pupils label pictures, write sentences and short descriptive paragraphs. Higher attaining pupils produce some impressive extended writing which is occasionally redrafted using information communication technology. They use subordinate clauses and all basic tenses in defined situations and their work is accurate and varied. Modern languages contributes well to pupils' general literacy.

- 171 Overall, the teaching was good. It was good or better in over three quarters of all lessons and excellent in some. Teachers generally used the foreign language extensively to the great benefit of pupils' listening skills, but this approach was not consistent. All lessons were very well prepared and nearly always taught enthusiastically and at a brisk pace, with good use of resources. This motivated pupils to achieve of their best in all four skills. Very good use was made of deadlines to motivate pupils and keep them on target. The content of most lessons was carefully graded and matched to the needs and interests of pupils, with frequent change of task and good coverage of the four skills. This ensured that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, made appropriate progress. There was generally a productive atmosphere in lessons, and effective teaching combined with good motivation, enabled most pupils to progress well and achieve high standards. The best lessons were delivered with skill and enthusiasm and consisted of a wide variety of linked activities. This resulted in pupils responding with enthusiasm and attaining high standards. Very occasionally the pace was slow, there was insufficient challenge and too much use of English, which resulted in underachievement.
- 172 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Most pupils are very enthusiastic language learners, eager to demonstrate their skills. In several classes they were fully engaged by a range of language games and communicative activities. In a Year 9 lower attaining French class, pupils enjoyed practising vocabulary and structures using a game of snakes and ladders. In a Year 8 French class, pupils responded well to a question and answer session cued by throwing a soft ball. Most pupils show high levels of concentration and perseverance. Most pupils contribute fully to all lesson activities, settle down to work quickly and remain on task.
- 173 The annual exchange with Germany and the trips to France ensure that the department makes a strong contribution to the cultural development of some pupils and also enhances their linguist skills. The department benefits from very good leadership, which ensures that good teaching and learning is maintained. The language teachers work well together in spite of the split accommodation and the lack of a departmental office. Documentation is good. Assessment procedures ensure that pupils' progress is monitored very effectively. Teachers and most pupils are clear about National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades, which helps towards achieving good rates of progress.
- 174 The improvement since the last inspection has been good. The GCSE results in French and German have improved. The attainment of boys has improved but it is still below

average. The department is currently adopting a number of strategies to raise further the attainment of boys. The number of double linguists in Year 10 has increased.. The department still makes insufficient use of information and communication technology to raise standards.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The new head of department is quickly establishing himself
- Pupils over the whole ability range are equally involved in all lessons
- Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes in lessons
- Music receives a favourable allocation of time in Years 8 and 9

Areas for improvement

- Complete the scheme of work and link it with appropriate procedures for assessment
- Provide valid musical experiences early in each topic in Years 8 and 9
- Improve methods of teaching composition in both key stages
- The second music room provides unsatisfactory accommodation which affects pupils' attainment

- 175 The inspection took place in the second week in which the new head of department was in post.
- 176 The results of teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were high. Pupils currently in Year 9 are not attaining standards that are likely to be as high by the end of the school year. They have not gained a confident working knowledge of the range of skills required in the National Curriculum. Keyboard skills are basic and pupils have only an elementary knowledge of important aspects of musical theory, relating to rhythm, pitch and notation.
- 177 Numbers of pupils taking GCSE have been small in recent years and there is little value in comparing results with those achieved nationally. However, results were above average in 1998 and 2000, but well below in 1999. There were no GCSE candidates in music in 2001. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 11 is well below average. Pupils have developed little facility in composing and their knowledge of musical theory is very limited. For, example, they are unfamiliar with the bass clef, they do not know the function of cadences, and their knowledge of using chords to harmonise a melody is under-developed. Note-taking provides pupils with opportunities to develop their literacy skills but they have had no opportunities to use ICT in music in the recent past.
- 178 The small amount of written work from last year gives no indication of pupils' previous progress in lessons or over time. Progress in lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory. In Year 8, pupils gained useful information about how different kinds of music are used to enhance the image of products in advertisements. In Year 9, they quickly gained basic information about electronic keyboards and were able to play simple melodic phrases from notation. In Year 11, pupils made only slow progress in composing because there were no instruments available to enable them to experiment and develop their skills. At this early stage in the term, there was little difference between the progress of lower and higher attaining pupils.
- 179 Pupils' attitudes to learning were very good. They listened well to instructions, collaborated well together and treated equipment with care. Behaviour remained good even in those lessons where the pace of learning was slow.

- 180 Teaching was satisfactory overall throughout the subject. Teachers are very committed and have good practical skills. They prepare lessons carefully and produce worksheets of high quality. They give instructions clearly so that pupils know what they have to do, can set about each task efficiently and use time productively. They provide a good level of individual help so that pupils of all levels of attainment make progress at a similar rate. In the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, teachers spent too long explaining topics without linking the tasks to a genuine musical experience. In one lesson the teacher evaluated pupils' writing of harmony without playing it, which meant that the pupils had only a limited opportunity to learn from their mistakes.
- 181 The new head of department has prepared a provisional scheme of work containing interesting topics, but this does not indicate the standards expected from high, middle and lower attaining pupils in Years 8 and 9. Procedures for assessment, as outlined in the handbook, are unsatisfactory since they are not clearly linked to standards expected in the revised National Curriculum. Criteria for assessment of GCSE work are satisfactory and carefully linked to examination requirements. Resources and accommodation are good in the principal music room but unsatisfactory in the second room, where a significant percentage of music lessons take place. No instruments are housed there and time is lost in transporting them. Accommodation and resources are therefore unsatisfactory overall. The head of department has made a good start to managing the subject. The collaborative tasks in Years 8 and 9 provide good opportunities for pupils' social development and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. A varied range of extra-curricular activities is planned, and there are good opportunities for musicians to develop their abilities further in instrumental lessons during the week and at the Saturday Music School, which is organised by the school and provides a good link with the community. At this early stage after the appointment of a new head of music, improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- very good leadership and management
- the excellent relationships both within the department and between teachers and pupils
- the enthusiasm and very high commitment of the teachers
- the very good knowledge of the specialist staff of the activities they teach

Areas for improvement

- the development of consistent opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their work in all lessons in all years
- the totally inadequate changing facilities
- there is a lack of opportunity to monitor and provide training for non-specialist teachers to ensure consistency of teaching

- 182 The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were broadly average with more than half the pupils achieving at or above the level expected nationally and the evidence of the inspection confirms this. The standard of attainment of the current Year 9 pupils is average although in some activities it is above. For example, in hockey both boys and girls show a very good level of stick and ball control and are developing a good understanding of the tactical use of space. In gymnastics and dance the attainment is average and pupils

were beginning to show some perceptive insights when encouraged to evaluate each other's performance. Overall, therefore, the standard of attainment is average.

- 183 GCSE results in 2000 were above the national average and have been so for the last 4 years. The proportion of boys gaining grade A*-C has remained reasonably consistent but the girls' results have shown a greater fluctuation, with a high point reached in 1998 and a noticeable drop in scores since then. This reflects the fact that the girls' group in 1998 had a particularly high level of practical performance and the groups since then have been less able in practical terms, although equally or more able in academic terms. The department is fully aware of this and provides well-structured opportunities for pupils to improve their practical performance. For example, a group of girls was able to participate in extra practice on the trampoline during a lunch time. This is an effective strategy in helping to raise achievement and is just one example of the high level of commitment of the teachers to their pupils.
- 184 Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are strongest in traditional games skills. In netball, girls have a good grasp of the footwork rules and are able to apply them consistently. Some discuss and analyse advanced tactics and are beginning to use them in their games. Boys, in football, showed a very good level of understanding of maintaining width and using space in a game and consistently used accurate passing techniques to keep the game open. In hockey, pupils were equally good at utilising space to maintain a fast and open game and their level of skill generally, in stick and ball control, was above average. Overall, the standards of attainment in Years 10 and 11 are good.
- 185 Progress in lessons in Years 8 and 9 is good and in some lessons very good. In a hockey lesson, pupils of lower ability made very good progress in acquiring the basic skill of a reverse stick dodge during a practice session and then used the technique in a game. Pupils made very good progress in understanding how to link movements together in a sequence and therefore increased their understanding of flow in gymnastics. In Years 10 and 11, progress in lessons was very good overall. Pupils who were taught how to "block" tackle early in a lesson on hockey, could employ the same tackle in a game by the end of the lesson. In another lesson, pupils were taught the principle of triangulation in passing and subsequently used this to open up a game and create space.
- 186 Throughout both key stages, pupils with special educational need make good, and often very good, progress alongside their peers. All pupils, except those who cannot walk, are integrated as far as possible into normal lessons. Teachers are fully aware of individual needs and, where necessary, adapt targets and tasks to accommodate individual pupils. This system is enormously helped by the excellent relationships and attitudes of the pupils. They show respect and consideration for each other and are willing to help each other to achieve by accepting those with lower attainment and making them feel part of a team. Special arrangements made for the non-ambulant pupils ensures that they, too, can make good progress.
- 187 The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are a significant factor in their good achievements and standards of attainment. Very few pupils did not participate in the lessons during the inspection and all tried hard to complete tasks set. They arrived at lessons promptly and changed quickly and sensibly in often very difficult and over-crowded conditions. No instances of unsatisfactory behaviour were seen during the inspection.
- 188 The quality of teaching in Years 8 and 9 is good, and in Years 10 and 11 is very good. In most lessons the teaching was very effective because the teachers trained in physical education were able to employ progressive practices which enabled pupils to achieve well

and improve their skills. In a few lessons, where the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the activity were more limited, pupils' learning was satisfactory but hindered from further development. In the most effective lessons, pupils were well-prepared physically during the opening activities for the lesson to come, intentions were shared, tasks were challenging and presented at a brisk pace, and pupils were helped to evaluate their learning.

- 189 Leadership and management of the department are very good. The department works smoothly and efficiently despite having to incorporate five teachers to cover the timetable. Assessment procedures are good. National Curriculum level descriptions relating to different activities are published clearly for all pupils to see, so that they can work out what they have to do to improve and this has a positive impact on the pupils' desire to achieve.
- 190 There is very good provision of spaces in which to teach the subject. However the changing facilities, with only one room each for boys and girls, which are much too small to accommodate the numbers now in the school, are inadequate.
- 191 Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory. The good standards of attainment have been maintained and despite minor fluctuations, GCSE results are slightly up. Pupils have good opportunities for planning their activities and evaluating their work in gymnastics, dance and GCSE lessons but, overall, there are insufficient opportunities, particularly in games lessons in Years 8 and 9.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **good**.

Strengths

- the outstanding contribution made to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- the enthusiasm and subject knowledge of the teachers and their high expectations of pupils
- the response of pupils to the teaching
- the quality of teaching

Areas for improvement

- the allocation of learning support assistants to religious education lessons is inadequate
- the quality of the accommodation which impacts on the teaching and learning

- 192 The standards of pupils currently in Year 9 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupil's written work is of a good standard as a result of the emphasis placed upon the development of their literacy skills. Pupils in Year 9 identified different views of God using extracts from the Bible included in the effective resources produced by their teacher. Their factual knowledge is very good as shown when, drawing on the work of last year, they discussed the meanings of the events that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane. In a Year 8 lesson, all pupils made good use of a questionnaire they had completed, to reflect on the spirituality in their own lives.
- 193 In Years 10 and 11, where pupils discuss religious and ethical topics, standards of attainment in class debate are above average. In lessons, all pupils were able to contribute their ideas. Year 10 pupils had given careful consideration to the ways in which people are

unique. They explained what this meant and listened attentively to the views of others. Groups of pupils in Year 11 discussed case studies and assembled evidence for and against euthanasia. There has been an improvement in standards since the last inspection, in part as a result of the increased time available in Years 10 and 11.

- 194 The standards of the group of pupils currently preparing for GCSE examination are at the level expected at this stage. They recall facts and provide effective definitions of terms, for example of miracles. Their written work is good. They have compiled useful notes and provide accurate written answers. However, all experience difficulties in the planning of essays.
- 195 Developing pupils' literacy skills is a clear priority of the teaching in all years. In Years 8 and 9 pupils broaden their good vocabulary and teachers repeatedly check their understanding of words. A variety of prose and poetry is used and pupils are required to write in different styles and for different purposes. Writing frames are provided which ensure that all are able to make progress. Spelling and punctuation are corrected in the marking of work. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud, and books from the school and County libraries are used to supplement the departmental resources. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make very good progress in developing speaking and listening skills. The interesting survey of Bible ownership, carried out with Year 8 pupils, provided an opportunity for pupils to apply and practise their number skills but such opportunities are few. Though pupils are encouraged to use computers to research homework tasks, the use information and communication technology in religious education is unsatisfactory.
- 196 Pupils make good progress in both key stages and achieve well. Lessons are very well planned and this ensures that pupils are aware of what they need to do. As a result, all make significant progress. Alternative resources and tasks, the support of teachers, and imaginative pairing and grouping ensure that the work of the lower attaining pupils is supported and encouraged. Extra learning support is allocated in only a small proportion of lessons. This is unsatisfactory. The challenge of lessons stretches the more able. For example, Year 8 pupils interpreted a poem, *The Blind Men and the Elephant*, in developing an appreciation that people have different views.
- 197 Pupils enjoy and value their lessons and so behaviour is very good overall. The very positive response of the older pupils is a significant strength. All benefit from the supportive relationships that exist between pupils and with their teachers. As a result, they are willing to make contributions, to listen to and respect the views of others. This was clear when the GCSE group discussed the meanings of miracles.
- 198 Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Most lessons were very good or better and none were unsatisfactory. Teachers have very good knowledge and an enthusiasm for the subject that motivates and can inspire the pupils. Pupils' work is marked diligently and feedback, together with the frequent use of praise, rewards and encourages their efforts. Clear guidelines have been established that enable very effective debates and meaningful reflection to take place. The quality of lesson planning ensures the most effective use of the relatively short time available to the subject. The resources meet the learning needs of all pupils and, since the last inspection, have been enhanced with additional religious artefacts. Lessons proceed at a good pace, but the range of teaching methods is constrained by the accommodation.
- 199 The curriculum complies with the requirements of the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus and the examination board. A particular strength is the contribution made to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, achieved through what is taught and how it is

taught. The curriculum planning and delivery are successful in ensuring the inclusion of all pupils. However, the heritage of Norwich has yet to be sufficiently exploited as a learning resource.

- 200 The department is managed very effectively and there is a shared commitment to the further development of the subject. Improvement since the last report has been good. The department has addressed successfully all of the issues raised.