

INSPECTION REPORT

JOHN FLAMSTEED COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Ripley, Derbyshire

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112948

Headteacher: Mr G Boss

Reporting inspector: Mr J W Ashton

Dates of inspection: 21st – 25th May 2001

Inspection number: 193437

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Derby Road
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Derbyshire

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Andrea Scott-Jones

Date of previous inspection: 21 April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4492	Mr J Ashton	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it?
				School's results and achievements
				What should the school do to improve further?
				How well are pupils taught?
				How well is the school led and managed?
9736	Mr J Brasier	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				Best value
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21785	Ms V Kerr	Team inspector	Mathematics	Numeracy
3943	Mr D Innes	Team inspector	English	Literacy
			English as an additional language	
23246	Mr J Mitchell	Team inspector	Science	Staffing
23492	Mrs H Chadwick	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	Accommodation
23418	Mr R Yates	Team inspector	Art and design	Resources
22524	Mrs S Innes	Team inspector	Design and technology	
			Special educational needs	

1752	Mr R Jones	Team inspector	Geography	Careers, work experience
30794	Mrs G Murray	Team inspector	History	Spiritual, moral, social, cultural provision
4829	Mr I Waters	Team inspector	Modern Foreign languages	Assessment
15487	Miss J Bean	Team inspector	Music	
2941	Mr A Henderson	Team inspector	Physical education	
10361	Mr F Evans	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

John Flamsteed School is a relatively small 11 to 16 comprehensive school, serving the ex-mining community of Denby and its surrounding area, eight miles to the north of the city of Derby. It has slightly more pupils (560) than at the time of the last inspection. Fewer than one per cent of its pupils are from a minority ethnic group, and there are none for whom English is an additional language. The pupils represent the full range of attainment normally found in a comprehensive school, although with slightly more who have below average attainment. Just over nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the national average. Twenty two pupils have statements of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 37 pupils are presently at stages 3 to 5 of the SEN register, with moderate learning in the main, behavioural and speech and communication needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

John Flamsteed is a happy, secure and continually improving school. It is led and managed well and provides a good education for its pupils. Standards of attainment are comparable with those of similar schools. Its pupils are taught well and they achieve effectively in their time at the school. The school provides good value for the money it receives.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well by making good progress in most subjects.
- Standards of attainment in geography are particularly high.
- Most aspects of teaching and learning are good.
- The school is led and managed well, both academically and pastorally.
- Pupils are known well and effectively cared for.
- The pupils are treated with respect and the large majority respond appropriately.
- Provision for pupils' moral and cultural development is good and their social development is very good.

What could be improved

- Attainment in German is too low.
- Although some aspects of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good, its co-ordination is weak.
- Some teachers need help to deal effectively with the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils.
- Too much time is wasted travelling between lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in April 1997, the school has made good progress in almost all those areas where it has the ability to improve and it has a good capacity for further improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is improved. There is a greater consistency in teaching quality across different subject departments plus a greater variety of teaching and learning methods. The provision for information and communication technology is much improved. Standards of attainment in mathematics are higher, so that they now at least match and sometimes exceed those in English and science. Pupils now make better use of their morning tutor time with worthwhile activities, but they still do not receive a daily act of collective worship. The school's accommodation has improved significantly, but there is scope for substantial further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds based on average point scores in end of KS3 national tests and GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
KS3 National Curriculum tests	C	C	C	C
GCSE examinations	D	C	C	

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

Attainment matched national standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 in 2000 and has done for the past few years. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9. Results in mathematics and science also match those of similar schools (those with pupils from similar social backgrounds), but English results were lower. In most other subjects, pupils' attainment matched national standards. Geography attainment was higher. The overall trend in attainment at the end of Year 9 in recent years has been upwards, just about matching the national upward trend.

At the end of Year 11, overall GCSE results across all subjects in 2000 were just above the national average, and in line with those for similar schools. They are well above the results obtained nationally by schools whose pupils were of a similar standard at age fourteen. The trend in the school's average GCSE points scores, for all the core subjects, over the past five years is steeper than the national trend, This again represents good achievement over a key stage. Results in geography are especially high, year on year. German results are lower than expected nationally.

Standards of both literacy and numeracy at least match national standards by the end of each key stage. With few exceptions, pupils with SEN achieve as well as other pupils in the same class, allowing for their lower starting points.

In 2000, the school exceeded its performance targets for the proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSE grades A* - C and for the average GCSE points scores. This represents good added value, especially for those pupils who were achieving at below average levels for their age when they entered the school in Year 7. The targets for 2001 are even more challenging but are achievable from the evidence of the work seen.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school. The vast majority are enthusiastic in lessons and speak highly of their teachers and other adults.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall, being good around the school, at lunchtime and in the dining hall, although this is offset by the poor behaviour shown in some lessons by a few pupils. Pupils' behaviour in the bulk of lessons seen was good or better.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Teachers know their pupils very well and enjoy working with them. Personal development is good. The school council is a major strength and encourages the taking of responsibility and initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is good, one percentage point better than at the last inspection, and unauthorised absence has halved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Both teaching and learning are strengths of the school. Ninety five per cent of the 131 lessons inspected were at least satisfactory. Just five per cent were unsatisfactory. Sixty five per cent of lessons were at least good. Eighteen per cent were very good and occasionally they were excellent in geography. This better teaching promotes the good learning in which pupils make substantial progress, their interest is captured well and their productivity is high. In some lessons, in mathematics, history, geography and science, for example, they also have above average awareness of how well they are doing and of how they can improve the quality of their own learning. The relatively smaller number of unsatisfactory lessons were all at Key Stage 3, two each in mathematics and German, and one in each of science and learning support. Occasionally, there are lapses in planning or failure to manage challenging behaviour, which result in unsatisfactory learning. Teachers are not achieving prompt enough starts to lessons, some of which are up to 10 minutes late in starting. The good teaching of literacy is quite widespread across the school, notably in science. The teaching of numeracy, outside of specific mathematics lessons, is less well developed. The school meets well the needs of all its pupils, although those with SEN are better catered for within mainstream classes than in withdrawal groups.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall and meets statutory requirements. Broad, balanced and increasingly more relevant, particularly at Key Stage 4.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Good level of staffing. Full access to the National Curriculum and appropriately supported in mainstream lessons, but there are weaknesses in co-ordination.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Satisfactory spiritual provision. Good moral and cultural and very good social provision. Pupils do not receive a daily act of collective worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The high quality of pastoral support pervades every aspect of the school and is a strength overall. The school is a safe environment, with all the expected safety measures in place. The pastoral aspects of behaviour management are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Effectively led and managed by the headteacher and senior management team. Pastoral leadership is strong and effective. The leadership and management of most subjects, including all three of the core subjects English, mathematics and science, are good. In some cases, humanities and ICT for example, they are very good. The co-ordination of SEN is a relative weakness.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well balanced and experienced governing body which acts well as the school's critical friend and fulfils almost all its statutory duties satisfactorily.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school thoroughly evaluates its performance against schools nationally, and compares the performances of its separate departments against each other.
The strategic use of resources	In general, resources are well targeted to where they are needed, but there is room for improvement in the use of staff supporting pupils with SEN.

The number of staff is adequate for the needs of the curriculum. Teachers are well qualified and have a good range of experience in the subjects they teach. Resources are adequate for the number of pupils in the school. Sufficient supplies of consumables are available but there is a shortage of textbooks in some subjects, especially in relation to homework, which prevent some pupils from making appropriate progress. Accommodation is much improved since the last inspection, but the separation across the two halves of a large site continues to hinder prompt lesson starts. Financial administration is efficient, and modern technology is used well in accounting. Financial acumen is evident when purchasing. Comparisons of efficiency are made with similar schools and the value of particular training courses assessed. The governing body challenges the justification for new spending and seeks full details of how the school might benefit. Staff are fully consulted on development priorities and staff, governors and management are fully involved in drawing up the development plan.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children make good progress and work hard; • the school is easy to approach with problems; • it is well managed and produces pupils who are mature and responsible. 	<p>Some parents, however, do not feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well enough informed about pupils' progress; • or that the school works closely enough with them. <p>The are concerned also about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homework and the range of activities available outside lessons.

The inspection team supports parents' positive comments. Pupils' progress is reported on a similar basis to comparable schools and the school actively encourages offers of help. The inspection team finds that the school uses homework well and that a good range of activities is available outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Evidence from national tests taken at the end of primary school, and from standardised tests given to pupils on entry to the school, indicate that just below average proportions of pupils enter John Flamsteed having achieved the national standard in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
2. By the end of Year 9, in the year 2000, attainment in English, measured by average points scores in the end of Key Stage 3 tests, matched national levels but was below that for similar schools. Attainment in both mathematics and science matched national levels and also matched that for pupils from similar schools. Similar schools are those whose pupils come from similar social backgrounds. Boys achieved less well in English than girls by a similar margin to that found nationally. They exceeded the achievements of girls in both mathematics and science by more than the national difference. In most other subjects, pupils' attainment in 2000, by the end of Year 9, matched national expectations. A notable exception was geography where attainment exceeded national expectations, due largely to very effective teaching. The overall trend in attainment at the end of Year 9 in recent years has been upwards, almost matching the national upward trend. English results have been consistently the weakest of the three core subjects for most of the past five years, but in 2000, the results across all three subjects were much closer to each other.
3. At the end of Year 11, GCSE results across all subjects in 2000 were just above the national average. The boys' results, as in previous years, were lower than those of girls, but the gap was narrower than the national gap between boys and girls' results and only one third as wide as four years ago. This points to the success of one of the school's recent projects to improve the relative performance of boys. Compared to similar schools, John Flamsteed's GCSE results were in line with those of schools with pupils from similar social backgrounds. They are well above the results obtained nationally by schools whose pupils were of a similar standard at age fourteen.
4. In 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving A* - C grades just exceeded the national average in English and was better than average in both mathematics and science. Nine per cent of the entry achieved the higher grades A* or A in English, whilst 10 per cent and 16 per cent respectively did the same in mathematics and science. The trend in the school's average GCSE points scores, for all the core subjects, over the past five years is steeper than the national trend, allowing for a dip in 1998. Results in most other subjects at least matched national figures in 2000. One exception was German where, after a significant increase between 1998 and 1999, results have dipped again. There has been a significant change of staff teaching German over the last four years, which has resulted in a lack of continuity. The school's assessment data shows that more pupils with lower attainment levels opt to learn German rather than French. In comparison with other subjects, pupils attain better in other subjects than in German. Results in geography are especially high, year on year, reflecting the exceptionally good standards of teaching seen in lessons at Key Stage 4, as well as at Key Stage 3.
5. Standards of literacy match national standards by the end of each key stage. Standards of numeracy match national standards by the end of Key Stage 3 and are

better than this by the end of Key Stage 4. This represents good progress from the time pupils enter the school with below average standards overall. The attention given by the specialised teaching within the mathematics department and the support provided by special educational needs (SEN) staff ensure that these problems do not seriously affect progress in the wider curriculum. For example, pupils can cope with number-based work in science, design technology and geography.

6. By the end of Year 9, most pupils achieve well. They make good progress, compared to their prior attainment, in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), and religious education (RE). They make satisfactory progress in art and design, history, modern foreign languages, music and physical education (PE). Pupils achieve much better than might be expected from their low starting point by making very good progress across the key stage in geography.
7. By the end of Key Stage 4, at age 16, most pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, ICT, history and music. They make satisfactory progress in design and technology, modern foreign languages, PE and RE. Pupils achieve much better than might be expected and make very good progress across the key stage in both geography and art and design.
8. With few exceptions, pupils with SEN achieve as well as other pupils in the same class, allowing for their lower starting points. In 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving at least grade G in one or more subjects at GCSE was above the national average. Most of the pupils who entered the school with weak reading skills are now more confident and read with better understanding because they are supported well in lessons by teachers and education care officers who are aware of their difficulties. On the other hand, when pupils with persistent difficulties are withdrawn from classes for additional help, they make more limited progress, since the learning and teaching are often less effective in the withdrawal groups. There is no specific identification or SEN provision for gifted and talented pupils.
9. In 2000, the school exceeded its performance targets for the proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSE grades A* - C and for the average GCSE points scores. This represents good added value, especially for those pupils who were achieving at below average levels for their age when they entered the school in Year 7. The targets for 2001 are even more challenging but are achievable from the evidence of the work seen.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

10. Attitudes are good, relationships are very good and behaviour is satisfactory. The school is gaining a well deserved reputation for dealing effectively with pupils who exhibit behavioural problems but this is beginning to put unfair pressure on the school's support systems, and especially upon teachers who are relatively new to the profession or to the school.
11. Pupils enjoy school. The vast majority are enthusiastic in lessons and speak highly of their teachers and other adults. They are keen to greet visitors and talk to them about the school. Once in class they are keen to get down to work, although lesson changeovers are somewhat dilatory. They show a genuine interest in their work,

especially in answering questions. This was particularly evident in a lesson discussing the characters in 'Bridge to Terabithia' where the quality of listening and the eagerness to answer questions was excellent. These positive attitudes are the result of the very good relationships between staff and pupils built up over a number of years and of the enthusiasm shown by teachers for their subjects. In interviews with pupils they talk of some lessons being disrupted by pupils who have enrolled recently and are yet to benefit fully from the supportive ethos of the school.

12. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, being good around the school, at lunchtime and in the dining hall, although this is offset by the poor behaviour shown in some lessons by a few pupils. Temporary exclusions reflect the problems exhibited by this small number of pupils. They are above average for a school of this size. There have been no permanent exclusions recently. In the dining hall, pupils talk to each other sociably and help to keep the school in good condition by respecting the buildings. Where classroom management is less successful there is some restlessness, lack of effort, and pupils continue to talk across the teacher. Oppressive behaviour was observed once during the inspection, and pupil interviews suggest that this is a rare occurrence and that when it occurs it is speedily and effectively dealt with. Pupil behaviour in the bulk of lessons seen was good or better.
13. Relationships are very good. Teachers know their pupils very well and enjoy working with them. For example, after personal and social education lessons pupils stay behind at break time to chatter about their social life and their problems. The teacher informally helps the many pupils who seek his advice. In science lessons pupils work well together in groups, for example, in the 'Earth in Space' project. They are appreciative of each other's work, even to the extent of giving spontaneous rounds of applause when other pupils read out their own work effectively.
14. Personal development is good. The school council is a major strength in encouraging the taking of both responsibility and initiative. Many year group activities are organised by pupils, particularly the supporting of charities and the detailed arrangements for visits. Pupils conduct visitors around the school and help with induction of new pupils.
15. Attendance is good, one percentage point better than at the last inspection, and unauthorised absence has halved. The start of school is often delayed by four or five minutes by the late arrival of the 'second bus' with the same bus doing two trips. Although the spacious site can be traversed in three minutes, lessons often start ten minutes late due to the leisurely pace at which pupils transfer between lessons. Registers are efficiently maintained.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching and learning are strengths of the school and have improved since the previous inspection. Ninety five per cent of the 131 lessons inspected were judged to be at least satisfactory, with just five per cent being unsatisfactory. Sixty five per cent of lessons were at least good, and 18 per cent were very good. One lesson of geography in Year 8 was outstanding. The very good lessons were in English, history, mathematics and geography at both key stages; in science, PSE and design and technology at Key Stage 3 and in RE at Key Stage 4 (there were no RE lessons to inspect at Key Stage 3 during the inspection week). In addition, at least one good lesson, and usually many more than this, were seen in every National Curriculum subject.

17. This better teaching, which is promoting the better learning, is notable in every subject for the teachers' good command of their subjects, and in virtually every subject for the teachers' effective planning and high expectations of all their pupils. The most effective teaching methods seen were those in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, humanities (history, geography and religious education) drama at Key Stage 3 and in art and design at Key Stage 4. In these, and also in design and technology lessons, pupil management was a strength. ICT resources were used most effectively in humanities, and in PSE and science lessons. Pupils' work was assessed well and good use made of the assessments to modify future teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics, science and humanities lessons. The best examples of using homework to extend work begun in class were seen in mathematics and geography at both key stages, and in English at Key Stage 4.
18. In these better lessons pupils make substantial progress, their interest is captured well and their productivity is high. In some cases, in mathematics, history, geography and science, for example, they also have above average awareness of how well they are doing and of how they can improve the quality of their own learning.
19. A very good science lesson with Year 7 pupils was notable for the sensitivity with which the topic of sex education was taught, and for the way in which it was used to reinforce pupils' literacy skills of writing, spelling, reading and listening. After an initial short introduction, and following detailed work in a previous lesson, pupils were asked to write at length about human sexual reproduction, using as many as possible of the correct technical names. Sufficient time was given for every pupil to write a significant amount; the teacher circulating and giving individual support and encouragement where necessary. Pupils then read out a selection of the finished accounts to the class in turn. The quality and standard of some accounts was staggeringly high for such young pupils. Rapt and respectful attention was the result, and much more secure learning than might otherwise have been the case.
20. The small number of unsatisfactory lessons were all at Key Stage 3, two each in mathematics and German, and one in each of science and learning support. Occasionally, there are lapses in planning or failure to manage challenging behaviour, which result in unsatisfactory learning. In mathematics, some pupils have a rather modest view of what constitutes hard work and teachers do not always succeed in motivating them to sufficient sustained effort. Teachers in some mathematics classes do not begin with a clear enough statement about what is to be achieved, nor do they review with the pupils the success of each lesson. In one of the unsatisfactory German lessons, pupils received too little challenge and their learning was less than it should have been. In the other lesson, when teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were reluctant to co-operate with the teacher and showed poor motivation. In a small minority of science lessons, the challenging behaviour of a few pupils is not managed sufficiently effectively to allow the lessons to proceed as planned. Weaknesses in the quality of preparation, and of record keeping and a lack of sufficient focus in the lesson caused a learning support lesson to be judged unsatisfactory. The expensive resource of education care officers (ECOs), or even in some cases, support teachers, is not always used to best effect.
21. Pupils with SEN are most often taught in classes in which they are integrated with their fellow pupils, sometimes with in-class support from either a support teacher or

an ECO. Some pupils are occasionally withdrawn in small groups for more intensive support in small groups. The quality of the teaching and learning they receive, when integrated with other pupils and taught by specialist teachers, is generally good. Most lessons provide effectively for the needs of all pupils. The support in lessons by ECOs and teachers is mostly effective. Teachers have pupils' individual education plans (IEPs), although the quality of these needs improving. In mainstream lessons teachers make good provision for pupils with SEN. The quality of learning matches that of others in mainstream lessons. When the pupils are withdrawn from lessons the quality of learning is satisfactory but not as good as when they are taught in the mainstream.

22. Teachers of all subjects are aware of teaching and learning strategies commonly used to raise levels of literacy in primary schools. As a result, most subjects are making a contribution to improving standards of literacy. Pupils are helped to understand, use and correctly spell words relevant to their work in most subjects. In some subjects, they are given good opportunities to read for understanding. Poetry is read and written in English, history and science. Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence in using language by contributing more than short answers to discussions and having opportunities and guidance to write at length, especially in English, geography, history and science. They are encouraged not only to write coherently but also to write creatively, for example in science, when they used a poem to describe the action of a blast furnace. On the other hand, the teaching of literacy within the mathematics curriculum is under-developed. Although teachers are aware of the difficulties which some pupils experience with technical terminology, they lack some of the skills needed to help pupils improve this aspect of their learning.
23. The responsibility of all teachers to consider and contribute to the development of pupils' numeracy is yet to be tackled systematically. There is good practice in science, geography and design technology, where teachers approach mathematical elements of their subjects with great care. However, there has been no recent audit to identify the numeracy skills needed by pupils to cope with the demands of the curriculum. Therefore, the school cannot co-ordinate the approach to common mathematical techniques which are used in different subjects: for example, graphs in science and geography; measurement in design technology; and the use of co-ordinates and enlargement in art. The school has not yet identified ways in which all teachers can contribute actively to improving pupils' skills in this area of education.
24. There is improved teaching and learning, and weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been addressed. On the other hand, the time lost travelling between lessons has increased and even very experienced teachers now appear resigned to starting their lessons up to 10 minutes late. The challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils is still restricting the learning of pupils in some classes. Some teachers, who are still relatively new to the profession or to the school, still need support to help them to master the skills of ensuring that such pupils arrive punctually for their lessons, are employed in useful activities rapidly and are stretched with demanding work which interests them.

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

25. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements. A suitable range of options is offered at the end of Year 9. Religious education is provided for all pupils and meets the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus. The school seeks to provide relevant courses for all its pupils, including an interesting and developing work-related provision of good quality. Through its curriculum the school meets the needs of its pupils effectively. Great effort is made to place pupils in their preferred options by the beginning of Year 10. This reflects the concern the school has to give each pupil the opportunity to study their first choice subjects. A good personal and social education programme and provision for work experience and community placements underpin the curriculum. In this way the school makes sensible use of resources in the local community. There is a good programme of visits and activities, which contribute to pupils' learning. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and respect the differences and similarities between people's beliefs, values and traditions.
26. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal and social education. There is a well thought out programme, which includes sex education and attention to the dangers of drug misuse. It is taught by one teacher to each class at both key stages. This approach means that pupils have a consistent experience of personal and social education. The teaching is good because it is planned well and involves the pupils actively and enjoyably in learning.
27. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 9 class learning about contraception. Relationships are warm and friendly and pupils clearly enjoy the lessons. The school's approach to this area of the curriculum also benefits from the same teacher organising the Year 10 work experience scheme and the community placements, both of which work well.
28. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and adds considerably to pupils' experiences and learning. There is a wide range of sporting and other opportunities provided during the whole-school activities week, and these are very popular with pupils. Sport and team games are also popular and well-supported, whilst a well organised inter-form competition provides opportunities for many pupils to participate. Most subjects offer opportunities for extension, for example, ICT, history, and modern foreign languages, although the provision in music is sporadic. Help with additional work guidance and GCSE revision is also a feature in many departments. The library is used well, and both drama and the model car club are flourishing. Regular trips and visits are arranged both locally and abroad for educational and recreational purposes. Each year group organises its own programme for its day off-timetable, and the curriculum is enhanced by specialist weeks with a whole-school focus, for example, combining the arts, science and technology.
29. The school's provision for careers education and guidance is good. There are effective links with the local employers and the Careers Service, with opportunities for pupils to receive individual guidance in Years 10 and 11. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of different career paths from Year 9 onwards. Careers events and lessons in Years 10 and 11 make a valuable contribution to preparing pupils for the world of work and further education. Pupils also benefit from a well-organised work experience programme in the summer term

of Year 10. The experience is supervised well and pupils' achievements in the workplace are recorded in their records of achievements. The careers room in a demountable classroom is in a very poor condition and is to be replaced as part of the current building programme at the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to use ICT to inform their career decisions. Year 11 pupils stated that they had received valuable careers advice at the school but felt that there was a need for more prospectuses to inform their choice of sixth form or college in the next phase of their education.

30. Provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory, although there are weaknesses in its co-ordination. They have full access to the National Curriculum and are appropriately supported in mainstream lessons. Pupils with statements receive their entitlement to support. A small proportion of pupils is withdrawn for teaching in small groups to support their development in literacy. Appropriate arrangements are made to support pupils who require help with reading or writing during examinations. At the end of Year 9, transitional reviews are in place and there is good involvement from the careers service. There is provision for pupils to have additional support during lunch hours most days. At Key Stage 4, pupils have opportunities to follow courses which are suited to their needs and for which they can receive appropriate accreditation.
31. Although the overall provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, it is limited by the absence of a regular act of collective worship in which there are opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own values and beliefs and those of others. The RE department makes a significant contribution. Pupils are given time for reflection. They are urged to take nothing for granted but to think about religion and religious beliefs. They are encouraged to express their feelings in their writing. Accounts of the Holocaust, written as if by Jewish survivors, and a defence of fasting at Ramadan, written as if by a young Moslem, show great sensitivity and a high degree of empathy for the feelings of others. In English, pupils are encouraged to make positive evaluations of their own work and that of others. In this and other subjects pupils' opinions are treated seriously and valued by their teachers. The study of geography gives pupils insight into the values and beliefs of other cultures such as Brazil. Pupils begin to see themselves as part of a global community, contrasting their lives with those of the less fortunate.
32. Provision for moral development is good. Teachers treat pupils with respect and encourage them to treat each other with courtesy. Pupils trust teachers. They expect support and help to deal with problems, even some which may have arisen outside school. Pupils are presented with moral dilemmas. Geography exercises involve moral decisions, for instance in situations when plans for new roads conflict with the welfare of local communities. Pupils in a science lesson discuss the moral implications of air pollution. History pupils discuss the immorality of the Nazi subjection of women. They also consider the constitutional statement 'All men are created equal' in the light of the white settlers' treatment of native Americans. Pupils have a good idea of right and wrong.
33. The provision for social development is very good. Pupils are concerned for each other and applaud each other's success. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils work co-operatively and are prepared to share information. Disparate groups of pupils sit happily together to chat at lunch times. The year councils and the school council provide opportunities for their members to become involved in whole school issues. They are currently researching school meals and

have requested out-door seating. Pupils have a responsible attitude to learning. For example, the history revision classes after school are very well attended. Extra-curricular activities give more scope for pupils to mix and to make new friends. Year 7 pays an annual visit to the Royal Show. Year 8 pupils are offered a pets and hobbies day. As part of the PSE programme, Year 10 pupils undertake community service in pre-school and nursery groups and in day care centres for the elderly. Pupils may also achieve a vocational award by becoming involved in projects such as the restoration of local woodlands. Pupils with specific problems are offered a Circle of Friends to help and advise them.

34. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Knowledge of their own culture is promoted through visits to museums and other places of historical interest, to art galleries and the theatres. A combined art and history visit to Florence gives an extra cultural dimension to the study of the Renaissance. An annual Magistrates Day ensures that pupils are informed about the English legal system. In geography, very good use is made of the local area as a resource which enhances pupils' sense of community and their awareness of their own culture. Through their study of English literature, pupils recognise the differences between contemporary culture and that of earlier periods. In history and geography, pupils study the cultures of other lands – Brazilian, Chechnyan and native American. On occasion the school welcomes groups of American pupils and provides host families for their stay in the area. Multicultural Britain is not ignored. Studies of literature from the Indian sub continent and of Afro Caribbean verse are expanded to identify similarities and differences in culture. Urban geography involves a study of the Asian community in Bradford and the Italian community in Bedford. The library is well resourced for books on other cultures. An excellent selection of books on religious festivals - for example Sikh and Islamic – is used in the humanities department. An interesting selection of cookery books from Lebanese to Vietnamese is currently being used for a programme on 'Food from other countries'.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The high quality of pastoral support pervades every aspect of the school and is a strength, as it was at the time of the last inspection. A deputy headteacher and the heads of year provide strong leadership and are devoted to the care of the pupils in the school. Assessment arrangements continue to be satisfactory. Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and there is good provision for pupils in wheelchairs.
36. The school is a safe environment, with all the expected safety measures in place, and regular safety inspections which are recorded and acted upon. There is a systematic review of safety procedure, for instance, safety procedures for outside activities have just been updated, and a better evacuation procedure installed. Child protection procedures are good, the nominated person being very experienced in this field with good contacts and knowledge of local procedures. Appropriate training has been given to staff. Pupils who are being looked after by the local authority or who are on the 'at risk' register are shown an extra interest and, where appropriate, offered extra support. Topics and issues taught in the personal and social education programme help pupils to look after themselves, and these lessons are very highly regarded by the pupils themselves. They also play a significant part in the school's good procedures to counter harassment, together with assemblies and a highly regarded contribution from the drama department. Welfare is generally well provided for, although some of the toilet provision requires improvement.

37. Attendance is monitored and promoted well. Some 20 pupils with poor attendance records are monitored daily and appropriate action taken if they fail to appear either at school or in lessons. Imaginative procedures are sometimes used. For instance one very poor attender was reformed by gearing his written work towards his intended career. Otherwise the expected rewards and procedures are in place.
38. The promotion of good behaviour is satisfactory. The good set of principles for achieving good behaviour, backed up by procedures aimed at ensuring uniform implementation, are successful most of the time, although some staff need more support on how to deal effectively with the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils. The pastoral aspects of behaviour management are very good. Much counselling takes place by the heads of year, a deputy head and other members of staff. A pastoral care worker has recently been appointed and she has also contributed to the counselling activities, specialising in anger management. These activities are effective and are the principal contributor to the school's reputation for handling poor behaviour well.
39. The school has satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. There are effective procedures to ensure that the school has secure information to pass to departments about pupils' attainment when they are first enrolled. To supplement this, pupils are measured by the use of standardised cognitive tests in Year 7. Subject assessments are guided by a whole school assessment policy. Procedures are excellent in geography, very good in science, and good in English, mathematics and the humanities. However, assessment in music at Key Stage 3 is underdeveloped. More internal moderation of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments is required in design and technology and in physical education to determine accurate levels for each pupil. Closer monitoring is required to bring all departments up to the same high standards. Day-to-day marking, which underpins the assessment of pupils' classwork and homework, is not carried out consistently across subject areas.
40. Arrangements for the identification and assessment of pupils with SEN meet the recommendations of the Code of Practice. Pupils with SEN are identified by liaison with primary schools, the results of tests taken before and after admission to the school and by concerns of parents and teachers. Pupils who are identified as having SEN are placed on a special register which is appropriately maintained. All teachers know its details. They have access to copies of individual education plans (IEPs) for each pupil. IEPs are reviewed termly, progress recorded and pupils are moved up or down the stages of the register as appropriate, based on the success they are having with meeting their targets. Pupils with statements have their progress and needs reviewed annually. Statements and records of provision are maintained well. Form teachers oversee the needs of pupils on Stage 1 of the SEN Code of Practice. Heads of year write the IEPs for pupils on Stages 2 and 3 and the special needs co-ordinator writes the IEPs for pupils on Stages 4 and 5. In both cases the IEPs would benefit from having a sharper focus. The pastoral team play a significant role in monitoring the progress and provision for pupils with SEN.
41. Assessment data is used satisfactorily to guide curricular planning. School and subject examination results and the national test results are analysed and trends identified. Within subject areas, however, the analysis of data to inform planning is inconsistent. Good use of it is made in science for example, where assessment results are used to form pupil groups at Key Stage 4, and the analysis of GCSE results has led to the introduction of modular science.

42. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development across the range of subjects of the curriculum are satisfactory. The form tutor, in conjunction with the subject teacher and head of year, monitors the progress and personal development, looking at underachievement and pupils' behaviour. Issues raised at briefings are followed up with pupil referral sheets, and there are separate sheets for form tutors to gather information. At the beginning of Year 10, prior attainment data, especially standard assessment test scores, are produced for departments to set target grades. These are then reviewed after the examinations later in the year and those above and below target are identified. Year 11 pupils are mentored to help them through preparations for GCSE. Small groups of boys from Year 9 and Year 10 have been identified to participate in groups to raise attainment and self-esteem. Records of achievement provide parents with details of courses, teachers' comments about attainment and progress, and pupils have the opportunity to provide their own comments, which are reinforced by teachers' targets for pupils. Teachers' information to pupils at Key Stage 3, with detailed comments about their work and levels they have achieved, is very good in the humanities, but weak in modern foreign languages, music and art. For the current Year 7, departments have produced a bank of statements to use in developing a computer system on reporting, which have a much sharper focus on pupils' attainment in relation to the appropriate levels of the National Curriculum. The simple, effective and manageable interim reports, which are much appreciated by parents, are in abeyance owing to action by the teaching unions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school's partnership with parents is effective, as it was at the time of the last inspection.
44. Most parents believe that their children make good progress and work hard. They feel that the school is easy to approach with problems, is well managed and produces pupils who are mature and responsible. Some parents, however, do not feel well enough informed about pupils' progress or that the school works closely with them. Parents are also concerned about homework and the range of activities available outside lessons. The inspection team supports the positive comments. Pupils' progress is reported on a similar basis to comparable schools and the school actively encourages offers of help. The headteacher is, however, concerned at these criticisms and plans further research into what parents need. The inspection team finds that the school uses homework well. Activities outside lessons are good. The school arranges a good spread of outside visits and allows pupils access to all parts of the school, except laboratories and workshops, in the lunch hour, which is unusual. There are also a range of clubs meeting on the school premises.
45. The information provided for parents is good. There is a very good termly newsletter plus an informative annual report and an informative prospectus, although both could promote the school's merits more effectively. The distribution of annual reports or records of achievement are carefully timed to coincide with evenings for the discussion of pupils' progress. The records of achievement have good descriptions of the work tackled, qualitative assessments of pupils' achievements, statements by pupils evaluating how they have performed and, for the younger pupils, targets for improvement. Quantitative data on performance are made available at the parents' meetings, and suggestions on how pupils may be helped at home. Together these are good procedures. The school also holds informative evenings and provides

information on work experience, choices in Year 10 and sixth form provision at a range of institutions. There are effective procedures for the induction of new pupils.

46. Parents help the school through the parents' association, which raises valuable funds. Parents help with design and technology and netball coaching. They provide accommodation for visiting American pupils. Most help with encouraging homework through the pupils' planners and some are to be involved in a basic skills project. One of the strengths of the school is the way it involves parents in problem solving. Whenever there is a problem where it is felt that collaboration with home can make a contribution, the school is enthusiastic to do so. For example, after a temporary exclusion, parents are asked to come to school with their son or daughter to discuss strategies for improvement. Parents of pupils with SEN contribute comments on perceived progress of the children at annual reviews. Most parents attend or provide written comments for the review meetings and are supportive of the school's efforts to help their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The school is led and managed effectively and is governed well. The school's positive ethos, referred to in the previous report, is still much in evidence and permeates everything that happens in the school.
48. The headteacher, in his ninth year at the school, leads well in a quiet and principled way, gradually and effectively taking the school forward during a period of substantial building modifications. He is ably supported by two experienced and capable deputy headteachers, who, as well as carrying heavy teaching loads, effectively split the co-ordination and oversight of curricular and pastoral matters between them.
49. The governing body is well balanced and experienced, containing a good range of expertise and professional knowledge, including from the world of education. Whilst understanding clearly the role of governors, and where this fits with that of the school's senior management, the governing body is more involved than many in school development planning, and at an earlier stage than is sometimes the case elsewhere. Therefore, governors are better informed about the actual work of the school and its current strengths and weaknesses than they might otherwise be, and are consequently all the better equipped to act as 'critical friends' of the school. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily, except for ensuring that all pupils take part in a daily act of collective worship.
50. School development planning is a strength of the school. The latest plan has a coherence which points to a great deal of thoughtful discussion having been put into it, involving right from the very start both governors and staff. It has a clear and vibrant statement of intent, that is, to make the school as good a small secondary school as it is possible to be. It is also well linked, via aims which stress the sense of belonging, the high standards of personal conduct and the fostering of good work habits, to separate departmental sections with more specific and measurable objectives. These separate departmental sections fit well with the whole school portions of the plan, which have more of a strategic feel.
51. The leadership and management of most subjects, including all three of the core subjects English, mathematics and science, are good. In some cases, humanities and ICT for example, they are very good. A high level of team spirit is a common

factor in them all. Pastoral leadership is strong and effective. The year system is the backbone of the school's strategy for pastoral care and it works well. Parents and pupils speak highly of the care provided by the school.

52. The co-ordination of SEN is a relative weakness. Although all teachers understand their responsibilities in respect of the SEN Code of Practice and provide well for pupils in lessons, there is no formal liaison between departments and the SEN co-ordinator. Teachers are provided with information about pupils and have copies of IEPs but otherwise have insufficient support and guidance on how to support pupils with SEN. Most IEP targets are not sufficiently focused. There is some confusion between aims, strategies and targets. There are no link members for SEN in departments. Some teachers do not understand how to help pupils to achieve their targets and are not provided with sufficient support and guidance for this from the SENCO. The quality of documentation for the department is generally satisfactory except for the SEN policy, which is in need of updating, and the handbook, which is unhelpful for guiding members of the department. Guidance provided for teachers to help them to understand and support pupils with handwriting and spelling difficulties is outdated and does not meet the needs of non-specialists. The quality of links with outside agencies is good. There is room for improvement in the effective use of the staff designated to give additional support to pupils with SEN.
53. The number of staff is adequate for the needs of the curriculum. Teachers are well qualified and have a good range of experience in the subjects they teach. The proportion of time spent teaching and the ratio of the number of pupils per teacher are both similar to the national average. There is good quality technical support in science, design and technology and information and communication technology. There is some non-specialist teaching in history, mathematics and information and communication technology but this is generally of a satisfactory quality.
54. Procedures for the induction and professional development of staff are good and all aspects of staff development are documented well. Under the leadership of the headteacher, performance management is well-established and responsibilities are effectively devolved through the school's existing line management procedures. The school expects to have completed its first cycle by the end of the summer term. There is a secure and well-organised system for determining and providing for staff training needs in relation to subject areas. Requests by individual teachers for subject specific training have to be linked to the school and department development plans and allocations are made following discussions between the headteacher and the staff development co-ordinator, thus ensuring that available funds are being spent wisely. However, there is no requirement for staff to report back other than informally on the training courses attended. On some training days the school makes good use of the expertise of staff on a range of topics such as recording and reporting and target-setting.
55. The programme of training provided for newly qualified teachers is supervised well by a senior member of staff. The main responsibility for its delivery lies with the appropriate subject area but there is a whole school element to it as well as input from the local education authority. New teachers have regular meetings with the co-ordinator on a range of general issues, for example, classroom management. Newly qualified teachers are regularly observed in the classroom by a number of people, including the headteacher. Effective written feedback is given and targets for action set. Teachers are granted leave of absence to attend relevant courses provided by

the local education authority and others. Newly qualified teachers currently in school feel well supported by the training they are receiving.

56. Resources are adequate for the number of pupils in the school. Spending is focused on both school and department development plans. Sufficient supplies of consumables are available to ensure that the curriculum is taught, but a shortage of textbooks in some subjects, especially in relation to homework, prevents some pupils from making appropriate progress, and pupils are required to provide their own drawing materials in art and design. Significant progress has been made in the provision of ICT since the last inspection. Appropriate subject specific software has also been purchased for many subject areas. However, the use of ICT to enrich the learning of music is limited by the department only having an out-dated computer and no suitable software. More technician support is provided and is having a positive impact on pupil access to equipment. The library is very well organised and a well-used resource. The library development plan identifies priorities and the librarian makes effective use of the funding available. Non-fiction texts, however, are in short supply. Learning resources for SEN are adequate but some are in need of updating.
57. Accommodation is much improved since the last inspection, and is satisfactory overall, but there are severe restrictions in its layout which could only be completely solved by rationalising it on to one half of the site. Further improvement is well under way with the almost completed new technology block to house all design and technology and ICT. Accommodation is good in some areas of the school, for example, for English, humanities and physical education. It is unsatisfactory for mathematics, drama and music. For example, there is no really satisfactory teaching area for drama, and the music practice room is in a poor state of repair. Two mathematics rooms are too small and one has such bad acoustics that children cannot be heard answering questions. Some areas of the school could be improved by more thorough cleaning. The large school site contains some fairly cramped accommodation. For example, there is no school hall and little storage space. Sections of the perimeter are currently unfenced and whilst vandalism has been a problem at the school, the installation of closed circuit television cameras has reduced it considerably. Rainfall causes mud and debris to be washed down to the school buildings from the higher ground creating difficult conditions both inside and out. Access around school for the two pupils who use wheelchairs is helped by the installation of ramps, non-slip surfaces and the effective use of a tractor system for lifting pupils and their wheelchairs upstairs. Accommodation for pupils with SEN is unsatisfactory in that it does not provide a stimulating environment. Their base room is not open to support pupils for much of the day. It is either locked when unoccupied or used as a teaching room. The most pressing issue for the school as a whole is an organisational one, the learning time wasted in travelling from one edge of the site to the other. In the absence of a rationalisation of all the provision on to the newer side of the site, which could be partially funded by selling off the older part of the site, urgent consideration is called for a timetable structure which would drastically reduce the number of occasions pupils have to travel between the two halves of the school.
58. Financial administration is efficient, and modern technology used well in accounting. Financial acumen is evident in purchasing procedures. For instance, a trial of competitive tendering for insurance was found to be less effective than asking for quotations and then 'horse trading'. Comparisons of efficiency are made with similar schools and the value of particular training courses is assessed. The governing body challenges the justification for new spending and seeks full details of benefits.

Staff are fully consulted on development priorities and staff, governors and management are fully involved in drawing up the development plan. The development plan is fully costed and the costs incorporated in the budget.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The school's staff and governors are in a strong position to remedy the weaknesses identified in this inspection. They should:

Raise standards of attainment in German by:

- improving the continuity and quality of teaching.
(Paragraph 20, 130, 131)

Improve the co-ordination of special educational needs by:

- forming stronger links between the co-ordinator and each department;
- updating relevant documentation and guidance for teachers;
- improving the focus of pupils' individual education plans;
- clarifying and improving the role of both in-class and withdrawal support;
- up-dating the guidance for teachers to help them to support more effectively pupils with spelling and handwriting difficulties.

(Paragraphs 8, 20, 21,52)

Take all necessary steps to assist those few teachers who need help to deal effectively with the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils, including by:

- helping them to master the skills of ensuring that such pupils arrive punctually for their lessons, are employed in useful activities rapidly and are stretched with demanding work which interests them.

(Paragraphs 20, 24)

Reduce the large amount of time wasted travelling between lessons, either by:

- concentrating the accommodation on to the newer half of the site as soon as funds permit; and in the meantime:
- revamping the timetable to have more breaks for travelling between lessons;
- having a concerted whole school drive to insist upon punctuality to lessons.

(Paragraphs 15, 24, 57)

Other issues which the school should consider:

- Not all pupils experience a daily act of collective worship.
- The shortage of textbooks in some subjects and pupils having to provide their own drawing materials in art and design.
- Making the SEN learning support base for pupils with SEN more accessible and a more stimulating environment for pupils.

(Paragraphs 31, 56, 57)

KEY STAGE FOUR

60. The Key Stage 4 curriculum meets statutory requirements. Pupils are offered full GCSE courses in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Religious education and information and communication technology are offered as GCSE short courses. There is provision for pupils to take all these subjects at Certificate of Achievement level. In addition, pupils are offered three option choices, modern foreign languages or the John Flamsteed Vocational Award; design technology, which includes electronics, and a choice from Expressive Arts, humanities and Physical Education. In order to follow the John Flamsteed Vocational award, pupils can be disapplied from a modern foreign language. Pupils may also be disapplied from design technology in order to choose subjects from expressive arts, humanities or physical education. This provision is for those pupils who are really good at one or more of these subjects. It is intended to widen the choice pupils are able to make. Pupils are encouraged to make a sensible and balanced choice, which allows them to gain ten full GCSEs.
61. The John Flamsteed Vocational Award is a work related course designed for those pupils who would find it more appropriate. The school has designed the course to challenge pupils to master certain key skills on their own initiative. These key skills include communication, application of number, information and communication technology, working with others, problem solving and improving their own learning. The Award is externally validated. Pupils can use part of the Award as a credit for post 16 education and training. The course is organised well. For example, during the week of the inspection, pupils worked with members of the Groundwork Trust to map and improve a local wood. Pupils had constructed and administered a survey amongst local people, analysed their findings and used this to plan ways to improve access and information about the area. They made their own decisions, working in a harmonious partnership with members of the trust and the deputy headteacher who runs the course. Pupils spend one whole day each week working on the Award plus another period for evaluation and planning. This has consequences for the timetabling of some subjects, for example mathematics and modern foreign languages. Within the constraints of a small school, great effort is made to provide a curriculum which offers opportunities for pupils of all levels of attainment to achieve a worthwhile qualification. Those pupils who take part value the John Flamsteed Award.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	131
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	59

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	17	47	31	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	560	N/A
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	55	N/A

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22	N/A
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54	N/A

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	49	68	117

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	29	36	33
	Girls	52	50	40
	Total	81	86	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	69(47)	74(67)	63(54)
	National	63(63)	65(62)	59(55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18(15)	34(36)	29(18)
	National	28(28)	42(38)	30(23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	28	31	35
	Girls	49	37	46
	Total	77	68	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66(75)	58(68)	70(67)
	National	64(64)	66(64)	62(60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	25(30)	34(35)	26(29)
	National	31(31)	39(37)	29(28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	48	49	97

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	23	44	47
	Girls	24	47	48
	Total	47	91	95
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	48(54)	94(90)	98(96)
	National	47.4(46.6)	90.6(90.9)	95.6(95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	40
	National	38.4

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	557
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	30	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	31.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	300

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78%
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.5
Key Stage 4	20.8

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1,324,136
Total expenditure	1,321,843
Expenditure per pupil	2,399
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,243
Balance carried forward to next year	20,536

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	560
Number of questionnaires returned	115

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	50	7	5	3
My child is making good progress in school.	36	56	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	63	9	8	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	52	21	9	2
The teaching is good.	30	52	11	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	45	20	14	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	45	6	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	42	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	18	39	27	10	5
The school is well led and managed.	30	51	8	4	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	49	10	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	41	26	9	9

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

ENGLISH

62. Attainment in tests taken by pupils aged 14 in 2000 matched national levels but was below that of similar schools. Boys achieved less well than girls by a similar margin to that found nationally. Standards of attainment almost matched those in mathematics and science and were higher than in recent previous years. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* - C in English and English Literature just exceeded national averages. The percentage gaining A* - C was below average in drama where an unusually high proportion of lower ability pupils followed the course. Results in English show that levels of attainment improve significantly from the time pupils enter the school when attainment is below average.
63. Evidence of the inspection confirms that pupils aged 14 speak clearly and confidently when working as a full class or in smaller groups. They listen attentively to teachers so that they quickly understand explanations and instructions and begin tasks confidently. Usually, they also listen carefully to each other in group discussions and when responding to questions asked by teachers. Pupils read aloud confidently and with good understanding of at least the main sense of a passage. A satisfactory proportion read with quick recognition of significant details and good understanding of how writers gain their effects. Most of the pupils who entered the school with weak reading skills are now more confident and read with better understanding because they are well supported in lessons by teachers and support assistants who are aware of their difficulties. When those with persistent difficulties are withdrawn from classes for additional help, learning and teaching are less effective. Pupils take pride in their written work whether it is hand written or produced by use of computers. They use appropriate language when writing for a wide range of purposes. Higher attaining pupils are able to select and organise material when required to write at length, whereas others depend upon the guidance of teachers. The quality of the writing of pupils at all levels of attainment, including some with otherwise impressive skills, is reduced by the frequency of persistent misspelling of words in everyday use. This occurs especially when confusing words with similar sounds such as 'their', 'there,' 'as' and 'has'. Many are unsure of the use of full stops and capital letters are sometimes used in the middle of words. Evidence was noted of pupils having made good use of computers for word processing, and occasionally for research, but this is not part of a planned provision.
64. In Years 10 -11 the balance of strengths is similar to that observed in the work of younger pupils. Pupils have very good relationships with teachers and each other which encourages them to develop understanding through offering suggestions when discussing aspects of literature. They are confident and articulate in speech and listen attentively to teachers and each other. They read with good understanding and know the importance of using evidence to support their judgements. Pupils demonstrate wider vocabularies in written work and higher attainers, particularly, seek to use techniques observed in the work of writers they have read in their own writing. Some written work is of very high quality but that of the majority is less effective because of the frequency of errors of the kind identified in the work of the younger pupils.

65. Pupils in all year groups make good progress in lessons and over time by comparison with earlier achievements. They are motivated well and respond positively to the challenging work their teachers set. Particularly good examples were noted in a Year 7 class exploring the emotions of a character in 'Bridge to Terabithia,' making very good use of techniques more usually employed in drama, and in a Year 10 class analysing technical aspects of film-making. Effort and behaviour are good so that learning is purposeful and is not disrupted. Teaching and learning are less effective when pupils moving between buildings have to travel significant distances to lessons and arrive very late.
66. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages is mostly good and one quarter of it is very good. It is never less than satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons carefully and conduct them at a purposeful pace towards well defined learning targets. This helps pupils sustain their concentration by ensuring that pupils understand the relevance of lessons and how they link to earlier and future work. Teachers make skilful use of questions both to confirm and to develop understanding. Although they would like more guidance on how to help some pupils with learning difficulties they almost always provide appropriate levels of challenge for pupils at all levels of attainment within their classes. Teachers are careful to encourage pupils to work as full classes, in small groups and as individuals. This variety of experience contributes significantly to the development of both their learning and their personal skills. Good examples were noted in Year 8 classes working on aspects of 'Great Expectations.' The quality of learning of pupils with special needs is improved by the work of educational care officers who have good understanding of the pupils concerned. Learning in a Year 10 drama class gained from the collaboration between the class teacher and a learning support teacher. Teachers are very quick to respond effectively to any signs of wandering concentration so that time is used very efficiently.
67. The curriculum is enriched by the provision of drama for all pupils at Key Stage 3 and at both key stages by the inclusion of units of work on media studies and literature from other cultures. There are too few opportunities in school for pupils to use information and communication technology. The quality of marking and assessment is good, especially in Years 10 – 11, where strengths are identified and advice on further improvement is provided more consistently. There is a need to introduce appropriate methods to improve the accuracy of elementary sentence construction and the spelling of words in common use as part of a whole school strategy. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is effective sharing of tasks and a positive team spirit. Since the previous report, the quality of teaching has improved and now it is never less than satisfactory. The pace of lessons and the provision of appropriate challenge for the highest attaining pupils have improved.

DRAMA

68. Drama is taught to all pupils at Key Stage 3 as a subject with its own specific skills and opportunities. It is a popular option leading to GCSE for an unusually high proportion of pupils in Years 10 - 11. Techniques of drama are also used well in English lessons to explore situations and relationships encountered in literature as well as to develop pupils' skills of speaking and listening.

69. Standards of attainment at GCSE are below national averages for Grades A* - C but all usually achieve a grade in the A* - G range. Success at this level is restricted by the very limited accommodation available for groups which are larger than usual and contain a wider range of attainment. Pupils aged 14 have good skills of planning and performing and good awareness of communication with an audience through gesture and facial expression. They are perceptive in evaluating their own performances and those of others and able to suggest possible means of further improvement. Attainment is above average for pupils of this age.
70. Pupils at 16 build upon their established skills and make good progress. This is more possible in fine weather when pupils can rehearse outside the drama room which is much too small for their numbers. Higher attaining pupils move confidently towards performance and are well able to make sensible decisions about options for presentation whereas lower attainers are heavily dependent upon the guidance of teachers in planning and rehearsing.
71. Pupils enjoy their work and work hard to improve their skills. Because they are confident in their relationships with teachers and each other they are willing to experiment and show ambition. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Lessons are planned well and conducted at a brisk pace. Tasks are clearly explained so that pupils begin work confidently. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, effort and achievement to which pupils respond positively.

LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

72. **Standards of literacy are satisfactory at the end of each key stage. This represents good progress from the time pupils enter the school with below average standards.**
73. Teachers of all subjects are aware of teaching and learning strategies commonly used in primary schools to raise levels of literacy. As a result, most subjects are making a contribution to improving standards. Pupils are helped to understand, use and spell correctly words in most subjects. In some, they are given good opportunities to read to gain understanding. Poetry is read and written in English, history and science. Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence in using language by contributing more than short answers to discussions and having opportunities and guidance to write at length, especially in English, geography, history and science.
74. The school does not have a policy for literacy development to underpin and extend practices which are proving beneficial. In consequence, opportunities are not always recognised. Although standards of literacy improve during the time pupils are in the school, some weaknesses persist and have an adverse effect. Pupils generally spell correctly the technical language they encounter in their studies. They continue to confuse everyday words, especially those with similar sounds such as 'there,' 'their,' 'as' and 'has.' The majority become able to write complex sentences but many continue to miss out full stops and capital letters. Capital letters too often appear in the middle of words. The school needs to develop whole school strategies to overcome these weaknesses without reducing the confidence pupils have gained in other aspects of writing.

MATHEMATICS

75. Results in the tests for fourteen year olds in 2000 match both the national average and the average attained in similar schools. This standard has been maintained over the last four years. Results gained in mathematics are close to science results and better than those in English. The differences in results obtained by boys and girls are similar to national figures. All the evidence gathered during the inspection confirms the maintenance of this standard of attainment. Pupils are working consistently at appropriately high standards in all the areas of mathematics. For example, higher attaining Year 9 pupils, who have started their GCSE work, are able to manipulate algebraic formulae with great confidence. Year 9 pupils in a lower set, learn how to take bearings, use angle measurers with skill and show a good understanding of the underlying principles. When pupils enter the school there is a weakness in their number work. Many have yet to master multiplication tables and they show limited ability to manipulate numbers mentally. This limits their attainment in other areas of mathematics. However this aspect of work improves rapidly and by Year 9 is no longer a problem. A below average proportion of pupils meet the national standard for mathematics when they enter the school. The standards reached by all pupils by the age of fourteen, including those with SEN, represent good achievement.
76. Results in GCSE examinations in 2000 are above the national average and have been for the last five years. The results match those obtained in similar schools. They are well above the results obtained nationally by pupils who were of a similar standard at age fourteen. This good standard of attainment extends across all pupils. The proportion gaining the higher grades (A* to C) was above the national average. The proportion achieving at least grade G was 95%, compared to only 90% nationally. Standards evident during the inspection were slightly better. Observation of lessons and the results of module tests already taken, indicate that more pupils should obtain higher GCSE grades in 2001 and 2002. The top set in Year 10 have mastered the graphical method of solving quadratic equations and many are tackling confidently problems set at the highest standard of difficulty. Pupils in the lowest Year 10 set are all working hard on a graded assessment course and are all in line to achieve at least grade G. The rise in standards from the tests taken at fourteen to the GCSE examinations also represents good achievement. The improvement from Years seven to 11, which is equally evident in all pupils, represents good achievement overall.
77. Teaching is good. Of the lessons observed, four fifths were good or better at Key Stage 3 and three fifths were good or better at Key Stage 4. Two lessons were unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. The large majority of teaching has a firm basis in very good relationships with pupils. This creates very well ordered lessons and a good climate for learning. Pupils respond positively, they trust their teachers and almost always give of their best. Nearly every lunchtime, some pupils spend time in the department benefiting from individual tuition. Lessons are planned well. The difficulty of work is carefully matched to pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Pupils in the bottom set of Year 10, follow individually tailored work designed to meet their personal needs. They receive appropriate help from the teacher and all learn effectively. Imaginative lessons result in pupils enjoying the work and, although they often have to strive hard they are ultimately successful. Improved self confidence is evident by the end of Year 7 and continues throughout pupils' time in the school. Pupils of average attainment in Year 10 worked with great interest on a practical activity designed to test their understanding of probability. During this lesson, all

practised several basic skills and all attained a secure grasp of a difficult and abstract concept. The emphasis on understanding, rather than learning mechanical routines, is most evident in the recently introduced work on numeracy. All lessons now include a short section on number work and the improvement in mental agility is evident. This improved facility is helping to raise standards in all areas of mathematics.

78. A relative weakness in teaching and learning is the pace at which some lessons proceed. Some pupils have a rather modest view of what constitutes hard work and teachers do not always succeed in motivating them to sufficient sustained effort. Teachers sometimes do not start lessons with a clear enough statement of what is to be achieved nor do they evaluate, with the pupils, the success of each lesson. Very occasionally, there are lapses in planning or failure to manage challenging behaviour, which result in unsatisfactory learning.
79. The teaching of literacy within the mathematics curriculum is underdeveloped. Although teachers are aware of the difficulties which some pupils experience with technical terminology, they lack some of the skills needed to help pupils improve this area of learning. The use of ICT to enrich the learning of mathematics is seriously limited by lack of access to equipment. The provision for pupils with SEN is good. In classes where there is a wide range of attainment, their progress is ensured by good quality in-class support. Where classes are taught in ability sets, pupils with learning difficulties are in small groups, taught by teachers with good expertise in dealing with their problems.
80. Several factors have an adverse effect on learning. The accommodation is in the oldest part of the school and some is of a poor quality. Two rooms are too small and one has such bad acoustics that children cannot be heard answering questions. All the rooms used are in need of decoration. They do not provide a good working environment for pupils or teachers. The present timetable allocates all four lessons for Year 11 into two consecutive days. Having two lessons in one day and long intervals between does not allow optimum use of the time available. Finally, the problems of getting from one building to the other are effectively cutting some lesson times down from fifty to forty minutes. Taken over an extended period, this loss of learning time is significant.
81. Leadership and management of the department are good. All the mathematics staff work together as a mutually supportive team. They all share in the responsibility for raising standards and developing the quality of learning. This is evident in the high morale, the very effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, and the energy with which new initiatives are grasped. The department has made an early and effective response to the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers are working together to redesign completely the schemes of work for Years 7 and 8. The new approach to number work is already resulting in better standards. Since the last inspection, all the issues criticised have been improved. Standards of attainment have risen and teaching is more imaginative and of better quality. The only weakness not rectified is the absence of a cross-curricular numeracy policy. The department provides a good education in mathematics and has all the necessary skills and determination to improve still further.

Numeracy across the curriculum

82. Standards of numeracy for many pupils entering the school are weak. The attention given by the specialised teaching within the mathematics department and the support provided by SEN staff ensure that these problems do not seriously affect progress in the wider curriculum. For example, pupils can cope with the number based work in science, design technology and geography.
83. The responsibility of all teachers to consider and contribute to the development of pupils' numeracy is yet to be tackled systematically. There is good practice in science, geography and design and technology, where teachers approach mathematical elements of their subjects with great care. However, there has been no recent audit to identify the numeracy skills needed by pupils to cope with the demands of the curriculum. The school cannot therefore co-ordinate the approach to common mathematical techniques which are used in different subjects: for example, graphs in science and geography; measurement in design technology; and the use of co-ordinates and enlargement in art. The school has not yet identified ways in which all teachers can contribute actively to improving pupils' skills in this area of education.

SCIENCE

84. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national standards. In the national tests in 2000, the proportions of pupils reaching at least level five and those reaching at least level six were both very similar to the national average and to those in schools with pupils from similar social backgrounds. There is no consistent difference between the attainment of boys and girls, although the boys' results in 2000 were better than those of the girls. The variation of results over time follows the national trend. Work seen during the inspection confirms the standards represented by the test results and some was better, particularly for high attaining pupils. All pupils rapidly develop good skills in experimental science from Year 7 onwards, and the sharp focus of the department on practical science is a substantial strength of its work. Most pupils write well about their experimental and other work and the scientific literacy of all pupils is developed well. They are encouraged not only to write coherently but also creatively such as seen, for example, in the use of a poem to describe the action of a blast furnace. By the end of the key stage, some high attaining pupils show a well-above average understanding of the mechanisms of topics such as inheritance, and many pupils in Year 8 acquire a good grasp of the principles of photosynthesis. Pupils with lower attainment, and some with SEN, can carry out experiments successfully on a range of topics but need a good deal of help in the recording of their results. Their grasp of scientific vocabulary and understanding of concepts is not secure and needs constant reinforcement.
85. By the age of sixteen, attainment is above the national average. The proportions of pupils reaching at least grade C and those reaching at least grade G in the 2000 examinations for GCSE were both above the national average. The fact that no pupil taking double science achieved a grade below E in 2000 represents a good performance for the department. The proportion of pupils achieving the very high grades of A and A* is well above the national average. Boys achieved better results than girls but not consistently so over recent years and the GCSE results overall have consistently improved since the last inspection. The small number of pupils following the certificate of achievement single science course all achieved a

distinction. As at Key Stage 3, the pattern of attainment seen during the inspection compares favourably with examination results. All pupils continue to build successfully on their experimental and investigative skills. For example, by the end of the key stage, all pupils, including those with SEN and many of the pupils on the certificate of achievement course can successfully complete experiments in which they have to collect a range of data and represent them graphically. In this, they are well supported by adequate mathematical skills and their knowledge and ability to use scientific vocabulary continues to develop at least in line with their scientific knowledge and understanding. Some excellently presented pieces of coursework show a first rate ability to plan experiments from a base of secure understanding of the science underlying, for example, the action of enzymes on the chemical breakdown of a potato. Secure use of mathematics contributed to a high mark for the analysis of results in an experiment on Newton's laws of motion. Pupils with low attainment have difficulties with analysis and evaluation of the results of their experiments but score good marks for data collection as a result of their good training in practical skills throughout the school.

86. Achievement is good overall. The acquisition of knowledge and understanding of science and development of skills of all pupils proceeds at a greater rate than expected nationally at both key stages. At Key Stage 4 in particular, the high expectations of teachers and the positive attitude of pupils is underpinned by the consistent focus on the development of practical skills and the drive to promote scientific literacy, all of which make significant contributions to the ability of pupils to progress quickly. Although most pupils who start the key stage with high attainment achieve particularly well, those with low attainment and SEN are well-supported by their teachers and other classroom support and consequently achieve above expectations.
87. Teaching is good overall and ensures that learning is also good at both key stages. Almost seven lessons out of ten were good or better with only one lesson judged to be less than satisfactory. Appropriate expectations, strong emphasis on experimental work planned and carried out by pupils and a consistent focus on the development of scientific literacy are features of most lessons.
88. In lessons considered good or very good, high expectations, well-focused questioning, good lesson structure and articulate responses from confident pupils make major contributions to effective gains in knowledge and understanding and to the acquisition of skills. For example, a sensitive and carefully prepared approach to the teaching of human reproduction led to the creation of a very good learning environment for pupils in Year 7 with consequent very good gains in knowledge of the biological facts. Well-motivated pupils in Year 9 gained good benefit from the chance to work in groups and share ideas on air pollution in a lesson with a good variety of activities which allowed the lesson to proceed at a purposeful pace.
89. The secure subject knowledge that all teachers have, together with a sharp awareness of the current state of knowledge and understanding of their pupils, provides a secure platform from which any lesson can move forward. For example, pupils in Year 10, already confident in carrying out experiments, were further challenged to consider how to raise the standard of their work by using a preliminary experiment to establish the precise range of measurements necessary for success in a rate of reaction experiment. Pupils work well together in the laboratory and there is a strong sense of mutual respect between them and their teachers which makes for a purposeful and positive atmosphere in most lessons. Learning was good in a Year

8 lesson on photosynthesis because the whole class was involved in a well-controlled activity which used pupils as molecules taking part in the carbon dioxide, oxygen and water cycle in green leaves.

90. In some lessons, most of which are satisfactory in many respects, learning is less effective because the pace of lessons is too slow due to either a limited range of activities or some which are pursued for too long. Pupils learn less effectively when opportunities are missed for using questions at the ends of lessons to establish gains in learning. In a small minority of lessons, the challenging behaviour of a few pupils is not managed sufficiently effectively to allow the lesson to proceed as expected.
91. Leadership and management in the department are good. The head of science has clear vision for the development of the work of the department and actions taken in relation to its management are closely focused on the needs of all pupils. There is a pleasant working atmosphere and staff support each other well in their work. The very good technical support provided by the experienced and hard-working technician makes a substantial contribution to the success of the department by consistently ensuring that appropriate resources are available in the right place at the right time. Good displays of pupils' work helps to create an attractive learning environment.
92. Procedures for regular assessment of pupils are very good and the database of information collected is made available to all teachers. Information about the standard of pupils' work is regularly communicated to them and to parents. Results of tests and examinations are analysed annually and the results used effectively in a variety of ways. For example, groups of pupils in Year 10 are formed using assessment data and decisions were taken recently to change to modular GCSE science and to target practical coursework as a means of raising standards at Key Stage 4. There is no formal monitoring of teaching in the department and, although marking is undertaken regularly, there are some inconsistencies which are not identified.
93. The department has shown good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen, particularly in GCSE results for all pupils and, at Key Stage 3, in the work of pupils with high attainment. Teaching has improved and there is now a higher proportion of good and very good teaching. Although the provision and access to hardware for using ICT in science remains inadequate, resources are now being used much more effectively. For instance, some very good work is in progress in identifying ways in which pupils can use web sites to further their learning in science.

ART AND DESIGN

94. When pupils enter the school their skills in drawing and painting are generally low. However, teacher assessments show that the majority of pupils are meeting national expectations by the end of Year 9. GCSE results for pupils at the end of Year 11 show an improvement since the last inspection: the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C being above the national average.
95. The work seen during the inspection confirms that standards at Key Stage 3 are lower than those at Key Stage 4. The sample of work provided from Years 7, 8 and 9 contained many examples of poorly presented, unfinished work with little evidence of the systematic teaching of skills. A lack of rigour and challenge is evident. Pupils'

critical and analytical skills are underdeveloped, limiting their ability to refine and modify their work. Discussions with pupils reveals limited awareness of basic skills such as colour mixing and pencil techniques. Though pupils are keen and open in talking about their work, their gains in knowledge and understanding are limited. A Year 9 class was making very good progress in modelling techniques using the school building programme as a starting point, but drawing and observational skills remain under-developed. Sketchbooks are not used at either key stage. This is a serious weakness. Allowing for their limited previous experience and their low levels of attainment when they arrive in the school, their achievement by the age of 14 is satisfactory.

96. The sudden jump in the standard and quality of work by pupils in Years 10 and 11, to above the national average by the end of the key stage, represents good achievement. There is a particularly marked improvement in the attainment of pupils during Year 10. They rapidly develop a belief in their own creative ability and, as a result, make good gains in knowledge and understanding and produce work of good quality. For example, in producing paintings based on natural forms using the concepts behind the work of Georgia O'Keefe. They are less confident with looking and drawing and work with an inappropriate range of pencils, which the pupils themselves are asked to provide. Most pupils are able to evaluate their own work and can be objective but few can identify ways to improve it. No Year 11 classes were observed due to the timing of the inspection but there is evidence in the Year 11 GCSE folders of work that pupils' ability has improved by the end of the Key Stage. In Year 10 the pupils are motivated, interested and very involved. They enjoy their art lessons and relationships between pupils and staff are excellent.
97. The quality of teaching and learning in the department is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. The better teaching and learning occurs in Year 10 where it is good. At both Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good. Classes are attentive at the start of lessons where short introductions recap on previous learning and current work is discussed. In spite of this good practice, opportunities are lost to engage further the pupils in discussions and feedback, as for example, in a Year 8 lesson on Impressionism where pupils had no knowledge of the origin of the movement. The excellent relationships between pupils and staff are a strength of the department. No unacceptable behaviour was observed. This was due to good classroom management and to the teachers' very good knowledge of the pupils. Their knowledge and understanding of the subject is good, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Challenging teaching is evident in the quality and range of work produced for GCSE where pupils use ICT, video, photography and a range of image manipulation techniques with confidence and skill. Although teachers use subject specific language, this is underdeveloped and is not systematically taught. In Year 10, note-taking is used well. In the double lessons at Key Stage 4, pupils have no problem in sustaining their levels of concentration owing to good one-to-one teaching. Many pupils are in lessons before they are due to start and after break and lunch. There are occasions where teachers fail to summarise lessons or remind pupils of what they are to learn, thus denying pupils the opportunity to evaluate their work and reflect on their achievements. Teachers should now develop the subject further by taking advantage of the very good relations with their pupils to make greater demands, especially in relation to basic skills and techniques in Years 7, 8 and 9, and research and sketchbook work at both key stages. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in Year 10. Staff know their needs and work towards the targets in individual educational plans.

98. The curriculum in art and design is satisfactory. It has improved since the last inspection. Long and medium term planning is in place, although individual lessons are not planned in detail with aims, objectives and learning outcomes shared with the pupils. An increased coverage of the work of artists and a significant improvement in the provision and use of ICT has led to a greater level of understanding and is meeting the needs of the majority of pupils. Resources for art and design are satisfactory but in purchasing consumables staff must ensure that pupils are provided with quality materials. The department does not supply pupils with pencils and sketchbooks. Methods of assessment are thorough and appropriate but pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 need to be made aware of National Curriculum Levels and how to improve. The head of this small department provides clear, sensitive direction for staff and pupils alike. However, more sharply focused monitoring of teaching and learning is needed if the progress made since the last inspection is to continue.
99. The department has improved since the last inspection and continues to improve. GCSE results and attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are better. Provision and use of ICT has improved and the use of a range of artists in critical studies is now well-developed. The creative approach by staff and the one-to-one teaching is a strength of the department. Good progress has been made since the last inspection but there are areas for development. Basic technical skills need improving at Key Stage 3, sketchbooks need to be introduced across both key stages and the monitoring of teaching and learning should be carried out on a more formal basis.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Standards of attainment match national expectations at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11. In GCSE examinations in 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* - C results was broadly in line with the national average, as it has been over the last three years. The results for boys were above the national average.
101. In the work seen during the inspection, standards are average in Year 9. Pupils are introduced to good design methods which they use effectively to design and make products such as novelty paper holders. Because they are encouraged to work creatively, higher attaining pupils show flair and imagination. All pupils follow their own working drawings and modify on-going work until they have a product which matches their original intention. In food technology, pupils show similar independent thinking when they make a range of dishes from other countries and cultures. They use a combination of books, computers and the views of others when they research ideas, recognising the value of gathering information from a range of sources. Drawing skills, criticised in the previous report, have improved so that pupils are now able to communicate their ideas more effectively. In electronics lessons, pupils construct simple alarm systems to a good standard but their knowledge of components is insecure.
102. In the work seen during the inspection, standards of work of pupils in Year 10 are as expected for their age. They have good practical skills and select and use a wide range of hand and machine tools confidently and safely. Higher attaining pupils are able to compile detailed, comprehensive design folders with a combination of clear hand drawn and computer generated graphics. They have a sound understanding of nutrition and use this to develop sweet and savoury products which satisfy consumer needs and wants. Pupils finish and present practical work to a good standard. Fewer pupils reach standards which match those expected in resistant materials and electronics. In resistant materials, coursework lacks depth and

research is mostly superficial. In electronics, higher attaining pupils understand the concept of designing timing circuits but most construct the circuit to a specified design without real understanding of how it works.

103. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. Pupils make clear progress in relation to their ability on entry to the school. They learn to design and make products to a particular specification and to modify their designs to improve them. For example, a Year 9 class made pasta salads for which pupils selected their own ingredients, resulting in original and individual dishes. They quickly learn to use hand and machine tools competently and confidently so that by Year 9 they are able to select appropriate tools for each task. Pupils make satisfactory progress with drawing skills which helps them to communicate ideas more effectively. They do not make enough progress with learning to use appropriate terminology for the techniques they use. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make satisfactory progress with practical skills. They make less progress during this period with written work and graphics. This is often because a significant minority of pupils demonstrate attitudes which are too relaxed and they need frequent prompting to increase their efforts. Pupils with SEN receive good assistance and make progress which is at least similar to that of others. For example, with the help of a learning support assistant, a pupil with physical difficulties was able to design and make packaging for biscuits and to test its effectiveness successfully.
104. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology and have good relationships with teachers and each other. This contributes to the mainly positive attitudes, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Behaviour is good and pupils with SEN related to behavioural difficulties make good progress towards their targets because they are very well managed by teachers and learning support assistants.
105. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. More than half the lessons seen were good. Others were occasionally very good and the remainder were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is more effective in Years 7 to 9 where lessons often include timed activities which increase the pace and pupils are more successfully motivated to work productively. In food technology, teaching is good in all year groups. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils which leads to their co-operation and enjoyment of the subject. They plan lessons well to meet the needs and interests of all pupils. They give clear explanations of what they are expected to do in lessons but there is insufficient attention given to setting individual targets for pupils. Teachers use effective teaching methods, particularly in Years 7 to 9, which lead to high levels of motivation in pupils. They actively support individuals and skilfully manage a wide range of activities. Teachers are aware of the special needs of those with individual education plans and give them appropriately challenging work and support them effectively during lessons. In some otherwise satisfactory lessons, lesson structure does not provide enough opportunities to review and consolidate learning or the lesson is conducted at a slower pace which inhibits progress. The quality of technician support enables teachers to work more efficiently in lessons and to focus more on what has been planned. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to develop individual ideas and to work creatively whilst insisting on good standards of basic techniques and safe working practice.

106. Good leadership and management have led to the development of a good team spirit, despite the difficulties of working in unsatisfactory accommodation with rooms being widely dispersed. Teaching is monitored and in-service training needs identified for the professional development of teachers in the department. The newly qualified teacher is supported well and receives good guidance from members of the department, as well as from senior managers in the school. Schemes of work are constantly reviewed to provide appropriate experience for pupils. The broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9 includes modules on electronics and control. At present there is no opportunity for pupils to work with computer-aided manufacturing equipment although it is intended to remedy this when the new technology block opens in September. The department has appropriate procedures to assess the work of pupils and, in Years 7 to 9, to pass information on to all who teach the pupils. However, there is insufficient use of assessment information to monitor the progress of individual pupils and to establish individual targets for improvement. The department has improved its marking system since the previous inspection but it is still not sufficiently linked to National Curriculum levels and this restricts opportunities for pupils to see the progress they are making. There has been satisfactory improvement to the quality of teaching, to improving pupils' drawing skills and to establishing assessment records. There is good capacity to improve further when the department is housed in more suitable accommodation and with more up-to-date resources. More rigorous target setting and monitoring of progress in lessons and over time for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is needed to raise standards further.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Standards of attainment in geography at the end of Key Stage 3, as measured by National Curriculum teacher assessments, have improved steadily over the past three years. In 2000, a well above average proportion of pupils achieved Level 5 by age 14. At the end of Key Stage 4, at age 16, the 2000 GCSE results were well above the national average, which has been the case for the past five years. Results over that period have been consistently good, with between 64 and 74 per cent of those entered for the examination gaining passes at grades A* - C. Both boys and girls have tended to obtain significantly higher grades in geography than in the other subjects they take at GCSE. Results at GCSE grades A* - G have also consistently exceeded the national average over the past five years. In 2000, over 25 per cent of those entered gained passes at grade A* compared with 3.9 per cent of pupils nationally.
108. Discussions with pupils, plus an analysis of pupils' work during Year 7, revealed that they had a variable range of geographical experiences in their primary schools and levels of achievement in geography were below those expected for pupils aged eleven. In work seen during the inspection, pupil achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national expectation for 14 year olds indicative of very good progress in the acquisition of new learning in geography during their first three years at the school. At the end of Key Stage 3, achievement was not quite as high as the well above average attainment recorded in teacher assessments for 2000. At the age of 14, pupils' writing skills in geography exceed the national expectation. They can carry out extended enquiry work and record their findings in a range of genre. They read aloud competently and oracy skills are developed well. The very good progress in learning through Key Stage 3 is supported by the use of a well-planned integrated humanities course in Years 7, 8 and 9. Geography is taught alongside history and religious education in a way that ensures that individual strands in programmes of study for each subject are cross-referenced to enhance pupils'

understanding of the context of geography. This lays a firm foundation for discrete geographical study from Year 10. Pupils handle atlases and large scale local maps very competently and make very productive use of graphs of different types to record geographical data. Their understanding of geography and the use of geographical skills are enhanced by the use of well-planned field work in the local area and on the school campus in each year of their course. These local studies are complemented by well taught case studies of Italy, Brazil and Japan. Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance some individual research but the use of databases and spreadsheets to support research and chart findings is under-developed. Pupils with SEN are well supported by support staff using appropriate materials which ensures that their attainment is in line with national expectations given their level of prior attainment. This ensures that they make very good progress at both key stages.

109. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards of achievement are well above the national expectation for pupils of that age group. This reflects further very good progress in learning by pupils from across the attainment spectrum, including those with SEN, in the acquisition of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. Inspection findings show that the skilful use of enquiry approaches to learning continue to contribute well to very high achievement at Key Stage 4. Pupils show a very good knowledge and understanding of hydrology and issues of water management. This in-depth pupil knowledge, understanding and skills is again well supported by a judicious choice of suitable case studies using a range of source material which include well selected texts, CD-ROMs and most significantly, well-chosen video-based evidence.
110. Teaching is very good, and in one case excellent, in over half the lessons seen at Key Stage 3 and in just under half the lessons seen at Key Stage 4. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teachers' planning is excellent; the extensive use of enquiry approaches often based on the local area is a major strength of the department and supports very good pupil progress. A wide range of teaching methods is used, with group and pair work particularly well developed at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils show good teamwork when working together in pairs or groups. This was apparent in an excellent Year 8 lesson in which pupils designed and built their own weather vanes, anemometers and rain gauges which were used and tested in an investigation of variations in microclimate on the school campus. The analysis of results and the writing up of findings was of a very high standard.
111. Specialist teachers' very good subject knowledge and excellent communications skills ensure that pupils get a very thorough coverage of their examination syllabus. Non-specialist teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and are well supported by subject specialists. However, their depth of coverage of the programmes of study is less well developed. A particularly strong influence on high attainment in GCSE examinations is the use of GCSE question formats which are specially adapted in assessments made as early as Year 8. Teachers give a strong emphasis to the reinforcement of previous learning through skilful questioning on previous work and good reviews of work already covered at the start of lessons. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils, which is evident from searching questions and very challenging classwork tasks that include extension tasks for the higher attaining pupils. Class control is of a high order with very sound use of a range of teaching resources and carefully prepared worksheets. Particularly good use is made of the department's good stock of videos to enhance pupil understanding. This leads to pupils taking a very positive attitude to their work and they show good levels of

interest and motivation. Pupils' behaviour is good; they take a keen pride in their work and show clear enthusiasm for the subject. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, which supports high quality learning. The marking of pupils' work is excellent, and allows them to understand their own strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do to improve. The use of homework is very good and reinforces classroom learning.

112. The department has a very good ethos for learning and is very well led by a very effective head of department. Departmental planning is good, teamwork is very productive and the use of assessment to set pupil targets and inform curriculum planning is excellent.
113. Since the last inspection, this very strong department has maintained very good levels of pupil attainment and delivers very good quality teaching and learning to its pupils compared with good teaching and learning at the time of the last inspection. Management is now very good compared with the judgement of "effective" in the last inspection and the department's teaching accommodation has been significantly improved through the effective use of a new purpose-built humanities teaching block.

HISTORY

114. Teachers' assessments indicate that the proportion of pupils meeting national expectations at the end of Year 9 is in line with the national average. GCSE results have fluctuated over the last five years but both the 1999 results and the 2000 results show a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades was slightly above the national average. Twenty one percent of pupils entered gained A* to A grades. Girls' results were lower than those of boys. Some pupils attained good grades in the Certificate of Achievement.
115. The work seen during the Inspection confirms that most pupils by the end of Year 9 are making satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils are achieving well. A Year 9 group studying the First World War selected evidence from very good source material which included facsimiles of diaries and the forms which told relatives of soldiers' deaths. Pupils took delight in handling original postcards written at the time. The highest attaining pupils produce assessment exercises – for example a Memoir of a Native American – which are clearly and grammatically expressed, well presented, showing both good ICT skills and very good historical understanding. The progress of lower attaining pupils is sometimes hampered by a lack of motivation. Most fail to make deductions from information provided without considerable guidance. In some classes progress is hampered because over-talkative pupils distract their fellows.
116. By the end of Year 11, the standard of work is above the national average. This represents good achievement. Pupils are able to analyse historical situations and to define cause and effect. Year 10 pupils studying Roman medicine were able to see how the excellent system of communications allowed epidemic disease, as well as armies to travel. They understand the political upheaval that could result from a health threat to the patrician class. These pupils used their initiative to extend their knowledge by finding extra information on the Internet – one pupil had looked up Hippocrates. Some higher attaining boys working on the design for a public health system for a Roman town were able to prioritise the building projects and to foresee problems if maintenance and running costs went over budget. They dealt with this

as a practical problem and, at the same time, appreciated the historical significance. Pupils studying Hitler's Germany show a clear understanding of the Nazi use of propaganda and indoctrination, particularly the way it was used to ensnare young people. Year 11 course-work shows that many pupils have an analytical and mature approach to problems. One, investigating the Gangroad, explained what he had discovered from documents but also what he had not been able to find out. For example, how companies using each others' lines drew up timetables. Pupils answer questions readily but rarely initiate them. Pupils discuss work in groups but there is little class discussion.

117. In many classes the range of attainment is very marked. Pupils with SEN usually make satisfactory progress. In one Year 9 class, as a result of the help given by the teacher and a learning support assistant, they completed their work almost as quickly as the rest of the class. The department is well resourced with suitable materials for lower and higher attaining pupils. Materials produced within the department are of very good quality.
118. The good progress is the result of good teaching and learning. Teaching is always at least satisfactory. Seventy five percent of the teaching seen was good and occasionally very good. In the best taught classes planning and management are good. A very successful lesson in which Year 9 pupils selected evidence from a wide variety of sources on aspects of the first World War was the result of meticulous preparation and very good organisation. Teachers create a safe learning environment. Pupils feel secure and are enabled to learn quickly, effectively and with enjoyment. They know what is expected of them. Confident energetic teaching ensures that pupils are kept fully involved, their attention held and their concentration sustained. A Year 8 class was gripped by stories of cutpurses and bear baiting in Elizabethan England. The best taught lessons are given strong, but still flexible, structure by the use of academically very good and very detailed study guides produced by the department. Teaching is direct but not prescriptive. Pupils are encouraged to come to decisions and to make their own judgements but there is always a safety net in the form of extra help, and pupils are not left to flounder. Learning is made relevant. The Roman emphasis on preventative medicine is compared with modern anti-smoking campaigns. Often teaching is vivid and imaginative. Year 8 is devising a Time Traveller's Guide to Elizabethan England. Activities are suitably varied. Just occasionally teaching is over-ambitious and too much is attempted in one lesson. Sometimes the reinforcement of learning at the beginning and end of lessons is neglected. The pace of lessons is generally good but this can be difficult for the teacher to gauge in classes where the attainment range is very wide. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good. Pupils are often given a choice of working independently or within groups. Those who work in groups share the work efficiently between them. In most classes there is a pleasant hardworking atmosphere.
119. The department is efficiently and enthusiastically led. Teaching is well monitored. Assessment procedures are good. A folio of exemplar materials has been compiled to set standards for National Curriculum levels. Assessment results are used to set individual targets. Clear records of pupils' achievements are kept. The next planned process is to collate and use these statistics to plot the progress of all pupils. Pupils know what levels they have reached and what they need to do to improve. They are given coursework mark schemes. History rooms are attractive with up-to-date and eye catching displays of pupils' work.

120. Since the last Inspection, the GCSE results have improved, there is less whole class teaching and pupils have been given more scope to organise their own inquiries. This progress can continue. Teachers convey their enthusiasm for the subject. Recruitment into the GCSE classes is good. A significant number of pupils go on to A level history. The department is forward looking, progressive and responsive to change, committed to improving pupils' academic performance and to ensuring their enjoyment of the subject. Teachers have extensive subject knowledge and their approach is suitably challenging, but higher attaining pupils could respond to stronger intellectual demands: for instance, the introduction of more controversial issues and the consideration of disputes between professional historians. The capacity of this group of pupils for more independent learning could be developed further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

121. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) meet national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 have improved over the last three years and are now in line with national standards. In 2000, pupils taking the GCSE short course achieved results in line with national expectations. Pupils taking the certificate of achievement achieved good results. Pupils can use word processors, desk top publishing, databases and the Internet to organise and present information. Higher-attaining pupils demonstrate very good presentation skills as well as effective planning, design, implementation and evaluation of ICT solutions to problems. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make satisfactory progress but suffer from a lack of focused ICT learning support.
122. In 2000, by the end of Key Stage 3, the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or higher was well above the national average. Performance has improved over the last three years, although teacher assessments indicate a far higher level of attainment than that seen in the inspection. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils can use word processors, desk top publishing, databases, spreadsheets and drawing programs with ease and confidence. Year 7 pupils competently enter text and graphics into a database on alien creatures. Pupils also have opportunities to program robots, use control software and to measure events using data loggers. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress.
123. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, with the occasional good lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge and support individual pupils by demonstrating skills and procedures at a level which is easily understood. Where teaching is good, there is clear progression from previous lessons, and pupils are expected to complete tasks efficiently. Teaching and learning at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to work independently in lessons when appropriate. At both key stages there is a lack of focus on numeracy and, particularly, literacy. Teachers miss opportunities to improve pupils' spelling and punctuation even though pupils have the necessary skills to amend their work. Sometimes, teachers rely too heavily on one method of teaching which does not sustain pupils' concentration for the whole of the lesson. Occasionally, lack of discipline causes disruption to learning, affecting those pupils who work hard and have high aspirations. Unusually, teachers do not allow pupils to print out work during the lesson. This has a negative impact not only on the value which pupils attach to their own work but also on the ability of the teacher to mark work and to generate a cycle of amendment and improvement. Attitudes to learning are generally

positive and teachers have good relationships with pupils. In lessons, pupils are usually helpful and friendly towards each other. Pupils with SEN, including those with physical disabilities, have a positive view of ICT and use it effectively.

124. Provision in ICT has improved a great deal and continues to improve. It is led and managed very well indeed. Although the present ICT co-ordinator does not teach ICT, he has implemented the school's vision for ICT and very good improvements have been made since the last inspection. The school now has a network of PC computers in the main ICT room, while departments based around the main buildings have been allocated computers for subject-based and cross-curricular work. For example, the humanities block has 10 computers and the mathematics department has a 6-computer local area network. The library encourages lunchtime access to its two computers and good range of CD-ROMs. Computers in the physical education department are used particularly well by pupils and staff, who show a good level of skill. The recently-appointed computer technician makes a significant contribution to improved provision in the ICT department. Staffing levels are adequate for the present curriculum although none of the teachers is an ICT specialist. However, the improvement in staff ICT skills through New Opportunities Fund training is having a very positive impact within the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

125. Teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9, in 2000 showed that standards of attainment were in line with national expectations. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* - C in the GCSE examinations in 2000 in French was above the national average. The performance by boys was particularly good, and better than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* - G was above the national average, with no pupil obtaining less than grade E. Results have shown a rising trend over the last three years, which is still being maintained. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* - C in the GCSE examinations in German was below the national average, but results at grades A* - G were above. After a significant increase between 1998 and 1999, German results show a downward trend, which has not been reversed. There has been a significant change in staff teaching German over the last four years, which has resulted in a lack of continuity, and school assessment data shows that more pupils with lower attainment levels opt for German than for French. By comparison with other subjects, pupils attain better in other school subjects than in German. No boys have obtained a high grade (grades A* or A) in either language over three years, and only one girl has been successful at this level.
126. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' overall level of attainment in their first modern foreign language by the end of Key Stage 3, by the age of 14, is close to the national expectation. The level of attainment which pupils are expected to reach nationally in languages has been raised from level 4 to level 5, which involves the use of the past tense. Although pupils have covered the perfect tense in both languages, it has so far not been sufficiently consolidated. In their written work for instance, pupils cover a range of constructions in different exercises. These exercises are not then used to form short paragraphs of extended writing, which would show pupils' gradual progression over time. Understanding is generally satisfactory and many pupils have a good knowledge of topic vocabulary, of leisure activities, school subjects and ways of describing members of the family, for example. Pupils are not always challenged to ask the questions as well as to answer them in their oral work, or to ask for help in the foreign language.

Pronunciation varies, and there is room for improvement, which is part of the department's contribution to basic literacy skills.

127. Pupils' progress across the key stage is satisfactory in both languages: all pupils learn two languages from Year 8 in mixed ability classes with a limited amount of curriculum time for the second language, although there is an improvement in Year 9. Higher attaining pupils would benefit from greater challenge. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in some lessons and teachers also provide them with different, more simplified material. Generally they make good progress.
128. The standards in French have been maintained so that by the age of 16, end of Key Stage 4, their overall attainment is above the national average. Pupils have not suffered from lack of continuity, and teachers are confident and have well established, accurate moderation assessments of pupils' coursework. In addition, the presence of a French foreign language assistant has assisted their oracy and understanding. Standards of attainment remain below average in German. Pupils have experienced four different teachers over four years, and this year both Year 11 classes have been taken by a committed teacher of German who is new to the school in his first year of teaching.
129. Progress in relation to prior attainment is good in French and satisfactory in German. In the scrutiny of coursework completed by Year 11 pupils, they displayed a sound knowledge of tenses and of the relevant vocabulary for writing formal letters, about lost property or holidays. One piece of writing was outstanding, making good use of conversation within a narrative framework. The scrutiny of coursework in German showed a much wider, less accurate range. Many pupils experienced difficulties with the perfect tense. One piece of writing, however, was as outstanding as the French piece. It was highly accurate, displayed a wide range of adverbs and adjectives, correct use of cases after prepositions and excellent use of word order. Pupils with SEN all achieve grades A* - G and the certificate of achievement has now been discontinued.
130. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages is satisfactory overall. In two of the lessons observed the teaching was good, and in two others it was unsatisfactory. When the teaching is good, pupils are involved orally and the teacher makes good use of the foreign language in the class. Pupils are well challenged by the use of chorus work and pair work. Participation is good, and they respond well and are interested in what they do. They are productive and develop what they have learnt. In one of the unsatisfactory lessons, only one task was covered, and pupils received little challenge. In the other lesson, when teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were reluctant to co-operate with the teacher and showed poor motivation. Generally, however, teachers make good use of resources in lessons, particularly of worksheets, different tasks and skills are covered and management of pupils is sound. Homework is set regularly, but the marking of books across the department is irregular and inconsistent. Few pupils complete corrections to improve their accuracy, and there is room for improved presentation of written work in some cases. Numeracy should be used more often in lessons, in order to help pupils consolidate and retain their knowledge. Teachers do not monitor pupils' progress at Key Stage 3 closely enough by attention to the attainment levels of the National Curriculum
131. Improvement since the last inspection has to be seen in the light of changes within the last four years. There have been three different heads of department and four

teachers of German in a small department of three teachers. The present head of department is providing sound management and direction, and is supported well by the other two teachers. However, an experienced teacher of French is leaving at the end of this term, and this will necessitate another change. Standards in French are rising, but there remains much to do to improve the German. The arrival of a German language assistant next year should provide good support. Overall, satisfactory improvement has been made.

MUSIC

132. By the end of Key Stage 3, at age 14, standards of attainment in music are below the national expectation. The attainment of a significant number of pupils receiving instrumental tuition is above national expectations. During the inspection, groups of Year 7 pupils were observed composing and performing fanfares and marches. Most pupils understand the formation of C Major chords and some are able to apply the musical terms of crescendo, decrescendo and $\frac{4}{4}$ time when discussing their compositions. The vast majority of pupils are able to maintain individual ensemble parts but ability to keep in time is in many cases related to overall ability. Standards in singing are average and in some of the lessons observed were good. Year 8 pupils heard during the inspection performed a varied repertoire of songs. Their performance of an African song 'Tina Singu' showed a good sense of rhythm tuning and pitch. All pupils are enthusiastic and most are able to sustain their individual lines confidently in the two and three part versions. Articulation is clear and there is attention to speed and dynamics.
133. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards of attainment in music are high. All pupils entered for GCSE Music in 2000 achieved A* passes. Since the last inspection the numbers of pupils choosing to study music have remained small and because of this, comparison with national figures is not statistically reliable.
134. By the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment in composing and performing is very high. The live performances heard, of four pupils playing their original compositions, were confident and controlled, displaying well-developed skills. The compositions were based on 'The Railway'. Each was unique, effective and creative, demonstrating the composer's understanding and knowledge of the elements of music and the ability to apply them effectively. Listening and appraising skills at Key Stage 4 are less well developed.
135. Most pupils behave well, working co-operatively in groups and listening empathetically to performances and the ideas of others' and celebrating their successes. Behaviour and attitude are largely related to the work set. When an activity goes on for too long some pupils find difficulty in sustaining concentration and behave inappropriately. This was evident in a Year 7 singing lesson where there was insufficient variety and challenge to hold the interest of pupils across the ability range of the group.

136. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is all at least satisfactory and half of it is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use their own instrumental and vocal expertise effectively to help pupils learn. There was some evidence of challenging questioning in both class and instrumental lessons. Where the teaching and learning are good the work set is challenging, requiring pupils to be creative and evaluative in developing their ideas. An example of this was observed in a Year 7 composition lesson during which the vast majority of pupils made progress in relation to their capabilities, showing ability to refine work begun in a previous lesson. Where teaching and learning are less effective, aims are not clearly defined and activities do not stimulate the pupils to learn by extending and improving their skills and understanding. This was the case in a Year 7 vocal lesson which lacked clear objectives and definite structure. At Key Stage 4, teaching and learning are good. Instrumental teachers support pupils in their GCSE course and pupils apply their instrumental skills well to listening, composing and performing.
137. The scheme of work covers the different elements of the National Curriculum but assessment, monitoring and recording procedures are insufficiently detailed. Regular assessment is not used to monitor individual pupil progress or to inform planning. A more effective and consistent approach to recording individuals' work would ensure that pupils' outcomes are measured according to National Curriculum levels. There are no recorded examples available for inspection of pupils' compositions or performances at Key Stage 3.
138. Resources for learning in music are unsatisfactory. There is one Acorn computer within the department but no suitable software. The use of ICT is an area for development within the music department. The two practice rooms are small and in need of repair. When these are being used for instrumental lessons there are insufficient spaces for other group activities to be accommodated. Valuable time is wasted at the start and end of lessons because classroom percussion instruments and keyboards are locked away for security reasons. The main music room lacks attractive posters and good wall displays of pupils' work and is not a stimulating environment for learning.
139. Since the last inspection a significant number of pupils have begun instrumental lessons. String and brass teaching is a strength of the music department and along with vocal work could be developed further, affording pupils opportunities to perform in school instrumental ensembles and choirs. This would help to improve the profile of music within the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. Standards in physical education, by the end of the two key stages, match national expectations overall and represent satisfactory pupil achievement and progress. Pupils' positive attitudes and generally good teaching ensure that both boys and girls learn effectively, and make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
141. For both 1999 and 2000, the formal teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 suggest that standards in physical education are much lower than the national expectation, but this is not confirmed by inspection findings. In work seen during the inspection, standards in Years 7-9 are generally average for both boys and girls. By the age of 14, the majority of pupils are reaching expected standards in their activities, including those having special educational needs (SEN). In Year 9, standards in girls' athletics are above average. Year 9 boys are making good

progress in developing secure techniques in triple jumping, despite not having any previous experience in the event. In cricket, Year 7 boys perform enthusiastically in improving their bowling skills, although their attainment is below average. Year 7 girls are similarly enthusiastic in their introduction to tennis, and are reaching expected standards. However, for boys in Year 8, standards in tennis are lower than expected, and more emphasis is needed to consolidate their foundation skills in this activity.

142. Results in GCSE physical education have shown good improvement since the previous inspection. Since 1997, when results were well below the national average, they have risen steadily. The most recent 2000 results were above the national average, with two thirds of candidates achieving the higher A* - C grades, and with little difference between the attainments of boys and girls.
143. In the work seen in Year 10, standards in physical education match national standards. (No Year 11 pupils were seen during the inspection owing to study leave.) Most boys and girls have a sound understanding of the effects of exercise on the body, and know how to prepare themselves for their activities. In tennis, Year 10 boys show a wide range of capability, but overall standards are below average. A small number of higher attainers, who are members of clubs, are very skilled for their age, but a much larger proportion have problems with co-ordination and ball control. A more structured emphasis on basic skills and techniques is required to help raise their standards. In athletics, both boys and girls are developing secure techniques in throwing and jumping events, and standards are as expected for their age. For those taking the GCSE course, their practical standards are above average. Their work in the theoretical elements of the course is also above average, and pupils show a good understanding of physiology and the principles of fitness and exercise, well linked to their own activities and to the factors which affect physical performance.
144. Pupils, including those with SEN, make secure progress in physical education. Their learning skills are mainly good, and pupils are co-operative in lessons. Their behaviour is satisfactory, and most are enthusiastic and have a positive interest in the subject. Levels of participation are good, and pupils work hard and take part fully in lessons, although some boys find difficulty in concentrating fully.
145. The quality of teaching and the learning that it promotes are never less than satisfactory at both key stages. One quarter of lessons were good at Key Stage 3 and four fifths were good at Key Stage 4. Teachers have good relationships with pupils which helps to create a co-operative atmosphere for learning in lessons. Management of pupils is a strength of the teaching, and this contributes to the mainly positive attitudes and behaviour. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the activities they teach. As a result, pupils learn correct techniques and improve their knowledge and understanding. This was the case in two successful athletics lessons where well-selected, progressive practices ensured good progress, for example, in improving the long jumping of Year 10 girls, and in quickly developing the basic techniques of the triple jump for boys in Year 9. In the more effective lessons, teachers frequently question pupils to check on their learning and develop their understanding. This was well illustrated in a good Year 10 GCSE lesson in which pupils explored their knowledge and awareness of the use of drugs in improving athletic performance. The positive support they received in this extended the depth and breadth of their learning.

146. Areas for development in teaching include the need for greater consistency in setting clear objectives for lessons, and sharing these with pupils. Although planning is sound, it is not always clear how the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment are to be met. There is need for a sharper definition of the tasks and resources are needed to ensure appropriate progress for both the higher and lower attaining pupils. In tennis, in particular, there is need to focus more strongly on technical improvement, and avoid more complex practices which are inappropriate for the lower attaining pupils. This criticism was noted at the previous inspection, and has not yet been tackled effectively.
147. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, although the lack of regular, structured monitoring and evaluation of teaching is a weakness. Curricular planning is good at Key Stage 3, and National Curriculum requirements are met. The programme at Key Stage 4 is properly under review by the department in order to try to improve opportunities for pupils' choice and specialisation. The Junior Sports Leader Award is a good feature of the current provision. Although the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 require moderation, in other respects, the procedures for assessment are good, and the department's use of information technology in its administration is a strength.
148. Improvement in physical education has been good since the previous inspection. Staff are committed and work hard in both their curricular and extra-curricular roles. The range of extra curricular opportunities for boys and girls is good, and they are popular and help to raise standards. Most issues from the previous report have been tackled. Importantly, teaching has improved, and as a result pupils' progress and standards have been consolidated, with notable improvement in the GCSE results.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

149. As at the previous inspection it was not possible to observe religious education at Key Stage 3 owing to the way in which the humanities courses are organised as self-contained subject modules. During the inspection, history and geography were taught but not religious education. In addition, Year 11 pupils were on study leave. Judgements are therefore based on observation of one Year 10 lesson, interviews with pupils and the head of department, scrutiny of pupils' work and the assessment procedures.
150. At Key Stage 3, standards reflect the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus and are in line with national expectations. Pupils study Christianity and other world faiths through a thematic approach as they learn about 'Festival', 'Pilgrimage' and 'Rites of Passage.' Good use is made of the time available in the modular arrangements.
151. At Key Stage 4, all pupils follow the GCSE short course and can choose to take the GCSE examination. In 2000, 16 pupils opted to do so and all achieved grades A* - C. Although this is only a small group, the results are very good. Fourteen of the 16 pupils achieved grades A*- B. Pupils achieved grades significantly better than the national averages for each of the grades A*, A and B. This was the first group to study the short course as a GCSE examination has not been offered in recent years. In the present Year 10, 46 pupils wish to take the GCSE examination. This reflects the increasing interest in religious education as a credible examination subject.

152. The work seen during the inspection confirms that the standards noted at the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have a sound knowledge and understanding of the moral issues connected with abortion. They can understand and empathise with the plight of the homeless in society and are beginning to relate this to the problems of materialism in a consumer society. Their studies of Martin Luther King and the position of Muslim Women in Islam show a sound knowledge of religious thought and customs.
153. At Key Stage 3, pupils are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about religious education. They can give interesting details about festivals in various world faiths, such as Christmas and Easter in Christianity, Ramadan in Islam, Divali in Hinduism and Bar Mitzvah in Judaism. Their written work shows in depth coverage of each module with some interesting examples of extended writing. For example, Year 9 pupils wrote imaginatively and sensitively about the Holocaust, revealing an unusual depth of understanding. Similarly, pupils in Year 8 writing a short playscript about 'fasting' during Ramadan clearly understand why Muslims think the discipline of fasting is important to their lives. Pupils produce informative pamphlets on local churches and on the Holy Land. Many of these show high standards in ICT.
154. Overall, teaching is good and has a clear impact on learning. All humanities teachers are involved in teaching religious education at Key Stage 3 so there is some non-specialist teaching. This is not so at Key Stage 4 where the subject is taught entirely by the head of department, who is a specialist. The arrangements for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 work well. The work seen shows that a variety of teaching and learning approaches are used effectively. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject, enjoy their lessons and make good progress. Pupils with SEN make good progress because the subject is organised to take account of their learning needs. In the one lesson observed at Key Stage 4, teaching is very good. Carefully thought out learning objectives are shared with pupils and progress is reviewed at the end of the lesson. In the lesson, good use is made of fiction to make the experience and problems of homelessness real. Pupils learn well because they are involved and encouraged to contribute to the lesson.
155. Leadership and management of religious education are good. The subject is well organised at both key stages. Content of lessons is planned and presented well. The various teaching and learning activities make learning interesting and enjoyable. The humanities teachers work well as a team and the quality of marking is good. The assessment procedures, common to all humanities subjects, are good. In religious education they are very good because the head of department has written level descriptors for each of the attainment targets so that there is a common approach to teaching and marking. The level descriptors take into account the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus and the guidelines of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority. This innovative and imaginative approach helps pupils to know how well they are learning and assists the teachers by providing criteria with which to mark pupils' work. There are regular formal and informal departmental meetings. Pupils' work is often moderated by all the teachers. Detailed records of the levels achieved by pupils are kept.
156. The department has improved since the last inspection. The GSCE short course has been introduced and has achieved high standards in the examination. There is much more differentiated material available and the artefact collection has been increased and widened. ICT is very well integrated into the subject. Another strength of the subject is the way in which pupils are encouraged to understand and reflect on what

they learn. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A weakness is that in marking pupils' written work, not enough attention is paid to correcting some spelling mistakes. The previous inspection concluded that the religious education department was 'a developing and dynamic curriculum area.' It continues to be so.