

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ARCHBISHOP HOLGATE'S CE SCHOOL**

York

LEA area: City of York

Unique reference number: 121709

Headteacher: Mr J Harris

Reporting inspector: Roy Hedge  
2932

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 193670

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hull Road York
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	His Grace the Archbishop of York
Date of previous inspection:	24 <sup>th</sup> February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9424	J Cassidy	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30702	P Bowyer	Team inspector	Mathematics	
11044	J N Hedge	Team inspector	English Special educational needs	
30512	V M Bailey	Team inspector	Science Equal opportunities	
29972	W Webster	Team inspector	Geography	
22906	B O Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
20287	D Harris	Team inspector	Modern languages English as an additional language	
27665	A Lees	Team inspector	Music	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Archbishop Holgate's is a mixed Voluntary Controlled Church of England comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16, situated in the eastern suburbs of York. Most pupils are of white, British heritage. The school is smaller than most, with 621 pupils on roll, a significant increase since the last inspection, reflecting the growing popularity of the school with parents. Year 7 is now oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is declining and is now broadly in line with the national average. The standards pupils have reached when they enter the school at Year 7 are changing. Until three years ago these standards were well below average, but pupils now in Years 7-9 entered the school at a standard which was broadly average. The percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language is higher than in most schools with a small number at an early stage of English acquisition. A broadly average proportion of pupils has been identified as having special educational needs and an above average proportion have statements of special needs.

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

Archbishop Holgate's is an improving, and in most respects a very good school. Pupils achieve well, given their attainment when they entered the school in Year 7. Teaching is consistently good and almost none is unsatisfactory. The quality of management and organisation and the school's determination to improve are excellent. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- The quality of management is excellent, with a powerful determination to raise standards and the quality of provision consistently.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal moral development.
- There are very good systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and taking robust action to ensure teaching continues to improve.
- There is an impressive programme of extra-curricular activities, including excellent provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- There is very good close working with partner primary schools.

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

- The quality of leadership for design and technology, English and special educational needs.
- The quantity of extra support for pupils on the register of special educational needs and those at an early stage of English language acquisition.
- The role of form tutors in taking an overall responsibility for the academic progress of pupils in their forms.
- The availability of computers for use across the curriculum.
- Ensuring the entitlement of all pupils in Years 10 and 11 to programmes of study in information and communications technology (ICT) and religious education.

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

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

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in February 1997. Pupils' achievements in tests and examinations have remained good and standards have risen. The quality of teaching is now much better and good overall and there is hardly any unsatisfactory teaching. Governors are now playing their full part in an excellent management team. There are much more effective systems for monitoring and improving teaching. The curriculum has a much sharper focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills; summer schools for lower attaining Year 7 pupils have been introduced together with a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to make rapid progress.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

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

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

In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2000, standards were above average when compared with the national picture and with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Standards in English were well above both averages, showing a significant improvement over the results for earlier years and a particularly good achievement by boys. Mathematics results were average and science results above average, though average in comparison with similar schools. The improving trend over the last five years is in line with the national trend. Results over the last few years have represented a good achievement given well-below average standards on entry to the school.

The average GCSE points score in 2000 was below average and below the figure for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils achieving at least five GCSE passes at the higher grades A\*-C was similarly below average, though the figure taken over the last three years together is close to average. Few pupils in recent years have gained A\* grades. Nevertheless, these results represent a good achievement in the light of the standard those pupils were at on entry to the school five years earlier. Results are improving at a faster rate than the national picture and the school is on target to reach the ambitious targets it has set for future years. Over the last three years girls have done better than boys, though the gap between them has been similar to the gap nationally. Standards in the resistant materials and graphical products areas of design and technology are too low. The standards reached in lessons during the inspection by Years 10 and 11 were broadly average, with strengths in mathematics and religious education and weaknesses in English, geography and modern foreign languages.

Standards in basic literacy and numeracy are above average by the end of Year 9, partly as a result of the added emphasis given to these areas in the planning of the curriculum. Standards in information and communication technology, however, are below average at the end of Year 9.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils concentrate well and focus on the tasks they are set in lessons, and take full advantage of the school's considerable programme of activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour in class supports good learning except for a few Year 10 lessons where there is some minor disruption. Behaviour around the school and the site is also very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate well to one another and to their teachers. There is minimal bullying or other oppressive behaviour.
Attendance	Levels of attendance, authorised and unauthorised absence are broadly average.



## 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.*

The good quality of teaching and its impact on learning are strengths of the school and account in large measure for the good quality of pupils' achievements. In only two percent of the lessons seen by inspectors was teaching unsatisfactory and none was poor. Almost eight out of ten lessons seen had teaching which was good or better and in a third of lessons teaching was very good or excellent. Some teaching of the highest quality was seen in history and science. In science, a half of the teaching seen was very good and in physical education almost a half. Teaching in English and mathematics are both good. Some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in art, history and design and technology. Some very good teaching was seen in every subject. In no subject is teaching overall unsatisfactory.

As a result of this consistently good teaching pupils' learning is also good. Pupils make good progress throughout their time in the school and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs learn as effectively as others, though some pupils at an early stage of acquiring English are held back because there is not enough specialist teaching for them, though what there is, is good. High attaining pupils benefit from well-planned and taught extra sessions, often at weekends or in holidays.

The mathematics department teaches numeracy skills very well, especially in Year 7. In English, especially during Years 7 to 9, there is very good provision for improving literacy skills which is supported in other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum has good breadth and balance and a very good range of extra-curricular activities is offered, including extra sessions for high attaining pupils. The requirements for all pupils to study religious education and information technology are not fully met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Teaching is good but monitoring pupils' progress needs some improvement. Some pupils who should have individual education plans do not have them. Learning support assistants work hard but are not well managed and there are too few of them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is generally good and the quality of teaching is often very good, but there is not enough specialist teaching to meet the needs of some pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is generally good. Assemblies, the personal and social education programme and religious education are important in promoting pupils' spiritual development, which is sound. There is very good provision for their moral development and teachers are good models.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures are good. There is careful monitoring of pupils' academic progress, their behaviour and personal development, though form tutors play too small a part in overseeing pupils' academic development. Attendance information is not collated with sufficient care.

The school works well with parents, who regard the quality of provision highly.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff is excellent. Most departmental management is good but there are shortcomings in the management of design and technology, English and special educational needs. The school is aware of these problems and has made plans to improve the situation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are effective, know the school well and play their proper role in planning and in monitoring the school's effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are excellent procedures for monitoring effectiveness and an excellent record of working to improve the quality of provision.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources very effectively and makes very good use of all of its income.

The school has an appropriately qualified teaching staff, though there is too little specialist teaching to cover some aspects of design and technology in full. Non-teaching staff make a very valuable contribution to the school, though there are too few learning support assistants to meet the needs of all who could benefit from their support. Some pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition have too little specialist help. The school is appropriately resourced except that there are too few computers to meet the needs of subject departments. The buildings and grounds are more than adequate for the delivery of the curriculum.

The overall quality of management is excellent. There is a close focus on strategies to raise attainment, to improve the quality of provision and to achieve best value. Planning is very good and financial procedures are such as to promote best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• There are high expectations of pupils</li> <li>• Management is good</li> <li>• The school is approachable if there are questions or problems</li> <li>• Pupils like school</li> <li>• Pupils make good progress</li> <li>• There is a good range of activities outside lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' homework planners are not well used</li> <li>• There is not always the right amount of homework</li> <li>• The school does not work closely enough with parents</li> <li>• Information about pupils' progress is too infrequent</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments about the school and that planners are not well used. Appropriate homework is mostly properly set but the homework timetable is not always strictly adhered to. The school generally makes every effort to work closely with parents. Reports about pupils' progress are good. An annual report represents an acceptable minimum and the school issues seven over five years.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the past, on the evidence of national test results and standardised tests administered in Year 7, pupils have entered the school at a standard that was well below average. The results achieved in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE represent a considerable achievement for these pupils and for the school. Over the last three years, standards on entry have risen to a position close to the national average. As a result the school has set itself challenging targets which, if achieved, would result in above average test and GCSE scores. Evidence of current standards collected during the inspection suggests that the school is on course to meet these targets.
2. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2000, standards were above average when compared with the national picture and with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Standards in English were well above both averages, showing a significant improvement over the results for earlier years and a particularly good achievement by boys. Mathematics results were average and science results above average, though average in comparison with similar schools. The improving trend over the last five years is in line with the national trend. Results over the last few years have represented a good achievement given standards on entry to the school.
3. The standards reached by the end of Year 9, as evidenced by the quality of work seen by inspectors, was above average in English, mathematics, science, physical education and religious education. Standards are average in modern foreign languages, history, geography, art and music and below average in information and communication technology. In design and technology, standards are above average in textiles and food technology but below average in resistant materials. Overall, the progress made by pupils as they move through Key Stage 3 is good.
4. The average GCSE points score in 2000 was below average and below the figure for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils achieving at least five GCSE passes at the higher grades A\*-C was similarly below average, though the figure taken over the last three years together is close to average. Few pupils in recent years have gained A\* grades. Nevertheless, these results represent a good achievement in the light of the standard those pupils were at on entry to the school five years earlier. Results are improving at a faster rate than the national picture. Over the last three years girls have done better than boys, though the gap between them has been similar to the gap nationally.
5. Work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11 was largely in line with these past results though there is every indication that there are more higher attaining pupils moving through the school than has been the case in the past. Standards by the end of Year 11 are above average in mathematics, food technology, textiles and religious education. Standards are broadly average in science, information and communication technology, history, art, music and physical education and below average in English, graphical products, resistant materials, modern languages and geography. Pupils' good progress is maintained through Key Stage 4.
6. There are some particular strengths in pupils' attainment. Research skills and the

use of critical studies are well advanced in art. In English, especially at Key Stage 3, skills of oral communication are good. In art and textiles the quality of finished products is high and listening skills in music are very good. On the other hand, standards as observed during the inspection and in past GCSE results are too low in the resistant materials and graphical products areas of design and technology. Although GCSE results are still below average in English, geography and modern languages, pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory given the standards they have reached on entry to the school in Year 7.

7. Pupils make good progress in improving literacy skills during their early years in the school. There is good teaching in English and other subjects take a responsibility for pupils' literacy more consistently than is usually the case. As a result, standards are above average. There is also good progress in acquiring numeracy skills, especially during Year 7 and standards are above average by the end of Year 9.
8. Higher attaining pupils make good progress as a result of well-organised teaching. The school has had fewer high-attainers than average in the past, but the proportion is growing as the nature of the pupil intake into Year 7 is changing. These pupils are doing well.
9. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in small teaching groups in English and mathematics and reach good standards given their prior attainment. A small number of pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition make inadequate progress because they get too little specialist teaching and as a result they do not achieve as well as they might.

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

10. Pupils have a positive attitude to school and generally appreciate the experiences and learning opportunities that the school provides. They get involved in a full range of activities during the school day and in a comprehensive extra-curricular programme of academic and sporting activities, notably a basketball coaching scheme that starts at 7.30 a.m. Parents express positive support for these arrangements and their responses to the questionnaire indicated that almost all pupils like school. Many pupils reported that they valued being identified and treated as individuals by staff. In most of the lessons observed by inspectors, pupils worked and concentrated well. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to strong teaching. In lessons they are well motivated, keen to be involved and make a good contribution.
11. Behaviour in and around the school is very good and has improved since the last inspection. In most lessons, pupils are well behaved and focus on their work, although some instances of minor disruptive behaviour were seen, particularly in Year 10. Pupils are courteous towards staff and visitors, willing to help each other and engage in conversation about their experiences. No pupils were permanently excluded in the year before the inspection. Nine pupils were excluded for a fixed period, many more than once.
12. Movement around the school is largely self-regulated and orderly with little evidence of unruly behaviour even though one or two corridors, particularly in the humanities block, are rather narrow and cause some bottlenecks at peak times.
13. The school places great emphasis on maintaining a safe, orderly environment to allow pupils to develop to their full potential. Staff and pupils enjoy very good relationships that impact positively on learning. Pupils consistently display respect

for each other and for their teachers. There is a spirit of self-help, which sits well with the learning opportunities and effective teaching in the school. Pupils report that there is no significant bullying or other forms of oppressive behaviour and parents say that the school deals with any such problems quickly and effectively. Generally pupils are able to understand and relate to views and values different from their own very well as in many of the religious education lessons observed, where pupils were able to relate to the values and practices of world faiths.

14. The school could profitably introduce more opportunities to take responsibility, though pupils respond well when opportunities such as helping to run the library are offered. Pupils also take responsibility for some other activities such as charitable fund raising and serving on the school council.
15. Overall attendance rates are satisfactory: they were broadly average last year and unauthorised absence rates compared favourably with the national figure. Inspectors found that there were many instances of pupils arriving after registration or lessons had begun causing some disruption to teachers and peers alike. Some of these problems are caused by the late arrival of school transport.

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

16. The good quality of teaching and its impact on learning are strengths of the school and account in large measure for the strength of pupils' achievements. In only two percent of the lessons seen by inspectors was teaching unsatisfactory and none was poor. This represents a considerable improvement from the last inspection, when almost a fifth of teaching was unsatisfactory. Almost eight out of ten lessons seen this time had teaching that was good or better and in a third of lessons teaching was very good or excellent. Some teaching of the highest quality was seen in history and science. In science, a half of the teaching seen was very good and in physical education almost a half. Some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in art, history and design and technology. Some very good teaching was seen in every subject. In no subject is teaching overall unsatisfactory.
17. This consistently good teaching successfully promotes good learning. The management of pupils in class is a particular strength. Clear directions and firm discipline are a common characteristic of lessons. As a result, pupils stay on task and concentrate well, so the quality of learning is good. Teaching methods are varied in order to hold pupils' attention. In much English teaching in Years 7 to 9, under the influence of methods suggested as part of the Key Stage 3 National Pilot, good planning, brisk starts to lessons and interesting variety ensure that pupils are busy and purposeful. Pupils respond well and their literacy skills are enhanced. Indeed, the effect of the pilot has been to concentrate effort across the curriculum on literacy skills and good literacy teaching was seen in geography, religious education, science and art as well as in English. There is good support in Year 7 history for the use of extended writing. The teaching of numeracy across the curriculum is as yet less well developed, but is certainly strong in mathematics in Year 7.

18. There are appropriate but high expectations of what pupils might achieve. Challenging work is a feature of science lessons; for example in a Year 9 lesson about leaf structure, taxing questions made pupils think hard and promoted concentration and learning very successfully. In physical education, good planning and enthusiastic delivery promotes a dynamic response.
19. Teachers' own knowledge and understanding of their subjects is good. Modern languages teachers, for example, use the target language well. In music lessons the teacher's own skills and knowledge are used to generate probing question and answer sessions which result in rapid pupil progress.
20. Some problems remain. The quality of teaching is inconsistent in design and technology: some weaker teaching of graphical products and resistant materials remains while teaching of textiles and food technology is very good, and there is poor management of pupils in some art lessons. In these lessons, pupils lose concentration and the pace of learning slips. Some English teaching is dull and lacking in enthusiasm and strong starts to lessons in Years 7 and 8 are not always sustained. In some modern languages lessons there is too little insistence on pupils' consistent use of the target language.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are generally taught well. Low attaining sets meet their needs and in most lessons work is appropriate for them, though some information and communication technology worksheets are too difficult. Teachers know pupils with special needs well. Good support is provided by learning support assistants to pupils with statements of special educational needs but more pupils would benefit from similar support. Pupils with English as an additional language are well taught by specialist teachers provided by the local education authority, but for some at an early stage of English acquisition there is not enough specialist teaching to allow them to make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are well served by a series of extra opportunities to learn, such as master classes in science. In their mainstream lessons they are taught well and make good progress.
22. Pupils' work is generally marked and assessed well, especially so in mathematics. Homework is consistently set except in information and communication technology. Assessment is a strength in music, though in history, marking does not give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve.

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

23. The school provides a good curriculum of appropriate breadth and balance for most pupils. The full National Curriculum and religious education are in place, though not all pupils receive their full entitlement and to this extent some statutory requirements are not met in Years 10 and 11. These difficulties arise from the school's proper efforts to provide a curriculum that reflects the needs of older pupils whose levels of attainment are well below average. The school has a history of succeeding well with these pupils, some of whom follow an enhanced work-related programme provided by other agencies. These arrangements work well and meet pupils' needs but, in part because of the difficulty of providing sufficient timetable flexibility in a relatively small school, result in a number of shortcomings. At present, a number of these pupils do not follow the very good religious education provision and some do not continue with modern languages after Year 9 or Year 10.
24. The curriculum offered for individual subjects is well planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 and GCSE syllabuses at

Key Stage 4. In design and technology, however, although the statutory curriculum is covered, there are weaknesses in the areas of systems control and structures. The department has insufficient specialist staff to ensure that all those working in the resistant materials area receive an equal experience in developing the full range of skills in making products with resistant materials. The quarter or so of Year 10 and 11 pupils who do not follow a specific information and communication technology - based course have too little experience across the curriculum to meet their entitlement, in part due to the difficulties departments have in gaining access to hardware.

25. The school makes generally good arrangements for the teaching of basic skills. There are draft policies for teaching literacy and numeracy and the school's participation in the Key Stage 3 National Pilot has focused attention on these areas. Numeracy teaching is particularly good in Year 7 mathematics lessons, but, as yet, other departments are not concentrating on numeracy. Literacy teaching is very strong in English lessons, where the influence of the pilot is very powerful. Other departments are beginning to play their part and inspectors saw focused, effective literacy work in geography, religious education, science and art.
26. Good curriculum arrangements are made for pupils with special educational needs, though there are some shortcomings in the provision. Some information and communication technology worksheets and tasks set in art are too difficult. Much of the curriculum is taught to groups of pupils based on prior attainment and in these groups pupils with special needs make good progress. Teachers are aware of their needs, though individual education plans have insufficiently focused targets and are sometimes of limited help to subject teachers. Nevertheless, departmental planning to meet pupils' needs has improved since the last inspection though some pupils at stages two and four of the register still do not have individual plans. Pupils' targets need to be more closely focused on their specific literacy and numeracy needs or on behavioural and social skills and need to be short-term and achievable. There is too little systematic monitoring and analysis of their progress. Additional support is provided to pupils with statements of special educational need through teachers supplied by the local education authority and learning support assistants but their activities are poorly co-ordinated. Other pupils on the special educational needs register would benefit from similar support.
27. There is generally good support for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Most of these pupils make good progress in class. Six pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language were receiving specialist tuition in English from two visiting qualified teachers at the time of the inspection. These pupils are withdrawn from lessons two or three times each week and are taught either individually or with another pupil at a similar level of attainment. The quality of this tuition is of a high standard. Pupils' written work shows strong progress over time and some have a good enough level of comprehension and oral response to allow them to keep up in their other subjects without individual support. Two pupils, however, were not receiving adequate support. Their understanding and use of English, both spoken and written, were at a low level of attainment and they are accordingly unable to make sense of many of their lessons, particularly those with a high English language content. In spite of the sensitivity of some teachers, the lack of in-class support is holding these pupils back and compromising the progress they make. In an English class with Year 10 pupils, for example, one boy was unable to take part in the lesson and appeared distracted and confused by language and processes he did not understand. At present it is unclear where responsibility for the overall pastoral and academic oversight of these pupils lies.

28. As part of the school's very impressive array of extra-curricular activities there is some excellent further provision for gifted and talented pupils. Intellectually challenging courses are held at weekends and in holidays provide opportunities for high-attaining pupils to make rapid progress and to enjoy the experience and excitement of stimulating and sophisticated work. Pupils who have some difficulty with literacy and numeracy benefit similarly from summer schools offered to pupils in the summer before they enter Year 7. About 90 activities are available to pupils as part of the wider extra-curricular programme with particularly strong contributions from the science, physical education, music and art departments.
29. Exemplary transition arrangements with partner primary schools ensure appropriate curriculum continuity. Parents and pupils expressed strong support for the school in this area. Liaison with primary schools has improved and is now a strong area. The school also enjoys very good relationships with local colleges and the university.
30. There is good provision for pupils' personal development. A personal and social education programme is taught through religious education for Years 7 to 9 and by a specialist team for Years 10 and 11. These courses are well planned and taught. Careers education is integrated into the programme and pupils speak well of the preparation for transition to the next stage of education.
31. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Careful thought has been given to this aspect of provision and the staff handbook gives very good guidance on the range of experiences that may enhance pupils' spiritual development. Good opportunities are given to pupils through collective worship and the annual carol service to learn about key aspects of the Christian faith. On those occasions when pupils create and present their own acts of worship, these are sincere and moving, as was that presented by Year 7 pupils on the arrest and trial of Jesus. Collective worship for Year 11 also provided a good opportunity for pupils to reflect on the origin and meaning of the Eucharist. In general, however, opportunities for this kind of activity are limited and on most occasions pupils are rather passive in assemblies and there is little to encourage involvement. Opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the spiritual dimension of experience are taken in religious education, art, geography, music and information and communication technology. An excellent history lesson about the Holocaust successfully raised spiritual and moral questions. Most subject areas have policy statements but there is little specific planning to implement these into lesson plans and the intention of the school in this area of provision is not being effectively met. The requirement for daily collective worship is not met for all pupils every day.
32. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. High expectations of moral behaviour are set out clearly in the school mission statement. Emphasis is placed upon respect, consideration for others and the exercise of self-discipline. Pupils are clearly taught to distinguish right from wrong and experience consistency in teachers' expectations. The personal and social education programme gives pupils good opportunities to reflect on issues related to personal and social morality. In Years 7 to 9 the programme is well integrated with religious education and pupils learn how religious conviction is expressed in moral concern. Good opportunities to develop pupils' moral awareness are taken in music, where the experience of slavery is related to the development of a particular musical style, in geography, through the study of issues surrounding economic development and in history when pupils study the Holocaust. A range of issues in science, such as genetics, conservation and pollution offers opportunities for raising ethical questions. In



information and communication technology, pupils have been made aware of problems that they may encounter when using chatrooms on the Internet. In design and technology, they are encouraged to discuss the conflict which may arise between environmental and economic developments. Practical moral concern is encouraged through support for a range of national and local charities.

33. The provision for pupils' social development is good. In many lessons pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively and the quality of relationships generally throughout the school is very good. In science, modern foreign languages and art pupils are encouraged to show responsibility in organising activities. In information and communication technology pupils are able to work with minimum supervision during lunchtimes and after school and they respond well to this opportunity to show responsibility. Very good opportunities are provided in music through ensemble playing and collaboration on school productions. Limited fieldwork in geography contributes to the development of social skills, as does teamwork in information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education. A good example of collaborative work was observed in a Year 7 tutor group in which pupils prepared for a presentation in assembly, but in most tutor groups there is little structured support for pupils' social development. The personal and social education programme makes a good contribution to social education through consideration of such topics as health education, careers education, work experience, citizenship and education about drug and alcohol abuse. Opportunities to exercise a degree of initiative and responsibility in the general life of the school are presented through the school council, library and reception duties, organising charity fund raising, helping with parents' evenings and open days and running the Year 11 common room but there are few other opportunities beyond these activities.
34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Visits to theatres, galleries and concerts extend their cultural experience. A number of curriculum areas contribute directly to educating pupils about their own cultural heritage. Good examples were observed in science, where pupils were researching the life of Edward Jenner, in history on the medieval church and in religious education where pupils were studying the Passion narrative from the Gospels. Currently there are no visits to sites of historical interest or to religious communities, which is a weakness in provision, though some are planned for the future. Visits to France and Germany help to raise pupils' awareness of European life and culture. They are helped to understand aspects of cultural diversity through geography and religious education. Work in art and design and technology introduces them to non-western culture and artistic traditions. In English they are introduced to poetry from a variety of cultures and the music of other cultures is introduced in all year groups. Little direct contact with a range of cultural traditions, however, means that this is a relatively undeveloped area of provision.

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

35. There are good standards of care for pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of pupils' individual and collective needs and the school is clearly a caring community. A senior member of staff oversees the care system and chairs a pastoral care group that includes governors and staff and meets regularly to consider whole-school and individual issues. The needs of pupils are addressed with due skill, knowledge and consideration.
36. The use of registration times for social contact between staff and pupils is intended to reinforce the priority the school places on caring for others and to help build constructive relationships. This period of "warm up" before the school day and "warm down" after lunch is intended to ensure that pupils arrive in lessons in a suitable frame of mind to begin work. Experience during the inspection suggests that time is sometimes wasted and unstructured and could be used more effectively. Form tutors play too little a part in monitoring the progress and general academic wellbeing of pupils, though the pastoral system is in a period of transition and development. Some pupils learning English as an additional language, for example, would benefit from closer monitoring by form tutors. Overall, though, teachers' close knowledge of the pupils they teach and their support in class meets pupils' needs well and makes a good contribution to their academic progress.
37. Subject teachers closely monitor pupils' academic progress. The school has very good overall systems in place for tracking the progress of individuals or groups of pupils against their test scores on entry to the school. Assessment information is widely available to teachers and departments generally use this information well to plan support for pupils and to check on departmental effectiveness. There are good procedures for placing pupils in attainment-based groups that meet their needs well.
38. Pupils with special educational needs are made to feel welcome in their base. Good liaison with partner primary schools ensures that their needs are well known when they arrive in Year 7. Their progress is not well monitored, though, in part because their targets as noted in individual education plans are not concise and clear.
39. There is good monitoring of pupils' behaviour and successful promotion of high standards of conduct. The school takes a very strong stance against bullying which is effectively applied in the few instances that occur and involves parents, pupils and staff working together to resolve problems. Governors are involved with disciplinary processes through an active pastoral care sub-committee.
40. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are set out well in their planners and staff handbooks and pupils are aware of the school's system of rewards and sanctions. The school uniform code is universally complied with, amplifying a visible sense of identity and creating a positive image of the school.
41. Sanctions for inappropriate behaviour are based on a graduated approach ranging from admonishment through detention to fixed term exclusions. Permanent exclusions are very rare and the school works very hard to maintain the education of all of its pupils, including some who have been excluded from other schools. The LEA supports the school by making places available at a centre specialising in short-term training for disaffected or problem students. Use of external adult mentors is beginning in Year 10 and will allow some pupils to work with appropriate adult role models.

42. A system of merits is used mainly in Years 7, 8 and 9 to recognise and reward effort and achievement. Pupils respond positively to the scheme and avidly seek merits. Awards are used equitably and can result in pupils receiving certificates and peer recognition in assemblies.
43. The emphasis on a strong pro-active approach to behavioural issues has resulted in a number of fixed period exclusions (40) with no permanent exclusions during the year prior to the inspection. Governors are supportive of the approach to discipline and receive full details in regular confidential reports. The pastoral sub-committee of the main governing body complies with statutory requirements relating to exclusions, though their annual report to parents does not include the statutory information about exclusions.
44. Health and safety issues are addressed systematically and effectively by regular review, which involves governors and staff.
45. An assistant headteacher has oversight of child protection issues, and there is a named member of staff responsible for liaison with external agencies. Guidance is given to staff, including those new to the school, through an appropriate mix of documented policy and training. Heads of year are involved and aware of specific cases where close monitoring is required.
46. The school generally complies with legislative requirements on attendance. Although the systems for monitoring attendance are good, the appropriate procedures are not always followed in practice. On one occasion during the inspection a class register was not completed for one form group after lunch. Registers are generally completed to a good standard though monitoring of the process by heads of year is inconsistent. Truancy is tackled in collaboration with the Educational Welfare Service who visits the school on a regular basis. Pupils identified as needing closer supervision are tracked throughout the school day. Continued absence by a pupil results in a follow up contact after morning registration usually by telephone to parent or guardian.
47. The school is at an early stage in its provision and use of management information relating to attendance. Information about attendance is not scrutinised daily, so senior managers are not aware when attendance is poor, as was the case on one of the days of the inspection. Details of attendance are not included in governors' annual report to parents, in breach of statutory requirements.

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

48. Partnership with parents is generally good and most parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. There is general agreement that the school has improved since last inspected and parents who attended the meeting were very optimistic for its future. Some parents were concerned that reporting about pupils' progress, though clear and helpful, is too infrequent, though there is at least one report each year. There was a wealth of praise from parents for the attitude and helpfulness of the staff, including those managing the reception desk.

49. The school works hard to ensure that parents are involved and kept up to date with their children's education. There is a target of answering queries within 24 hours, and to that end a system of colour-coded messages is used to highlight those needing rapid response. In addition to the normal round of open evenings held for whole year groups, heads of year spend a very great deal of their time talking to parents by telephone and face to face to ensure pupils make appropriate progress.
50. The head of pastoral care elicits parents' views on the quality of the school's response to how any incidents or how school staff have dealt with problems. Feedback is then taken into account in developing policies and practice.
51. Information for parents is clear and helpful. Reports on pupils' progress are mostly good though sometimes teachers' writing contains too little detail. There is a weekly "drop-in" session for parents of disaffected children and great care is taken to ensure that new pupils are integrated successfully into school life. Regular informal and accessible newsletters are sent to all parents.
52. The Key Stage 3 curriculum pilot has included a comprehensive survey of parents' views on transition to the school. The results were so useful that the school has undertaken a separate survey of Years 9 and 11 this year. Many staff members spoke of the advantage of being a small school, which allows them to get to know pupils and parents well.
53. The staff handbook contains a wealth of advice and policy guidance relating to parental contact and evidences the high priority that the school places on parental contact. Few parents are active in the school, though there is parental support for sports events.
54. Each pupil has a homework planner, which contains a section for parents to comment on progress directly to teachers. Some parents feel these are ignored or under-used by the school. Scrutiny of a sample of diaries supported these views, there being little or no two-way dialogue evident. Many pupils keep diaries poorly and the school is missing an opportunity to supplement its good contacts with parents by encouraging dialogue about pupils' progress through the diaries.

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

55. The school has an excellent headteacher who is ably supported by a senior team who work together with intelligence, energy and commitment. The school has clearly been transformed during the tenure of the present headteacher. The number of pupils has steadily increased and the intake year is now oversubscribed as the school's reputation has increased. The quality of teaching, behaviour and organisation has improved and pupils achieve well, given their standards on entry to the school.
56. The headteacher's commitment to raising standards and enhancing the quality of provision is at the heart of the school's success. There are ambitious expectations of the quality of teaching and middle management that are made explicit in the school's formal documentation, such as the staff handbook. The careful induction of all new staff illustrates a process of attention to quality that typifies the impressive impact of leadership. Documentation sent to applicants for teaching posts stresses high expectations of classroom practice; successful applicants spend some days in the school before taking up post; there are well planned induction seminars and all new teachers are seen in the classroom by the headteacher early in their time at the

school.

57. There is excellent supervision and monitoring of the work of staff with extra responsibilities. The three assistant headteachers have a clear division of responsibility but collaborate very effectively, so the school is administered smoothly and runs well. Heads of subject departments are supervised and supported very effectively and senior staff have clear and accurate knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. Governors are prepared to take robust action to replace staff who, after appropriate support, prove unable to satisfy the high expectations that the school rightly demands.
58. The quality of teaching is rigorously monitored. All staff are seen teach and receive appropriate feedback on a regular and routine basis. Heads of department are properly involved in this process as well as senior staff. As a result, inspectors saw very little unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection.
59. Governors play their full part. They are supportive of the school and alive to its strengths and weaknesses. Strategic financial planning is prudently handled by the appropriate governors' sub-committee whose chair is skilful and assiduous. Financial planning and control are excellent: there is close attention to ensuring that the school secures best value in its expenditure and financial supervision is very good. The school makes very good use of specific grants such as the financing of the National Key Stage 3 Pilot and of extra funding secured through the Foundation Governors. Information technology is used well as a management tool for tracking pupils' progress and financial management, though the full potential of the electronic gathering of attendance data is still to be realised.
60. Development planning is clear and sets out priorities that closely reflect the commitment to raising standards. These priorities reflect the school's aims and values closely. Each department produces an annual report that reviews the previous year's work as well as a plan aimed at improvement in the next year. These documents are used as the focus for discussion with senior managers. Ambitious but realistic targets for pupils' attainment are set. In the main, departmental management is good, though there are some shortcomings that the school has recognised and has moved to resolve by making further staff appointments. The management of design and technology lacks vision and consistency, so the various disciplines within the subject are unevenly developed. Standards in graphical products and resistant materials remain low. Management of English lacks impact and there are shortcomings in planning.
61. There are some shortcomings in the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils mostly receive committed and sympathetic teaching. Accommodation for the special educational needs base is good and the area is well resourced. Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection in the quality of the special needs register. Some problems remain, though. Not all pupils who should have them have individual education plans and the targets in their plans are often insufficiently precise or well framed. Monitoring of their progress is therefore made difficult and needs to be improved. There are inadequate records of pupils' progress. The reading programme is not evaluated so the department is unclear about its effectiveness. Learning support assistants work hard alongside specialist teachers provided by the local education authority but their work is not well co-ordinated or managed.
62. The school enjoys good buildings and playing fields and has a very good swimming

pool. Resources for learning are generally adequate but there are too few computers for use by most departments. Progress in information and communication technology, especially in Years 10 and 11, is hindered by poor access to computers in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, religious education, history and music. The design and technology department has too little specialist teaching to cover all the necessary skills in working with resistant materials. Otherwise there are sufficient well-qualified teachers to cover the curriculum but there are too few classroom assistants to provide enough support for pupils with special educational needs. Although there is some good specialist teaching for pupils for whom English is an additional language there is far too little to meet the needs of all. Some pupils at an early stage of learning English are severely held back by a lack of specialist teaching and are unable to access the full curriculum. There is not enough technician support for the design and technology department.

63. The quality of management overall has improved since the last inspection and is now of excellent quality. Statutory requirements are met except that: collective worship is not available to all pupils every day; there are some omissions from the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents; not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 have religious education lessons and a number of Year 10 and 11 pupils have too little experience of information and communication technology to meet requirements.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

64. The school's senior managers and governors are in a strong position to ensure that the weaknesses identified in this report are remedied. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of provision further, they should:
- (1) ensure that measures already in hand are successful in: improving the quality of management of design and technology so that standards in resistant materials and graphical products are improved; improving the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and the management of the English department;  
Paragraphs: 60, 61, 76, 125
  - (2) make more support available for pupils with special educational needs and pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition;  
Paragraphs: 26, 27, 36, 38, 86
  - (3) enhance the role of form tutors in taking an overview of pupils' academic progress and personal development;  
Paragraphs: 27, 36
  - (4) make sure that there are enough computers readily available for use by departments;  
Paragraphs: 76, 90, 102, 125, 140, 148, 166
  - (5) ensure that Year 10 and 11 pupils receive their entitlement to taught programmes in religious education and information and communications technology.  
Paragraphs: 63, 147, 178

### **Other issues which the school should consider:**

- Much better use could be made of homework planners as a means of communication between the school and parents;  
Paragraph: 54
- Better use could be made of daily attendance records;  
Paragraphs: 46, 47

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	140
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	33	40	21	2	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	Years 7 - 11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	621
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	74

Special educational needs	Years 7 – 11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	88

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.2	School data	0.8
National comparative data	7.7	National comparative data	1.1

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





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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	45	45	90

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	26	29
	Girls	36	29	30
	Total	68	55	59
Percentage of pupils	School	76 (66)	61 (54)	66 (61)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (23)	43 (39)	30 (26)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	34	25	34
	Girls	35	26	30
	Total	69	51	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (66)	57 (57)	71 (69)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (19)	39 (34)	21 (28)
	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	62	49	111

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	17	51	59
	Girls	26	48	49
	Total	43	99	108
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	39 (38)	90 (85)	97 (92)
	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	34.2
	National	38.4

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	598
Any other minority ethnic group	19

### ***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	40	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: Years 7 - 11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	36.62
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Years 7 - 11**

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	198.5

#### **Deployment of teachers: Years 7 - 11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.9
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#### **Average teaching group size: Years 7 - 11**

Key Stage 3	22.9
Key Stage 4	20.0

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	1,538,401
Total expenditure	1,558,643
Expenditure per pupil	2,637
Balance brought forward from previous year	-2903
Balance carried forward to next year	-23,145

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	621
Number of questionnaires returned	199

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	47	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	48	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	55	7	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	53	12	5	1
The teaching is good.	38	54	2	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	46	16	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	37	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	32	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	48	12	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	40	49	2	1	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	45	4	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	45	3	2	4

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

### **ENGLISH**

65. The year 2000 results of national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE at the end of Year 11 reflect the changing school population. Standards reached by pupils on entry to the school in Year 7 have improved in recent years. Pupils who sat GCSE examinations in 2000 entered the school at a standard that was well below average and are achieving well although the standards they reach by the end of Year 11 are still below average. Pupils now in Year 9, however, had broadly average attainment when they entered the school in Year 7 and are now achieving above average standards.
66. In the 2000 GCSE examinations pupils did better in English than the previous year but results were still below average. Girls did better than boys in line with the national picture. Pupils did less well in English than in mathematics and science. English Literature results were similar to the previous year and close to the national average. Few pupils gained the highest grades in either examination. These results represent a good achievement for these pupils whose test scores when they were in Year 7 were well below average.
67. Pupils at the end of Year 9 did well in the national test in English in 2000. The proportions of pupils attaining Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were well above average in comparison with pupils in similar schools. Test results have improved dramatically since 1998. The gap in performance narrowed so that in 2000 there was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils did better in English than in mathematics and science. The attainment of these pupils when they entered the school was closer to the national average than those now in Year 11. The progress made by pupils who took the test in 2000 was very good.
68. Overall standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average. Many pupils have good oral skills and when given the opportunity in lessons are able to explain and develop quite sophisticated ideas confidently. They read aloud willingly. In a high-attaining Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils read fluently, were able to recognise that the poem 'Half-Caste' is written phonetically and could comment on the language of the poem to explore its meaning. They have a good understanding of and are able to use technical terminology appropriately. Low-attaining pupils in Year 9, despite less developed oral skills were willing to contribute to the lesson by reading their work out to others. Written work is generally presented well. High-attaining pupils make good progress with their writing and some write at length. Pupils generally have a reasonable grasp of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. In a Year 8 middle-attaining class, most pupils' writing was broadly average. Good use is made of writing frames. After first drafting their work, low-attaining pupils in Year 9 write reasonably accurately but boys generally write less than girls. In Year 7, pupils with below average skills have additional teaching in a 'progress' group – these pupils were making very good progress with understanding main and subordinate clauses and the use of connectives.

69. At present, overall standards by the end of Year 11 are below average. Pupils are often better at expressing their ideas orally than in writing. Most pupils demonstrate reasonable understanding of the texts they study but fewer pupils than average are able to express these ideas fluently in their writing and are hindered by limited vocabulary and weak grasp of spelling and punctuation. In a middle attaining Year 11 lesson, for example, although written work was below average, in discussion pupils were able to clarify their ideas about the development of character and consolidate their knowledge of the narrative of 'Of Mice and Men'. High-attaining pupils in Year 11 had good understanding of the social and political background to 'Animal Farm' and were able to make thoughtful and articulate responses to questions about the novel. Some high attaining pupils write at length and develop their ideas carefully. Low-attaining pupils in Year 10, in particular boys with special needs, had good knowledge and understanding of a scene from 'Macbeth' which, although below average represented a considerable achievement. Although these pupils were not fluent readers they were able to read and interpret the meaning of a scene from 'Macbeth' with evident enjoyment.
70. The school is making good progress in raising the profile of literacy across all departments. A small working group spearheads developments and links with all departments although current practice varies. Pupils' planners now have lists of subject-specific terminology and key words are displayed in design and technology, geography, and physical education, for instance. In science pupils are required to write in a good range of writing styles and some good use of writing frames was seen in both science and in history. Good support for the teaching of writing skills is provided by the literacy co-ordinator.
71. Pupils behave well in English lessons. They are attentive and listen carefully. They respond well and are confident and keen to participate. They try hard. Pupils co-operate well together. Some younger pupils with special needs have a short span of concentration and easily become restless. In Year 11 pupils are sensible, have mature attitudes to their work and are able to organise themselves well.
72. Overall the quality of teaching and learning are good. There is some very good teaching of the subject. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In most lessons objectives are clearly identified at the start. Teachers have a good grasp of the subject and present stimulating and high quality materials in lessons. In the most effective lessons expectations are high and lessons have pace. In Year 11, for example, pupils responded very well to the teacher's lively and interesting exposition. The lesson flowed along and was crammed with new information and ideas about 'Animal Farm' – consequently learning was strong. A Year 8 lesson moved briskly from reading poems by Robert Frost and John Mole to discussion of alliteration and its effect in a poem written by the teacher, then to planning for pupils' own writing. Relationships are generally very good; pupils are encouraged to participate and their efforts recognised and praised. Lessons are pitched carefully and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Low attainers in Year 7 and in Year 10 made particularly good progress as a result of a supportive environment and tasks presented at the right level. Learning support assistants are generally well integrated into lessons and work well with small groups of pupils. There is some excellent and extensive marking of work that is supportive in tone, engages well with the pupil and sets out targets to help pupils improve. They are very appreciative of such marking and recognise its value.
73. Some aspects of teaching are in need of improvement. Some teaching is dull and lacking in enthusiasm. Too little opportunity is made for pupils to engage actively

with topics through carefully organised pair or group discussion. The range of teaching approaches lacks variety. The strong start to lessons resulting from the starter activity, particularly in Years 7 and 8 is not always sustained, subsequent tasks sometimes lack structure and pace is lost.

74. There have been some very positive initiatives in this department. Along with other schools in the city, Archbishop Holgate's is involved in the Key Stage 3 national pilot to raise achievement especially through targeting literacy and numeracy. The pilot is well co-ordinated and there are some important outcomes resulting from it. The planning and resourcing of teaching in Years 7 and 8 as a result of the pilot are particularly strong, sometimes excellent. There is some effective practice aimed at teaching and reinforcing basic literacy skills. Teaching follows the recommended methods of the National Literacy Strategy. This has made a clear impact on the pace of lessons, which always begin with a very brisk ten-minute activity. In the best lessons this pace is maintained to the end. Teachers are beginning to use some of these more focused approaches in other years. Other important developments include a summer school for pupils entering Year 7, regular quiet reading times in lessons, and the use of a 'Reading Passport' as a means of promoting reading. Pupils are involved in reviewing their own and others' work and targets for improvement are set. These are promising developments but are not yet thoroughly embedded into practice across the department.
75. Generally the department functions smoothly. Teachers are committed and hardworking. Attainment has improved since the last inspection. There is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils make better progress in lessons than at the time of the last report. There are some very positive aspects of departmental practice. There has been some good work to address the different learning styles of boys and girls, which has had an impact on the way teachers organise their classrooms. In Year 10 the department is trialing the teaching of high-attaining pupils in separate gender groups. The department offers some extra-curricular opportunities including a lunchtime drama club, a school production, and theatre visits.
76. The present leadership of the department, however, lacks impact and rigour. There are a number of shortcomings in management. There is, for instance, no overall curriculum planning at Key Stage 4 and as a consequence, no clear strategy or programme which is followed by all teachers to improve provision and raise standards. The place of information and communication technology within the English curriculum is underdeveloped. There is little opportunity for drama within the curriculum in both key stages. Teachers are not well informed about the individual needs of pupils on the special needs register and there is too little in-class support for them. Practice in marking and assessment, raised in the last inspection report, is still inconsistent. The school has measures in hand to address these issues.

## **MATHEMATICS**

77. The last inspection in 1997 reported that some teaching was poor, that attainment was below average and that some pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Since then teaching has improved impressively, pupils' attainment overall is above the national average and progress made by pupils is usually good and sometimes very good.
78. Results in national examinations at the end of Years 9 and 11 in 2000 were broadly in-line with national averages. At Year 9, this represents the continuation of an upward trend in results over the last few years, a trend which the department



realistically expects to improve still further this year. At Year 11, taking into account that the attainment on entry of the cohort was well below average, the GCSE results represent very good achievement. Here, the trend over the last few years has been more erratic but is still upwards. Analysis of pupils' work and of assessment data suggests that the results at Year 11 in 2001 will be above average. There is little difference between the performance of boys and of girls.

79. The standards of work seen during the inspection cover the full attainment range and overall are above national averages at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Classwork is generally neat and tidy and of good quality. High-attaining older pupils can write numbers in standard form and understand circle theorems, they can find missing angles and sides of triangles by means of the sine and cosine rules and they understand the construction of vector triangles. Middle-attaining Key Stage 4 pupils were revising for their examinations at the time of the inspection but demonstrated that they understand Pythagoras' theorem, can plot straight-line graphs and curves and understand cumulative frequency diagrams. By the end of Year 9 high-attaining pupils understand straight-line graphs and can calculate gradients and identify intercepts, they can solve simultaneous equations by more than one method and they can understand probability tree diagrams. Middle-attaining pupils understand and can use mensuration formulae for circles, they can calculate one quantity as a percentage of another and they can calculate the three types of average for a set of data.
80. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Overall within the department, the standard of teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is generally good. However, non-specialists in the department, whilst effective classroom practitioners, have problems planning lessons well. Where planning is inaccurate pupils make slower progress than they might. Where planning is sound (as it is in most lessons) pupils make good progress with the pace of work appropriate to their prior attainment. The management of pupils in the classroom is good or very good and good teacher – pupil relationships are evident whether one to one or teacher to class. Most lessons make skilful use of question and answer sessions by using both directed and undirected questions to draw all pupils into the lesson.
81. Teachers' expectations are usually high and pupils are generally stretched. Classroom work is often so organised that groups of pupils at different levels of attainment can progress at appropriate rates. This process is aided by the usually effective setting procedures. However, in Year 7, the subject is taught in two half-year groups of three sets each and the attainment range within each set makes differentiation of work difficult.
82. The teaching of numeracy in Year 7 (through the recently introduced National Numeracy Pilot) is very good; the technique of an introductory warm-up session using "number fans" and personal whiteboards helps all pupils to participate in lessons and generates very high interest. Here, lessons broken up into three parts keep pupils on task and enable lower-attaining pupils to consolidate their weak numeracy skills. Where the use of warm-up numeracy sessions has been extended outside Year 7 it proves an effective use of time.
83. Pupils show their numeracy skills in other departments, for example in geography where pupils collect, analyse and display data and in science where pupils plot and draw graphs. However, pupils do not always transfer their skills accurately, for example in science where some graph work shows some confusion, especially

among low-attaining pupils. The completed development of an effective numeracy policy across the curriculum is an issue that needs to be addressed.

84. Pupils work well together and form sound relationships. High standards set by staff means that pupils are well aware of what is expected of them in class and they respond positively to the ethos by working hard in lessons. They settle quickly and generally maintain interest and concentration. However, 60-minute lessons seem too long for some low-attainers who are apt to lose concentration. As most lessons are strongly teacher led, there is little opportunity for independent learning except when working on the area of the curriculum that deals with using and applying mathematics. Here, the level of work is good – some Year 10 and 11 coursework is very good showing excellent insight and a confident use of algebra.
85. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is very good. There are home-produced examinations and tests that are regularly used to assess progress. Pupils are clearly informed of their marks and the pupils themselves record their progress on charts that also indicate targets. All information is contained in a central database. These data are used to inform the setting procedures and to predict final grades. Homework, which is set once a week for all groups, usually consolidates classwork and is mostly set using high quality home-produced material. Both homework and classwork are marked accurately following departmental guidelines.
86. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is through the effective setting procedures. Despite a shortage of learning support staff, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
87. Talented pupils are identified on entry to the school by testing and by primary school records. The top one-third of pupils in Years 7 and 8 enter the Leeds University maths challenge where, this year, the school obtained seven gold awards and about 40 silver or bronze awards. Next year this scheme will be extended to include Year 9 pupils.
88. The head of department is very well-organised and leads the department well. Members of the mathematics department are experienced teachers and have the potential to make a strong team. The departmental documentation is clear and explicit. The scheme of work is very comprehensive and detailed, although subject to alteration as the National Numeracy Strategy makes its impact in Year 7 this year. The action taken to meet the school's targets for the subject is good. The head of department is well aware of targets agreed with senior management and the department's use of assessment data is very good and ensures that targets are met or exceeded.
89. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching in the subject is good. Monitoring of lessons by the head of department and senior staff takes place regularly. However, more needs to be done in helping non-specialists teach the subject. Since the non-specialist teachers have responsibilities outside the department it is difficult to find time for effective planning and development meetings.
90. The department's use of computers is unsatisfactory. Currently information and communication technology work is only done with some Key Stage 3 pupils and Key Stage 4 pupils have little opportunity to use computers. Access to computer facilities is difficult as the computer rooms are in great demand. However, excellent use of information and communication technology facilities by a teacher was seen in one lesson where a combination of a laptop computer, some appropriate software

and a projector was used to good effect to demonstrate vector triangles. The department plans to extend this type of information and communication technology usage.

91. There are pleasing displays of commercial material and pupils' work on the walls although there is little multi-cultural input seen in either the work or in the displays. Key words of the subject are displayed on classroom walls to aid the learning of mathematical terminology although insufficient use of them is made during lessons. The department has good accommodation and a large quantity of textbooks, some modern and some out of date. Teachers make good use of these resources by selecting appropriate exercises from textbooks as required. High quality resources in terms of exercises and assessments have been developed (and continue to be developed) by the department to supplement textbooks. There is a pleasing lack of graffiti in books or on desks and the subject area is generally free of litter.
92. The departmental development plan concentrates largely on the implementation of the National Numeracy Scheme in Year 7. Although this is an appropriate area for development, there are other issues that need to be considered. These include in-service training for non-specialist teachers, the development of information and communication technology use, the development of a whole school numeracy policy and the continued development of high-quality resources to supplement aging textbooks.

## **SCIENCE**

93. In 2000, the results of the national tests taken by Year 9 pupils were above the national average for all schools and in line with the national average for similar schools. These results represent a good achievement for pupils who were of broadly average attainment on entry to the school three years earlier. The boys performed better than the girls relative to their respective national averages. The results were lower than those in English and better than those in mathematics. The trend of results follows the national picture and they have been above the national average for the last five years.
94. The majority of pupils are entered for the dual award science GCSE and a small number for the single award examination. In 2000, the overall percentage of A\*-C grades was just below the national average and the percentage of A\*-G grades above. Girls performed better than boys relative to their respective national averages. The percentage of A\*-C grades has fallen over the last three years. However, the performance of pupils in the dual award examination was high compared with their performance in other subjects and represents a good achievement for pupils whose average attainment on entry to the school five years earlier was below the national average.
95. Pupils make good progress throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 and their achievement is good. By the age of 14, the standards seen were consistent with the standards in the national tests. Pupils have good practice in developing their experimental skills and overall, these skills are sound. They have a good understanding of the processes involved in a scientific investigation. They have good planning skills and can apply the principle of a 'fair test' very well. The high and average-attaining pupils can record experimental observations and measurements accurately. Though pupils can recall their knowledge, their ability to apply it in new situations is less well developed.
96. By the age of 16, the standard of work seen is in line with national expectations,

which is higher than the standard shown in the year 2000 GCSE results. During Years 10 and 11, carefully structured teaching enables all pupils to make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of science and of the contribution science makes to society. The pupils' achievement relative to their very low starting point on their entry to the school is good. Overall, pupils' investigative skills are sound. High-attaining pupils have good skills. Average attaining pupils have good planning and observation skills, but their ability to analyse and evaluate their results is weaker and needs further development. Low-attaining pupils are not sufficiently accurate in the collection of their experimental results. Pupils have poor study skills and so find the recall of facts in tests and examinations difficult.

97. Literacy skills are sound for most pupils but very weak for some low-attainers. There is some planned development of literacy in science with an emphasis on the correct use and spelling of scientific terminology. Key words are used to support low attainers and a wide range of writing styles is used. Numeracy skills are generally sound, although low-attaining pupils have weak graphical skills. They have problems choosing appropriate scales and with the concept of the line of 'best fit'. They have a tendency to draw bar charts rather than line graphs. Strategies for using and enhancing numeracy in science are underdeveloped. Pupils are competent in using computers to research and analyse information but they do not have sufficient practice in using computers for modelling and to collect measurements. Pupils with special educational needs progress at the same rate as the other pupils, due to good support from teachers and support assistants. The developing use of writing frames helps pupils to structure their work. The introduction of science master classes motivates and enhances the learning of high attaining pupils.
98. The good progress and achievement of pupils are due to very good teaching, which promotes very good learning. Teaching is good in Years 7-9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Some outstanding teaching was seen. A key strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers manage their classes. They insist on high standards of work and behaviour so that pupils are not distracted from their learning in lessons. The very good relationship between teachers and pupils engenders very positive attitudes to science. Teachers are encouraging and supportive and make good use of praise to boost pupils' confidence. This ensures that most pupils are comfortable in volunteering answers to teachers' questions, which enhances their learning.
99. Science teachers use a variety of teaching methods with imaginative approaches that capture pupils' interest and motivate them well. An example of this was seen in an excellent Year 9 chemistry lesson on displacement. The teacher had collected a range of footwear, from large boots to small slippers, to represent metals of differing reactivity. These were used in a practical demonstration of their 'kicking out' power. Pupils had to make their own selection of three metal/metal oxide mixtures, which they heated to see if displacement took place. The teacher's dynamic delivery generated pupil enthusiasm. The teacher stressed the importance of careful selection if they were to see reactions. Pupils had gained a good understanding of patterns of reactivity from the initial demonstration and were able to apply this knowledge in making their choices. The pupils were well motivated, worked hard, enjoyed the lesson and made excellent progress.
100. Teachers have appropriately high expectations for all attainment groups and are very good at challenging pupil thinking, skilfully using questioning to extend pupil understanding. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson on leaf structure. Questions such as 'is a leaf waterproof?', 'is "breathe" a good science word when talking about

cells?', 'what are the advantages and disadvantages of a large surface area for a leaf?' tested pupils' understanding and made them think about their work. This resulted in very good learning. Pupils work hard in lessons and sustain their concentration. Teachers use time targets to focus pupils' attention on their task and structure lessons carefully in small steps with a variety of activities. This means that lessons proceed at a purposeful pace and pupils keep 'on-task' throughout, making good progress. An example of this was seen in a Year 11 lesson on space with a group of low-attaining pupils. After a lively enthusiastic introduction by the teacher and a discussion on the seasons, using a model of the solar system, pupils completed a worksheet in complete silence, concentrating hard and working productively without the need for any teacher reminders or intervention. The teacher had captured their interest and the pupils took responsibility for their own learning and demonstrated good independent working skills. Their learning was very good.

101. Good subject knowledge and understanding is evident even when teachers are not teaching their own science specialism. Lessons are planned well and the aims are made clear to pupils, which helps to focus their learning. Sometimes these aims are not revisited at the end of the lesson to enable the teacher to assess learning. Written work is regularly marked but comments are not specific enough to show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils enjoy science and the very good teaching motivates and captures their interest. When this happens pupils demonstrate good listening skills and come to lessons prepared to work. Pupils collaborate well with each other in practical work. Generally, their written work is well presented, showing a pride in their work. In spite of teacher encouragement, some pupils lack confidence in their own ability and do not readily volunteer answers to questions posed by the teacher, which has a negative impact on their progress. Pupils' independent learning skills have improved since the previous report, but generally lessons are teacher dominated and strategies for allowing pupils opportunities for independent study are insufficiently developed.

102. The leadership and management of the department are very good. There is a good improvement plan with appropriate targets for improving standards. Assessment is very well used to inform curriculum planning and to monitor and support pupil progress. There is sound monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and pupils' work. The quality and range of learning opportunities is very good. The science staff are extremely dedicated and hard-working and give freely of their own time at weekends and in school holidays to support pupils' learning. The York Science Week Challenge and weekend sessions on such topics as astronomy and genetics enrich the curriculum. Science master classes enhance learning for GCSE pupils and revision classes for both Years 9 and 11 aim to raise standards in public tests and examinations. Resources are efficiently organised by the laboratory technicians and are adequate, apart from the urgent need for computers and sensors to enable pupils to collect and analyse scientific data. The accommodation has recently been refurbished and is now good. The standard of display is very high and provides a stimulating learning environment.
103. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. For instance, the range of learning opportunities has increased with the introduction of CASE thinking skills lessons and the wealth of extra-curricular activities in science. Results in the Year 9 public tests and the good standard of teaching have been maintained. The use of assessment information to improve standards has been developed. In order to improve further the department should develop the use of information communication technology, diagnostic marking and pupils' study skills, and continue the planned revision of the scheme of work. The department has the capacity to improve further, because of the effective and thoughtful new leadership, together with a very hardworking, enthusiastic and committed team, who have already planned a range of strategies for raising standards in future years.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. Standards of attainment in art are broadly average. Teacher assessments at the age of 14 indicate that higher than average numbers of pupils are meeting or exceeding national expectations. These assessments are generous and reflect a lack of standardisation. The attainment of the girls is better than that of the boys. These results are an improvement on those of recent years. The GCSE results by the age of 16 are also improving but remain well below the national average. The numbers of girls gaining a grade between A\* and C was close to the national average in the year 2000, whereas none of the boys were successful. Every pupil who sat the examination was awarded a grade between A\* and G, which is better than the national picture.
105. The work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are rising at an increasing rate. Pupils allow the work of other artists to influence the way they develop and present their work and there is evidence of them having looked at a broad range of European and non-European art and artists. Particularly good models based on the idea of a room for artists such as Vincent van Gogh or Bridget Riley capture the flavour and echo the artist's work in an unusually personal way. A project based around Aboriginal art demonstrates the pupils' personal response and is bold, original and based on careful research.

106. The sketchbooks of pupils in Years 7 to 9 carry evidence of their investigation of materials and ideas as well as their response to illustrations from books and other sources. Preparation work and planning is broad, thorough and innovative and reflects their refreshing open-minded approach to working and experimenting with mixed media. A personal response in the form of carefully observed and analysed drawing from observation is less easy to discern. Certificates of merit provide encouragement to these younger pupils.
107. The work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 shows a more highly developed, stronger ability to take the ideas of other artists and use them in an individual way. A folder of work strongly influenced by Aboriginal art contained evidence of thorough research into the images, life-style and working methods of these people and was further linked to ideas taken from Beryl Cook, L S Lowry, René Magritte and photographs of the pupil's garden at home. Imagery from this work was also developed into a repeat pattern by using computer software. The quality and range of experimentation is less good than in Years 7 to 9. A set of work based around advertising materials relating to Yorkshire Water and David Hockney's swimming pool paintings, while demonstrating the high quality compositional skills and strong response to other artists' work evident within the department; also illustrates the weaker skills of observational drawing which limit opportunities for making work more personal and original. Objective drawing and investigation are lagging behind designing skills. This inability to observe, analyse and record specific information through drawing is a contributory factor in pupils' unsuccessful search for the very top grades.
108. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in art but there are occasions when there is insufficient thought given to their progress or how the work might be modified so as to increase the challenge. The same is true of gifted and talented pupils. Consideration should also be given to more demanding, appropriate homework so that pupils might have the opportunity to develop their skills away from the sometimes inhibiting gaze of their classmates.
109. Achievement is good. Allowing for the varied experiences of art education the pupils have had when they arrive in the department at the age of 11, their achievement by the age of 14 is good. Their achievement by the age of 16 is only satisfactory, due mainly to their underdeveloped skills of research and observational drawing.
110. Teaching and learning in the department are good overall. Teaching and learning in Years 7, 8 and 9 are good, sometimes very good, but occasionally unsatisfactory. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good and sometimes very good. In the best lessons, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and the way they manage their pupils, make a significant contribution to their pupils' learning. Good relationships are a particular feature of many lessons when pupils recognise their teachers' genuine feel for their subject and respond accordingly. The teachers challenge their pupils by insisting on good quality, original work and by providing inventive starting points. Lessons are invariably introduced by the teachers making expectations clear and by skilfully engaging their pupils in discussions relating to previous learning or current work.
111. In a very good lesson, Year 7 pupils were pleased to watch their teacher demonstrate different methods of drawing with pastel and related materials. The pupils soon began offering their ideas as to how the process might be modified in

the pursuit of different effects. The pupils were impatient to start the practical session and their gains in knowledge of drawing and technique were rapid. In another very good lesson with Year 11, lower-attaining pupils prepared for the rapidly approaching GCSE examination by discussing their plans with their teacher and each other. The mature way these young people were pleased to offer their ideas for compositions, at the same time as recognising the merit of their classmates' ideas was a direct result of the value their teacher placed on their efforts. Although the standard of their work was well below average their gains in confidence, their progress and the raising of their expectations were a tribute to the pupils and their teacher alike. This is in marked contrast to a small number of supposedly more able, Year 10 boys who chose to resist the best efforts of their teachers, preferring instead to waste their time and ability, in aimless, often noisy, conversation.

112. In the only unsatisfactory lesson seen during the inspection, the expectations of the pupils and teacher alike were low. The teacher failed to provide the pupils with sufficient guidance on observational drawing. Poor management of a small number of difficult pupils allowed their inappropriate behaviour and noise to increase to levels that interfered with those who wanted to work. The class's attention soon began to wander; behaviour deteriorated, and under-achievement was the result.
113. There are occasions when teachers spend time pointing out the meanings of new words when they arise. The natural way subject-specific words are used in lessons makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy. The links the department has made with the Impressions Gallery in York, and the way pupils are encouraged to take part in initiatives such as the Year of Photography, make a very good contribution to their learning and their commitment to the subject. Equally the way potentially difficult pupils are encouraged to involve themselves in extra-curricular activities such as painting sets for the school production raises their self-esteem and adds to their personal development.
114. The curriculum in art is broad and balanced and statutory requirements are met but there is scope to bring creative textiles, three-dimensional studies and computer generated artwork nearer the centre of the department's activities. Assessment methods are thorough and the methods used to predict the examination grades of those pupils in Years 10 and 11 are accurate. Assessment at the age of 14 is less accurate, however, and reflects the lack of standardisation available to the teachers.
115. The management of the department is good and provides clear direction for staff and pupils alike. The way the head of department makes potentially difficult pupils feel welcome, and manages them without confrontation, sets high standards for staff and pupils alike. The work of the teaching staff within the department is monitored regularly and steps are taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is a need to provide further in-service training so that all teachers within the department might meet the high standards of classroom management and lesson content set by the head of department. Strategic planning for the short, medium and long term needs further details of cost, staffing, time and resources necessary to implement the plans.
116. Since the last inspection there has been a change of leadership and a change of direction. Specialist teachers have replaced the non-specialist teachers who worked in the department. Pupils' understanding and knowledge of the work of a wide range of art and artists has improved, as has their ability to use their new knowledge to influence their own work. The work produced in the department is original, innovative and with a highly decorative quality of design. Pupils enjoy art



and design and their relationships with their teachers ensure that the department remains a strength of the school. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the improvement continues.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. The department has some very good features but equally some areas that require much development. Areas for development that were highlighted at the time of the last inspection have not all been successfully improved. By the end of Year 9 standards of work seen are generally in line with those expected nationally. In food and textiles technology there are more pupils working at a level above that expected for their age than in the area of resistant materials. By the age of 16 overall GCSE performance is below the national average. Although the department did match the school's percentage for A\* - C grades, this was as a result of very good results in food technology and textiles. In food technology and textiles A\* - C figures were 62.5% and 77% respectively, thereby placing them well above the national averages. Results in graphic products and resistant materials were very much below national averages, particularly in graphic products where only 7.7% achieved A\* - C. Figures for resistant materials were 20%. Girls' attainment at GCSE is better than that of boys.
118. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 food lessons are prepared to increase the level of complexity of their work and in some instances modify recipes in the light of experience. Their confidence and the opportunity they have to be innovative results in a high level of attainment. This has an equivalent effect on the standards achieved by other groups including those with special educational needs, who make above average progress. The flexibility afforded to pupils at the design stage, for example Year 8 working in textiles, results in good work. Pupils use information and communication technology naturally as a tool to enhance the level of fabric embellishment so, although the construction of the product was similar, each pupil produced a unique bag whilst developing a broad range of skills. The level of innovation in the design process and the subsequent making is not as evident in the resistant materials area where a more tightly structured approach linked with a limited range of materials depresses the standards achieved. Standards overall therefore are broadly average with pupils having exposure to a limited range of processes. No substantive work is completed in metal. Through Years 7 to 9, work on systems, control and structures is limited, a point acknowledged by the department
119. By the age of 16 pupils working in the medium of food attain a good standard of presentation and are able to explain clearly the design and make process. Pupils are confident in practical work including those with English as an additional language who, through good support from teachers, attain standards matching their practical capability. Year 11 pupils showed good understanding of examination requirements when involved in a trial practical session designed to reinforce their knowledge and ability to describe the making process. In textiles Year 11 pupils had developed a wide range of design briefs. One pupil working with materials including PVC explained clearly the problems encountered and how she had overcome them. She was very clear on the benefits and difficulties of working with that material. Pupils' ability to work in innovative ways is a feature of the subject. Pupils working with resistant materials do not show the same variety in their work because of the tight constraints of the design specifications they are given. All pupils have made a cabinet, using wood, with the opportunity to decide on the internal features. Whilst there were differences between pupils' efforts the general construction techniques

were simple and of limited quality. More accomplished pupils developed good finishes to the exterior casing. Little high quality work was seen in graphic products.

120. Teaching in design and technology is almost all at least satisfactory and two-thirds is good or very good. It is better in food technology and textiles than in resistant materials and graphics. Where teaching was particularly effective learning objectives were well constructed and explained to pupils concisely. Introductions left pupils in no doubt about the expectations of the teacher with regard to lesson outcomes and general levels of application in the lesson. The structure of good lessons was such that an appropriate pace was maintained, ensuring that pupils learned well and made good progress. This was well illustrated in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were working in acrylic and being introduced to the use of the buffing machine. The good learning in these lessons is the result of careful planning and good time management. Teachers use focused and targeted questioning, not only to establish the soundness of the prior learning but also to test the level of knowledge and understanding that individual pupils have of the new learning introduced in the lesson. They reinforce the need for sensible and safe practice in hazardous areas and ensure that all pupils understand the potential dangers of ignoring the rules that they have developed and agreed. The specialist teachers in the department have good subject skills and knowledge, which is used to good effect in demonstrations as well as in providing evaluative and constructive comment.
121. Where lessons were least effective, teachers used a limited range of teaching methods. Teaching was over-directive with too much time spent talking to pupils and too little responsibility being given to pupils for their own learning. The result of the over-direction along with some narrow focus was a loss of concentration and reluctance to participate. Problems also arose where pupils were given too little guidance, no structure and no definite outcome by the end of the lesson. In some lessons, questions put to pupils were too general and failed not only to establish their knowledge and understanding but also failed to engage their full attention. Insufficient emphasis is placed on ensuring that work is appropriate to pupils' levels of attainment in groups where the range of ability is broad, so the needs of some pupils are not met.
122. Homework is generally relevant and used to good effect in allowing pupils to reinforce their understanding of the subject. Good learning often takes place where pupils are involved in practical demonstration, for example in Year 8 textiles with the introduction of the overlocker. Although there is not always work tailored to their particular needs, pupils identified as have special educational needs generally make good progress. Equally those pupils with English as an additional language, through good support are able to perform well in the practical sessions. Overall, in all years pupils show good levels of concentration and perseverance. Those in Years 10 and 11 were aware of their potential grades at GCSE and what was required to improve. General attitudes and behaviour are good across the department and pupils show a positive approach especially where teaching inspires.
123. Although the statutory curriculum is covered there are weaknesses in the areas of systems control and structures. The department has insufficient specialist staff to ensure that all those working in the resistant materials area receive an equal experience in developing the full range of making skills. Good examples of multi-cultural work were seen in textiles where Year 11 where pupils had researched a number of different cultures to establish a design for the final project; one pupil, for example, looked to Japanese art as part of a wider consideration of oriental art when

looking at patterns for garments. One pupil looked to ancient Egypt to develop a theme for cushions. The research involved the investigation of aspects of customs in these civilisations. In investigating products and materials, pupils in food technology consider the environmental impact of products and their packaging. This involves consideration and discussion of the economic and environmental dilemmas facing commercial companies. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their social skills further through working in pairs or design teams.

124. The systems that have been developed for recording and monitoring pupil progress are effective but are not consistently used across the department and some records are incomplete. The completed records are used well to inform pupils about their progress, particularly in food and textiles. Marking inconsistencies are evident in the level and depth of developmental comments and the correction of spelling of both technical and general language. The quality of reports to parents at Key Stage 3 varies: best examples give a clear indication of not only what activities have taken place but how well the pupil has performed, followed up with points to note in order to make further progress. The weaker examples, whilst indicating what topics had been covered make no judgements and give no guidance for improvement.
125. The quality of management across the department is barely adequate though there is very good support from the subject leaders for food technology and textiles. Whilst the disciplines within the department work closely to ensure a sound curriculum with appropriate assessment and recording procedures, there is a lack of consistency and no evident corporate approach to design and technology. This results in pupils missing the opportunity to gain a seamless design and technology experience. The level of technician support is inadequate; the dual role of the incumbent technician is insufficiently defined and not effectively managed to ensure that the needs of the curriculum are met, though the technician demonstrates a high level of competence. Food technology and textiles do not have an appropriate allocation and therefore teachers are unduly burdened with technician tasks. Resources, whilst satisfactory, lack sufficient computers to fully meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a need for more subject-specific software, hardware for computer-assisted manufacture and ready access to a dedicated computer facility.
126. Since the last inspection there have been some improvements but some of the criticisms mentioned remain. There are still inconsistencies in standards at both key stages and a narrow range of experiences in resistant materials and the range of materials used. Equally the areas of praise have continued to improve, for example the work in food technology and the much improved textiles provision. Monitoring and tracking of pupils has improved, as has the quality of teaching. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The school has measures in hand to improve the quality of management of the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

127. Since the previous report, geography has a new subject leader appointed from September 2000. Results at GCSE are below average and in recent years have remained much as they were at the time of the previous inspection but standards are now rising. Pupils make good progress through Years 7 to 9, developing the skills to harness an expanding body of geographical knowledge. They have a reasonable command of place, distance, direction and location and use terminology with increasing accuracy and appropriateness. Work matched to pupils' prior attainment, evident in Year 7 but more pronounced in Years 8 and 9, where pupils are grouped by their attainment, is achieved through open-ended and graded tasks and through a growing diversity of strategies designed to cater for the range of pupil

need. By the end of Year 9, attainment is broadly in-line or slightly above national expectations.

128. Typically, a third of the cohort, no longer predominantly boys, continue geography into Key Stage 4. In 2000, results improved significantly on those in 1998 and 1999. Virtually half the GCSE entry gained grades A-C, slightly below the national average, but representing good achievement by pupils who, on average, were well below the expected standards when they entered the school in Year 7. Boys outperformed girls, against the national trend. Standards currently being achieved overall in Year 11 remain below national averages. In year 10, they are closer to them but there is a wide range of attainment. Some pupils can apply geographical concepts in a way which demonstrates incisive and lateral thinking whilst others struggle with terminology and recall and are vague and imprecise in description.
129. The quality of teaching is good. It is never unsatisfactory but is at its best where it acknowledges wide variations in need. As a result, learning is also good. The concentration of a Year 10 class, for example, was held throughout a lesson on industry which began with a useful recapitulation before moving to a well-planned exercise which required pupils to interpret statistics and so to draw and illustrate comparisons between employment structures across the world. All pupils achieved very good progress because levelled worksheets and targeted teacher support successfully challenged every member of this mixed ability group and additional work using triangular graphs was available to stretch the highest attainers. As a result, there was no evidence of the behavioural problems for which a third of the class appear in the special needs register. Whilst there is great diversity in teaching methodology which adds pace to lessons and sustains pupil interest, there is also a degree of reliance on textbook exercises, some of which are less inspirational. Members of one Year 7 class, for example, investigated microclimate through practical work in the school grounds and were able to contribute meaningfully to a subsequent discussion on the factors that affect temperature. Their attitude and behaviour were exemplary but, for another Year 7 class also engaged in weather and climate, the textbook was a poor substitute for the classic anti-cyclonic conditions affecting York that day and so apparent through the classroom windows. The class struggled to comprehend abstract concepts and, whilst they willingly participated, there was much guesswork and poorly focussed learning.
130. A strength of teaching is its contribution to the development of basic skills not only with key words but through interesting and creative writing and through the extensive use of graphs and statistics. A Year 9 class was producing its own report contrasting the rich north with the poor south. A Year 11 lesson on global warming stemmed from statistics relating to carbon dioxide emissions and was directed by means of healthy debate along lateral lines. A useful tactic is the devoting of a small part of many lessons to quick-fire questions on the basics.
131. Year 11 pupils were enthusiastic in sharing their research on the advantages and disadvantages of various fuels. Pupils in all years actively participate in lessons, volunteering answers and asking questions. The standard of presentation of their written work improves noticeably. Pupils are generally courteous and committed to their work and teachers competently managed the few instances of negative behaviour.
132. This is a department in transition. The incoming subject leader is an enthusiastic and dedicated teacher and has quickly identified the key areas that need to be addressed to raise standards. Considerable progress has already been made. Schemes of work are being reviewed. New schemes for Year 7 are fully in place

and meet new criteria. The department continues to develop its role in the delivery of basic skills especially in literacy and is rapidly getting hold of the task of ensuring that the level of challenge inherent in the work matches pupils' prior levels of attainment, although the level of class support for pupils with special needs is inadequate. Opportunities for using information and communication technology are developing despite very limited access to hardware. Fieldwork and enquiry work are being re-evaluated. Monitoring of teaching is in place. The need to formalise and record assessment so as to inform and set targets is well understood and is an area highlighted in development plans. In these ways the department is, at last, responding to the criticisms of the previous inspection. The effects of this response on standards are already visible.

## HISTORY

133. The attainment of a majority of pupils towards the end of Key Stage 3 is average and that of higher-attaining pupils is above average. Most pupils have a secure grasp of the main events of the periods and themes studied and know how to take information from historical source materials. They can organise information in a logical sequence to present a narrative account of historical events and know that some sources may be more reliable than others for historical enquiry. Able pupils in Years 7 to 9 often have a very good understanding of how a variety of factors may interact to create change. There is no evidence of underachievement by pupils in this key stage.
134. Attainment by a majority of pupils towards the end of Year 11 is average. Their knowledge of the themes and periods studied is sound. They can derive basic information from visual and written source material and describe the content of sources but are weaker in evaluating and interpreting them. The coursework of higher attaining pupils, however, contains good evidence of their ability to analyse sources critically and to offer sound reasons for judging some to be more reliable than others in reaching conclusions about the past.
135. Results in the GCSE examination have shown marked variation in recent years. In 1998 results at grades A\*-C matched the national average. In 1999 and in 2000 results in these grades were below the national average, significantly so in 2000. Whilst the performance of girls has been better than boys at the higher grades, results for girls in 2000 were below the corresponding national average. Performance at grades A\*-G has been better, with all pupils entered gaining passes at these grades in the past three years.
136. The quality of teaching is good and in Years 7 to 9 it is often very good. One of the lessons seen was excellently taught, though another, taught by a non-specialist, was unsatisfactory. The specialist teachers are well qualified and their good subject knowledge enables them to plan effective lessons that develop pupils' knowledge of history and the skills of historical enquiry. Good planning and careful guidance in previous lessons in Year 7 had enabled many pupils to make good progress in their ability to write a connected narrative about the Norman Conquest. Very good teaching in a Year 8 lesson on the American West enabled pupils to understand how a variety of different factors may interact to create historical change. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, poor pupil management and some lack of specialist knowledge hindered progress and many pupils were easily distracted from the theme of the lesson. An excellent lesson in Year 9 on the Holocaust raised profound moral questions and very effectively drew upon pupils' empathetic understanding. In Years 10 and 11 a good deal of work has been done to develop pupils' skills in

history and to raise attainment. Pupils are encouraged to write at length and to take care with the presentation of their work. Lessons in these years are generally less interactive than Years 7 to 9 and teachers do not always fully exploit the opportunities presented to develop pupils' oral skills and confidence in expressing their views in class.

137. The quality of learning is good and in Years 7 to 9 it is often very good. The positive attitude of most pupils to the subject enables lessons to proceed at a good pace and there are no problems of behaviour or discipline. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress and those in Years 7 to 9 are acquiring a very good grasp of historical skills. Very good learning in a Year 7 lesson was characterised by an evident sense of enjoyment in a well-planned lesson on the medieval church. Some pupils in this class were able to offer perceptive comments on what might have happened if Harold, and not William, had won the Battle of Hastings! Most pupils are making good progress in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are willing to respond to teachers' questions and most work with concentration on the tasks set. Some lack confidence in expressing their views orally, but the written work of the majority shows that they are positive in their attitude to the subject. Exercises are completed, care is taken with presentation and many pupils present their work using word processing.
138. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is giving pupils a broad historical education. Currently, pupils' experience is not extended by visits to historical sites. Pupils' work is regularly marked and end of Key Stage 3 assessments are being revised to provide more accurate evidence of pupils' attainment. At present assessment does not give pupils in Years 7 to 9 sufficient guidance on how to improve in the skills specific to history and not all pupils get early feedback on their attainment in course work in Years 10 and 11.

139. There have been several changes of subject staff in the last two years. The recently appointed teacher in charge of history is providing good leadership and has identified clear priorities for raising the attainment of pupils, developing their historical skills and their ability to write effectively. The scheme of work is currently being revised. Resources for the subject are adequate, with the exception of resources for information and communication technology.
140. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection in the quality of teaching and in the level of challenge made of pupils. Further improvement needs to be made in: raising the attainment of pupils in public examinations; the assessment of pupils' work so that they know how to improve; the support given to non-specialists to develop greater confidence in teaching history; the range of opportunities offered to pupils to enhance their classroom experience through visits to sites of historical interest; the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

141. In the 2000 GCSE examinations in the combined business studies and information technology course, 59% of pupils achieved A\*-C grades which is above the national average. Teacher assessments of pupils in Year 9 in 2000 indicate that the standards of the majority of pupils are just above national levels.
142. The standards of pupils' work seen during the inspection indicate that pupils in Year 9 are just below national levels, although pupils in Years 7 and 8 are in line with national expectations. In GCSE in Years 10 and 11 there is a full range of attainment between A\* -G, with pupils producing work at the level expected for their age and in line with national standards.
143. In Year 7 pupils show confidence in logging on to the school network and can quickly make use of the software available. They can use basic word processing and desktop publishing programmes and make good use of fonts and colour to make their work attractive. In Year 8 pupils are able to use more advanced skills of word processing and desktop publishing and have a satisfactory understanding of databases. At the time of the inspection they were working on a unit on spreadsheets. They understand cell location and can apply simple formulae to calculate totals. In Year 9 pupils were working with slide show presentations. Although most pupils, including some lower-attainers, have produced presentations with two or more screens in just a few lessons, many pupils lack confidence in making a wider use of fonts to improve their presentation. However, pupils can take images from the Internet, the school network and CD-ROMs and incorporate these in their presentations. A few higher-attainers show good awareness of audience with lively and informative slide shows, making good use of the technology. In Year 10 pupils are able to create graphs from the data they have collected with their own data capture sheets. However, some pupils lack confidence about resizing graphs and are unsure about importing these into their projects. In Year 11 pupils had completed their coursework for GCSE with one project for business studies and two projects for the information technology element of the course. To complete these projects, they had made use of the skills learned in Years 7 to 9 and new skills developed during the course. Making good use of word processing, construction and interrogation of databases and well planned spreadsheets, pupils produced projects of good quality and demonstrated their understanding of the subject and the target audience.

144. Teaching of the subject is good; sometimes it is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and give clear explanations that have a positive impact on pupils' learning. At the start of lessons, teachers share the lesson objectives with pupils, which helps them understand what is required of them. Question and answer sessions are generally well used, although sometimes there is too little pupil involvement. Classes are always well managed and teachers create a good working atmosphere. Planning is done well with sufficient challenging tasks for pupils and extension work for very high attainers. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is less well done. The good work sheets which are often prepared for lessons enable the majority of pupils to work at their own pace, but do not take into account the difficulties some pupils have with reading. At the end of lessons teachers make good use of the time to reinforce pupils' learning through discussion and explanation. Apart from Years 10 and 11, pupils rarely get homework in the subject. Pupils' work is usually well marked but although some use is made of the National Curriculum levels for the subject, pupils have little knowledge of these, nor how they might improve from one level to the next. National Curriculum levels are not used in lessons to help pupils set targets
145. Pupils make good progress in lessons, as they learn new skills and increase their knowledge and understanding, as well as improving their use of existing skills. There is particularly good progress in Years 7 and 8 as pupils increase their understanding of the construction of and use of spreadsheets. Some higher-attainers in Year 7 are beginning to understand how spread sheets can be used in modelling and forecasting. Pupils in Year 9 make satisfactory progress as they increase in confidence in using a range of software which they have not experience in Years 7 and 8. In Years 10 and 11 pupils make good progress as they produce projects for their course work, making use of previously learned skills. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.
146. Pupils in all years are interested in the subject. They show enthusiasm for their work, and persevere with tasks set. When given the opportunity they can work independently and often in lessons they help each other when working on adjacent computers. They take pride in their work and in GCSE projects they are productive as they draft and redraft their work to improve its quality. They act responsibly in computer rooms in lessons, at lunchtime and in after school clubs, where they are keen to make use of the computer facilities.
147. The department is managed well, and the curriculum is well planned, taking into account the demands of the National Curriculum and the pupils' experiences of information and communication technology in previous years. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 the curriculum could be improved, as there are only two courses available, a joint business studies and information technology course, and an Intermediate GNVQ course which is taught by York College. About a quarter of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not take either of these courses and have no information and communication technology lessons.
148. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Although the standard of work seen in Year 9 is just below expected levels, standards in years 7 and 8 are in line with national expectations. There has been a significant improvement in GCSE results in 2000 with performances above the national levels. Teaching of the subject is good and pupils make good progress. Discrete information and communication technology lessons for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 introduced since the last inspection are beginning to impact on standards though some pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not



receive their entitlement in the subject. Cross-curricular information and communication technology continues to be developed. The majority of teachers have had training in information and communication technology and all subjects include the use of it in their curriculum plans. However, because of the limited access to computers centrally and in departments, teachers are not always able to make full use of this technology at the present time, nor the skills which pupils have developed in their information and communication technology lessons.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

149. The modern foreign languages department is effective and has many strengths, not least of which are the stability and commitment of its experienced teaching staff who work hard to maintain and improve standards.
150. Over the past three years GCSE examination results in German have been consistent, with around 40% of those entered gaining a grade A\*-C. Although this is below the national average, it represents a good achievement for many of these pupils who, on aggregate, did at least as well in German as in their other subjects. Consistent with the national picture in 2000, girls did better than boys in foreign languages, and by a much greater margin than nationally. Numbers of pupils entered for French have been too few to make a useful comparison with national figures, but their results have been similar to those taking German, in spite of a later start in French.
151. By the end of Year 11 those pupils who continue with German or French to GCSE level, around 60% of the year group, and more girls than boys, attain standards rather below national expectations, though many are achieving at a level above what is predicted for them. Some higher-attaining pupils in the top German set are working at a level above national expectations. They have a good grasp of grammar, react swiftly to the teacher's instructions in German and make sense of difficult dialogues by native speakers at normal speed. Pupils studying French in Year 11 make themselves understood in authentic situations, such as asking for tourist information, and have sound comprehension of spoken and written French. Middle and lower-attaining pupils have difficulty pronouncing German and French and adapting language they have already learnt. Some are reluctant to speak in the foreign language. Of the four language skills, reading and writing are the least well developed. There is little evidence in either language of extended writing using a variety of tense and idiom. A good start has been made with introducing reading programmes.
152. In contrast to Key Stage 4, attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is, overall, in line with expectations. This is especially true of German which all pupils study throughout Key Stage 3. Most pupils can speak about themselves and their family life with some confidence; higher attainers have good accent and pronunciation and can cope well with the complexities of German grammar such as different order of words and the endings on adjectives. In spite of strong teaching, pupils doing French in Year 9 are rather behind expected levels because they have started in Year 8 and have less time to complete the required work. Through demanding and sensitive teaching, pupils with special educational needs were able to ask their way around an imaginary town and make sense of the replies. As in Key Stage 4, reading and writing in German and French are areas where pupils' skills are least developed.
153. The teaching of modern foreign languages overall is sound with many strong

features. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory and some were good or very good. Teachers are proficient in the languages they teach and use French or German very consistently in the classroom and with sensitivity to what pupils can cope with. This results in the good levels of comprehension of most pupils, and the speed with which they learn to understand new words. Teachers plan their lessons imaginatively with clear aims and a variety of engaging methods and vivid home-produced resources to sustain interest and keep pupils actively involved. They manage pupils with respect, courtesy and appropriate firmness, anticipating potential difficulties and handling reluctant pupils with sensitivity. This leads in most cases to good relationships in the classroom and a calm working environment where learning can take place naturally.

154. Where teaching is at its strongest and these examples of good practice are present, pupils learn effortlessly and enjoy themselves in the process. In such cases pupils behave sensibly, respond eagerly and listen attentively to the teacher and, during paired speaking tasks, to each other. By the end of a Year 9 German lesson, for example, a group of lower attaining pupils were able to describe what clothes people were wearing, using correct adjective endings for their descriptions. Very demanding and well-organised teaching gave pupils copious opportunities to practise the new language and learning was both swift and enjoyable. Behaviour in this lesson was exemplary; pupils worked hard and took an active part.
155. In a few respects teaching lacks challenge and would benefit from a more consistent approach to certain items of good practice. There needs to be a greater insistence on pupils using the foreign language in the classroom for everyday requests or apologies. Pupils who work quickly need to be extended by more open-ended tasks both in class and for homework. Teachers could sometimes stretch pupils more by withdrawing written prompts and requiring fuller answers to questions. The skills of reading and writing need to be more systematically developed. The routine marking of work, although regular and encouraging, does not insist enough on correction or repetition.
156. Teachers generally make good use of the sixty-minute lesson. However, one consequence of these long lessons is to space out the two period per week allocation so that long gaps occur from one to the next, making it hard for some pupils to remember what they have learned. The overall allocation of time to modern languages in Key Stage 3, especially to French, is below average, making it very difficult for pupils to reach an appropriate standard to embark on a two-year course to GCSE. Numbers studying two foreign languages, as at the time of the last inspection, are therefore very small. In view of the relatively large number of pupils who do not continue their foreign language studies beyond Key Stage 3, there would be significant benefits in giving pupils some form of accreditation at the end of Year 9 to recognise the work they have done.

157. Pupils' work is frequently and thoroughly assessed, results carefully recorded and compared with previous performance and predicted grades. This allows teachers to make pupils aware of what levels they have reached and to set them targets for future performance. The department's accommodation is very pleasant, spacious and well appointed, with some engaging displays of pupils' work, much of it completed using information and communication technology. There is scope for using information and communication technology in a more systematic way to ensure that all pupils have an opportunity of benefiting from it in their language learning. Up-to-date equipment and learning resources contribute well to pupils' learning. However, sets of course books are not enough to allow all pupils to have one each in class. Pupils benefit considerably from the work of German students from York University who take small groups for conversation. The annual trip to France or Germany is well subscribed and offers pupils good opportunities for social and cultural enrichment.
158. Management of the department is currently shared between the two subject leaders. This works well on a day-to-day level; staff are supportive of each other, meet frequently and operate as a team. However, no-one in the department currently has sole authority to take certain key initiatives forward, in particular the development of extended reading and writing skills and addressing the disparities in performance between girls and boys, both of which were mentioned in the last report as being in need of attention.
159. In certain respects the department has made good progress since the last inspection. Teaching has improved and the reservations about the use of French in the classroom and the management of pupil behaviour have been put right. Provided the department is enabled to take these initiatives without undue delay, it should be well placed to make further improvements.

## **MUSIC**

160. In the GCSE results in music in 2000, three of the five pupils taking the examination achieved a grade between A\* and C. All pupils achieved a grade between A\* and G. The percentage figure for grades A\*-C has fluctuated over preceding years because of the very small numbers taking the examination. Pupils' points score was consistently above average over the last three years.
161. Standards in work seen in lessons and sampled on tape, at the age of 14 and 16, are average. As pupils come into the school with a very mixed experience of music this standard represents good achievement, with pupils making good progress through the school. They enjoy their work in music and are very keen to perform and compose. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in this practical environment. Those with special talents in music also make good progress because of tasks designed to challenge them appropriately. Those capable of taking GCSE early do so successfully. Those pupils learning to play instruments in school are provided with good lessons. In these they are achieving well, developing good reading and performing skills. Many pupils also take part in the choir and instrumental groups for the much-appreciated Christmas carol service at York Minster. Musical productions, this year "Grease", also provide a good enriching extension to the work of the classroom.

162. Pupils in Year 9 listen well and appraise a wide range of music, including music from other cultures. They use musical vocabulary to describe accurately what they hear. They show good background knowledge in music. When performing in small groups, pupils can play together well, controlling the pulse and rhythm. They improvise quite confidently both rhythmically and melodically. Their compositions at this stage are often quite straightforward, but higher attainers are capable of developing and refining their musical ideas. Some of the songs composed by Year 9 pupils show imaginative touches. A few pupils at this stage use a computer to assist their composing and those that do make better progress with this component of the music curriculum. The department at present only has one computer, and, although teacher and pupils use this very well as a resource, it is totally insufficient for the number of pupils taking the subject.
163. Pupils in Year 11 perform individually and in groups, listening carefully to each other. Higher attaining pupils play with a sense of style, showing very good awareness of the other player, responding to nuances of interpretation. Lower- attaining pupils without instrumental skills use singing for their performance and make good progress to achieve a commendable standard. Their compositions are expressive and of varying complexity. Some pupils continue to use acoustic instruments successfully, while others make very good use of the computer sequencing software.
164. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In one-third of the lessons seen teaching was very good. The teacher has very good knowledge of the subject and is a very able practitioner, providing the pupils with a good role model. The teacher uses a very good range of strategies to help the pupils to learn. Very good interactive listening, with the teacher asking increasingly focused questions, is rehearsed in most lessons using a range of recorded and live music, including pupils' own compositions and performances. As a result pupils develop good listening and appraising skills. These are used most effectively when evaluating their own and others' work, and are helping pupils develop a good mental picture of what makes a good performance and composition.
165. Lessons are very orderly affairs, very well managed by the teacher. As a result the majority of pupils behave very well in class, using the whole suite of rooms very responsibly and maturely as they move around. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 9 lesson, where groups of pupils managed their own learning with maturity and enthusiasm, with the teacher acting in an advisory capacity for much of the lesson. The teacher enjoys very good relationships with pupils. He encourages them to work co-operatively in small groups without his continuous support, and this results in good collaboration when composing and performing. This work is productive in the majority of cases with most pupils making very good creative effort, because their learning objectives are clear and they are well motivated. On the one occasion when this did not happen, it was because a large class of mainly low-attaining pupils lacked the maturity to organise themselves and they were given too long to do their task. Very good advice is given to pupils about how they can improve their work and time is provided in the lesson for the pupils to improve their skills. Pupils in Years 7 to 9, however, do not know what their unit grades are, nor are they yet aware of the new levels of attainment in music. Knowledge of and familiarity with these will enable them to begin to take control of their own learning and to set themselves realistic targets for improvement. Pupils in Year 11 use the examination criteria regularly for their work and as a result make a realistic assessment of their standard.
166. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. Standards have been

maintained. The use of information and communication technology is developing effectively but is limited by the lack of computers. Assessment in the form of review and reflection is a regular and effective feature of most lessons now and this has improved since the last inspection. Procedures for assessing pupils formally and for monitoring their progress against a set of criteria are not yet in place.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

167. Overall attainment is above average at the end of Year 9 and average at the end of Year 11. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show that standards are above the national average. There is a difference between boys and girls with boys clearly above and girls only just above the national figure of 76% of pupils gaining level B or above. Currently there are no GCSE results against which national comparisons can be made. The standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are average overall, though levels of personal fitness are higher for boys than for girls.
168. In Years 7 to 9 most pupils are achieving well including those with special educational needs. Personal levels of fitness are above average for this age group and skills are acquired quickly. In dance, in Year 8, for example, set routines are learned quickly and sufficiently well for them to be repeated accurately, then further developed by adding elements of originality to the taught sequence. In Year 9 new games skills are similarly acquired by boys in Australian Rules football. Both of these activities present well-constructed opportunities for improvement to be made in the levels of self-confidence of pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. In this setting the good progress they make matches that of other pupils.
169. Within Key Stage 4 achievement is better in Year 10 than in Year 11, though there is no evidence of underachievement. Again in dance, aerobic routines are learned quickly and performed energetically. This raises standards of personal fitness and shows that the girls in the group have a clear understanding of the purpose of healthy exercise. Gifted and talented pupils across the school achieve well both in lessons and in the extra-curricular programme of sports and games. Their success, both as individuals and in teams, is reflected in the results of competitions and events at district, regional and national level.
170. The consistently high quality of teaching is a strength of the department; it is almost always good and in almost a half of the lessons seen was very good. In all classes pupils know exactly what to do in order to improve as a result of their teachers having set learning objectives clearly at the beginning of the lesson. The pupils respond positively and eagerly to the energetic, engaging and enthusiastic style adopted by all teachers. Lessons are well planned and pupils are managed well. The teachers know their subject well, devise activities expertly and enable all pupils to make progress and succeed. Standards of behaviour are good, as are the relationships between pupils and teachers. There is clear understanding and a well-judged response to pupils' different needs including those with special educational needs, who are well-known by the specialist teachers.

171. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met at both key stages. Currently there is no opportunity for pupils to gain any form of nationally recognised accreditation but the planned introduction of a GCSE course, to begin in September 2001, will provide a key focus for the work of the department. It will also enable the department to develop further its arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting. The linking of assessment to examinations in Years 10 and 11 will, when combined with work already being introduced on pupil profiling in Years 7, 8 and 9, produce information that will enable the department to measure the progress of all pupils in more detail and monitor the effectiveness of its work more readily. The programme of extra-curricular activities provided by this department is very good. It is very popular and provides opportunities for pupils of all abilities to gain experience and enjoyment in playing competitive sports. The management of the department is very good. The head of department gives clear leadership to the team and teamwork is very well developed. The physical education programme is very well organised and runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The leader has good vision and knows well what needs to be done in order to raise standards further in the subject.
172. Since the last inspection improvement has been good. Standards have been raised, especially at Key Stage 3, and in most lessons the progress made by pupils is better than it was. The quality of teaching is now higher, overall it is very good, in Key Stage 3 it is very good. The arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting have been improved. Under the present leadership there is clear potential for this department to continue to improve.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

173. The attainment of a majority of pupils towards the end of Year 9 exceeds the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a secure knowledge of the main features of the religions studied and many have a particular strength in expressing their own views about religious questions. This is especially so when these issues deal with significant areas of human experience such as suffering, belief in God and beliefs about life after death. Most pupils can relate religious teaching to the everyday practice of believers and understand that there may be tension between religious convictions and social life.
174. Attainment by a majority of pupils towards the end of Year 11 is above average. Pupils have a good knowledge of some of the central beliefs of the religions studied. They know how these are expressed in practice, as for example the teaching of Jesus in relation to war, sexual morality and poverty. Most of them can explain some of the problems which religious groups may face in contemporary life, for example in observing food laws or keeping the Sabbath.
175. Pupils were entered for the short course GCSE examination for the first time in 1999. Results in the past two years have been above the national average at grades A\*-C. Girls have performed better than boys, but boys' results were better than the national average for boys in the most recent examination. Results at grades A\*-G have been better than the national average in both years, with all pupils entered gaining a pass in these grades. A small number of pupils have also been entered for the Certificate of Achievement.

176. The quality of teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good and in Years 10 and 11 it is very good. The specialist teachers of the subject are well qualified, have very good subject knowledge and an evident desire to make the subject relevant to the experience of their pupils. Lessons are well planned and have very clear aims. Pupils know what is required of them and the great majority respond very positively to the subject. Good teaching in a Year 7 lesson on Islamic food laws enabled pupils to understand the reasons for the laws and what the implications might be for Muslim practice in modern society. The written work in pupils' exercise books indicates well-organised teaching that is systematically introducing pupils to some of the major religious traditions. Very good teaching was observed in a Year 10 lesson in which all pupils had special educational needs. Very good planning and the use of good support material enabled these pupils to think about crime, punishment and forgiveness. Carefully designed activities strengthened their literacy skills and helped them to organise their responses. The lesson was effectively concluded by good use of video material on the theme of forgiveness.
177. The attitude of most pupils to the subject is positive and their behaviour in class is good. The quality of learning in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good and in Years 10 and 11 it is very good. Pupils are making good progress throughout the school in their knowledge of religious belief and practice and in their ability to formulate and express their own religious and moral views. The good progress which is being made by pupils with special educational needs in all years is the result of well-planned teaching and the affirmative and encouraging manner in which teachers conduct lessons. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to make personal responses to the material presented in class. Much written work and the display of pupils' work in classrooms show a high quality of response. Pupils are willing to take care with the presentation of their work and many use word processing and desktop publishing skills in topics such as the Church as a community, a guide to a mosque and the celebration of creation. The assessment of pupils' work is done regularly and teachers' comments are helpful and often encouraging. Assessment in Years 7, 8 and 9, however, is not related to the statements of attainment set out in the agreed syllabus.
178. The curriculum is based on the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils study the subject except for a small number of pupils in Year 11 (fifteen in the current cohort) who follow a work-related curriculum. Provision meets statutory requirements except for these pupils. In Years 7, 8 and 9 religious education also includes the personal and social educational programme. Pupils in these years are receiving a good education in the moral and relationships aspect of personal and social education. Sex education, drugs education and careers education are taught as discrete units.
179. Recent staff and curriculum changes have strengthened the place of religious education in the curriculum. The recently appointed head of faculty, who has responsibility for the organisation of religious education, has set clear priorities for development. Management of the subject is good. The classroom experience of pupils is good, but is not enhanced by visits or by direct contact with members of faith communities. This is the one area where the scheme of work does not fully match the requirements set out in the agreed syllabus. Resources for the subject are adequate except for lack of access to computers. Accommodation is good and good display of pupils' work creates a welcoming environment for learning.

180. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection in the attainment of pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in the opportunity for pupils to gain accreditation. Further improvements need to be made in: provision for pupils in Year 11 to ensure that this fully meets statutory requirements; assessment of pupils' work in Years 7, 8 and 9 to relate it to statements of attainment in the agreed syllabus; the range of opportunities offered to pupils to visit religious communities or to meet practising members of the faiths studied; the use of computers to support pupils' learning.
181. This is a good department making a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and the ethos of the school.