

INSPECTION REPORT

CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

Clayton, Newcastle-under-Lyme

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124412

Headteacher: Mr M Heuston

Reporting inspector: Mr E J Wheatley
10013

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 4th May 2001

Inspection number: 192677

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D McGregor
Date of previous inspection:	17 th March 1997

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3827	John Knight	Team inspector	Geography	
2740	Betty Barratt	Team inspector	History Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Community links
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 936 pupils; 496 boys and 440 girls. It is similar in size to other 11-16 comprehensives. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is broadly average and the percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. At two per cent, the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is slightly above average, but none of these is in the early stage of English language acquisition. Pupils come from mainly private housing and some from local authority estates. Attainment on entry to the school is above average, overall, although there are variations between years. However, girls consistently perform better than boys in the national tests taken during the last year in primary schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many very good features. Standards are above average and are rising, especially at Key Stage 4, because teaching is good overall and often very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and direction for improvement and is well supported by the staff. Pupils' attitudes are very good. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards at GCSE are high.
- Teaching is good overall and one third is very good or excellent.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and gives very clear direction to the work of the school in raising standards.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for school and the quality of their personal development and relationships are very good.
- Provision for moral and social development is very good.
- Governors' involvement in the work of the school and their contribution in guiding its direction for development are outstanding.
- The range of extracurricular activities provided by the school is very good.

What could be improved

- Boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Courses in Years 10 and 11 do not provide sufficient work related opportunities for some pupils.
- The use of available assessment information is not well established in departments to support curriculum and lesson planning and to provide targets for individual pupils.
- Marking does not consistently provide pupils with enough detail of how well they attain, or what they need to do in order to make further progress.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997 and since then it has made good progress on the issues raised at that time. The school has done much to raise the standards achieved by boys, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and here boys' and girls' attainment is closer together. The underachievement of boys is a continuing problem as they enter the school with lower levels of attainment than girls. There has been improvement in the monitoring of teaching, although there is more to be done in involving departments consistently in this process. Library provision has improved considerably, with increased access to computers and space for pupils to carry out individual research. While the quality of books is good, there are insufficient to meet the learning needs of pupils. Strategic planning is now good, with clear priorities reflected well in the work of the school and departments, backed up with careful costing and action plans. Staff development is good and is closely linked to school and departmental development plans. The use of information and communication technology is now included in the

schemes of work of all departments and statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education are now met. Statutory requirements for the provision of collective worship are still not met. Standards have risen since the last inspection and the quality of teaching has improved significantly.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	C	A	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

In the end of Year 9 national tests in 2000, standards were above average, overall. They were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Compared with similar schools standards were below average. Boys performed worse than girls and the greater number of boys than girls pulled the overall results down. Over the last five years, the trend in results has been downwards, although in the last three years standards have risen again. Inspection evidence broadly reflects test results. Standards are above average, overall. In art, design and technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education, standards are average. In design and technology, standards are below average in graphical drawing and elements of resistant materials. Overall, achievements are satisfactory; they are very good in German, and good in English, mathematics, art, history, information and communication technology (ICT), French, physical education and religious education. In design and technology, achievement is satisfactory, overall, although expectations and the challenge of work are sometimes not sufficient to help pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

At GCSE standards were above average in 2000 and the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades was well above average, exceeding the school's target. The school achieved its target with the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A*-G grades, which was close to the national average. Compared with similar schools, performance was well above average, compared with prior attainment. In recent years, standards have risen faster than those nationally. Standards were highest in business studies, French and home economics and lowest in geography and physical education. Overall, girls still perform better than boys, but the difference is not so marked as in Year 9. Inspection evidence reflects examination results with attainment above average in most subjects, well above average in French and music, average in design and technology and geography and below average in non-examination ICT and religious education. Low attainment in the last two subjects is due to insufficient time for the curriculum to be fully covered. Achievement is good, overall; it is satisfactory in design and technology, geography, ICT and very good in music.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. This is because, in very good lessons, teachers identify the learning needs of these pupils and plan work effectively to suit their needs. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, similar to the progress of other pupils.

Standards of literacy are good and the quality of writing and the opportunities to read contribute significantly to standards of performance in most subjects. Standards of numeracy are sound, although there is some variation between subjects, because there is no whole school policy in place.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school and lessons are very good. They enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic, interested and involved in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils respond well to the high standards expected of them.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils respond very well to opportunities to show initiative and take on responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance at school is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good, overall. In 35 per cent of lessons, it is very good and sometimes excellent. In 44 per cent of lessons it is good and in 19 per cent it is satisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory in two per cent of lessons. Teaching is good in English, mathematics and in science in Years 10 and 11. The best teaching is characterised by a high level of teacher expertise which has a positive effect on the quality of explanations and questioning seen in many lessons. Lessons are very well planned and the very good relationships between pupils and teachers lead to very effective management of pupils in lessons. Consequently, the quality of learning is good and, often, very good. Teachers' expectations are usually high and lessons have a wide range of teaching methods which help interest and involve pupils. There is a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in English and design and technology. In occasional lessons in English and design and technology, the slow pace and unclear learning objectives lead to slow learning, particularly by boys, and low expectations lead to some behaviour problems.

The needs of all pupils are met well by teachers. The needs of the highest attaining pupils are effectively addressed and include a programme of support and work to extend their knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons, teachers develop the general targets provided for pupils with special educational needs into subject specific ones and provide a high level of support. However, this practice is not common to all lessons. Literacy skills are taught well throughout the school. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory, overall, but there is no whole school policy to support consistency of approach.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There is a broad range of subjects in all years, but although the school plans to introduce one vocational course in September 2001, this is not sufficient to meet the work related or vocational needs of pupils in Years 10 and 11. Opportunities for pupils to learn in clubs and activities out of lessons are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is sound, overall. In very good lessons, teachers provide work designed to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. However, this is inconsistent and individual education plans are not sufficiently detailed to help teachers plan work effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is good. It is very good for moral and social development, good for cultural, but unsatisfactory for spiritual. The school continues to fail to provide a daily act of collective worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of care and support for its pupils through high quality relationships and through a culture in which pupils want to do well and succeed.

The school has a good partnership with parents. Parents are seen as an important part of pupils' education, and the school works hard to involve them as much as possible.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very clear direction for how the school should improve and continue to raise standards and he is well supported by senior and other staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The contribution of governors to the development of the school is outstanding. They have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school and provide considerable support for the headteacher and staff. However, they have not ensured that the school meets statutory requirements for collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good understanding of its own areas for improvement. Teaching is observed and evaluated by senior staff, although departments are not all fully involved in this process. National tests and examination results are analysed and the information is used, though more consistently at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3, to plan lessons and provide targets for pupils.
The strategic use of resources	All spending is closely linked to school and departmental planning. The school is conscious of the limitations of its financial resources and makes every effort to ensure that it receives the best value for expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • The school has high expectations and children make good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Children are well behaved in school. • The school deals with parents' concerns well. • The school helps children become mature and responsible. • The school provides a wide range of activities outside of lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that homework is inappropriate. • Some parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them. • Some parents feel that they are not kept sufficiently well informed about the progress their children make.

The inspection team generally agree with parents over the strengths of the school. During the inspection, the provision of homework was satisfactory, overall. The quality of information going home to parents is generally sound, although reports on pupils' progress do not consistently give clear indications of what pupils know, understand and can do, or give subject specific targets for further improvement. The school's procedures for communicating with parents are good and it makes every effort to involve parents closely in their children's education.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school was above average in 2000 and although there have been fluctuations in recent years, attainment of pupils coming from the feeder primary schools has been above average, generally. In the last four years, the attainment of girls, measured by the results of the national tests taken in the last year of primary schools has been higher than that of boys.
2. In the end of Year 9 national tests taken in 2000, standards were above average, overall. In English, results were well above the national average, overall, when taking the performance of all pupils into account. The percentage of pupils obtaining the average Level 5 or higher was well above average and above average for the proportion of pupils obtaining Level 6 or above. In mathematics, standards were above average, overall, for all pupils with well above the national average percentage obtaining the Level 5 or higher and an above average proportion of pupils obtaining Level 6 or higher. In science, standards were broadly average for all pupils. The percentage of pupils obtaining Level 5 or higher was above average and, for those reaching Level 6 or above, was average. Compared with similar schools, standards were below average; they were above average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. Girls did better than boys by a greater margin than that seen nationally; standards obtained by boys were broadly average while girls obtained well above average, overall. There were significantly more boys than girls in the year group which depressed results, overall. The trend in results over recent years has been downwards, but from 1998 they have started to rise again.
3. By the time they are 14, pupils' attainment is generally above average, reflecting the results of the end of Key Stage 3 national tests. In English, standards of work are above average, overall. Pupils write, read, speak and listen well. Higher-attaining pupils have good research skills. Pupils generally have good handwriting and they spell competently, although lower attaining boys tend to be less accurate with their work. In mathematics, attainment is above average, with the highest attaining pupils having good arithmetic and algebraic skills. Pupils generally calculate, draw graphs and understand the properties of two and three-dimensional figures. In science, standards are broadly average, but with a significant proportion of higher-attaining pupils who have a very good understanding of complex ideas. Most pupils have good practical skills and predict and record results from investigations competently. Overall, the differences in attainment between boys and girls have narrowed. The school is doing much to motivate and involve boys in their learning and is starting to have some success. Across Years 7 to 9, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall. In English and mathematics, achievement is good, mainly because of developing skills that help pupils progress well. In science, pupils' achievement is sound.
4. Standards attained by 14 year olds are above average in history, ICT, and modern foreign languages. In modern foreign languages, the performance of boys is particularly good as they outshine the girls; the department's efforts to motivate boys have been very effective. In history, higher-attaining pupils show particularly good understanding of complex issues associated with historical events and most pupils analyse and compare historical information competently. In ICT, all pupils use a range of software well and the highest attainers use programmes very effectively to sort information they have entered into the computer. Standards in art, design and technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education, are broadly average. In art, pupils have a sound knowledge of a wide range of styles and the work from different cultures and they have good practical skills. In geography, the highest attaining pupils use statistical information well to support the geographical knowledge they accumulate. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the difference between living standards in different parts of the world, although lower attainers find these harder to describe. In music, pupils' musical skills are generally sound, although singing skill is below average. In physical education, practical skills in a wide range of sports activities are average, although ability to evaluate and improve their own performance is below average. In

religious education, pupils show a satisfactory level of knowledge of Christianity and the traditions and practice of other religions. Standards in design and technology are average, overall, and have improved since the last inspection. However, in graphical drawing and in resistant materials some pupils still underperform, mostly because tasks are trivial. Across Years 7 to 9, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, overall. In German, achievement is very good. In most subjects, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. However, in German, achievement is very good, mainly because the established methods to motivate and involve all pupils are used very effectively. In design and technology, achievement is satisfactory, overall, although in graphical drawing and resistant materials work is not always sufficiently demanding to involve or interest pupils enough to make the progress they are capable of.

5. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, standards were above average when the results of all pupils are taken into account. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more pass grades at GCSE was close to the national average, as was the percentage obtaining one or more pass grades. Compared with similar schools, the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades was very high. The percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A*-G grades and one or more A*-G grades was well below the average for similar schools. Results were best in business studies, French and home economics. Standards were lowest in geography and physical education. The differences in attainment between boys and girls are less marked in GCSE results than they are in end of Year 9 tests, a measure of the success of the school's drive to raise the standards achieved by boys.
6. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average, overall, by the time pupils are 16, and that there are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls, although there is a higher proportion of low attaining boys than of low attaining girls. Generally, standards have risen since the last inspection, because there is a clear focus on involving all pupils, especially boys, in their own learning. Inspection evidence reflects the GCSE results and also shows that the differences between the attainment of boys and girls has narrowed. Standards are above average in English and pupils make good progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening, drawing on a wide range of materials from different cultures and traditions to broaden their achievement and confidence. Writing and spelling are generally accurate, although, as in Year 9, some boys' writing is immature and inaccurate. Higher attainers generally perform well, producing mature, articulate pieces of work. In mathematics, standards are also high, with higher-attaining pupils having a good grasp of statistical work and the majority of pupils having competent computational skills. Pupils' progress is good. In science, attainment is above average. The highest attaining pupils assimilate scientific knowledge very well and apply it to other aspects of the subject. The majority of pupils acquire good investigative and practical skills and explain their understanding well. Generally, progress of all pupils is good.
7. Standards are above average in art, history, German, physical education, business studies and the examination courses in ICT and religious education, and in these subjects pupils achieve well over Years 10 and 11. In art and design, pupils show high levels of competency in a wide range of skills. Their work reflects the influence of different cultures and styles and they have a good understanding of the effects they create. In history, most pupils use historical source material effectively and the highest attainers explain their knowledge well in written work. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty in expressing their ideas clearly, but they achieve well, reaching higher than expected levels based on their prior attainment. In German, pupils achieve well and reach above average standards, although some middle attaining pupils have difficulties with the language structure. In physical education, pupils have good physical skills which they use well in several sports. They have a good understanding of physical and health factors involved in participation in sport but sometimes show an inability to work independently. In business studies, those pupils who take the course achieve well, producing high quality reports on retailing and use ICT well to illustrate and explain their work. ICT examination pupils achieve well over the duration of the course; they have a good understanding of ICT systems and produce good work, although some lower attainers on the course do not have the background knowledge to perform so well. In the non-examination course, standards are below average in Year 11; these pupils have insufficient time to learn as much as they ought to, a situation that is resolved for current Year 10 pupils.

Considering the time restrictions, achievement is satisfactory. In religious education, standards are above average for pupils on the examination course and they make good progress. Other pupils receive too little time to complete the requirements of the local agreed syllabus, but the standards they reach are broadly average, which is the result of very good teaching. Although achievement is good in lessons, over the duration of the course they experience it is only satisfactory. In geography, attainment is broadly average, with the highest attainers producing detailed maps, diagrams and written work, although some lower attaining pupils' written work lacks sufficient clarity and detail. Achievement is generally satisfactory. Attainment in design and technology is generally average and has improved since the last inspection, when it was below average. Pupils make sound progress, building effectively on their Key Stage 3 experience, although there are still some weaknesses in graphics. In music and French, attainment is well above average. In music, the level of performance by pupils is very high and pupils make very good progress, mainly because the teaching inspires them to work hard and to become fully involved. In French, very good teaching encourages a high level of commitment by all pupils, so standards of speech are high and often with a good accent.

8. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Most pupils are working to a standard commensurate with their level of ability. Progress is often good when pupils are supported in class by special support assistants or when they are withdrawn from lessons and the work is closely matched to pupils' levels of attainment. In very good lessons, teachers identify the learning needs of these pupils and plan work effectively to suit their needs. However, the lack of specific targets in individual education plans means that in some lessons achievement is limited.
9. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language has increased since the last inspection. None is in the early stages of English language acquisition and the progress they make is similar to that of other pupils.
10. Standards of literacy are above average, overall, across the curriculum, following a major whole school initiative implemented since the last inspection and co-ordinated by the head of English. Pupils (including those with English as an additional language) are able to write in a range of forms across subject areas (structured essays, extended enquiry work/coursework, short answer responses). They are able to redraft and proof read written work and, in the main, present their work well. They display good research skills in a number of curriculum areas and are able to use appropriate ICT software and the Internet as a resource. They can analyse and respond to a variety of non-fiction and fiction texts, with higher-attaining pupils demonstrating sophisticated reading strategies and a mature written style.
11. Pupils are able to select appropriate literary or linguistic forms to convey meaning in a range of subjects, for example, a Year 7 'rap' poem on health and safety in science, and are able to use specialist vocabulary across most subject areas. They are fluent orally and are able to present confidently, engage in worthwhile discussion and critically evaluate their own and others' contributions – demonstrating good listening skills. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are able to achieve the above through structured support, effective group work and the use of writing frames. Their reading ages are being raised by the extended reading programme and 'buddy' system.
12. Pupils' numeracy skills are broadly average. There is no whole school policy, but, within individual departments, pupils become familiar with using and handling numerical information. In science, design and technology and history there is good practice, but lack of a whole school approach means that, sometimes, pupils use certain mathematical processes before they have learned them thoroughly in mathematics lessons.
13. The key skills of ICT are well developed for most computer applications through the taught ICT lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 and the GCSE course followed by all Year 10 pupils and a minority of Year 11. Also, the use of ICT to improve learning in many other subjects helps pupils improve their skills. For example, there is good quality word processing of assignments and coursework in religious education. The mathematics department has its own small network which is

effectively used for work on control to develop pupils' understanding of shape and space and the use of spreadsheets for data handling and interrogation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The attitudes and values of pupils are very good and make an important contribution to the quality of their learning.
15. Pupils have very good attitudes to lessons and to their learning. They show interest in their work, concentrate very well and enjoy the activities prepared for them. Most pupils come to lessons with positive attitudes and a willingness to learn. They ask and answer questions, join in discussions and contribute well during lessons. Most pupils are good-humoured and relaxed. They are generally enthusiastic about lessons and work well even when they find the lesson difficult. For example, Year 7 pupils showed a high level of interest when developing mathematical strategies to win a game. In a history lesson, Year 9 pupils were absorbed in their work on the holocaust which forced them to consider the way in which ordinary people were involved and how dangerous it is to prejudge and stereotype people. Year 11 pupils are well motivated for their GCSE examinations. They enjoy their revision sessions and are eager to get on with the real thing. In religious education lessons, high quality discussions illustrated pupils' interest in religions different from their own and respect for the views of others.
16. Behaviour of pupils around the school and in lessons is good. Staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils think the rewards and sanctions are fair and have a positive effect on the standards of behaviour in school. Pupils socialise well outside the classroom and the atmosphere is good-humoured and calm even when busy. Anti-bullying is given a high priority throughout the school in tutorial time, assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons. The pupil peer-counselling group offers help and support and has been instrumental in resolving and helping many pupils. Pupils report there is very little bullying and if it arises, they are confident that it will be dealt with quickly and sensitively. Pupils have a strong sense of loyalty towards the school and there is very little litter, graffiti or vandalism. Pupils enjoy being at school.
17. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are of a very high quality and create a supportive and caring atmosphere in which pupils feel secure and comfortable. These very good relationships have a positive impact on pupils' response and attitudes in lessons. Pupils are valued both as individuals and for their contribution to the daily life of school as can be seen from the way prefects and peer counsellors perform their duties. Discussions in many lessons show pupils' acceptance and tolerance of others well. They respect each other's feelings and are supportive of each other in lessons, working in pairs and groups productively. Pupils are very polite and friendly and welcome visitors into their school.
18. During the last academic year, there was one permanent exclusion and there were 80 fixed term exclusions, involving 59 pupils. This is high for a school of this size, but exclusion is a clear part of the structured approach to applying high standards of behaviour and it is effective. One-day exclusions are used as a short, sharp shock strategy for certain acts that the school will not tolerate. Exclusions do not affect the standards achieved by those pupils. Analysis of the exclusions by year groups show that the strategy is working, as there are significantly fewer exclusions in Years 10 and 11 than in the lower years as pupils absorb the culture of high standards.
19. The school has created an environment in which pupils see their learning as important and which gives them confidence to be themselves and to grow personally and emotionally. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are raised by the commitment of the staff and the genuine interest staff show for each pupil. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to take on responsibility within school. Year 11 prefects are selected after nominations by staff and they carry out their duties responsibly and seriously. Each Year 7 tutor group has two prefects attached to them. The prefects act as guides and friends particularly in the autumn term and also help tutors during

personal, social and health education lessons. Prefects are actually selected towards the end of Year 10. They shadow the Year 11 prefects and have specific training to help them be effective. There is also a group of pupils who act as peer counsellors, providing support and help for anybody who needs it. They have attended intensive training, often in their own time and their commitment and dedication is impressive. Their contribution is valued by staff and pupils alike. Older pupils also help younger pupils improve their reading and literacy skills during the extended reading sessions at the beginning of the afternoon. Representatives from each tutor group attend the school council meetings and feel that they have a genuine voice in their school. Many pupils join in the variety of activities offered to them and take part in many sporting events and school productions. Homework diaries are used diligently by all pupils which helps them to organise their work and time. Pupils are now involved in reviewing their achievements each term and beginning to set themselves targets to help improvement. Pupils respond well to the careers education guidance, including the work experience programme that introduces pupils to a wider community outside school.

20. Attendance at the school is good. The annual attendance rate is consistently above the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Most tutors make good use of the morning registration time, creating a purposeful start and preparing pupils well for the day ahead.
21. Pupils behave very well in lessons and most pupils with special educational needs are confident they will succeed when they have appropriate support in class and because teaching staff are usually aware of their needs. Their attitude to work is enthusiastic and they have good relationships with other pupils and with their teachers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching is good and often very good. In 35 per cent of lessons, teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. In 44 per cent it is good and in 19 per cent it is satisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory in two per cent of lessons.
23. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, teaching is good. In most other subjects teaching is good, too, and in history and religious education it is very good. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology overall. However, there is much good teaching in the subject and, while teaching in design and technology is generally not as good as in other subjects, it reflects considerable improvement since the last inspection. In the great majority of lessons in all subjects, work is well matched to the needs of pupils, especially where there has been recognised underperformance by boys. As a consequence, in most lessons, pupils of all abilities learn well and the learning gap between girls and boys remarked on at the last inspection is closing.
24. Teachers mostly have very good subject knowledge and this is evident, for example, in English GCSE lessons where probing questioning and well structured lessons motivate and involve pupils so that they learn well. In science lessons, the teacher's expertise is used very effectively to extend pupils' understanding. Teachers' subject expertise is evident in all subjects, including geography where not all lessons are taught by subject specialists. In ICT, teachers' very good expertise leads to clear explanations and demonstrations of techniques which pupils learn rapidly. Teachers' experience and subject expertise ensure that pupils receive a wide range of experiences and this leads to high levels of interest and positive attitudes to work.
25. Lessons are very well planned and in the great majority of lessons the intentions are shared with pupils, giving them a clear indication of what teachers expect. Classrooms are well organised for this; there are 'blue-boards', especially intended for teachers to display learning targets and other significant features of lessons. This is effective, contributing to the high expectations seen in most lessons and the sense of purpose in pupils' learning. Teaching methods are good, overall, and very good in Years 10 and 11. In modern languages, for example, consolidation of new vocabulary and sentence structure is effectively carried out by providing a range of different tasks

using the new language and by insisting on the use of French or German language in all conversations in lessons. This has a positive effect on learning; in modern languages learning is frequently very good.

26. In the very best lessons, teachers' expertise and use of a wide range of teaching approaches have a very positive effect on the quality of learning. For example, in some history lessons, the use of music, historical documents, artefacts and discussion inspired pupils to become very involved in finding out about the details of the Holocaust. Their learning was very good and the lessons contributed significantly to their spiritual and moral development. In religious education, teachers' subject knowledge and provision of opportunities for independent learning are important factors in the very good learning seen.
27. In the small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory low demands on pupils and slow pace of work lead to unsatisfactory learning and some poor behaviour, because pupils lose interest. Undemanding work was seen in some graphics and resistant material lessons, and slow pace in some English lessons.
28. Relationships in all lessons are usually good and often very good. Along with demanding work and good pace they provide the key to the very good management of pupils seen in most lessons. Pupils respond very well to being treated maturely; they acquire confidence and readiness to learn and generally work hard. In the few instances where behaviour started to deteriorate, a calm response from the teacher, with stated expectations for behaviour, were sufficient to ensure that good behaviour was restored.
29. The marking of pupils work is satisfactory, overall. Some teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, indicating on it how well pupils have performed and adding comments on what they need to do to improve their work or make further progress. However, this is not consistent; in some pupils' books there is little marking to inform pupils of their performance or to indicate how they can improve. When questioned, these pupils were not sure of how well they were performing or of what was needed to improve the standard of their work. While more frequent in Years 7 to 9, this was also apparent in some lessons in Years 10 and 11.
30. The teaching of literacy is good. Literacy has a high profile in all departments and contributes to pupils' ability to read and analyse subject-specific texts well. The extended reading in class (ERIC) programme plays an important part in this. Most departments also use a variety of teaching strategies effectively to extend pupils' skills in reading, writing and speaking/listening. Key words and the use of specialist vocabulary are widely taught to develop pupils' understanding and supported through subject display boards, recap at the start of lessons, key word banks/glossaries, diaries and planners.
31. There is a strong emphasis on language work, including appropriate structure and spelling in a number of subjects, for example, history, religious education, English and science. Writing frames and proof reading techniques are used to support the quality of pupils' writing, including pupils with special educational needs. In many subject areas, such as art, business studies, geography, religious studies, history and drama, teaching actively enhances pupils' research skills and their ability to produce extended writing. Good speaking and listening skills are also developed through effective whole class and group discussion and presentations. Evaluation skills are taught in a number of subjects. In art, for example, pupils are encouraged to appraise the quality of work and annotate coursework, and in physical education where Year 7 pupils maintain a diary which includes evaluation skills.
32. However, in design and technology, the school framework for literacy is not consistently implemented within teaching and marking.
33. There is no policy in place for numeracy across the school. Individual departments have no framework within which to employ their mathematical requirements so that, although some good work was observed in business studies and history, it is without support and advice from the mathematics department.

34. There is good teaching of specific ICT knowledge, understanding and skills. This is supported effectively by teaching in other subjects. For example, Year 7 pupils received clear teaching about how to make effective searches on the Internet as they researched the designs of kites. Presentation software was used effectively in several geography lessons to present pupils with key information. In an excellent mathematics lesson, Year 8 pupils using calculators competed with those using a spreadsheet to find the trial and improvement solutions to quadratic equations.
35. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, both where support is provided in lessons and where pupils are withdrawn from English lessons in Year 7 and 8. However, inadequate use is made of pupils' individual education plans to inform planning and pupil progress. The identification of subject specific needs and the setting of related targets is rarely apparent. Targets are very general and not distinctly related to learning, or to guiding teaching in subjects. Good classroom teaching involving an appropriate range of teaching strategies and resources is compensating for this to a certain extent in many lessons. Many teachers plan for the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, but do not have sufficient information to identify specific targets and there is an inconsistent approach to planning and target setting across departments. The paired reading scheme is a significant factor in the early progress made by these pupils.
36. The provision for the most gifted pupils is good. Within lessons, work is challenging; teachers identify the highest attainers and provide suitably demanding work. In addition, the school provides a good range of extra activities designed to extend the learning of these pupils. This includes visits and talks about astronomy, health and fitness and Russia and the Ukraine.

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

37. The curriculum is satisfactory, overall. Throughout their time in school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have access to a broad range of subjects and the legal requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. In Years 7 to 9, both the breadth and relevance of the curriculum are generally good. Design and technology is the exception, where teaching time is insufficient to ensure that all aspects of the subject are adequately covered. In addition to all of the subjects of the National Curriculum, pupils follow courses in drama and personal, social and health education (PSHE) which includes units of careers education. In addition, in Years 8 and 9, pupils are able to study two modern languages. However, there is too little time available for design and technology and this results in too little time being available for the adequate cover of all of the strands of the subject. In Years 10 and 11, whilst the breadth of subjects available continues to be good, the relevance of courses to meet the needs of all pupils' interests and aptitudes is less strong. This is particularly true for pupils whose achievement may not be well supported by academic courses and who do not follow a full range of GCSE courses.
38. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a compulsory core of subjects which comprises GCSE courses in the National Curriculum subjects, religious education and non-examination courses in physical education, careers and citizenship. In addition, pupils have access to drama, dance, child care, business studies and the ASDAN (Award for Development and Accreditation Network) Youth Award Scheme. Pupils who do not follow a full range of courses leading to GCSE, follow a number of courses which are accredited by a certificate of achievement and the National Skills Profile and supplement their studies with a special programme focusing on preparation for employment through work experience, time in a college of further education and social skills training. Inclusion on this programme, however, often arises because pupils have become disaffected by the curriculum they are following rather than because it was offered as a coherent and appropriate range of learning experiences from Year 10 onwards.
39. The principle of ensuring that all pupils follow a broad compulsory core of subjects results in a good range of learning opportunities, but the large number of subjects included presents

problems in choice in Years 10 and 11. One of the consequences of this is that the legal requirement for all pupils to study science is met by offering a single science in the core provision, as this requires less time than the double award science. This is contrary to the firm expectation of the government that the great majority of pupils should take double science or the three separate sciences. Single science is intended for a minority of pupils who have a good reason to spend more time on other subjects.

40. The good breadth of courses, including the modified provision for some pupils in Years 10 and 11, has grown in response to need, but provision lacks coherence, especially in ensuring clear pathways to learning through opportunities which are well matched to pupils' ability, aptitudes and interests. The school is currently planning to widen the learning experiences available through the introduction of a GNVQ foundation course in Construction and the Built Environment in September 2001. It is planned that this course will be accompanied by additional work experience and possibly links with a college of further education, although planning for these elements is not well developed. Furthermore, there is no planning to link the provision of vocational education with the valuable links with local businesses associated with the school's Community Education Project. The school is rightly concerned that the introduction of vocational education should be successful, but current planning tends to be over cautious, focusing on the introduction of one course only, rather than on interpreting the greater flexibility now available in the National Curriculum in Years 10 and 11 more imaginatively, and taking a positive stance in providing a broad co-ordinated vocational and work related curriculum for all pupils who would benefit from such a course.
41. Pupils' learning is significantly enriched by the very good range of learning experiences in clubs and out of lesson activities. There are particular strengths in the wide range of games and sporting activities, the many modern languages exchanges and links with schools in France and Germany and extra curricular classes, the opportunities for challenge and extension study available for more able pupils and in the operation of Clayton Radio. In addition, pupils participate in many activities in music and drama, including school productions of good quality. Field work plays a central part of the study in subjects such as geography, history and religious education and there is also an extensive programme of school trips to theatres, museums and theme parks. The activities day at the end of the school year provides further valuable support for pupils' learning, enjoyment and personal development.
42. Links with the community are strong and provide good opportunities to widen pupils' learning experiences, but are not yet fully developed.
43. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) and tutorial programme provide a firm basis for discussing issues of citizenship and wider social concern. Pupils take responsibility for themselves and others through, for example, the school council which encourages participation in the life of the school. The social development of pupils is good and opportunities are given for pupils to relate positively to their peers, adults in the school and the wider community. Schemes of work include detailed lesson plans and good lessons were seen in Year 7 on environmental issues and in Year 11 on life after school. The impact of courses is evident in the polite and friendly nature of pupils and the way they work co-operatively together, as evidenced in group work in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are positive about the way in which they are included in the life of the school. The school's ethos of inclusion and support for those pupils identified as having special educational needs has a positive effect on the social and moral development of those pupils as well as all other pupils in the school. Outside speakers, for example the police, enhance the programme and physical education makes an effective contribution to pupils' social development by encouraging them to consider issues of teamwork, fairness and justice within the setting of games.
44. The school has made good progress in improving the use of ICT by other subjects since the previous inspection and statutory requirements are now met. The processes of staff training and curriculum planning have been very effectively managed by the co-ordinator. The management of the use of ICT by other subjects has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now very good. ICT is an integral part of learning in many subjects and included in their schemes

of work. In art, for example, pupils use the internet for very effective research and use an image processing package as part of their work on portraiture as they modify photographic images of themselves in a wide variety of ways. In modern languages, pupils use word processing for a wide variety of writing, including poetry and creative writing. As the school is aware, there are still some weaknesses in the use of ICT by other subjects, particularly in data logging and control, and further development is needed to fully exploit the contribution of ICT to pupils' learning. The use of ICT is not yet included in the scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 for science.

45. There is satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs at Key Stage 3 and all pupils receive their curriculum entitlement. However, although there are alternative certification and accreditation arrangements at Key Stage 4, opportunities are restricted for these pupils as no formal vocational courses are offered.
46. The school makes overall good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Strengths in provision reported at the previous inspection have been maintained, but little progress has been made with meeting the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
47. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory, due to the failure to meet the statutory requirement for collective worship and also to the lack of a concerted effort throughout the curriculum to plan for this aspect of pupils' development. However, several subjects make significant contributions towards enabling pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and their knowledge and understanding of values and beliefs. The very good curriculum and teaching in religious education give pupils frequent opportunities to think carefully about the values that have inspired religious leaders and which influence the beliefs and values of their followers today. Geography teaching helps pupils to understand the beauty of natural phenomena. In history, pupils have the opportunity to consider major human experiences, such as suffering - as in an excellent lesson on the Holocaust. When writing poetry in English, pupils exercise their creativity when expressing their ideas about human emotions, for example. Despite these good examples, the school is not as successful as it could be in meeting its aim of enabling pupils to 'consider and value the spiritual dimension of life'.
48. Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development through the general ethos of the school, the pastoral system, relationships and the curriculum. The school is a very orderly place where a consistent and strong emphasis is placed on mutual respect. Adults exemplify this very well in their relationships with pupils which are marked by a friendly and attentive manner. Pupils are patiently taught about right and wrong when they fail to rise to the school's expectations for their behaviour, the form tutors playing a key role in this respect, but all staff contribute. In lessons, pupils have many opportunities to think about moral issues, for example the consideration of relationships in personal, social and health education, the study of motivation in drama and novels in English and by practising adherence to rules in physical education. In science, geography and history, examples were seen of discussion of moral issues such as environmental pollution and genetic engineering. Because of its subject matter and the very good teaching, religious education makes a particularly strong contribution, for example, when pupils learn about the moral codes of Christianity and the other major religions. The moral aspect of the school's aims is met very well.
49. The school is also very successful in meeting its aim for pupils' social development – provision is very good. There is plenty for pupils to do outside of lessons by way of extracurricular activities where they can engage in teamwork. Many opportunities exist, especially for the older pupils, to exercise leadership, particularly through the prefect system. Other pupils also contribute, for example through peer counselling, reading buddies and helping with school events. Group work in lessons in science, modern languages, physical education and geography, for example, enhances both pupils' social development and their academic progress. In physical education and also in religious education and drama, there is a strong emphasis on pupils working co-operatively.

50. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Art and music draw some of their examples from beyond Western culture, but also appropriately emphasise the more local origins of much that pupils experience. Through day-to-day teaching of mathematics, geography, history and modern foreign languages, pupils' cultural horizons are broadened, as they are through religious education by its very good teaching of the major world religions represented in Britain. Visits to places of interest in drama, history, modern foreign languages and physical education – locally, nationally and on the mainland of Europe – all contribute. But other subjects miss out, as with lack of teaching about scientists in science. While some subjects contribute to teaching pupils about multiracial Britain, especially religious education, there is no concerted whole curriculum approach to this essential aspect of pupils' education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The school provides a good level of support for its pupils as it did at the time of the last inspection. This is appreciated by parents and pupils alike.
52. The school pays good attention to the physical care and well-being of its pupils. There is an effective child protection policy which follows the local authority procedures. The head teacher is the designated officer and provides good advice and support for staff and pupils. Good use is made of outside agencies and lines of communication are clear. There are good arrangements for dealing with first aid, sickness and accidents. The school follows clear and detailed guidelines for the organisation and participation of off-site visits and activities and there are regular checks on fire and electrical equipment. There is a good strategic approach towards health and safety, involving governors and staff. The health and safety policy identifies roles and responsibilities within school and is regularly reviewed. Audits and risk assessments are carried out in all departments and safe practice was observed in lessons. Some health and safety issues were raised with the design technology department during the inspection.
53. The school provides good support and guidance for its pupils and has created a secure and caring environment. The pastoral system of heads of year and tutors plays a central role in making this so positive. Tutors and pupils mostly stay together for five years. Classes have tutor time, assemblies and a personal, social and health education lesson together each week and this gives plenty of opportunity to build stable and effective relationships. Teachers and tutors know pupils well individually and have a genuine concern for their progress, welfare and personal well-being. The quality of the relationships is the basis upon which much of the personal support is built, and this contributes to pupils' confidence and attitude to school. Pupils have trust and confidence in their teachers and find them approachable, responsive and encouraging. The school is a happy place and most pupils enjoy being there.
54. The school has very good systems and procedures for encouraging and maintaining good discipline and behaviour, based on a climate of trust, respect and honesty. These values permeate the school day and pupils respond to the high standards expected of them. The merits and sanctions are clearly understood by pupils and felt to be effective in maintaining good behaviour and attitudes. Staff show much respect for their pupils and for each other which contributes strongly to the calm and friendly atmosphere within the school. The personal, social and health education programme considers the cause and effect of bullying and older pupils trained in peer counselling join in these sessions to give first-hand knowledge and experience of how they can help. The school is willing to look at different options to help specific groups of pupils. For example, a group of boys has been working with the local community development officer to help understand and manage their own behaviour, leading to a drama project with the New Vic Theatre group.
55. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and attendance is good, as a result. A senior member of staff and a welfare assistant monitor attendance constantly and office staff provide information to heads of year daily. Parents have been told about the attendance hot-line and are encouraged to ring if their child is not going to be in school. Office staff make first day contact where no notification has been received. The school has a good relationship with the education welfare officer and they work together to help those pupils and

families where non-attendance is a major issue. This year, Year 11 pupils whose non-attendance was seriously affecting their chances of being entered for GCSE examinations, have been targeted. They have had extra support and the attendance of some of them has improved considerably as a result. There are certificates and rewards for pupils with particularly good attendance through the year and the school is looking at ways to extend these rewards further. The ethos and atmosphere within the school is one of high expectations and friendliness which motivates pupils and makes them want to be in school.

56. There are good systems to support pupils' personal development. The pastoral system of year heads offers high quality support to pupils and tutors. Staff have in-depth knowledge of all their pupils and they communicate well with each other. This plays an important part in the on-going process of monitoring the overall progress of pupils through the year. Good consideration is given to supporting pupils emotionally and personally with such things as the peer counselling group, the school counsellor, drop-in sessions by the school nurse and using visitors to support the personal, social and health education programme. Achievement certificates and assemblies, letters of praise and the enthusiasm and high expectations of the staff have created a culture in which it is good to do well. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, the termly report gives a clear summary of their performances through current and 'aspirational' grades and pupils understand how well they are doing. Pupils and parents attend the academic review meetings together where pupils' progress is discussed and joint targets are set to help them improve. There is currently not the same amount of information available for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils use their homework planners diligently. They record their homework accurately and ask their parents to sign weekly. Planners are checked by tutors, so that any concerns about homework are picked up immediately. At the end of each term, pupils review and assess their work and achievements in all subjects and aspects and assess their strengths and weaknesses. They then set themselves targets and record them in their diaries to help focus their minds on improvement the following term. Pupils review and assess progress made against these targets with their tutors.
57. Arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting the progress of pupils with special educational needs are sound and meet statutory requirements. Procedures for identifying pupils are in place, although there is some lack of coherence in the management and identification of pupils, as there are no regular established links between the special needs department and other departments across the school. Not all departments have identified a member of staff who will assume some responsibility for special needs. Although the use of subject-specific targets on individual education plans is inadequate, when support staff are in lessons they assess progress and liaise with subject staff to provide relevant information to inform curriculum planning. Primary liaison is good and forms the foundation for initial assessment which is then developed through testing of pupils on entry and enables most pupils to receive appropriate support during their first year in school.
58. The school's procedures for assessing pupil's attainment and progress are good. A large amount of data is collected and issued to subject departments, but its use is variable. Good practice exists in a few subject areas such as English, geography, modern foreign languages, ICT and religious education, where assessment information is used to plan for pupils' development, resulting in the raising of standards. In other departments, the assessment process is at an early stage of development and not always used to guide curriculum planning. This is most noticeable at Key Stage 3, but not exclusively so. Work is marked regularly by many teachers and their constructive comments give pupils a focus on what they need to do to improve. However, there are instances of infrequent marking and with few tangible comments. As a result, some pupils are unsure of what needs to be done to make progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. The school has maintained the positive relationship with parents reported in the last inspection and is constantly looking for ways to improve further.

60. Most parents continue to hold the school in high regard, as they did in the last inspection and have predominantly positive views about the school. They are particularly pleased with the progress pupils make and the high expectations the school has of them. They feel that the standard of teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. Parents feel comfortable approaching staff with problems and queries and that the school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible. Some parents do not feel that the school works closely with them and that they do not get sufficient information on the progress pupils make. Some parents feel there is too little homework, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9.
61. Parents receive a good range of information about the school and its philosophy and approach. The prospectus is professional, attractive, informative and readable. It gives an accurate picture of the school and what parents can expect. The governors' annual report is also interesting and gives parents a good insight into the activities of the school. The termly newsletters are packed with articles, many written by pupils themselves, and gives a genuine snapshot of life at school. There are many eye-catching displays around the school which give parents and visitors a flavour of what goes on and the achievements of pupils.
62. All parents are invited to a parents' consultation meeting each year to discuss progress. In Years 10 and 11, parents receive a copy of the termly interim report which gives a GCSE grade for the level their child is currently working towards and a grade they could aim for. An effort grade is also given. These reports give parents a snapshot of current achievement and enable them to compare progress from term to term. All parents receive a fuller written report towards the end of the year. Whilst the comments in the reports are encouraging and personal, they concentrate on pupils' attitudes to work rather than giving a clear picture of what they can and cannot do, and are often too general rather than specific to the individual subjects. Many of the targets are also general rather than being practical and constructive ways in which pupils can improve and parents can help. Exceptions to this are in German, history and some English reports where the targets are specific and much more helpful.
63. The school is keen to encourage parents to take an active part in their children's education and is looking for ways to develop partnership with parents further. Tutors stay with the same group through the years, resulting in a stable point of contact for parents and good relationships. Tutors are quick to contact parents when a problem arises and parents generally feel comfortable in approaching teachers with concerns. Parents receive the school calendar at the beginning of the year, so they know when meetings and reports are due. Parents' views are sought on a variety of issues. A questionnaire issued at parents' meetings not only asks their views on what the school is currently doing, but also what parents feel the priorities for development should be. Parents' comments are appreciated and valued and often integrated into policies and practice. The Parents' Forum invites parents to discuss issues and add their voice more informally. The home-school agreement is in place and clearly indicates what both the school and parents can expect from each other. Parents have a clear picture of the standards the school expects. They receive copies of the homework policy and timetable each year and their help is requested by signing the homework planner every week. Most parents do sign regularly and some use the planner as a means of communicating with tutors or subject teachers. The parent and staff association actively supports the school through many fund-raising and social events throughout the year. Parents play an active and valuable part on the governing body and feel their views are well represented.
64. Parents expect a lot from the school and the school responds well. The school appreciates the high regard in which it is held and works hard to involve parents in decisions and activities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The school is well led and managed and the Headteacher and senior team provide very clear direction for the school to improve and continue to raise standards. This direction for improvement is generally reflected in the work of senior staff and heads of departments. Responsibilities are allocated well and there are clear lines of communication between senior staff and heads of departments, although these are sometimes a little too rigid, for example, in linking the work of

special educational needs staff to the work of departments to produce individual education plans that contain subject specific targets. Staff work well together to raise standards and the headteacher values their efforts and commitment to the school.

66. The role that governors take in guiding and supporting the work of the school is outstanding. They have an excellent understanding of how the school works, its strengths and areas for development. Wherever they are involved in setting policy or taking decisions, they ensure that they are fully informed, by consulting with staff, asking for reports from staff or seeking out the information that they require. The level of consultation they have with the headteacher and senior staff is regular and frequent and contributes to the effectiveness of their involvement in the development of the school. The organisation of committees to deal with governors' responsibilities is extremely good and governors ensure that there is always staff representation to make a contribution to decisions they make.
67. Governors fulfil all of their legal responsibilities with the exception of ensuring that the statutory requirements for collective worship are fully met.
68. The school's priorities for development are good and are clearly evident in the actions taken to bring about improvements in the school's performance. In turn, departmental development plans reflect whole school priorities to increase academic and other achievements, to make the most of the human resources available to the school and to improve the school environment. The funding for development is closely linked to these priorities. Planning and linking it to a long-term strategic view, has improved since the last inspection.
69. The school has a good understanding of how well it is progressing in its improvement programme. However, within the senior staff line management structure, understanding of what is needed to ensure that development is fully effective, for example, in design and technology and special educational needs, is not always extensive enough.
70. The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching are sound, overall. Senior staff are heavily involved in observing teaching and providing feedback to teachers as part of the school's performance management procedures. This they do well. However, the involvement of staff within departments in observing, evaluating and sharing effective teaching practice is inconsistent, although there are high levels of collaboration in other ways within departments.
71. Overall, the management of special educational needs is sound and several aspects of the management are good. The policy is clear and the handbook is a useful working document. Teaching and support staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and support staff are effectively deployed. There is good support from outside agencies and communication within the department is good. However, communication with departments across the school is weak and links between the special educational needs department and other departments is underdeveloped. This is reflected in the quality of individual education plans. These still do not identify subject-specific targets and there is still inconsistent planning for special educational needs across all departments. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The governing body provides appropriate support and the governor responsible for liaison is generally well informed.
72. Staffing is satisfactory overall. The school has a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum; the experience and expertise of teachers is good. However, there are too few learning support assistants to provide the necessary level of in class support for pupils on the special needs register.
73. Training and development of staff are good overall. The school provides a good range of training opportunities for staff and support staff. Information and skills are shared; teachers are required to evaluate the training they receive and feed back to their colleagues on courses attended. Staff are supported by regular review of their professional development with senior staff. The whole school policy of monitoring and evaluating teaching is, however, unevenly implemented throughout the school. Induction of new teachers, including those who are newly qualified,

- provides effective support. Work with initial training students is well organised and clearly documented; school mentors for initial teacher training receive appropriate training.
74. There are sufficient administrative staff, who enthusiastically ensure the smooth running of the school on a daily basis. The school site is efficiently managed by committed staff.
 75. The school has made good progress in remedying the weaknesses in accommodation identified at the last inspection. The quality of accommodation now contributes positively to pupils' learning. The library and dining room are no longer used to teach classes because two new classrooms have been added. The number of science lessons taught in laboratories has been significantly increased by creating an additional laboratory. Two art classes are no longer taught in one large room. An all-weather sports pitch has been constructed to help solve the problem of being unable to use waterlogged pitches during the winter. There are still some lessons for English and modern languages that are taught in general classrooms some distance from the subjects' bases and this means that teachers have to carry resources and pupils' books to another part of the school which reduces teaching time for some lessons. Steps are being taken to reduce this movement. There is high quality display in many rooms, including those for mathematics, ICT, geography, religious education and art. These displays help to create a bright and stimulating learning environment.
 76. The school has identified further weakness in accommodation and so improvements remain a priority in the strategic development plan. There is only one computer suite that is available for other subjects and this limits the use of ICT by some subjects. Consequently, plans are in hand to create a second suite for use by other subjects. There is not a specialist room for drama and one lesson is taught in the sports hall where the acoustics are unsatisfactory. The food technology room is to be refurbished, because its equipment is obsolete.
 77. The school's learning resources are satisfactory overall. Expenditure on resources is approximately £200 per pupil, an increase since the previous inspection, but still well below national expenditure figures, reflecting the fact that the school receives funding that is well below the average. The proportion of the budget spent on teaching resources fell for the first three years after the previous inspection, but is now rising. Resources are sufficient in most subject areas, although there are still some shortages in modern foreign languages to ensure that there are opportunities for listening and reading in French and German and for independent study in the library. Some equipment used in design and technology is outdated and does not adequately support pupils' learning. Some subject areas such as science have insufficient access to computers. The overall provision of computers is good, with one computer for every 15 pupils. A third (cross-curricular) ICT room was completed in 1998, so the situation has improved since the last inspection. Although the quality of books in the library has improved considerably since then, there are only five books per pupil, well below the national average. Money accrued from the sale of land for housing has enabled the school to install an all-weather pitch since the previous inspection and the school is currently bidding for the installation of floodlighting for this facility. The recently adopted computerised, integrated learning system for helping pupils with learning difficulties is starting to show the advantages of electronic aids, as a number of pupils are making real progress in improving their reading and calculating skills.
 78. The school has established a web site that includes resources for pupils' learning with sections for each subject. At present, this is of limited value as many of the resources identified do not link directly to the school's curriculum. However, some good progress is being made in providing pupils with access to useful learning resources for geography and business studies.
 79. The school makes good use of the funds available to it. Funding is well below what is available in most other schools. Therefore, there are limitations in the school's level of expenditure, evident for example, in the numbers of books in the library. Nevertheless, the school plans spending wisely. The budget is closely linked to the improvement plan priorities, several quotes are obtained for all services and expenditure is shrewdly managed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. This is mainly because a comprehensive improvement planning process has been established that fully involves all staff in the school. Consequently, there is a high level of commitment to maintaining and continuing to raise standards, particularly of boys. The issues raised in the inspection are all well known within the school and are already the attention of staff to improve.
81. What the school needs to do now is:
- a. Raise the attainment of boys throughout the school, by using effective strategies already used in some subjects to improve levels of interest and involvement. (2, 4, 5, 6)
 - b. Improve the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 by providing opportunities for pupils to follow vocational and work related courses. (37, 40, 45)
 - c. Establish the consistent use of available assessment information within all departments to support curriculum and lesson planning and provide targets for individual pupils. (58)
 - d. Improve marking so that it consistently provides pupils with enough detail of how well they attain, and what they need to do in order to make further progress. (29, 58)

Minor issues the school should also address.

- i. Raise levels of achievement in design and technology by:
 - ensuring that there is sufficient time to cover the subject fully, (37, 126)
 - reviewing and improving the curriculum so that it reflects the full breadth and balance of the subject, especially at Key Stage 3, (126)
 - providing challenging work in all lessons, (27, 120)
 - ensuring that resources are suited to pupils' learning needs. (77, 127)
- ii. Establish the process of observing and evaluating teaching within departments so that all teachers have the opportunity to benefit from the extensive good teaching seen throughout the school. (70, 73)
- iii. Ensure that reports on pupils' progress sent home to parents include details of what pupils know, understand and can do in subjects and what they need to do to make further progress. (62)
- iv. Implement a whole school numeracy policy so that practice is consistent throughout the school. (33)
- v. Ensure that individual education plans for all pupils with special educational needs contain targets that are subject-specific and give suitable guidance to teachers throughout the school. (35)
- vi. Meet statutory requirements for collective worship. (47)
- vii. Link planning for vocational education with that for community education. (42, 85, 86)
- viii. Provide planned opportunities for spiritual development in subjects. (47)
- ix. Provide planned opportunities for pupils to learn about the contribution to subjects of the diverse cultures found in this country. (50)

COMMUNITY LINKS

82. The strong links which the school has developed with the local community, over the last three years especially, are founded on its commitment to lifelong learning and its view that community links are central to school life and work.
83. Much has been achieved since the introduction of the Community Education Project, in 1998, especially in terms of the increased use of the school facilities outside school hours by youth and community groups and by adult education classes run by a local college of further education. Particularly strong links have also been formed with Staffordshire University which have benefited curriculum development, through, for example, the support provided for the introduction of courses in citizenship and which also enrich pupils' learning through, for instance, the use of ICT facilities, attendance at talks about topics related to pupils' learning such as the holocaust and the links in sports and science.
84. Pupils' learning and their personal and social development are strongly promoted by their involvement in a number of projects such as the Health Action Zone project run in partnership with Staffordshire County Council and several other local organisations, which is aimed at encouraging pupils to walk or cycle to school. This project has been successful in establishing a travel plan to this end, which is shared with primary schools. Pupils have also engaged in the development of a millennium garden as an environmental project and, currently, members of the school council are choosing another community-related project from a range of options which include working with older people in the community. In addition, pupils' learning benefits from members of the community, including local clergy, the school nurse and personnel from industry working with them in lessons.
85. The co-ordinator for the Community Education Project is keen, enthusiastic and hard working. He has done much to encourage the development of the Project since his appointment in 1998. His survey of local businesses resulted in an expression of much interest in contributing to the community project, but this has not been fully exploited. Links with already established community partnerships are not sufficiently well developed. For instance, there are no systematic links with careers education and work experience. Nor is the current planning for the introduction of vocational education taking into account the valuable contribution which the Community Education Project could make to vocational and work related courses.
86. Although much has been achieved in many ways, through the Community Education Project, the potential contribution of the community to pupils' learning – both local and further afield – through for example, ICT, is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator has other major responsibilities and this limits the time allocated to developing the community links and to developing a structure to facilitate consultation, communication and management of the project.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	161
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	67

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	29	43	19	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	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	936
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	63

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	19
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	67

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	21

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	110	84	194

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	76	77	62
	Girls	79	72	67
	Total	155	149	129
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (76)	78 (70)	67 (67)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (45)	44 (44)	29 (27)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	83	74	70
	Girls	78	76	74
	Total	161	150	144
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (77)	78 (76)	75 (75)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	58 (51)	49 (48)	33 (47)
	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	90	73	163

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	50	80	85
	Girls	46	69	71
	Total	96	149	156
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	59 (60)	91 (98)	96 (99)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41 (44)
	National	38.4 (38)

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	2
Indian	3
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	8
White	897
Any other minority ethnic group	16

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	2	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	78	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	48.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	306

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26.8
Key Stage 4	23.3

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2 006 417
Total expenditure	1 972 906
Expenditure per pupil	2 108
Balance brought forward from previous year	23 700
Balance carried forward to next year	57 211

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	936
Number of questionnaires returned	182

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	55	7	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	39	57	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	65	4	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	57	19	3	2
The teaching is good.	29	64	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	53	16	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	51	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	46	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	52	20	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	41	52	2	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	58	7	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	47	8	0	10

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are pleased with the work of the school, the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by their sons and daughters. Some parents expressed concerns about homework, but the inspection found that the frequency and amount of homework were broadly satisfactory. Some parents feel that they are not kept sufficiently informed about the progress their children make and inspectors found that reports are not detailed enough about what pupils know, understand and can do, or in setting subject specific targets for them to improve their work.

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

ENGLISH

87. Attainment in the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average and has improved since the last inspection. Although girls as a whole attained higher standards in the tests than boys, boys' attainment was still above average and built on their position at entry in Year 7, following the Key Stage 2 tests where their results were lower than the standards of the girls.
88. At GCSE, results were, again, well above national averages, overall, in both English and English literature, with the results in the former being more successful in relation to both the national average and to other subjects. Whilst girls' attainment continues to be higher, the gap between the two has been reduced since the last inspection, following the introduction of a range of strategies across both the key stages to enhance the performance of boys. For example, a programme of extended reading in class (ERIC), revised setting procedures and changes in approach to teaching and learning have been effective in raising the standards of boys. The impact of these strategies has not been fully monitored to analyse closely where there are differences between performance in teacher assessment and the tests at the end of Key Stage 3. In addition, there has been no detailed analysis of the differences in performance between English and English literature at GCSE and to explore why there are few pupils obtaining the highest grade at GCSE.
89. By the time pupils are 14, attainment is generally above average and all pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences, producing diaries, poetry, narrative and descriptive work. They can respond critically to a variety of literary styles, justifying their comments by reference to the texts and understand how structural differences and language can be used to good effect. They are good at speaking and listening, both in whole class situations and in group work. Higher-attaining pupils, in particular, demonstrate effective research skills, and standards of handwriting, spelling, and punctuation are generally good and have improved over time. However, the technical accuracy of average and lower attaining boys with spelling and punctuation is still slightly weaker than girls, where ICT is not used as a support. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve particularly successfully and are well supported by clearly targeted work when they are withdrawn from lessons in Years 7 and 8 and by a range of devices to help structure their writing.
90. By the time they are 16, attainment is consistently above average, with pupils at all levels demonstrating wider reading and a greater knowledge and understanding of a range of texts from different cultures, traditions, and periods – embracing drama, fiction, poetry and non-fiction, including the media. They demonstrate increasing fluency and accuracy in their written and spoken skills and set themselves personal targets.
91. Higher-attaining pupils demonstrate a mature written style, using linguistic and structural forms to heighten effect, and analyse and compare texts, considering audience, purpose and form, and explore literary themes over time. Average and lower attaining pupils continue to progress, although the writing of some boys displays less maturity and accuracy by comparison with the high standards achieved elsewhere. The quality of writing achieved over time through homework adds very significantly to the standards of attainment seen in lessons.
92. Standards have generally been improved since the last inspection, following the development of a whole-school literacy initiative co-ordinated by the head of English. Within English, this is characterised by a strong focus on supported reading, particularly of non-fiction and supported writing, the promotion of active research skills linked to the development of the library as a resource centre, more consistent marking and planning across the department and a strong focus on speaking and listening activities across all key stages.

93. Pupils also benefit from the whole school focus on reading of non-fiction which is often related to subject-specific areas. They have the improved facility of the library for research and the use of ICT with software designed to provide learning support. In most subjects, with the exceptions of design and technology and mathematics, there is a range of techniques to enhance the use of specialist vocabulary and improve writing.
94. Teaching is good, overall, with almost all the lessons observed in Years 7, 8 and 9 satisfactory or better, about one third very good and a quarter good. Teaching in one lesson was unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, teaching was almost all good or better. In about one third of lessons, teaching was very good or excellent and in a half it was good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson. Particular strengths in the department are teachers' good subject knowledge and syllabus expertise. This shows in well-structured and planned sequences of lessons with clear learning objectives, imaginative well-timed activities that engage pupils' interests and probing questioning which extends pupils' understanding as well as their speaking and listening skills. Teachers' strong emphasis on language and structure across a wide range of written and literary styles, using appropriate specialist vocabulary, enables pupils to respond critically to a range of texts and to enhance their own writing by adopting appropriate linguistic/structural techniques. Particular support is provided for average and lower attaining pupils, through the reinforcement of word and sentence level work, use of writing frames, supported reading to improve the fluency and accuracy of their work and through the use of ICT to enhance boys' work, in particular.
95. Excellent relationships with pupils and good use of group work lead directly to the good motivation and engagement of most pupils and support for each other. Regular marking enables pupils to review their progress over time. The best lessons are characterised by well-paced and imaginative activities that motivate both boys and girls. For example, a short quiz on famous names in advertising enabled the class to recap on the whole range of advertising strategies. A similar approach in a Year 7 withdrawal group working on phonics/spelling asked pupils to 'name a friend' if they got the word wrong and in a cross-curricular initiative with art, pupils created a box to store their most precious memories, which they had to explain and present to the class. In the last example, the teacher used the opportunity to have an in-depth discussion on faith, friendship and values.
96. In the two lessons that were unsatisfactory and occasionally in other lessons, lack of clear aims/objectives, pace and timing failed to involve pupils, particularly boys.
97. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met and assessment information is used by the department to guide setting and monitor pupils' progress. However, marking does not always indicate to pupils how well they are progressing, or what they need to do to improve further. Formal observation of teaching and sharing of best practice is not established within the department as one of a range of approaches for improvement. Nevertheless, the department's future priorities are clearly defined and it benefits from very effective and sensitive leadership which takes account of the talented and committed staff.

MATHEMATICS

98. By the time the pupils are 14, their achievement in mathematics is above the national average with girls doing better than boys. In comparison with similar schools, however, the results are below average and display a comparative lack of the higher grades. Results for this age group, in terms of average points score, are below those of English, but above science in the school. Here again, girls outshine boys. By the time pupils take GCSE examinations at 16, they achieve above the national average in terms of percentage passes for both grades A* - C and A*-G. At this age, however, it is the boys who do better than the girls. In the most recent, 2000 examinations, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A*-B was well above national averages. GCSE results for mathematics in the school fall below those for English, but above those for science.
99. By the time pupils are 14, their attainment is above the national average, with a number of pupils performing very well. The higher-attaining pupils, for example, recognise and differentiate between different classes of graphs including those for cubic, reciprocal and exponential equations. In earlier lessons, these pupils coped proficiently with volume calculations of regular and irregular

- shapes. Pupils of average attainment use their knowledge of regular polygons correctly to calculate internal angles for them. Lower attaining pupils use a spreadsheet, interrogate a database and correctly filter out chosen features. In all lessons, pupils with special educational needs achieve in parallel with their peers, not because the material is properly adapted for them, but because the teaching is of a high standard and there is a high level of personal attention. In no lessons is there a difference between boys' and girls' achievements nor do pupils from ethnic minority groups produce work of a different quality from the others.
100. By the time pupils are 16, their attainment is again above average. Higher-attaining pupils deal confidently with their first lessons on probability, applying conditional and unconditional tree diagrams to determine the chance of a particular series of events occurring. In earlier lessons, these pupils showed sound understanding when dealing with awkward fractions involving proportional change. Pupils of average attainment employ 'a line of best fit' to interrogate a scattergram with an appropriate degree of precision. Pupils of lower attainment analyse the mathematical strategy to win a game of pinball, do so effectively and show pleasure and satisfaction in dealing with a game of chance mathematically. Gender differences are apparent at this stage, with the setting arrangements for the subject placing a higher proportion of boys in the lower ability groups.
101. The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. It is strong throughout the school, but marginally better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. At Key Stage 3, all teaching is at least good with a third being very good and one lesson out of 11, excellent. At Key Stage 4, teaching in one lesson out of 13 is satisfactory and another excellent. Just under a half is good and a further third very good. The very best teaching provides well-chosen changes of activity or focus and so maintains a fast pace to the work. The teachers' good subject knowledge coupled with a good teaching strategy means that lower ability pupils use mental arithmetic successfully to determine 'four and a half percent of'. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and this, coupled with their good use of time, allows interactions to be very productive in terms of learning. Teachers' expectations are very high and most pupils respond accordingly. Teachers' planning is generally thorough, but it does not generally take account of the resources or extra planning to meet the needs of either pupils with special educational needs or those who are gifted and talented. Homework is used effectively to extend the work of pupils. Contrary to the department's own requirements in its handbook, little is done in support of literacy across the school, with most spelling errors left uncorrected in class and homework.
102. Since the last inspection, in which a key issue for the school related to the lack of monitoring of teacher performance, the department has made some headway, although no such monitoring has happened in this academic year. The quality of teaching has improved markedly as has the degree that ICT supports teaching.

SCIENCE

103. The attainment of pupils in end of Key Stage 3 national tests in 2000 was broadly average. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 or above was above the national average, but the proportion reaching Level 6 or higher was in line with the national average. When these results are compared with similar schools they are below average. Girls perform much better than boys at the end of Key Stage 3 and although boys enter the school with lower results than the girls, in science the gap widens. The attainment level over the last 3 years has risen steadily, but at a slower rate than nationally. However, the results at the end of Key Stage 3 were in line with those expected based on the Key Stage 2 results and so satisfactory progress was made.
104. The attainment of pupils in the GCSE examinations in 2000 was above average both in the percentage obtaining grades A*-C and in the percentage obtaining grades A*-G. Results have risen steadily over the past three years and in 2000, for the first time, boys achieved higher results than girls. By comparison with the results that the pupils obtained at age 14, pupils are achieving at a higher level than predicted by those results; they made good progress in Years 10 and 11.

105. Evidence from the inspection shows that by the time pupils are 14, attainment is broadly average, matching the end of Year 9 national tests. The work of pupils in Year 8 is of a higher standard and suggests that attainment levels are rising. All pupils are confident in handling apparatus and use the correct technical terminology when talking about the subject. The higher-attaining pupils understand different distillation techniques and can apply that knowledge to everyday situations. They also apply theoretical knowledge of paint colours and the spectrum when suggesting what would happen in a chromatography experiment. The middle and lower attaining pupils are able to make predictions in a variety of practical situations, but do not always do so; often they just follow the practical instructions and then interpret the results. Weak mathematical skills hindered the work of the lower attaining pupils when the inability to work out the average prevented progress on to working out the speed measurement. By the age of 14, pupils of all abilities have learned new skills, increased their knowledge of scientific facts and their understanding of scientific concepts. Their progress is satisfactory.
106. By the age of 16, pupils are working at levels above the national average and indications are that those standards are continuing to rise. Pupils in Year 11 undertake a variety of revision work and show their understanding in a wide range of aspects of the syllabus. Higher-attaining pupils are able to apply principles learnt in other parts of the course to new topics, as seen when considering the need for nephrons to have a large surface area and the need for blood to have a constant water content. Lower attaining pupils make good progress in their understanding and communicate their knowledge well to others. For example, one group of pupils chose a section of the syllabus to present to other members of the class in an accurate, stimulating and confident way; covering aspects of the nervous system, adaptation and genetics and the impact of drugs on the human body. Pupils are confident in writing an experimental plan and can carry out that plan, using the concept of a 'fair' experiment, well. They also show good skills in interpreting information they collect in experiments. However, opportunity to incorporate the predictive and planning aspects are not always used outside of the specific work on scientific investigation.
107. The work seen during the inspection did not show the variation between boys and girls evident in the external results and all groups of pupils' progress at a similar rate. The standard of literacy is good, overall, with pupils using technical terminology and being confident in expressing their ideas orally. Pupils also make use of a range of literacy styles in their work such as including poems and raps in project work. The amount of extended writing is limited with most responses being in the form of short sentence answers. Standards of numeracy, whilst being satisfactory, overall, are a weakness with lower attaining pupils. Reports to parents refer to the attitudes of pupils, but give insufficient detail of knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in the subject. Targets for improvement are not subject specific enough.
108. Teaching is good, overall, with two thirds of the lessons seen being good and one lesson being very good. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good. Strengths within teaching are the clear objectives for the lesson, which the pupils understand; these are usually followed up with a summary session that enables the pupils to evaluate their own learning. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to draw out ideas from the pupils and encourage them to extend those ideas. In almost all lessons, there is a pleasant working atmosphere within which pupils work, discuss and feel free to ask questions. Most lessons in all years are taught as whole class lessons, with little small group work, leading to some pupils wasting time while waiting for others to finish. In addition, there is not sufficient material to extend the higher-attaining pupils. This has a particularly major impact in Years 7 and 8 where classes are of mixed ability. Opportunities are often missed to develop predictive and planning skills by including them in a wider range of experimental work than the formal investigation. Marking is regular and includes short comments on work for pupils to read. However, constructive comments, giving information on how to improve are rare and comments do not clearly indicate how good pupils' performance is so that they know what to do to raise their levels of attainment. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils to science are very good, and, in almost all lessons, the pupils are self motivated and work with a high level of concentration. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' good progress within lessons. On occasion, there is some restlessness among pupils, linked to finding the task difficult to complete.

109. The curriculum offered is broad and balanced and it is currently under revision to incorporate recent changes to the National Curriculum and to link the completion time with the external assessments. Present provision does not meet fully the needs of the wide range of pupils following the course, especially in Years 7 and 8. At GCSE, pupils are allowed to choose single or double science. However, the offering of single science does not follow the guidelines of the National Curriculum: 'The Government firmly believes that double science or the three separate sciences should be taken by the great majority of pupils. Single science is intended for a minority of pupils who have good reason to spend more time on other subjects'. Offering single science in order to offer an extra option choice for another subject is not covered by these guidelines and consequently a number of career paths for those pupils are limited. Pupils who wish to study three separate sciences cover the extra material in after school sessions. Whilst the provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and use of the Internet is made by pupils in most years, there are areas, such as data logging, where there is still insufficient provision for all pupils.
110. Management of the department is good, with an awareness of areas for development. There has been clear educational direction, resulting in effective strategies to improve the attainment of boys at GCSE. Teaching is observed informally and some feedback provided for individual teachers. Accommodation and resources for science are adequate and they are used well so that pupils benefit from an environment that promotes the subject and where pupils use the displays to aid their learning. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The positive aspects of the department have been maintained. Teaching has improved with a greater proportion being good, the attainment of boys at GCSE has risen significantly, more investigative work is carried out in Years 7 to 9 and more use is made of ICT. The department has a good base on which to develop.

ART AND DESIGN

111. In the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000, the attainment of pupils was broadly in line with national averages, with girls performing better than boys. At GCSE in 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C in GCSE was above the national average. Since the last inspection, the trend in results have been rising.
112. By the time pupils are 14, standards of work in lessons are in line with national expectations for pupils of the same age. Pupils use line, tone and texture effectively in their drawings. They observe natural forms well and understand three-dimensional concepts. Pupils use ICT skills effectively for research, for example, the line, shapes and patterns of Japanese kites. They explore ideas and assess visual information, including images and artefacts from different historical and cultural contexts. In a lesson on Cubism, pupils showed the ability to simplify images and consider textural surfaces. Work shows greater perceptual depth when pupils use first hand observation as a basis for their work. Pupils make good progress, their ability to work from direct observation and their understanding of composition and perspective developing well. Pupils with special needs achieve well and benefit from individual attention.
113. By the time pupils are 16, standards of work are above average. They experiment and make good expressive observational drawings and paintings. They demonstrate personal interests, ideas and responses to their own and other cultures through the work they produce. Good use is made of combining observation with a range of secondary sources and they often show the influence of different cultures, important movements in art, or particular artists. They are able to develop and sustain a chosen theme in their work and can investigate and explain their use of a range of visual and other sources in order to do so. Sketch books are used effectively and there is consideration for the development of language and vocabulary in lessons. Pupils speak confidently about their work and demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding. Work from direct observation is developed well through enlargement and textural consideration.
114. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. Standards of attainment have improved, as have the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the department. There

has been an increase in the range of media activities and improved resources and materials. ICT is now integrated within the art programme.

115. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, overall, and very good in Years 10 and 11. This is a direct result of the high expectations and enthusiasm that the subject specialist teachers bring to their work and the high standards they set. Lessons are always orderly and characterised by good relationships. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and apply themselves purposefully to their projects. They want to improve and do well and are eager to explain their work to classmates and visitors alike. There is an effective working ethos within the department and pupils are expected to behave and do their best.
116. The quality of teaching, overall, is good. In half of lessons, teaching is very good and in the other half it is good. The work set for all lessons showed good levels of subject knowledge and planning to meet individual requirements. Homework in Years 10 and 11 is good. It is appropriate in subject matter and used to support on-going project work. Well-constructed assessment procedures make a significant contribution to the development and progress of pupils' work. Pupils are aware of objectives and levels and their individual targets set. A more structured approach to homework is needed in Key Stage 3, with pupils being made aware of their levels of work. Lessons always start with the teacher identifying what the class will learn and with revision of previous learning. Initial discussions and demonstrations of processes are good. In one Year 8 lesson on Surrealism, the teacher showed the class perspective and, with the use of good resources, pupils' learning about proportion and scale were good. There is emphasis on procedure, methods and care of equipment. Careful, clear explanations and good intervention at key points in pupils' learning enable pupils at both key stages to make good progress. In a Year 11 lesson on coursework for the GCSE examinations, pupils were developing ideas from various resources and making personal choices. They demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the connection made with artists' styles which had influenced their work.
117. The subject is well led and managed. Teaching schemes and departmental policies are clear and provide good guidance for teachers. Since the last inspection, written aims and objectives which link programmes of study and teaching approaches are now established. The teacher in charge of art monitors the work of the department through classroom observations and work sampling. Assessment procedures throughout the school are effective and aid curriculum planning adequately.
118. There is now access to computers within the department and ICT is now being developed within the schemes of work. The teaching of claywork is not supported by technical help and storage and preparation spaces are still inadequate. Visits to galleries and museums and use of visiting artists are not used enough to widen pupils' experiences and to have an effect upon the quality and range of pupils' work. The availability of improved reference books and visual aids now meets the element of knowledge and understanding needed for a subject with such a wide cultural base.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. By the time pupils are 14, attainment is in line with national expectations, reflecting the National Curriculum assessments undertaken by teachers in 2000. The proportions of pupils achieving grades A*-C and A*-G in the GCSE examinations in 2000 were broadly in line with the national averages and this reflects a trend of improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment is in line with the standards expected by the age of 16. Girls do better than boys by the end of both key stages, but this does not represent a significant difference and is often related to disruptive behaviour in class. Across the school, attainment has improved from below average to average since the previous inspection report.
120. The overall standards in design and technology are broadly average. This is consistent with results in the national tests, both at 14 and 16, although there are variations within the four areas of study. Pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory by the age of 14, although a lack of rigour and expectation by teachers slows pupils' progress over time, when the pace of learning is slow. In addition, the standard of graphical drawing across all areas is below that expected and there is

a continuing over-reliance upon cutting out and sticking pictures and writing at a rudimentary level, especially in resistant materials. This results in too much unsatisfactory presentation of pupils' own work. In particular, the higher-attaining pupils under-perform. The quality of research, analysis and the development of ideas are satisfactory, with some good examples of pupils using their initiative to explore printmaking and embroidery techniques in Year 8, blending traditional method with ICT.

121. By the age of 16, attainment is average and pupils' pace of learning is satisfactory. There is an improvement in the range of structured approaches used by each specialist area within design and technology, which enables students to successfully build upon Key Stage 3 work and produce projects in the required areas for the GCSE examinations. The deficiencies in earlier design are corrected by the age of 16 so students are carrying out a more careful analysis of their designs and results of testing before, and during, the making of projects. Many have a good understanding of the topics they study. Practical work supports a sound knowledge of different processes and in Year 11, such as care in measuring, marking out, cutting and joining a variety of materials for projects, using wood. Most projects show an awareness of production methods and efficiency. The quality of course work has improved except for pupils' unsatisfactory knowledge of graphics, which is not well presented with regard to accuracy. A contributory factor is the shortage of accessibility to up-to-date ICT. Although the department has attempted to rectify this, opportunities in teaching and learning are missed, because planning takes insufficient account of how ICT might support the curriculum. For example, pupils do not show a good awareness and understanding of new technologies associated with production and manufacturing.
122. Pupils' sound use of tools and equipment is illustrated in Year 10 projects involving jointing and finishing of resistant materials. In food technology, pupils show a growing knowledge of bacteria found in food spoilage and in the culinary cultures related to Indian and Far Eastern life; this enhances pupils' cultural development. There are variations in attainment and progress of different groups of pupils, for example, the gifted and talented pupils are not set sufficiently challenging tasks and teachers place too much reliance on assessing the end product. Pupils in the early stages of English fluency are adequately supported in lessons. Most teachers plan easier tasks for students with special learning needs, but they are not well enough matched to pupils' individual education plans and their requirements in a practical subject.
123. Pupils have good attitudes to work. Many concentrate for long periods of time and are well motivated. They are keen to carry out practical tasks and work enthusiastically on their projects. However, teaching offers pupils too few opportunities to actively engage in lessons, because brainstorming and spider diagrams take too much time. Behaviour is good in lessons. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good and they usually cooperate well with others as appropriate. At Key Stage 4, a small proportion of boys show little sense of urgency in their attitudes and distract others in the class. The inclusion of spirituality promotes pupils' self-confidence and provides opportunities of awe and wonder 'when things go right'.
124. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Almost half the teaching is good and nearly all of the rest is satisfactory. In a small number of lessons the teaching is unsatisfactory, partly because the teacher accepts work of a low standard or the work set is too easy, resulting in behaviour problems and lost teaching time. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and pupils are generally well managed; time is usually well spent. The good teaching is having a positive impact on raising standards and improving pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs. The teaching of basic practical skills fails to consolidate pupils' progress sufficiently, especially at Key Stage 3, because of a shortage of curriculum time. This remains unsatisfactory since the last inspection. Assessment data are not analysed carefully enough to help teachers plan the next stage of pupils' learning and to correct identified weaknesses. The assessment routine is not well understood by pupils nor do they all have very regular up-to-date information on how they are doing and make comparisons with their peers. Homework is usually set, although there is inconsistency among teachers' marking and in showing pupils how to improve.

125. There is an inconsistent approach to teaching the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. On occasions, the application of number is well promoted, as in a Year 9 pupils' work where the mechanical advantage of a mechanism is worked out correctly. The contribution to literacy is not impacting sufficiently on raising standards because of an inconsistent approach by all staff.
126. The curriculum lacks breadth and balance. The amount of time allocated to Key Stage 3 remains below that recommended, making it difficult to fulfil adequately all elements of the course. For example, there are insufficient opportunities for pneumatics, alternative energy, robotics and automation. Staffing is adequate, but the recruitment and retention of full time staff is a continuing problem. Staff are positive and hard working in their approach to teaching and committed to improvement, although the monitoring of teaching and learning is too informal.
127. Much equipment is outdated for National Curriculum requirements and in all areas there is a shortfall in books, especially textbooks and in ICT. The accommodation is satisfactory, but in need of refurbishment. The leadership has developed the department satisfactorily and the time is now appropriate for a whole-school review of the place and importance of the subject.

DRAMA

128. Attainment at GCSE continues to be above average, both in relation to national performance and that of other subjects within the school. Whilst pupils did not attain the highest grade in the most recent public examinations, the results reflect very good 'value added' in a subject whose take up includes pupils across a wide ability range.
129. The above average performance in the public examinations is borne out by the standards of work seen in the lessons and samples of coursework provided. By the time pupils are 14, they know and understand the key elements of performance, can demonstrate a sense of audience and how this affects presentation and content and can use the specialist language of the subject to describe and evaluate performance. Pupils in Year 9 make sound progress, but the timetabling arrangement of teaching in blocks, rather than continuous teaching throughout the year, limits the consolidation of these areas of knowledge, skill and understanding.
130. The above average attainment of pupils is reinforced in Years 10 and 11, so that, by the time pupils are 16, they demonstrate considerable skill, knowledge and understanding both in their own performance and in analysing others'. They use their awareness of the impact of audience and different approaches to presentation and staging to convey mood and content and to critically evaluate the technical and dramatic requirements of a variety of texts.
131. Standards of attainment across the age range, but particularly in Years 7 to 9, have been enhanced since the last inspection by the development of a departmental scheme of work and handbook that set out the objectives, intended outcomes and programme of study and by the effective links across music and drama. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by group work. GCSE coursework, overall, demonstrates that pupils of all abilities comment on how effectively staging, lighting, set and direction are used to convey mood and meaning. For example, a lower attaining pupil described the 'deathbed' scene in 'Les Miserables', contrasting the light colours of the dying at rest with the dark colours of the living in the difficult world in which they exist. The scope and quality of coursework seen indicates that extension is provided for the most able, who demonstrate maturity of style, judgement and active research skills.
132. Teaching is good, overall, with some very good and excellent practice. Learning is extended by extra-curricular activity. The one lesson seen to be satisfactory was limited by the acoustic and physical difficulties of its location, although the group task could have been better suited to needs. Teacher strengths are seen in the high expectations they have of pupils and their familiarity with the scheme of work, which results in well-structured lessons which support, engage and extend pupils of all levels of ability. Relationships with and between pupils are very good and this impacts positively on the learning. The clear emphasis from Year 7 onwards on the development of performance and presentation skills for a range of audiences, on the

specialist subject language and on critical evaluation, significantly enhances pupils' learning and contributes to the development of literacy across the curriculum.

133. The effective leadership and management provided by the head of performing arts significantly shapes the success of the department.

GEOGRAPHY

134. In 2000, the school's National Curriculum teacher assessments in geography for 14 year-old pupils were well above the national average in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above. Girls' results were better than those of the boys by a wider margin than the national gender difference. Results have improved annually for the last three years from a position just below the national average. GCSE results have fluctuated in recent years and have been generally below the national average in terms of the proportion of pupils gaining grade A*-C, and represent a decline since the previous inspection. Girls outperform boys in most years. The latest results are in line with expectations based on the same pupils' performance in their National Curriculum tests in 1998. Relative indicators show that for the last three years, pupils have performed poorly in geography compared with their other subjects.
135. By the time they are 14, attainment is in line with national expectations for most pupils, with small minorities above and below. In their well-written enquiry work, higher-attaining pupils extract relevant information from a range of sources, including the Internet. They choose the most appropriate methods for representing data graphically, as seen when considering statistics on the contrast in living standards between different parts of Italy. In the same lesson, lower attaining pupils competently described, but could not explain clearly, the differences in these living standards. These pupils find difficulty with any requirement to write at length. All pupils use atlases confidently.
136. By the time pupils are 16, attainment for the majority is in line with national expectations. This represents an improvement when compared with the GCSE results of Year 11 pupils in 2000. Results from completed assignments and mock examinations suggest strongly that standards are improving. Higher-attaining pupils produce good quality coursework, testing hypotheses to good effect and enhancing the presentation of text and graphs with the use of their computer skills. They produce good quality notes with well-presented annotated maps and diagrams. As with younger pupils, the progress of a minority is impeded by weak literacy skills, but they cope well with the short answers required for data response questions. All pupils demonstrate, for example, a good knowledge of the factors indicating levels of economic development in different countries. There is no significant difference in attainment at 14 or 16 between boys and girls or between pupils from different ethnic groups.
137. Teaching is good, overall, and never less than satisfactory. It is very good in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 7 to 9. In nine out of ten lessons, teaching is good or better and in the rest it is satisfactory. In one third of lessons, teaching is very good. In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge is reinforced by brisk pace, challenge, sensible allocation of time to different activities and the setting of tasks suitable to the needs of individual pupils. These characteristics were seen in a Year 10 lesson on glacial erosion when pupils were required to absorb and interpret information from a range of source material and then answer a past examination question, all within a strict time scale. In this and other very good lessons, teachers used their ICT skills in an innovative way to enhance the presentation of information and so acted as effective role models for pupils, showing the way these skills can be used to assist learning. Pupils respond well to this quality of teaching by settling down quickly to work, behaving well, staying on task and listening attentively to each other's opinions. Their concentration is assisted by the variety of activities they are offered. Their growing enthusiasm for the subject is illustrated by the numbers choosing to follow geography related courses in post-16 institutions. Lessons start with a clear statement of aims, followed by a review of recent lessons, during which pupils readily recall and consolidate their earlier learning. Teachers' guidance in the use of textbooks, atlases and other resources helps pupils to make good progress in lessons. Learning is also assisted by frequent opportunities for collaborative learning, as seen in Year 7 environmental

fieldwork lessons. All teachers are hardworking and enthusiastic about the subject. Although some are not geography specialists, they all have sufficient subject knowledge to teach the groups they have been allocated. Non-specialists receive excellent support and guidance from specialists. In comparatively less successful lessons, tasks are not well matched to the needs of individual pupils, introductions are too long, and, in one lesson, pupils became inattentive and time was lost because of the need to correct the behaviour of a small minority. The general level of behaviour is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment, as do those with English as an additional language. Teachers and support staff know them well and recognise their needs. Homework is set regularly and provides useful reinforcement to classroom teaching. Work is marked regularly, usually with constructive comments, but there is some inconsistency in marking style between individual teachers. The geography curriculum offers good opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills, but higher-attaining Year 11 pupils are not taught the more advanced statistical techniques offered in many schools. Opportunities for pupils to develop their computer skills are well planned and have improved since the previous inspection. Displays of key words and the use of writing frames are helping to develop pupils' literacy, but they are given insufficient opportunities to read aloud from texts.

138. All the points raised in the previous inspection report have been addressed successfully. Management of the department has improved greatly in the last year with the appointment of new heads of humanities and geography. Evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of examples of pupils' work suggest that this improved management is beginning to reverse the decline in overall standards in the subject that was apparent between 1996 and 2000. The development of the analysis of a wealth of data on pupils' performance, outlined in the department's forward planning, is beginning to produce a more precise targeting of pupils' needs.

HISTORY

139. By the age of 14, pupils achieve standards which are above the national average. This is shown both in the results of national tests over the last three years and in the work of pupils in Year 9 seen during the inspection. The standards achieved by pupils at the age of 16 are also above average. GCSE results have been above average over the last three years and similar standards are evident in the work of pupils currently in Year 11. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well throughout their time at the school. Above average standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
140. From the age of 11, pupils acquire good historical knowledge, understanding and skills. By the age of 14, higher-attaining pupils especially, show a very good and mature grasp of complex issues. This was evident for instance, in a Year 9 lesson where pupils showed very good knowledge and understanding of the treatment of different groups in Nazi Germany. By the time pupils are 16, their knowledge, understanding and skills is often very good and is always at least sound. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding increasingly effectively in investigation and in linking, comparing and making decisions about key factors and their influence. Historical skills of chronology, empathy, argument and writing develop well. Pupils learn to produce well-structured and detailed essays and written assignments. GCSE coursework reflects a good recognition of significant factors and an ability to interrelate these in evaluating and explaining their impact upon events. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve better standards than expected, although their written work sometimes lacks depth and sufficiently strong explanation. Pupils' learning is enhanced by their very good standards in literacy, which are strongly fostered by the department and the good use they make of their numeracy skills. Overall, however, relatively little use is made of ICT either for research or the presentation of work.
141. Pupils enjoy history. Their learning is significantly strengthened by their very positive attitudes towards the subject. They work hard and concentrate well in lessons. They are very enthusiastic and work productively together, discussing and comparing their knowledge and ideas. In all lessons, learning benefits from very good relationships and excellent behaviour.

142. The high quality of teaching enables pupils to make very good progress. Teaching is very good. In the ten lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was excellent in two, very good in five, good in two and satisfactory in one. The teachers' very good subject expertise enables pupils to learn well. It is skilfully shared through clear and sometimes powerful, delivery and often through very imaginative strategies which bring history to life and emphasise its relevance for young people. Pupils respond with relish, keenly anticipating the next stages of their learning and thoroughly engaging in the process. For instance, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils of all levels of attainment were able to understand the complexities of the Weimar Constitution as a result of very clear explanation and being deeply involved in searching decision making. At best, teaching is inspirational, for example in a Year 9 lesson on the Holocaust, the learning environment created by teaching, the playing of music and display of artefacts encouraged pupils to respond in depth personally to the events of the Holocaust. This experience strongly promoted understanding, empathy and also pupils' spiritual and moral development.
143. Lessons are planned very carefully and successfully to provide sequential learning and resources are skilfully designed to promote historical skills. Some materials are designed specifically to meet pupils' learning requirements, although insufficient attention is paid, overall, to this need, with the consequence that some lower attaining pupils have difficulty in reading and understanding the text. Nevertheless, lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs progress well because of the clarity of the teaching and good quality individual tuition by the teacher and, in some lessons, by learning support assistants. Effective individual tuition promotes the learning of pupils of all levels of attainment in many lessons, but there are occasions when opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding through individual guidance are missed.
144. The strong emphasis upon the development of historical skills enables pupils to work accurately as historians from Year 7 onwards. They learn to use evidence effectively in research and to provide explanations and reasons for change. For example, pupils in Year 7 lessons were examining pictorial evidence of castles to identify changes in their design and the reasons for these. They worked keenly, using earlier learning at Key Stage 2 and from visits they had made to castles, to develop their skills of investigation and analysis. They responded very well to the high expectations of the teachers that they should work accurately in their observations and back their explanations of change by evidence.
145. Realistic high expectations and challenge are features of the great majority of lessons and result in high standards. In a Year 8 lesson, for instance, pupils demonstrated a mature understanding of the issues and problems resulting from child labour in the nineteenth century because of the high expectations of the teacher that they should examine evidence closely and be able to evaluate different view points. In this, and in all other lessons, pupils' progress was strongly fostered by the very good learning ethos. Good humour underpinned by rigour in terms of the standards expected, encourages pupils to contribute with confidence in many lessons. There are also many opportunities for them to work productively together and to learn through discussion and the sharing of ideas.
146. Learning in lessons is extended and consolidated by the setting of appropriate tasks for homework. Pupils' progress is closely monitored by the regular marking of their work, but marking does not always provide pupils with sufficient guidance on how to improve their standards in Years 7 to 9. Standards are assessed and recorded as an integral part of teaching. However, procedures are insufficiently systematic in tracking pupils' progress against their attainment at an earlier stage, for example, on entry to the school and at the age of 14.
147. The good leadership of the department strongly supports good achievement. The newly appointed head of department provides clear and energetic leadership and direction for work in history. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection, especially in the quality of teaching, resources and accommodation. Teachers are well supported in their work, but procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the department are underdeveloped. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils achieve well, but the use of performance data to set targets for improvement at both 14 and 16 years needs to be developed to raise standards

further. The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of learning opportunities, but the limited time allocated for the subject in Year 9 makes it difficult to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum and weakens the basis for study in Years 10 to 11.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

148. The teacher assessments for 14 year-olds in 2000 showed attainment above the national average. This was an improvement on the previous year and was higher than the standards reported at the previous inspection. Girls achieved more of the higher levels than the boys. About half of the pupils on the special educational needs register reached the expected standards and the other half were close to the expected standard. GCSE courses in ICT and business studies are taught by the same teachers. The GCSE for ICT in 2000 was taken by a small number of pupils who were taking GCSE business studies and were taught at lunchtime or as an evening class. The results were well above average with a particularly high proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades. The results for business studies in 2000 were similar to those for ICT. These results for both courses were higher than those reported at the previous inspection. The pupils achieved better results in business studies than in the other subjects they took. The pupils who were assessed by their teachers at 14 and took GCSE exams at 16 achieved well and their results were good.
149. The attainment of the current 14 year-olds is above the expected levels and standards are high. Higher-attaining pupils sort data prior to mail merging, so that letters are printed only for selected records. Presentation software is used well to create high quality presentations about a wide range of topics and organisations, with appropriate content and style for the audience. Pupils make good progress during Years 7 and 8.
150. A relatively small number of the current 16 year-olds take a GCSE in ICT and their attainment is above national averages. For their coursework, most pupils research the ICT needs of local businesses and organisations and then design and produce appropriate systems of good quality. Lower-attaining pupils have a sound outline knowledge of this work, but fail to develop their ideas in sufficient detail. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils constructed well-designed data-capture forms relevant to the business or organisation on which their coursework is based. This work followed the effective evaluation of forms from a wide range of organisations. Pupils make good progress during the GCSE course.
151. However, the majority of 16 year-olds follow a non-examination course and their attainment is below national averages. In this course, pupils create an ICT system for a small organisation, but their teaching time is too low and so they do not develop more complex lines of enquiry to test hypotheses or identify the advantages and disadvantages of different information handling applications. Also, these Year 11 pupils do not have the background of knowledge and skills in ICT of the current Year 9 pupils who are working at a similar standard. The current 15 year-olds in Year 10 all follow a short GCSE course and none takes a non-examination course.
152. The attainment of 16 year-olds who take GCSE business studies is above national averages. For example, they complete well-structured, detailed coursework reports on the impact of out-of-town retailing for a particular audience and include recommendations that Newcastle town could take to become more competitive. Pupils have a good understanding of theories about the motivation of employees and are able to apply these theories to new situations.
153. The use of ICT to improve learning in many other subjects helps pupils improve their skills. For example, there is good quality word processing of assignments and coursework in religious education. The mathematics department has its own small network which is effectively used for work on control to develop pupils' understanding of shape and space and the use of spreadsheets for data handling and interrogation. In art, pupils use the internet for very effective research and use an image processing package as part of their work on portraiture as they modify photographic images of themselves in a wide variety of ways. As the school is aware, there are still some weaknesses in pupils' skills, particularly in data logging and control. ICT and business studies provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills. For

example, pupils proof read their work and use appropriate technical vocabulary. In both subjects, there are many opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills through, for example, working with spreadsheets and calculating cash flow figures.

154. In the lessons seen, teaching was good, overall, and was never less than satisfactory. In five out of eight lessons teaching was good, in one lesson it was very good and in the remainder it was satisfactory. This resulted in good learning. There were a good number of strengths of the teaching and learning. The resources produced by teachers are of a high quality in terms of presentation and content and these enable pupils to learn quickly about, for example, sorting and searching data in a spreadsheet. Pupils have a sound self-knowledge of their own learning through the helpful feedback given on GCSE coursework and the checklists used for marking units of work in Years 7 to 9, which include pupils' self-assessment. However, pupils' self-assessment skills are relatively weak. Lessons are very well planned so that they build on what pupils have already learnt. For example, in a Year 8 lesson in which pupils created leaflets with desktop publishing software, they had already prepared templates and drafted the content of their leaflets for homework, so learning was rapid. Tasks are often challenging and require pupils to apply a wide range of skills and extension tasks are provided for higher-attaining pupils. Teachers' very good subject knowledge results in clear demonstrations and explanations, so that pupils' understanding and skills quickly increase. Teachers tirelessly monitor and support the progress of individual pupils when they are working at computers, help them solve problems and take forward their learning. Ongoing assessment is used well in lessons to identify any common difficulties and the teacher then interjects a short session of appropriate group or whole-class teaching.
155. Effective class management, together with varied and interesting tasks help secure good behaviour and positive attitudes from pupils. This contributes positively to their learning. There are occasional exceptions to this. In one lesson, about one-third of pupils, mostly boys, lacked the drive to achieve their best and were prepared to do only the minimum required. However, overall, there are no differences of attitude and behaviour between boys and girls, and pupils sustain concentration, are committed to do their best and collaborate well.
156. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well and are helped by the teaching to learn quickly. For example, a higher-attaining pupil had completed the lesson's task for a voluntary homework and the teacher's very good knowledge enabled her to help him improve his work by teaching some advanced, extra skills. In a Year 10 class, management of the lesson enabled higher-attaining pupils to move quickly onto the next activity, learn at good pace and produce high quality data capture forms for their coursework. Clarity of teaching, practical monitoring and support of individuals and focused teaching of particular groups enabled pupils with special educational needs to achieve the learning objectives in each lesson seen. For example, Year 9 pupils with special educational needs worked at the same standard as many members of the class and completed the mail-merging exercise.
157. There are occasional, isolated weaknesses in teaching in a few lessons. For example, homework was set hurriedly at the end of a lesson, so only a minority of pupils recorded it in their diaries. At various points in a lesson, three or four pupils have to wait for help from the teacher before they can continue with their work. Tasks were undemanding for some pupils in one lesson when, for example, a few pupils were copying a letter. These weaknesses exist because there is not a systematic approach to the monitoring of lessons which involves teachers receiving formal feedback with targets for improvement.
158. The current curriculum for those Year 11 pupils who are not taking an examination in ICT limits their progress. However, next year, the majority of pupils in Year 11 will be taking a GCSE short course and the rest will be taking the full course. The subjects are very effectively managed and, for example, the curriculum is very well planned and steps have been taken to improve boys' standards in Years 7 to 9. The targets set by teachers in reports are not always clear and specific enough. The technical support is effective in ensuring that equipment works well.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

159. French and German are the two modern languages taught at the school. In 2000, test results for pupils aged 14 were above national expectations in both French and German, continuing a trend of improvement since 1998. The results of the boys in both languages were above the national expectations for boys. In GCSE examinations in French in 2000, pupils achieved well above the national average, improving on a trend of above average results in French since 1998. In GCSE examinations in German in 2000, pupils gained above the national average, maintaining the previous year's above average performance in German. In GCSE examinations, pupils did better in modern foreign languages than in the average of all their other subjects, with particularly impressive performance in French where pupils gained results which were amongst the best in the school. The GCSE results of the boys were above average in both languages compared with boys nationally. Standards achieved in French and German for pupils aged 14 and in GCSE results have improved since the last inspection. The rise in standards is mainly due to an improvement in teaching and to the purposeful direction given by the head of department. The improvement in the performance of boys is the result of teachers' awareness of the learning needs of boys and adjustments made to lesson content to address these needs.
160. By the time pupils are 14, standards are above national expectations in both languages. Most pupils have good listening skills; they can understand routine classroom language used by teachers and perform well in listening tasks. Reading skills are well above national expectations in French and German; most pupils can understand a range of texts at a language level appropriate to their ability. Higher-attaining pupils reach above average standards in writing; they can use main tenses and vocabulary well and lower attaining pupils write with confidence but in simpler language. Most pupils achieve well in speaking; however, the ability to initiate conversations and use personal language is underdeveloped. The standards reached by boys in French and German are above average, overall. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There is good achievement, overall, at age 14 in modern languages; most pupils enter the school with some basic French and achievement is good. In German, in which all pupils are beginners in Year 7, achievement is very good.
161. By the time pupils are 16, standards in modern languages are above average overall. Standards are well above average in French and above average in German. In both French and German, all pupils have developed very good listening and reading skills. Standards in speaking are above average, with many pupils speaking confidently with good accents. In writing, many pupils reach above average standards in both languages, but, in German, pupils of middle ability are less confident, mainly because of difficulties some experience in handling more complex German structure. Achievement is good in both languages when compared to pupils' test results at age 14. Since the last inspection, there has been an overall improvement in standards by age 16 for all pupils and especially for boys.
162. Pupils generally have good attitudes to language learning. They cooperate well with each other in paired conversations and take a pride in their work. Behaviour is generally good, but discourtesy towards a teacher was seen in one lesson.
163. Teaching is good and never less than satisfactory. In one in three lessons, teaching is very good, in nearly half of lessons teaching is good and in the rest it is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well to include clear steps in learning for their pupils and a range of motivating activities, delivered at a good pace. A good example of this was a Year 9 French lesson, in which pupils acquired, practised and consolidated new language through a range of tasks, followed by a revision game with dice; the boys responded particularly well to the good pace of this lesson. In both languages, pupils achieve well in listening skills because all teachers consistently deliver lessons in the foreign language. For example, in a successful Year 11 German lesson, lower attaining pupils readily understood the teacher asking the way in an imaginary town and many responded confidently in simple German. Teachers support all pupils well in both languages with high quality ICT-generated resources which cater for a range of learning needs. In an able Year 11 French group, pupils' language was very well extended with an authentic text downloaded from the internet, and, in a Year 9 French lesson, clear word lists enabled pupils with literacy difficulties to participate fully in the lesson. Teachers frequently plan motivating role plays to give

pupils good practice in speaking, but opportunities for pupils to speak in unpredictable situations and develop their personal language are limited. The teachers support pupils' language development well with regular marking and encouraging comments; however, at Key Stage 3, grades are not consistently given across the department and targets for improvement are not routinely set. Modern foreign language learning makes a good contribution to developing literacy skills; pupils are trained to write accurately and they develop their dictionary skills well in reading and writing tasks. For example, in a successful Year 10 German lesson, pupils used dictionaries to understand authentic German brochures. Basic numeracy skills are practised effectively in, for example, shopping situations. ICT skills are used effectively to enhance pupils' knowledge of language and culture and the use of ICT in some lessons helps the motivation and achievement of boys.

164. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement, overall, and especially in the standards of teaching and learning, the attitudes and attainment of boys, and second language provision at Key Stage 3. Addressing the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs has begun, but requires developing into a comprehensive policy.

MUSIC

165. The 2000 teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the age of 14 were well below the national average, though evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that most pupils are now attaining at least the level expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The school has been unable to appoint an additional music teacher and this has affected standards in Years 7 to 9. The 2000 GCSE examination results continue to be well above average for pupils gaining A*-C grades and A*-G grades and these results show an improving trend over the past three years. Girls outnumber boys and gain higher grades.
166. By the time pupils are 14, standards in music are average for the majority, but with some good group work being attempted. This represents satisfactory achievement for all groups, including those pupils with special educational needs. In classes taught by the music specialist, attainment is rising and in work observed there was no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls. All programmes of study are covered but singing remains weak through lack of practice. The attainment of pupils aged 16 is well above average and very good progress is made, due to the inspirational teaching taking place. Some pupils are recognised as being gifted and talented and almost all have good performing skills; many have passed associated board examinations. They take part in school musical activities and some are members of bands and orchestras run by the county music service. Progress has been so good that the department predicts that all Year 11 pupils are on target to get A* -C grades at GCSE this year. Considering that pupils' musical attainment on entry to the school is about average, this represents very good progress over time.
167. Since the last inspection, standards in Years 7 to 9 continue to be satisfactory. With the introduction of tuition on guitar, percussion and keyboards, boys are now showing more commitment to lessons and extra-curricular activities. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are very high and of the 22 pupils on GCSE courses, boys are now in the majority in Year 10.
168. Teaching is good, overall, and excellent in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, teaching in one in four lessons is very good, in one in four is good and in half of lessons is satisfactory. The impact of teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and pupils learn well. Year 7 pupils practise exercises counting and clapping beats to reinforce their learning of pulse in music. They listen carefully to part of Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring' to develop their aural recognition. The quality of learning in Year 8 is good with pupils learning about machine sounds and how to write them down in graphic score, although there was insufficient time for practical experiment to rehearse what had been written. Year 9 pupils' understanding of the blues is enhanced by their ability to lead others, take a solo part or provide rhythmic support in their group performances. Singing surprised many pupils and the result showed that it was underdeveloped due to lack of regular inclusion in lessons. Through good classroom management and careful planning of lessons, pupils generally behave well and make progress in their learning. In Years 10 and 11 the teaching observed was

excellent in all lessons, with very good learning taking place. This is due to the head of department's enthusiasm and high expectations which lead to sustained learning for most pupils. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the main developments of instrumentation throughout the Renaissance, classical and romantic periods and spot changes in musical conventions when listening to taped examples. This is a positive effect of the teacher's good subject knowledge. It also ensures that pupils receive a wide breadth of study across the musical skills of performing, composing, appraisal and listening and effectively prepares pupils for examinations in music. Teachers carefully monitor and mark coursework. As a result, pupils' understanding improves and they are able to focus their learning where it is needed most. However, the work of all pupils could be further enhanced by the regular use of ICT to record and edit compositions.

169. The music department is well led and managed by a new head of music who is also head of performing arts. A supply teacher, untrained in music, shares the teaching of music in Years 7 to 9. The head of department realises that there are shortcomings in assessment and marking, particularly with regard to the new levels of attainment for pupils aged 11 to 14 and this is being addressed as a matter of urgency. This was also highlighted in the departmental review as an area for development. The scheme of work meets statutory requirements and is gradually being updated. Very little use is made of ICT, as yet, but a newly appointed music teacher starting September 2001 is keen to develop pupils' composing skills using new technology. Monitoring of teaching has started to take place. The quality of accommodation and resources is good and teaching rooms have bright displays relevant to the subject. The department runs vocal groups, a band and an orchestra and eighty-eight pupils learn to play instruments. Concerts and shows enrich the school's musical life and at present pupils are rehearsing for 'Guys and Dolls'.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

170. By the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessments in 2000 indicate standards that are below the national average. GCSE results for 2000 were below the national average. Attainment for other pupils by the end of Key Stage 4 conforms to the national average.
171. The evidence from lessons observed showed that the standard of work attained by the majority of pupils at the end of Year 9 matches the national average in all areas of the physical education curriculum. Most pupils apply techniques, skills and competition rules to several aspects of the curriculum, including cricket, rounders, athletics and tennis. Basic skills are sound for a majority of the pupils and provide a platform for future development. In cricket, boys have sound batting technique and are able to apply the basic principles and rules of cricket to the game situation. In tennis, girls have a good range of strokes and many are able to execute shots with precision and control.
172. Standards by the time pupils are 16 are broadly average. Pupils in practical lessons construct their own fitness profile, using a battery of fitness tests and, in a cricket lesson, refine their basic bowling skills and apply them to a small game situation. Pupils have good physical skills. In theory lessons, pupils show a sound understanding of factors influencing participation in sport, but are sometimes unable to work independently, and the attainment of boys is significantly below that of the girls.
173. Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually positive at both key stages. Most are enthusiastic, well behaved, and co-operative, demonstrating a real enjoyment of the subject. They are attentive and able to sustain concentration. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to undertake different roles such as coach or official are developing well.
174. The quality of teaching is good in most lessons at both key stages and was never less than satisfactory. Very good teaching was seen in one third of lessons observed, all at Key Stage 3. In these lessons, a secure knowledge of the subject is regularly conveyed to pupils through perceptive observation of performance, appropriate intervention and good teacher-directed question and answer sessions. In a Year 8 cricket lesson, all pupils were taught to execute the pull shot and they made very good progress when the teacher demonstrated very effectively and ensured, through good question and answer sessions that all pupils understood the technique. He then spent time with all pupils individually adapting and modifying the technique. Thorough planning, incorporating varied teaching strategies and an appropriate sequence of activities involving both individual and collaborative learning, is also a feature of many lessons. In a Year 10 GCSE practical lesson where pupils developed a good understanding of fitness and how this affects performance, a wide range of activities were used very effectively and pupils were organised so that they took responsibility for their own learning. They were able to help each other in such a way that their learning was consistently reinforced. Boys in one Year 11 GCSE theory lesson were underachieving where work was not consistently challenging and where there was very little pride in either the quality of their work or the presentation of their work. Discipline and class management are good, ensuring that the pace of most lessons is brisk. Assessment of performance during lessons by pupils and teachers is regularly used to enhance teaching and learning. The recording of assessment and setting targets for individual pupils using specific criteria linked to schemes of work and involving pupils is not used consistently. Specific activities to extend the most able pupils were often not apparent in lessons observed. Subsequently, the most able pupils were not always appropriately challenged.
175. The curriculum meets statutory requirements at both key stages and the range of activities at Key Stage 4 provides a sound preparation for post-16 leisure activities. Schemes of work are good working documents, but do not consistently provide specific guidance on developing the potential of the most able pupils. Lessons in both key stages consistently teach pupils how to prepare for and recover from specific activities and stress the benefits of regular exercise. The department is making a considerable contribution to the development of pupils' literacy through their use of 'key' words and through the very successful development of literacy booklets for all

pupils in Year 7 who are asked to summarise their experiences when accompanying the physical education department on any of their numerous visits to local or national sporting events. Staff within the physical education department provide a good range of extra curricular activities, and fixtures with other schools provide opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their skills and interests. All pupils are involved in inter-form competitions. School teams compete successfully with other schools in a range of sports and some pupils achieve representative honours.

176. The organisation and leadership of the department are good and day-to-day organisation and communication within the department are very good. A good departmental handbook clearly identifies policies and procedures. All staff are good role models, are committed and give generously of their time. Development planning is thorough and provides the appropriate detail to assist the department in meeting their targets, although it does not include the improvement of GCSE results. Nevertheless, there has been some useful work done to consolidate work covered and develop effective examination techniques. Formal observation of teaching in the department is not being used to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of the department or in sharing good practice. Accommodation in the department is very good and is a significant factor in the range of activities that can be offered to pupils, although playing field provision is inadequate. There has been good progress in addressing issues raised in the last inspection report. There are now excellent opportunities in all lessons for continued periods of exercise through the 'jogging challenge' which is having a significant impact on the fitness of pupils. The curriculum now provides sufficient time to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

177. By the time they are 14, pupils reach standards that, overall, are securely in line with the expectation of the local syllabus for religious education. This shows good progress from the time pupils joined the school in Year 7. The Year 9 pupils have sound knowledge and understanding, for example, of objects used by Christians in worship and prayer and can describe confidently the important features of a Christian church building. They are developing the ability to empathise with members of the various faith communities they are studying and have growing understanding of how beliefs relate to traditions and practices. The overall attainment of boys and girls in Year 9 is similar in their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and of the other main religions being studied and in their skills of empathy. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as do pupils who speak English as an additional language. Many written tasks are open-ended so that the more able pupils also achieve as well as they can, as do pupils with average ability.
178. In the GCSE examination in 2000 a very high proportion of pupils, all girls, obtained grades A*-C. Attainment was well above the national average and in line with the results achieved by these pupils in their other GCSE subjects. Pupils preparing for GCSE religious studies in Year 11, again all girls, attain standards that are well above the national average for grades A*-C. They have very good knowledge and understanding of Muslim traditions and practices, for example, and can speak about them with confidence, using specialist terms accurately. Other Year 11 pupils, the majority, follow a course in religious education that occupies only about a third of the year. Consequently, insufficient time is allocated to enable the local syllabus requirements to be met and standards are below average. However, this arrangement is being phased out and, in future, it is planned that all pupils in Years 10 and 11 will have the opportunity to prepare for either a full or short course qualification in GCSE religious studies. This is a good improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection. Within the few topics studied by the majority of Year 11 pupils in the non-examined course, very good teaching is bringing standards into line with expectations, for example in current work on euthanasia when pupils had the opportunity to develop their own views on the complex moral issues involved. Both boys and girls contributed to discussion and achieved equally well. As at Key Stage 3, pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. The GCSE course gives able pupils a chance to shine, but there is less opportunity in the other course due to the shortness of time.

179. Teaching is very good, overall; that observed during the inspection ranged from good to excellent. Judged by how well it helped pupils to learn, teaching was very good or excellent in seven out of the ten lessons seen, with no differences between the key stages. Pupils' learning at both key stages is very good in general. Several aspects of teaching are excellent: teachers' knowledge of their subject leads to high expectations of pupils and to very clear explanations of new work. As a result, pupils' understanding, as well as their knowledge, of religious beliefs and values and their relationship to the traditions and practices of contemporary Christianity and the other principal religions are developing well. Lessons are taught in a friendly and businesslike way, with hardly a minute lost from learning. Pupils are motivated to learn and their concentration is kept at a high level through well chosen and varied tasks and by skilful management of their behaviour.
180. Careful planning ensures that teaching and learning proceed step by step so that pupils know what to do. They work successfully, both independently and in groups, as well as contributing confidently to class discussions – they are very good listeners to each other and their teacher. Very good questioning keeps pupils on their toes, reinforces their understanding and ensures that lessons are firmly based on the stages of learning they have reached. Plentiful resources, together with visits to places of worship, help to bring the subject alive. Homework is well used to extend learning, although some of the more enthusiastic pupils sometimes write at unnecessary length, but not at the expense of quality. Very thorough marking helps to ensure that religious education contributes valuably to the development of pupils' literacy skills. ICT is effectively used during research activities and for the presentation of pupils' longer assignments. As a result of the very good quality of teaching they receive, pupils' attitudes to the study of religious education, both boys and girls, are very good and their behaviour is often excellent and never less than good.
181. The head of department provides excellent leadership and management. The many strengths found at the previous inspection have been maintained and weaknesses are being removed. Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning means that the next stage of improvement is planned well in advance and is based upon well researched priorities. Pupils are provided with a carefully planned and interesting curriculum that significantly adds to their motivation and to the standards they are reaching. The curriculum is being continuously refined, so that the needs of all pupils are met successfully, including pupils with special educational needs and the most able. The improving stock of resources, both textbooks and very good quality school-created materials, is underpinning this work. A careful check is made of pupils' progress and the resulting information is used to develop plans for teaching, another aspect of the high quality of management. Because of the very good experience pupils continuously receive in their religious education lessons, the subject makes a very significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the achievement of the school's aims in this respect. When the improved arrangements now in place for all pupils in Year 10 have become established in Year 11 also, with the opportunity for all pupils to achieve GCSE accreditation in the subject, the five year religious education course will be of consistently very good quality.