

INSPECTION REPORT

CHANTRY HIGH SCHOOL

Martley

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116980

Headteacher: Ms C Browne

Reporting inspector: Ms C Gillies
20597

Dates of inspection: 14th - 18th May 2001

Inspection number: 193816

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 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Martley Worcestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Goodman
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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20597	C Gillies	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11414	A Bennett	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4351	J Strickland	Team inspector	English	
19278	R Allan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
27050	V Blackburn	Team inspector	Science	
12331	V Grigg	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	
12336	M Overend	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	
20247	R Parry	Team inspector	History Equal opportunities	
10060	D Guttman	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
4373	P McKenzie	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
19532	E Charlesworth	Team inspector	Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18888	J Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education	
10807	P Quest	Team inspector	Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chantry High is a smaller than average 11 to 16 comprehensive school with almost 700 pupils. Except in Year 11 there are more girls than boys. The school is heavily oversubscribed. It serves a wide rural catchment area which includes wards which have an above average percentage of high social class households. Just over five per cent of pupils take free school meals (below average). No pupils speak English as an additional language and less than one per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is just below average but the percentage who have statements is well below. Standards on entry are above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Chantry High is an effective and good school. Standards in Year 9 tests are consistently well above average and GCSE results overall are always above average (well above in 1997 and 1999). The GCSE points score has improved since the last inspection, following the national trend. Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. The new headteacher is providing good leadership and has identified the areas which need development. With a low basic income per head the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' behaviour is very good and they are most attentive in lessons.
- Teaching is at least very good in 36 per cent of lessons.
- In the majority of subjects, consistently high standards are attained, especially at the end of Year 9. The percentage of pupils achieving five GCSE grades A*-C is well above average.
- Pupils are cared for very well and treated respectfully as individuals.
- Relationships both between pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good.
- Provision for the development of pupils' moral awareness is also very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology are below average. Facilities are poor.
- Standards attained in science and French, particularly by boys in Years 10 and 11, are not high enough.
- Unsatisfactory timetable and banding arrangements generate problems. The National Curriculum is not fully covered in information and communication technology, design and technology in Years 7 to 9. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education is not covered in Year 10 and is not taught in Year 11.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development lacks breadth and depth.

The strengths far outweigh the areas that could be improved (most of which are already identified in the school's development plan). The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION (February 1997)

The school has maintained standards which are consistently well above average in Year 9 and overall GCSE results which are at least above average. The GCSE points score has improved since the last inspection, following the national trend. Data on pupils' achievement is now used by heads of departments to set more challenging targets than in the past. It is also used to identify where boys or certain subjects are under-performing. A new head of art has raised standards. Heads of department have been encouraged to share good practice, particularly since the appointment of the new headteacher. Monitoring of teaching by the senior management team is being tightened up this year. The new music block and sports

hall are excellent. Teachers continue to work hard and some classes are large, partly explained by the relatively low basic income per pupil. Taking all factors into consideration, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils enter the school with above average standards. For the last four years, standards at the end of Year 9 have been well above average in English, mathematics and science, so pupils achieve well in the first three years. Differences exist between boys' and girls' results; girls do better in English and have done better in mathematics for the last two years. In four out of the last five years, boys have done better in science. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 were well above average in English, mathematics, science and history.

During the last four years, overall GCSE results have been either well above or above (in 2000) those attained nationally. In 2000, the percentage of five grades A*-C and the average points score were well above average. Girls consistently attain higher points scores. Results were particularly strong in English, English literature, drama, food technology, resistant materials, textiles and music. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is at least sound but not as strong as in the earlier years. However, in some recent years, boys have exceeded their national gender average by a greater margin than girls so the situation, which the school is fully aware of, is not straightforward. Standards seen during the inspection in Year 10 were well above average in English, geography and history but unsatisfactory in religious education.

Standards in literacy and numeracy are high. With too few computers, and lessons only in Years 7 and 10, standards are low in information and communication technology. The school has set challenging targets for 2001/2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Practically all pupils are enthusiastic about school life and have a sensible attitude towards their work. They are most attentive in lessons. Many participate in lunchtime and after-school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils behave particularly well considering the limited amount of space for eating, or relaxing at lunchtime when it is wet.
Personal development and relationships	Very good, both between pupils and between teachers and pupils. Pupils respond well to opportunities provided for them to take responsibility, for example as members of the school council and prefects in Year 11.
Attendance	Above average. Lessons after break and lunch do not start promptly.

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 was satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons seen during the inspection. It was at least good in 72 per cent, including 36 per cent when it was very good. Teaching was excellent in seven lessons; three in history, two in English, one in personal and social education and one in design and technology. The percentage of good and better teaching was high at the time of the last inspection so it is commendable that it has gone up and that pupils now experience very good teaching in over one-third of lessons. Examples of very good teaching were observed in all subjects apart from information and communication technology. Over 80 per cent was very good in art and history. In all years, the overall quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics and science. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and the school meets the needs of all its pupils well. The quality of learning, which is good, closely mirrors the quality of teaching. Teaching was least effective overall in Year 9, where three of the four unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The unsatisfactory lessons were in four different subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall although the National Curriculum in information and communication technology and design and technology in Years 7 to 9 is not fully covered. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education is not covered in Year 10 and is not taught in Year 11. Limited alternatives to GCSEs are offered. Geology is taught in Year 9.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Teachers mainly know the pupils requiring support very well and they make good progress. In several subjects, targets are not specific enough and a few formalities of record keeping are not complete.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good for moral development and good for social development. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is less than satisfactory. Assemblies and form time are not inspiring and religious education is not taught in Year 11. Pupils' appreciation of the multicultural and multi-ethnic nature of the United Kingdom is limited. All subjects need to contribute more to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: a dominant factor is the school's very good ethos. Pupils are treated respectfully, as individuals, and form tutors know their classes very well. Pupils needing extra support and help, for whatever reason, receive it.

The school works well in partnership with parents. In particular, parents are very supportive over homework.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The new headteacher is sensitive to the school's reputation and she has both consulted widely about, and considered most carefully, what changes are necessary to move the school forward. Her leadership is good. The interim senior management team is operating effectively. A significant majority of subject and year leaders carry out their duties most conscientiously.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors bring expertise to their work and give strong support to the school. They are well aware of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses. They are determined to maintain pride in achievement at all levels and high quality pastoral care, but also to work effectively with the new headteacher to raise standards by introducing well-considered changes and developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory and improving. For several years the school has highlighted and developed strategies to eliminate variation in performance between subjects and between boys and girls. The current focus is on teachers sharing good practice.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans its tight budget very carefully. Financial administration and control are excellent. Any extra funds and grants are used correctly and the principle of best value is applied extremely well. Well thought out premises plans are costed for the next five years and governors now appreciate the importance of linking all areas of financial planning to long-term development plans.

Excellent facilities for physical education and music contrast with too few computers, limited laboratories for science and several small classrooms. Overall, the staffing, accommodation and resources are adequate. Teachers work hard and spend more time in the classroom than in many schools. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils make good progress and achieve high standards. • Pupils are expected to work hard. • The school helps pupils to become mature. • The good standard of teaching, dedicated teachers and the high quality of care pupils receive. • The positive atmosphere in the school – they would not want to send their children anywhere else. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework: both too much and too little and inconsistencies in marking. • How the school works with them and provides information about how their children are getting on. These are linked with comments about the timing and arrangements for parents' evening. • The relatively lower standards attained by boys in some subjects. • Funding for the school as it is low compared to national figures.

Over 50 per cent of parents returned the questionnaire and many wrote comments as well. Approximately 40 attended the parents' evening. The inspection team confirmed all the parents' positive comments. Inspectors found that the quantity of homework set in Year 7 is not consistently maintained in Years 8 and 9 and the quality of marking does vary. Reports

could be improved and the school accepts that arrangements for parents' evenings need consideration. The school is fully aware of the imbalance in standards attained by boys and girls in a few subjects. The OFSTED report on the local education authority confirms that funding is low.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Attainment refers to the standards pupils achieve compared to national averages. Achievement refers to the progress pupils make in terms of where they started when they entered the school or when they started their GCSE courses. Thus good achievement does not necessarily mean that standards are above average, but that pupils have made at least as much progress as might be expected. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any Year 11 lessons or look at their work so standards in work seen could only be examined for Year 10.

1. Pupils enter the school with above average standards. For the last four years, standards at the end of Year 9 have been well above average compared with all schools and those with a similar uptake of free school meals, so pupils achieve well in the first three years. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is at least sound but not as strong as in the earlier years. During the last four years, GCSE results have been either well above or above (in 2000) those attained nationally and fluctuating close to those attained by schools with a similar uptake of free school meals.

End of Year 9: *pupils are expected to reach at least National Curriculum Level 5 in English, mathematics and science national tests taken at the end of Year 9. Level 6 and above are referred to as the higher levels. In 2000, the national percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 and above (with Level 6 and above shown in brackets) was 63 per cent (28 per cent) in English, 65 per cent (42 per cent) in mathematics and 59 per cent (30 per cent) in science. Average points scores are also calculated. A pupil achieving Level 5 in one or all three subjects would have an average points score of 33 which was also the national average points score in 2000.*

2. In 2000, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected and higher levels was well above average in English and science. It was well above average for the expected level and above the higher level in mathematics. The points score for English peaked in 1998 and that for science in 1997 and results have not risen as high since; with mathematics results fairly stable, the overall trend is in line with that seen nationally. Overall attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 is therefore very high though there is a noticeable difference in the percentage of pupils attaining the highest Levels 7 and 8. Last year the percentages were 31 per cent in mathematics, ten per cent in English and four per cent in science.
3. The difference between boys' and girls' results is not clear-cut as it fluctuates: girls consistently do better in English and have done in mathematics for the last two years. Boys have done better in science in four of the last five years. This picture is seen nationally and was also noted in several lessons during the inspection. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 were well above average in English, mathematics, science and history, above average in geography, French and German, below average in information and communication technology and average in all other subjects.

GCSE results: *In 2000 nationally, 47 per cent of pupils attained five or more grades A*-C, 91 per cent attained five or more grades A*-G and 96 per cent attained one or more grades A*-G. The average total points score was 38.4 (calculated by 8 points for A*, 7 for A, etc).*

4. In 2000, the percentage of pupils who attained five grades A*-C (63 per cent) and the average points score (43.4) were well above average. The percentage attaining five grades A*-G was above the average. Twenty-nine girls and 13 boys attained nine or more GCSE grades A*-C. Girls consistently attain higher points scores, and in 2000, 78 per cent attained five grades A*-C whereas only 50 per cent of boys did. Although this difference narrowed in 1999 when boys performed extremely well, in 2000 it contributed to the break in the rise in points scores since 1996. However, in some recent years, boys have exceeded their national gender average by a greater margin than girls so the situation, which the school is fully aware of, is not straightforward.
5. In 2000, results were above average in every subject and particularly strong in English, English literature, drama, food technology, resistant materials, textiles and music. They were relatively lower in science. Compared to schools which had a similar points score at the end of Year 9 and those with a similar uptake of free schools meals, Chantry pupils attained an above average percentage of five grades A*-C and made average progress taking overall points score as the measure. Since 1996, the upward trend in GCSE points scores has been in line with that seen nationally. In Year 9, pupils study geology as an optional subject – in 2000, 80 per cent attained grades A*-C in that subject.
6. In 2000, more so than in any previous year, boys' results were significantly lower than girls' and below the national average for boys in mathematics, science and French. Boys' progress, particularly in these subjects, is rightly being given high priority by the school. Relative to attainment at the beginning of Year 10, boys and girls achieved well in geography and history, and boys did well in German.
7. Examination of data which analyses the relative performance of subjects *within the school* shows that pupils do not attain as well in art, drama, French, science and mathematics (only in 2000) as they do in other subjects. Comparing results by subjects with those attained by similar pupils in other schools shows no subject is particularly weak (although art, French and science were until 2000). Year 10 standards seen during the inspection were well above average in English, geography and history, above average in mathematics, art, design and technology, German, religious education (for GCSE) and science, below average in French, information and communication technology and average in all other subjects. Standards in religious education for the non-GCSE pupils were below the local average.
8. In **English**, in lessons and library sessions, reading is developed most successfully, both for class study and private reading. Pupils analyse texts well and write both critically and creatively. Opportunities for discussion and reading out loud are limited but Year 8 pupils tackled a Shakespeare text well and many contribute enthusiastically in drama lessons. Pupils write well in a variety of forms and styles using imagination or following particular formalities. Achievement is very good in all years. Good written work is being done in several other subjects. Science encourages writing skills, some excellent writing is produced in history and further good examples were noted in religious education, geography, music and physical education.
9. In **mathematics**, pupils' mental skills have improved since the last inspection and now they only use calculators when appropriate. By the end of Year 9, pupils achieve very well and have good numeracy skills which they apply successfully in other subjects, for example scale in design and technology and statistics in science. The department successfully applies many methods of the National Numeracy Strategy already. Achievement is good in Year 10. Pupils understand well the concepts of space and

shape and learn algebraic techniques well, applying them successfully to solve problems. Higher attaining pupils do not gain an insight into the derivation of formulae or rules which would further raise their skill at solving problems.

10. In the last report, investigation skills were underdeveloped in **science**. They are much better now and pupils plan, carry out and evaluate practical work well. Many of them write logically and at length when analysing results but lack skills to report back verbally as group work is limited. In certain Year 7 groups, pupils use complex scientific vocabulary confidently, but in others, their understanding of new words is not so secure because they do not write them down. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 but only sound overall in Year 10.
11. By the end of Year 9, where they make good progress, pupils use their experience and imagination very well in **art**, whether working on drawing, painting, canvas, collage, weaving or ceramics. They research a wide range of artists, develop ideas most effectively and confidently have their own opinions. Their sketches display a good understanding of form and they work well together creating large wall hangings or murals. Progress is very good in the GCSE years. Standards in art have improved considerably since the last inspection.
12. In **design and technology**, pupils research well and use the information sensibly. They analyse designs with perception and by Year 10, have very good designing and making skills and produce accurate well-measured items. Progress and achievement are consistently good. Pupils undertake a wide variety of exciting and imaginative projects, including metal insect 'bugs' and 'horrible hamburgers'. They understand the advantages of production methods and evaluate their own products perceptively.
13. Pupils have a good command of **geographical** principles, processes and vocabulary and achievement is always good. They collect and analyse data well and use information gained on fieldwork (which is excellent) to draw conclusions and explain patterns in the landscape. They appreciate different viewpoints about a wide range of issues, such as oil-drilling in Alaska, tourism in Kenya and the impact of large buildings on land use and the environment for local communities. They are encouraged to extract information from source material and think for themselves.
14. In **history**, pupils understand concepts such as cause and change. They use well-developed analytical skills to obtain detailed evidence from a wide range of source material and develop their writing skills in a variety of forms, such as letters and newspaper articles. They appreciate arguments related to historical interpretation and so understand different perspectives on historical events, for example the role of Hitler in the Second World War. Their achievement is good in all years.
15. Ignoring the skills which some acquire at home, pupils do not achieve well in **information and communication technology** because they have too few lessons and there are few computers. Standards are too low in measurement and control (the science department is waiting for data loggers) and using spreadsheets to model problems. Year 7 pupils develop basic competence using a variety of software programs and the Internet and Year 10 pupils combine text with graphics quite fluently when studying desk-top publishing, but mainly the course they follow is not demanding enough.
16. In **modern foreign languages**, pupils have good listening and reading skills and particularly higher attainers write well. Pupils learn grammar and word lists quite well but in several groups, they do not speak the foreign language enough to be fluent and have

good accents. Their confidence using French or German for casual conversation depends on how much teachers use the languages in lessons. This especially affects some boys in Year 9 upwards because their motivation to speak a foreign language decreases as they get older. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and sound in Year 10.

17. Many pupils understand **musical** chords and scales and demonstrate this through their written and practical work on Western and Oriental music. They lack confidence understanding and playing rhythm correctly which makes it hard for them to play together. Keyboard skills need attention but many pupils use computers very well to compose and present their work professionally. Achievement and progress are sound in all years.
18. All pupils have good knowledge of health-related fitness and how important it is to prepare themselves for exercise. In all years, achievement in **physical education** is good and performance in Years 7 to 9 is sound in badminton and cricket and better in athletics. By Year 10, boys attain high standards in track events and girls in throwing. Badminton skills are developing well with the new facilities in the sports hall.
19. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a very good knowledge of Christianity and a good understanding of the major beliefs and customs of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. They use religious language well and make good progress. However, apart from the few pupils who follow the GCSE course, they do not study **religious education** enough in Year 10 and not at all in Year 11, so they forget most of what they have learned before, so achievement is unsatisfactory. The course they follow focuses mainly on ethical and moral issues.
20. Throughout the school, pupils with **special educational needs** make good progress because they are helped in lessons by teachers and learning support assistants who guide them to understand what is being taught and what they are expected to do. Progress for many is helped by setting and grouping arrangements and by departments, such as history, which provide specific tasks and materials or others, such as mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, which have purchased suitable textbooks.
21. For several pupils with special educational needs, access to a very good reading programme helps them to understand and grasp written information and to make good progress. As a result, the quality of learning by these pupils is good overall but less so in subjects which pay too little attention to providing the right level or approach for them. Although subject teachers are well aware of the needs of these pupils, the targets they set them are not specifically related to the subject.
22. Evidence seen during the inspection suggests that overall the majority of '**gifted and talented**' pupils achieve well. In mathematics, their progress is good because they learn advanced skills but do not necessarily understand rules which would raise their problem-solving skills even higher. Some work is too easy for higher attainers in information and communication technology. Talented musicians are encouraged to learn instruments and several achieve high standards. Pupils with particular sporting talents are fully supported to develop their skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

23. Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and their work. They are enthusiastic about the new buildings and facilities, and large numbers participate in extra-curricular activities, particularly the wide range of sports. The pupils really feel it is their school and

that they have a part in some of the decisions that are made. The school council believes its voice is heard and its representative group appreciates meeting with the headteacher.

24. Pupils behave very well in lessons. Classrooms are frequently exciting places in which to learn. In history lessons, where boys and girls are seated alternately, they concentrate particularly well, so that both behaviour and learning are excellent. It all adds up: a really good relationship between the teacher and pupils makes for very good behaviour and then very good progress in learning. Older pupils interviewed during the inspection explained this close correlation between their enjoyment of a subject and the quality of their relationship with the teacher. They identified particularly teachers' enthusiasm for their subject, ability to explain things clearly and their willingness to help pupils with areas of difficulty.
25. In the very few lessons where behaviour and attitudes to work were less than satisfactory, the poorer quality relationship between teacher and pupils was a significant factor. The strong quality of relationships between pupils and most teachers allows sensitive issues to be explored when appropriate, particularly in personal and social education lessons. Pupils co-operate well together in nearly all lessons and are willing and ready to share resources and ideas.
26. Pupils' behaviour around the school and during breaks is very good. Although there are limited spaces for recreation, there is no sign of tension or anti-social behaviour. Pupils acknowledge that some bullying takes place but they are confident that staff do act when it is reported. There are very few exclusions. Pupils occupy themselves responsibly, talking together in small groups in the hall at lunchtime during wet weather.
27. Pupils with special educational needs behave well and play a full part in lessons and, when supported, are keen to express their ideas and respond to questions. In a Year 7 geography lesson, one pupil was often the first to ask questions of a visitor to the lesson and to give answers to questions set by the teacher.
28. The experience of working alongside two pupils from a special school has had a big impact on pupils' personal development in a Year 10 food technology class. They have worked out for themselves how they should relate to their visitors, 'we treat them like teenagers'. The visit of three Chantry pupils to the special school gave them a wider perspective, both of what these special school pupils can do well and of the importance of independent living skills for all teenagers.
29. Pupils are pleasant and trustworthy. The inspector who did not realise he had dropped a five pound note was delighted when a pupil ran after him to return it. On several occasions during the inspection, boys and girls were seen supporting and working alongside each other most co-operatively, particularly in sporting activities. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and they make the most of them. From Year 7, there are form captains, school council representatives, duty monitors and librarians, and more recently, older pupils acting as prefects. Prefects are learning about earning respect from younger pupils and realising how difficult this can be. Year 11 pupils gain much from organising their leavers' ball and yearbook, with some teacher supervision. Pupils learn to value and use their personal organisers well.
30. Attendance is good and unexplained absences are below the national figure. Recently, pupils have raised the issue of punctuality at school council, wanting the school to take a strict approach. Lessons after break and lunch regularly start late as pupils begin to move from the yard at the time the lesson is due to begin. Occasionally, lessons over-

run, affecting other classes who have to wait. Pupils take quite a while to get to form time in the afternoons and during the inspection, assemblies started quite late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

31. In all years, teaching is good overall. It was satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons seen during the inspection. It was at least good in 72 per cent, including 36 per cent when it was very good or excellent. Teaching was excellent in seven lessons: three in history, two in English, one in personal and social education and one in design and technology. The percentage of good and better teaching was high at the time of the last inspection so it is commendable that it has gone up and that pupils now experience very good teaching in over one-third of lessons.
32. Examples of very good teaching were observed in all subjects apart from information and communication technology. Over 75 per cent of teaching was good in design and technology, English, physical education and religious education and over 80 per cent was very good in art and history. The quality of learning closely mirrors the quality of teaching. Teaching was least effective overall in Year 9, where three of the four unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The other one was in Year 8. The unsatisfactory lessons were in four different subjects.
33. When teaching is particularly strong, it is obvious that teachers use their very good **subject knowledge** effectively:
 - High quality demonstrations in athletics, girls' badminton and boys' cricket which develop pupils' techniques well.
 - Probing and thought-provoking questions in mathematics to help pupils solve problems.
 - Superb knowledge of texts and a wide range of literature in English.
 - Expertise shown by music and instrumental teachers being a source of inspiration for pupils.
 - Excellent demonstrations of new techniques in design and technology and art so pupils succeed and use them confidently.
 - Fluency in French and German shown by modern foreign language teachers.
34. There is a clear correlation between good learning and when teachers share the lesson's objectives, so that pupils clearly understand what is expected of them and get going swiftly. When teachers round up important points at the end of lessons, it helps pupils to have a sense of achievement. Many examples of good practice were seen in the majority of subjects during the inspection. However, in several science lessons, pupils were not always clear how practical work was to be carried out. In a few mathematics lessons, a lack of clearly defined objectives confused some pupils.
35. English and mathematics teachers make sure that pupils acquire the **basic skills** of literacy and numeracy to cope with all their other subjects and they are particularly well supported by the design and technology, geography and history departments. In music, some skills are not always developed carefully, for example pupils play the keyboards using too few fingers and lack experience of rhythm. The development of computer skills is severely hampered by the lack of lessons and computers (described elsewhere in this report) but in individual lessons, pupils master several fundamental software programs well.
36. In general, pupils are receptive to acquiring new **skills, knowledge and understanding**. For example, in music, pupils welcome mastering the latest

technology to produce professional looking finished scores and use it effectively to improve and refine their compositions. Pupils' **creative** effort is seen by how many of them give up free time to practise music, or work on their art and design and technology projects in the lunchhour. Year 10 pupils master skills such as combining text and graphics with diligence in information and communication technology lessons and when they find projects motivating, they develop their own ideas well. The standards of **physical** effort are considerable in physical education lessons and practices.

37. Another dominant feature of the high quality teaching seen in many lessons is when teachers make it clear that they have very **high expectations** by displaying their **enthusiasm and enjoyment**. In some instances this leads to rather long sessions dominated by the teachers talking. As pupils are extremely well behaved and responsive, they rarely show their restlessness but a certain glazed look was observed in some English and geography lessons. Modern foreign language teachers do not stimulate pupils enough to use French and German for everyday conversation.
38. When provided with time limits for tasks, pupils are extremely **productive** and keen to work at a good **pace**. In a history lesson, Year 7 pupils had to draft their thoughts quickly using a framework which formed the basis of a valuable homework. In design and technology and art, projects and group challenges are often so stimulating that pupils want to work hard and waste no time. If lessons move rather slowly, they do not enjoy the work so much.
39. Teachers' **planning** and the **content and methods** of delivery they use in lessons are generally good. In the majority of subjects, pupils appreciate the clear structure to lessons and respond by concentrating particularly well. In modern foreign languages, the method of delivery of new concepts is rarely included in schemes of work. On rare occasions in design and technology, a lack of excitement means pupils do not work so seriously as in the majority. In one Year 10 science lesson, the teacher failed to check whether pupils had completed the individual tasks set so they could neither reflect on, nor consolidate, their understanding. Greater understanding of mathematical rules would give higher attaining pupils particularly greater confidence when dealing with problems.
40. Several teachers are skilful at knowing how to encourage pupils to work on their own to develop their **independent learning skills**, a feature that was not well developed during the last inspection. In physical education, pupils know how to prepare themselves for exercise because teachers stress and explain the importance of warming-up and stretching properly. They also encourage pupils both to acquire and apply new skills in sports and now need to develop pupils' evaluation techniques. Pupils are shown how to develop arguments in history and to be critical of their own work.
41. In a Year 7 information and communication technology lesson, the teacher knew exactly when to advise and support pupils and when to leave them to explore ideas on their own. In geography pupils have to seek answers from material provided rather than being given them by the teacher. Self-evaluation is a key developmental feature of pupils' work in design and technology. Pupils do not learn to speak fluently in modern foreign languages because they rote learn word lists and grammar rules too much and prepare their spoken answers.
42. Teachers generate many very useful and original **resources** in several subjects. Well-prepared materials made a study of Mohammed interesting for Year 7 pupils in religious education. The history department's impressive web site is most helpful as pupils can access it out of school hours. Carefully selected extracts from good collections of

videos are used particularly well in English. Interesting and unusual materials stimulate pupils in art. These examples contrast with the occasional lesson in modern foreign languages where only a textbook is used, hence pupils' interest flagged, or some rather old-fashioned worksheets for personal and social education lessons.

43. Teachers have most positive relationships with pupils and **manage** them well. This contributes significantly to most pupils enjoying many subjects and being keen to succeed. Many teachers defuse potentially unco-operative behaviour tactfully and with humour so that learning proceeds in a good atmosphere. Good relationships between teachers and pupils allow sensitive issues to be discussed in the best atmosphere, for example the termination of pregnancy in religious education or friendship problems in personal and social education.
44. The picture about **homework, marking and assessment** is mixed although it is sound overall. These have a direct impact on how well pupils understand the standards they achieve and **their own learning needs**. Pupils are confident about their levels of attainment and targets, more so in Years 10 and 11, in some subjects, in others they have little idea. Where just marks and ticks are given, or books are not marked regularly, pupils have little idea about how they can improve their work, a comment made in the last inspection report. Marking is not good enough in science, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and GCSE physical education. A few parents feel that some teachers do not evaluate content fairly when faced with beautifully presented, computer-processed sheets rather than handwritten homework. The inspection team did not come across enough examples to confirm or dispute this.
45. In the relatively few lessons where teaching was only just satisfactory or unsatisfactory, one or more of the following features were noted: lax management of time; a relatively slow pace; weak planning; pupils not sure what they were doing; unimaginative and dull worksheets and a failure to match tasks to the needs of individual pupils (that is not appreciating that even within sets pupils have different needs). Learning was less effective when these features were present.
46. Teachers encourage '**gifted**' pupils to study the three separate sciences and a residential weekend provides them with extra challenge. In Year 7, such pupils rise to the challenge of a competition about space. In English and mathematics, gifted pupils work in the top sets and teachers know well how to extend the work they set them. Individuals who are '**talented**' in music, physical education, design and technology and art are usually spotted and encouraged to reach their potential, but the school has no 'gifted and talented' policy so arrangements are somewhat ad hoc.
47. Teachers know those pupils who have **special educational needs** well and so they respond to their needs in lessons by providing additional support, and by discussing the content of lessons beforehand with learning support assistants. However, too many schemes of work and lesson plans do not include either formal provision or tasks and approaches that cater exclusively for their needs, for example in science, geography, music and modern foreign languages. Open-ended tasks which allow pupils to respond at their own pace are often the only means of meeting these pupils' needs.

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

48. The quality and range of the curriculum is satisfactory overall with particular strengths: a good personal and social education programme; geology in Year 9; English literature for

all pupils; and vocational courses for a few in Years 10 and 11. In all years, aspects of the curriculum are not satisfactory because the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education are not fully met. Pupils do not have their full entitlement to information and communication technology, which is only taught discretely in Year 7 and not used much in other subjects. Some design and technology groups in Years 7 to 9 do not experience working with compliant materials. In Years 10 and 11, the requirements for religious education for all pupils, as laid out in the locally agreed syllabus, are not met because Year 11 pupils have no lessons and Year 10 pupils only have lessons for a few weeks.

49. The impact of the banding and grouping arrangements, on attainment and achievement, have not been evaluated although the need for this was identified in the previous report. A combination of these arrangements and the way the timetable is structured creates some unusual, and mainly unsatisfactory, situations:
 - Although the blocking of subjects allows the English department to teach pupils in sets, this means that design and technology fares less well with large groups which are not suitable for a practical subject.
 - A similar blocking of geography and physical education provides both of them with the opportunity to try out single gender teaching, which they have yet to evaluate, but this results in a couple of large classes in physical education.
 - As they may not have experienced all areas of design and technology in Years 7 to 9, pupils from lower sets are entered for Certificate of Achievement. Work seen shows that GCSE would suit a few of them better.
 - In Year 7, an hour per week is taken from geography or history to give pupils lessons in information and communication technology and a taste of drama but neither of these is picked up again until Year 10.
 - In some Year 7 information and communication technology lessons, three pupils share a computer
 - For several weeks in Year 10, pupils miss lessons in one GCSE option block to be taught religious education.
 - Year 7 pupils have an uneven spread of lessons through the week in mathematics, which has an adverse effect on progress in lower sets.
 - One Year 8 class has two French lessons in one morning and too little time is allowed for the introduction of the second language.
 - Sections of a Year 10 class (in rotation) miss their language lessons to follow an information and technology programme. This completely destroys any continuity in learning and makes it very difficult for the teacher. When this particular class is all present, it is also difficult for the teacher as there are 38 pupils to engage in conversation.
50. The mathematics department has responded well to changes in how numeracy skills are developed in primary schools. It already incorporates parts of the Years 7 to 9 National Numeracy Strategy in planning work for pupils. There is not yet a cohesive pattern of identifying pupils who are 'gifted and talented', although some subjects, in particular English, mathematics and physical education, have included items within their scheme of work to cater for their needs. Instrumental rehearsals are provided for talented musicians. One exciting addition to the curriculum is the optional, extra-curricular study of GCSE geology in Year 9.
51. A limited number of pupils have the opportunity to take a taster course in a vocational area. As part of Project 19, in partnership with the Further Education College, they study and attain a vocational qualification. Courses offered include motor vehicle maintenance, agriculture, construction, childcare and hairdressing. As the college

arranges the programme, they can miss some GCSE course work sessions, but teachers make efforts to give extra help at lunchtime so pupils can make up the work. At present no alternatives to GCSEs are offered for those who would like to experience a different form of learning in school. All pupils are taught English literature and most are entered for the examination. For those for whom it is suitable, the Certificate of Achievement is offered as well as GCSE English language.

52. Pupils with special educational needs have access to all parts of the curriculum. In Years 10 and 11, some choose courses leading to Certificates of Education rather than GCSEs or decide to experience the recently introduced vocational courses described above. The good personal and social health education programme (described in paragraphs 189 and 190) addresses pupils' personal development related to health, sex and drugs education well. The school has started preparing for the introduction of citizenship into the curriculum, but it has not made much progress yet. An audit is currently being done but plans are not complete; staff have not been trained for its introduction.
53. Pupils benefit from the very good contribution of the community to their learning. The school provides good careers education and guidance, greatly helped by very good links with the local businesses. A well-structured teaching programme, which gives pupils a chance to find out about different careers, is supported by individual interviews with a career adviser. The school was in the pilot scheme for rural schools with Compact and the review of the arrangement in Year 10 helped pupils to reflect on their achievements in relation to the demands of different work. Two separate weeks of work experience in each of Years 10 and 11 plus 'away days' and industry days strengthen links with local firms and give pupils further insight into the world of work.
54. The school is part of a consortium with other secondary and post-16 establishments and with each school hosting a different subject area, close consultation takes place. Similar co-operative working with primary schools means that information about attainment is transferred so that the school has a fairly comprehensive picture of how well pupils are doing before they come to school and after they leave.
55. Pupils have a good range of activities to take part in at lunchtime and after school. In physical education, many pupils are members of teams and bring credit to the school through their teamwork in competitions. The art and design and technology teachers give unstintingly of their time by being available at lunchtime to help pupils with their work. Modern language teachers arrange trips abroad and exchange visits with French families. Field trips and visits broaden the learning experiences of pupils at both key stages in history, geography and art. Geology GCSE is a popular extra subject in Year 9. Foreign visits have been organised to Canada and Iceland by the physical education and geography departments. Although there is a school play every other year which involves many pupils on and behind stage, there is no regular drama club which would meet the needs of those pupils with a particular interest in and talent for theatre. There is also a lack of less academic activities.
56. The school seeks to provide pupils not only with a challenging academic environment but also one which creates a positive environment in which all feel equally valued. There is a strong sense of community in the school with all members seeking to uphold the traditional values it has held for years. In many respects, this sense of tradition has served the school well, but much that happens does so by default rather than design. This is reflected in the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development which the school has not audited. Although some subjects, such as religious education, geography and English do develop opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual awareness,

most departments do not refer to it in their planning and lessons and do not specifically address it.

57. School assemblies are not planned to include a wide range of spiritual and cultural experiences. During the inspection, opportunities for spiritual reflection were missed. Pupils do not speak warmly of their experience of assemblies, although they always enjoy those in which they or other pupils participate. Overall, the provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory because it lacks breadth and depth across the curriculum and because religious education is not studied enough in Years 10 and 11.
58. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school is a pleasant place to be, with pupils demonstrating respect and good manners. Staff provide good role models and the school code of conduct is known and accepted by all pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to consider contemporary moral issues. A well-organised and well-taught personal and social education programme complements work that is done in many subjects. In a religious education lesson, pupils sensitively considered and debated the issues surrounding the termination of pregnancies, whilst Year 8 pupils cheerfully discussed the problems associated with friendship. Physical education lessons constantly reinforce this message. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong.
59. Social development is also well catered for. There are several opportunities for pupils to become involved in school life – an active school council makes a significant impact. The involvement of pupils in activities such as library duties, desk duties and helping out in parents' evening, all work together to create a situation where pupils can feel part of the school. An excellent example of this was the involvement of pupils in the appointment of the new headteacher; they interviewed short-listed applicants. In physical education, an emphasis is placed on teamwork; this is also reinforced in activities such as fieldwork in geography and music groups. In several subjects, pupils are encouraged to work together in groups. A few pupils support children from a local physically handicapped school, both at the other school and at Chantry. Provision for pupils' social development is good.
60. Opportunities for pupils to consider their own culture and traditions are found in several subjects. Both art and music make good contributions. Other subjects such as history and religious education complement these. During the inspection, pupils were preparing for a visit to Worcester Cathedral. There are several valuable exchanges with European countries. Exciting visits to such places as Canada and Iceland extend pupils' horizons considerably. Opportunities for pupils to consider the multicultural, multi-faith and multi-ethnic nature of United Kingdom society are few and limited. Although religious education includes certain aspects in Years 7 to 9, the shortage of time for this subject in Year 10 (with none in Year 11) means that pupils do not explore other faiths in these years and forget what they have learned before. The music department explores elements of Chinese music, and geography looks at African society but the overall provision for cultural education is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

61. The strength of the pastoral system, praised at the time of the last inspection, remains. All staff are determined to retain a clear focus on the strong, caring ethos of the school and treating pupils as individuals. The head of pastoral care is well respected by pupils and parents and they find him approachable. From Year 8, form tutors stay with the same group throughout the school, meet their pupils twice a day and take personal and social education lessons, so they get to know their pupils well.
62. Although the personal and social education programme is planned centrally, it can be interpreted flexibly, allowing tutors to cover topical issues such as bullying or racist comments when appropriate. Heads of year are also tutors and so cannot monitor the structure and use of tutor time. During the inspection, a variety of form time use was observed. Some tutors creatively expanded on personal and social education topics or developed assembly issues; a few merely checked planners and let pupils drift about until the end of the day.
63. Transfer arrangements with primary schools remain good. Year 11 pupils say they feel well prepared for the next stage of education having received good guidance about their courses and careers. Without a whole-school policy, not all departments have identified their gifted and talented pupils. An issue of unequal access to computers (which all schools experience) is described in paragraph 166. In most other respects, pupils are treated as individuals, and the school is sensitively aware of those with unusual home responsibilities or situations. It makes sensible and discrete arrangements to support them. Comments made by parents confirmed this.
64. The personal planners provided for pupils are very good quality and the content is practical; pupils use them well. They are very comprehensive documents, and pupils are proud to log their commendations and awards. The guidance on revision and study skills is useful, but the pages on target setting are not used at all.
65. Monitoring of attendance is satisfactory and cases of absence causing concern are properly referred to the educational welfare service. Pastoral support programmes have been introduced for a small number of pupils, but too recently for their success to be evaluated. Lessons after break and at the end of lunchtime often start late and much time is lost at the beginning of the 20-minute assembly or tutor time at the end of the day.
66. Although the medical room, criticised at the last inspection as 'bleak', remains the same, it is not used very often, except for a weekly drop-in session with the school nurse. Those pupils who are injured or unwell receive good care and there are enough qualified first aid staff. The office staff keep a careful watch for pupils out of lessons or leaving school without permission. First aid boxes are available in most practical areas, but a few are not in conspicuous places and a few do not contain disposable gloves. Accidents are properly reported, but there is not a close enough link between them and health and safety considerations. Too much responsibility is placed on the member of staff who copes with an accident or injury, to report verbally to the health and safety co-ordinator and formally in the accident book. Governors take their health and safety responsibilities seriously.
67. The school cares well for the well-being of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and learning support assistants know pupils well and are available to listen to their concerns at times outside lessons. Regular meetings between the special educational needs co-ordinator and department representatives allow relevant

information to be passed to all who need to know. The school makes good use of outside agencies and personnel to support pupils. All the statutory requirements relating to pupils with special educational needs are in place though the school prospectus does not describe the care and provision for pupils with disabilities.

68. Statements of need are reviewed annually as are individual education plans. These plans, which are in place for all pupils on Stages 2 to 5 of the register, are made available to all staff. They contain broad aims to meet pupils' needs but these aims are not broken down into specific, measurable, short-term targets that are attainable or related to subjects. As a result, the progress made by pupils is measured too infrequently and is largely discussed and recorded informally. For pupils in Year 10 and above, there are no formal transition plans that help to prepare them for life after school though the needs of pupils in this respect are addressed by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
69. Since the last inspection, the assessment policy and procedures have improved so they are now satisfactory overall. As well as receiving the Year 6 test results for most pupils, the head of pastoral care and special educational needs co-ordinator visit the partner primary schools to discuss pupils' standards and learning needs. When Year 6 pupils visit The Chantry in the summer term, they take a simple reading test and one non-verbal reasoning test. The school has wisely decided to use a wider range of tests in the future and to distribute this information to all departments. The basic banding structure is changed annually to reflect the ability of each year group. However, inspection evidence shows that several subjects, especially science, wish to have more say in how pupils are allocated to teaching groups. The full impact of the banding and blocking arrangements on attainment and progress has not been analysed (a need mentioned in the last report) although planned timetable changes for the next academic year may address some of the inconsistencies anyway.
70. An important aspect of assessment is how departments use test results to monitor progress and then to decide what they are going to teach and how they might alter their curriculum. Having made considerable progress since the last inspection, practice in design and technology is very good: teachers make good use of pupils' self-assessment and National Curriculum levels. Good practice was seen in English as achievement is carefully analysed to reveal trends and needs. Thorough assessment records in mathematics mean that planning is good and the right targets are set. The head of science meticulously monitors the outcomes of regular tests but teachers do not always respond to the changes suggested. National Curriculum levels are not used in geography, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. Assessment of pupils' levels in information and communication technology is not secure and their achievements using computers in other subjects are not recorded.
71. Most departments analyse their GCSE results well and since the last inspection, they have focused on gender differences. For several years, the school has used a data system which records the amount of progress made, or value-added, in Years 10 and 11. Teachers compare their results with those in other subjects and with those attained by similar pupils in other schools. This has contributed to extension work for higher attaining pupils and more accurate targets for individuals and departments, but not in all subjects. Further work on this is a key part of the current school development plan, particularly consideration of how teaching styles should change in response to analysis of results. Hence the issue in the last report about sharing good practice, which the headteacher is keen to extend. The school is fully aware of the gap between girls' and boys' achievement and attainment and continues to address this as a top priority. Governors monitor examination results carefully and use them to set whole-school targets and areas for improvement.

72. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' overall academic progress are good though they lack formality. Heads of year support form tutors in tracking pupils' progress but the former need more time to do this and the latter need to review results, and hence have an overview of pupils' academic progress, more regularly. Nevertheless, because teachers know their tutor groups well, pupils who are significantly underachieving are spotted early. Several departments, including English, mathematics, science and design and technology, conduct half-termly reviews, and some subjects, notably mathematics and science, have end-of-module tests linked closely to National Curriculum levels.
73. The achievements of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are recorded in the National Record of Achievement. A small group of pupils have been involved in Project 19 where they attend the local Further Education College and attain vocational qualifications units. Pupils' achievements in careers and work experience placements, together with a locally accredited basic computer skills certificate, also form part of the Record of Achievement. All Year 11 pupils are interviewed about their performance, attainment levels and potential. One outcome is that a few disaffected pupils have received mentoring which has contributed to them completing their examination courses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

74. Parents are very pleased with the work of the school. They feel their children are making good progress and behave well in school. They think the teaching is good and that the school expects their children to work hard. They feel comfortable about approaching the school and particularly like the way it generates consideration for others. They would not want to send their children anywhere else.
75. The pupil planners allow parents to monitor the amount and frequency of homework. Parents have concerns about their children getting the right amount of homework, and inspectors agree with their observations that the amount expected in Year 7 (which is quite a lot) is not consistently maintained in Years 8 and 9. Parents are very supportive over homework, and many have computers at home. Some note that if they do not have one, and their child cannot stay after school, it can be difficult for pupils to complete some homework and they cannot present it as well as others. In a few instances, they have concerns that beautifully presented work gets higher marks, regardless of the content.
76. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are invited to take part in annual reviews as required and the school invites them to attend the school on other occasions as is felt necessary, for example to discuss any concerns about progress. There are regular written communications with parents. Parents contribute significantly to fund-raising ventures organised by the special needs department. They respond well to questionnaires seeking their views of the way the department supports their children.
77. School documents and letters are of a good standard and written in a clear and accessible style. The governors' public relations sub committee provides a valuable role in raising the profile of the school in the community and encouraging fundraising. By writing letters to politicians, parents keenly support the school over the issue of funding. Occasionally, parents hear secondhand about problems on the buses, and would prefer to be informed by the school. Technically, the school does not have responsibility for behaviour on buses but it always attempts to address problems. This is an appropriate area for further co-operation between parents, the school and the bus companies.
78. Parents do not find there is enough time at annual consultation evenings, and the school

is aware that this needs to be reconsidered. The annual reports to parents are only satisfactory. Although their content has been reviewed, they have not developed enough. Academic standards are clear (although National Curriculum levels are not used in several subjects). However, as at the time of the last inspection, they provide too little detail on pupils' achievement in terms of progress, targets, potential grades and how to improve. The pupil self-assessment section is not leading to clear, achievable targets which could be revised and renewed. In the planners looked at during the inspection, the target pages were blank.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

79. Leadership and management are good. It is not easy to take over as headteacher when the previous incumbent was in post for over 20 years and highly regarded. The headteacher has struck the right balance between change and sensitivity for the school's reputation and existing strengths. Her leadership is good. Supported by the governors, she has made the future direction of the school very clear, by both consulting widely about, and considering most carefully, what initiatives are necessary to raise standards. She has observed teaching astutely and correctly perceived where systems – because they no longer serve the interests of pupils well – have remained unchanged for too long.
80. It is not appropriate to evaluate the quality of the leadership group (senior management team) because one deputy head has been absent with stress for several months. The interim leadership group (which met formally for the first time during the inspection) rightly includes the head of pastoral care, who had not formally been recognised as a member before. The headteacher is determined to improve the quality of monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching by the leadership group (not strong in the past) and heads of departments, which is satisfactory at present. She is providing the governors with alternative models for a future management structure. Until the absent deputy head's position is clarified, these cannot be discussed fully.
81. The match of the qualifications and experience of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum are satisfactory. The very little non-specialist teaching has no adverse effect on standards, except in information and communication technology where it does not meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils. The school has tried hard to appoint a co-ordinator and knows that the staffing situation is a problem. There are just enough learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs and they give good support.
82. The level of support staff is inadequate, particularly technical support for science, food technology, information and communication technology and art. As reported at the last inspection, the low level of administrative support for the library continues to mean it is not open as much as it should be. Administrative and clerical staff are high in quality but there are too few of them. During the inspection, many teachers were observed photocopying or doing other tasks which they could be helped with. The budget has been planned to increase the number of administrative and clerical staff.
83. Professional development for teachers has lacked continuity but responsibility for this has recently been re-allocated. Recent and relevant opportunities have been available and taken up in many areas, including training for special educational needs learning support assistants. Staff development in science, art and religious education has been unsatisfactory. The programme for the induction of newly qualified teachers is in place; one teacher has benefited from it this year. Induction for experienced, newly-appointed staff is unsatisfactory: the recently appointed head of physical education has not received any relevant support so far. Performance management systems are fully in

place, all teachers have agreed their objectives and some observations have been carried out. The school is on track to meet the autumn timescale for reviews.

84. All the arrangements to provide for pupils with special educational needs are in place, as noted in the last inspection report. This work is supported by a handbook and policies of good quality that help all staff to meet pupils' particular needs. Information is shared well as the co-ordinator holds regular meetings with department representatives. The caring co-ordinator is well supported by seven learning support assistants and the department is soon to take full advantage of information and communication technology equipment. The school has still to respond to the increasing demands and regulations for a more formal approach to supporting pupils with special educational needs. These increase the time needed for co-ordinators, governors and middle managers to adopt a structured approach to monitoring progress and setting targets.
85. Practically all subject and year leaders carry out their duties conscientiously and well, though they have very little time to do them, for example just one lesson a week as a year head. The head of music, being the only music teacher, has no support for generating extra-curricular activities and administration of peripatetic teachers. Subject leaders have too little time to monitor the work of their departments. The school's administrative staff, learning support assistants, technicians and the caretaker all work hard and contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school and the high quality of care pupils receive.
86. An example of where stagnation has hindered pupils' needs is the timetable and banding arrangements. The impact of these on standards, failure to cover the National Curriculum and religious education in full and large group sizes is explained in detail in Section 4. Evidence shows that at least two heads of department have requested timetable and banding changes for several years. These will now happen as the headteacher has determined to respond to their sensible requests. However, with a very tight budget, it will be difficult to reduce some class sizes as teachers already spend more time in the classroom than in the majority of schools and several of them give up their lunch hour to provide extra support for pupils.
87. The last inspection identified two key areas for improvement. Standards in art have risen with the appointment of a new subject leader, as has the quality of school self-review. Data on pupils' achievement is now used to set more challenging targets (although better Year 7 baseline data is needed). For several years, not only in response to the last report, subject leaders have identified and addressed (with varying degrees of success) variations in performance between subjects and between boys and girls. Using relatively high achieving departments as examples, geography and physical education teach boys and girls separately and history plans its seating carefully. During 1999, the school joined in an interesting local education authority project on raising boys' achievement. The least progress has been made in teachers sharing good practice. Taking all factors into consideration, particularly the consistently above average standards and the improved quality of teaching, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.
88. The quality of accommodation ranges from excellent and stimulating in physical education and music (significant improvement since the last inspection) to unsatisfactory in art, design and technology, information and communication technology and science (too few laboratories, all in need of refurbishment). The inspection team shares the school's concern about safety issues when large numbers of pupils are squashed in some of the classrooms, particularly in design and technology, art and mathematics. Despite the large playing fields, there is very little outside space for

recreation and socialising when it is wet. Limited storage space is a problem for many departments, particularly art (where work sometimes gets spoiled), geography and history. Good displays include pupils' work and the artefacts and wall hangings in design and technology and art are particularly lively and interesting.

89. Access for the disabled is limited to the new facilities and not possible to the upper floors of the main buildings. The governors have recently completed an innovative five-year strategic premises plan which addresses all the identified weaknesses and provides an excellent platform for future development. The recently appointed caretaker makes a very positive contribution to the programme of refurbishment, decoration and maintenance. The school looks clean, attractive and well cared for.
90. Resources are satisfactory overall and good action has been taken to address many of the shortcomings identified in the last inspection report. Information and communication technology, science and modern foreign languages resources remain unsatisfactory. There are still too few computers in all areas and too few textbooks in science and modern foreign languages. In English and history, the quality of teacher generated materials is very good and the new keyboards and recording equipment in music are excellent. The school library has a growing stock of books and is especially well served in the fiction section but more newspapers and magazines would give greater emphasis on current affairs and citizenship. Fund raising still provides many resources for several departments, for example the English readathon, because department budgets are affected by the school's limited income.
91. Financial administration is excellent and the principle of best value is applied very well. For example, evaluating tenders carefully, altering contracts to be sure quality as well as value is assured, and saving money by meticulously analysing how basic services are charged. Any extra funds and grants are used most effectively, the only significant amount last year being spent on computers – still an area for improvement. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are well spent though the special educational needs co-ordinator spends a large percentage of time teaching; he has too little time to work on individual education plans. With consistently above average GCSE results, good teaching and leadership and a low basic income per head, the school provides good value for money.
92. The headteacher has prepared a succinct version of the school development plan which is good as it contains the essential areas the school needs to address. Financial planning and action to meet the school's targets have always been sound but governors now appreciate the importance of linking these to long-term as well as immediate development plans. The excellent work of the premises committee has created site plans and budgets mapped out for the next five years.
93. It is frustrating for governors and parents that the school rarely has enough surplus to devise an innovative or imaginative budget. The OFSTED report on the local education authority (January 2000) referred to its 'relatively low education budget' and that it provides a basic sum per pupil which is low compared to other authorities. Weighing up this effective school (high standards, good teaching and leadership) with its costs, it is clearly providing good value for money. Fund raising dominates the governors' agenda and parents and teachers contribute much as well – they raise funds to buy essential textbooks and equipment, as well as supporting charities.

94. This report describes several significant areas for improvement but the inspection team acknowledges considerable funds are needed to address them properly. As examples:
- The number of computers per pupil is way below the national average.
 - Class sizes are sometimes large, of particular concern on health and safety grounds in science and design and technology.
 - Teachers have less free time than colleagues in many other schools. Subject and year leaders find it difficult to monitor what is going on, or inspire change in their departments or year groups.
 - In several subjects, pupils cannot take textbooks home as there are too few copies.
95. In the governors' annual report to parents, the chair once referred 'the three Ps shown by the school: Patience, Perseverance and Pursuit of excellence at all levels', and that the governing body 'has a broad range of expertise and a unanimity of purpose'. Both these statements are certainly still true. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and its understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is very good and realistic. It is fully aware of the areas where statutory requirements are not met in information and communication technology, design and technology, religious education and providing a daily act of collective worship. The governors' efforts to address these issues, particularly those related to information technology and religious education in Years 10 and 11, have been described elsewhere in this report.
96. It is also evident that the governing body has always considered non-academic standards, particularly preparing pupils for responsible adulthood, as being of equal importance to results. The chair of governors takes a particular interest in religious education and personal and social education. He, and the governing body, appreciate the importance of strengthening aspects of the spiritual and cultural education the pupils receive to support their preparation for responsible adulthood.
97. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is good and becoming stronger. They appointed a headteacher who is both guiding them and working with them to raise the already good standards, by introducing tighter structures and procedures. A review of the school's aims and values has stimulated interesting debate. All members of the school community were involved and the final version, to be published in the next few weeks, will reflect this thorough and thoughtful process. A list of features 'a Chantry pupil can become' includes courteous, responsible, confident and aspiring. There was no evidence to suggest that pupils are not already like this. The new and old school's aims and values are therefore well reflected in its work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to maintain improvement, governors and senior management should:

1. Raise standards in information and communication technology by:
 - persevering with efforts to appoint a full-time subject co-ordinator;
 - increasing the number of machines to match the national average;
 - providing a more worthwhile course in Years 10 and 11;
 - making access in the lunchhour easier for all pupils;
 - encouraging departments to use computers as much as possible;
 - reducing class sizes in Year 7 so each pupil has a computer in information and communication technology lessons.(paragraphs 163 -172)

2. Improve standards, particularly focusing on differences in boys' and girls' attainment in **science** (particularly in Years 10 and 11) by:

- challenging pupils and encouraging them to think for themselves;
 - making teaching more inspirational and interesting in all years;
 - sharing good practice to raise standards of teaching;
 - setting a wider range of tasks for homework and marking it regularly;
 - making teachers more accountable for the standards their groups attain.
- (paragraphs 123 - 133)

in **French** by:

- speaking less English in lessons;
 - explaining grammar and vocabulary in context and through conversation rather than in isolation.
- (paragraphs 173 - 182)

3. Alter the timetable and review banding and grouping arrangements so that:

- the full National Curriculum is covered in information and communication technology, design and technology in Years 7 to 9 and religious education in Years 10 and 11;
 - class sizes are reduced (with particular reference to large ones mentioned in this report);
 - lessons are taught in specialist rooms whenever possible;
 - banding and grouping arrangements suit individual subject needs.
- (paragraphs 49 and 86)

4. Raise the quality of provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development by:

- ensuring all statutory requirements for religious education are met;
 - auditing what the school already provides in all subjects;
 - improving the content of assemblies, with regular inclusion of quiet moments for prayer and/or reflection;
 - evaluating the purpose and use of form time to make better use of it;
 - widening pupils' experience, understanding and appreciation of multi-faith, multicultural and multi-ethnic life in the UK.
- (paragraphs 56 - 60)

In addition to the main areas for improvement, governors and senior management could consider including the following points for inclusion in their action plan:

Punctuality (paragraph 30); homework and marking (paragraph 44); gifted and talented policy (paragraph 46); National Curriculum levels (paragraph 70); reports (paragraph 78); special educational needs (paragraphs 20, 21, 47, 68, 91, 152, 158, 161 and 179).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	149
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	76

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	31	36	25	3	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 to Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	691	N/A
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	37	N/A

Special educational needs

	Y7 to Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6	N/A
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	119	N/A

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	58	79	137

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	51	49
	Girls	70	66	59
	Total	114	117	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (94)	85 (81)	79 (79)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	45 (57)	55 (55)	45 (38)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	51	49
	Girls	70	66	59
	Total	114	117	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (53)	85 (74)	78 (80)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	44 (29)	55 (57)	45 (38)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2000	60	67	127

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	28	56	57
	Girls	52	65	66
	Total	80	121	123
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	63 (66)	95 (93)	97 (98)
	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	School	43.4 (46.3)

per pupil	National	38.4 (36.8)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	686
Any other minority ethnic group	4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	17	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 to Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	36.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 to Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	152

Deployment of teachers: Y7 to Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79
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Average teaching group size: Y7 to Y11

Key Stage 3	27
Key Stage 4	21

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
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	£
Total income	1,468,132
Total expenditure	1,510,759
Expenditure per pupil	2,212
Balance brought forward from previous year	95,853
Balance carried forward to next year	53,226

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	691
Number of questionnaires returned	386

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	54	8	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	38	54	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	57	9	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	54	21	5	1
The teaching is good.	33	61	3	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	48	17	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	44	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	42	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	56	13	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	31	57	4	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	56	5	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	51	10	4	8

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

ENGLISH

- Well above average Year 9 test and GCSE results.
 - Strengths in literacy feed into work in all other subjects.
 - Very good teaching in over 50 per cent of lessons (excellent in two lessons).
 - A very large majority of pupils is entered for GCSE English literature.
 - Drama in Year 7 and for GCSE is very popular and successful.
98. Results attained by pupils in Year 9 tests are well above average and also the average for similar schools, despite a slight fall since 1998 in the percentage of pupils reaching the highest Levels 7 and 8. All pupils take GCSE in English and commendably, the department enters a very large majority for English literature. Last year, 79 per cent of pupils gained A*-C grades in English, compared with 63 per cent nationally. In literature, 88 per cent of pupils gained A*-C grades, compared with 56 per cent nationally; this was the best subject performance in the school. Results in both these examinations have remained at this very high level since the last inspection, when English and literature were reported as significantly better than average.
99. Attainment on entry continues to be above average, and pupils of all abilities sustain and improve their understanding, knowledge and skills in English as they move through the school. A notable feature of this progress is that the gap between boys' and girls' results is less than that seen nationally. Achievement is therefore very good.
100. In all years, these very high standards were reflected in the work seen during the inspection. The development of reading is very successful. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are introduced to an appropriate range of texts, both for class study and private reading. They are encouraged to read for pleasure, and most do so eagerly. An attractive and appropriate range of reading material is offered both in classrooms and the school library. Pupils encounter pre-twentieth century writers and begin to enjoy Shakespeare in Year 8. They read a good selection of modern poets and some earlier ones.
101. In their fortnightly library lessons, they develop skills in research and retrieval of information, and exchange recommendations of fiction and non-fiction books they have enjoyed. In Year 8, they consider newspaper styles and intentions. When they have access to computers, they make use of CD-Rom and the Internet. In Years 10 and 11, a good choice of texts for GCSE study extends pupils' range effectively and produces very good examination results because pupils learn to analyse texts effectively and write both critically and creatively about them.
102. Less evident in lessons was pupils' experience or pleasure in reading aloud. Although poems were studied in four lessons, teachers always read them aloud and no lines were spoken by any of the pupils. Good opportunities were missed. In contrast, when pupils were given the chance to speak some Shakespeare in a Year 8 class, they did so with increased understanding. They experimented with short extracts and much enjoyed their delivery of some vigorous Shakespearean insults.
103. Pupils' writing skills and their understanding of language develop well with regular practice and with teaching that makes productive links between reading and writing. From primary school literacy lessons, pupils bring a sound basis of language knowledge, including the use of sentence and paragraph structure, and a range of

literary devices. These are revisited in Years 7 to 9 and pupils' understanding of them is both consolidated and deepened. Pupils write in a variety of forms and styles: stories, letters, poems, reports and personal accounts. They write to inform, to persuade, to entertain and to experiment. Some lively, imaginative and well-presented work is seen in pupils' portfolios and folders, and on display in classrooms. Occasionally there is an over-emphasis on comprehension exercises, and the discussion and enjoyment of a poem are limited by its use as a quarry for finding examples of literary devices. In general, however, pupils' writing is not constrained by over-use of worksheets and those seen were usually well produced by teachers themselves and not photocopied from commercial publications.

104. Good written work is done in several other subjects. Science, which has its own departmental policy, encourages writing skills and makes use of writing frames. In all years, extended writing about scientific evaluations is expected and occasionally opportunities for creative writing too. Some excellent writing is produced in history, with awareness of genre and style, and there are also good examples in religious education, geography, music and physical education.
105. Speaking and listening standards are high, though speaking opportunities are limited. Pupils listen quietly and are very seldom restless or inattentive. In lessons, they are expected to do a good deal of listening and in those observed, the main oral activity was answering teachers' questions. Only in drama lessons were wider opportunities offered. In English lessons, pupils were not seen making sustained contributions they had prepared themselves, taking a lead, presenting evidence or supporting or defending a position. The cut and thrust of argument does not play enough part in lessons.
106. Not enough regular attention is paid to the National Curriculum recommendation that pupils should make extended contributions to talk in different contexts and groups: arguing, persuading, entertaining and debating. The emphasis on listening rather than active participation was also noted in assemblies. An active school council and the lively responses shown by pupils in interviews and in drama lessons show that they have much to contribute. Opportunities for developing speaking skills in other subjects vary and often the emphasis is on question and answer, led by the teacher, with only occasional presentations by pupils themselves. However, history, religious education and geography use discussion well, with opinion sharing, some role-play and interviewing.
107. Drama plays an increasingly important part in the department's work. A GCSE drama option was introduced three years ago. It has been very successfully taught by a drama specialist member of the English team. Outstanding results were achieved by the first group who took the examination in 2000, when 83 per cent gained A*-C grades, well above the national average of 68 per cent. The subject is flourishing, with an increasing take-up and two classes. The only other drama lessons are in Year 7, where each class has one hour a week. These lessons are much enjoyed and they contribute to pupils' confidence and their ability to work well in groups. In English and drama, pupils' attitudes are admirable. Readiness to learn and co-operate was evident in all the lessons observed and pupils responded positively to good teaching.
108. English and drama are taught by a strong and stable team whose subject expertise and enthusiasm were evident in all lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, it was good in the large majority of lessons and very good or excellent in over 50 per cent. Teachers prepare work carefully and have clear lesson objectives which take careful account of the attainment levels and needs of the class. Although teachers' input is always relevant and well informed, their enthusiasm sometimes leads them to talk for

too long; pupils' are not actively participating and their concentration wavers. More opportunities for pupils to discuss, argue and present would often make good teaching very good.

109. The undoubted success of the setting system used for English is the result of high expectations of all pupils and wise staff deployment. In Year 7, a small class of pupils with special educational needs is taught very successfully and skilfully by the special educational needs co-ordinator. All other pupils work in mixed ability classes. In Years 8 to 11, pupils are set in ability groups, which work well because of teachers' determination that all groups shall have access to the same curriculum and the same opportunities. All take both GCSE English and English literature and the lower group also take the Certificate of Achievement to ensure that they have a qualification in the unlikely event of their failing to obtain any grade in GCSE.
110. Teachers in turn work with top, middle or lower groups, and all classes are equally valued and equally challenged. Several lessons with very good work in lower groups were observed. A Year 10 class responded with considerable interest to a Wordsworth poem and watched a well-chosen video illustrating his Lake District background. In a Year 8 lower set, pupils with special educational needs worked eagerly on a project based on their reading of a Robert Swindell novel, which involved study of its Whitby setting, correspondence with the local tourist board and postcard writing. A range of skills was being skilfully developed and interest and curiosity well sustained.
111. A member of the department works very hard as the school librarian to ensure that all pupils have access to the library every lunch hour. She has made the library an attractive encouragement to reading, with good displays and information. Lack of funding has made it difficult for her to expand the stock, weak in some subject areas, and to provide an appropriate selection of newspapers and magazines, at present an area poorly served. An excellent example of literature across the curriculum occurred on National Poetry Day, thanks to the librarian, who asked all departments to start each lesson with a poem on that day. There was a very good response to this imaginative initiative and much pleasure and discovery for both staff and pupils.
112. The school has made a start on establishing and implementing a policy for language across the curriculum but as yet, this has lacked overall direction. The recently appointed literacy co-ordinator is to help departments to evaluate and improve their own practice and achieve greater consistency in the marking and correction of written work. A literacy audit has already been drawn up to look at the opportunities offered by particular subjects though this is not yet in general use. At present, practice varies, some subjects having their own policies and others none. In several subjects, including physical education and science, there is surprisingly little emphasis on the specialist vocabulary and on reinforcing knowledge of key words. In geography, by contrast, subject vocabulary is thoroughly taught.
113. The English department is firmly and very effectively led, with the commitment and enthusiasm which characterise the team. The management of the teaching programme, classes and resources is efficient, as the excellent departmental handbook indicates. Achievement, trends and needs are analysed carefully. Resources, such as the department's excellent collection of videos, are used effectively to illustrate and complement teaching, and not as a substitute for it. Budget constraints have led the department to organise its own fund-raising, and sponsored readathons have raised enough money to provide television sets as well as to support a charity.
114. This hard-working department has not found it easy to provide regular extra-curricular

activities, though there are visits to theatres and lunchtime support for private study. Although rehearsals for the most successful drama productions (which take place every two years) are time-consuming, pupils state that a more informal, regular drama club would be popular. No debating or discussion group exists at present; the English team is well qualified to take the lead in providing these or similar activities for pupils in the lunch hour.

MATHEMATICS

- Standards are high.
 - In all years, pupils have a positive attitude in lessons and respond enthusiastically so they make rapid progress and achieve well.
 - Pupils' mental skills have improved and they now use calculators only when appropriate.
 - No significant difference in standards attained by boys and girls.
115. Attainment on entry to the school is above average. In 2000, the Year 9 test results were well above average and above those of similar schools. Over 30 per cent of pupils reached the highest Levels 7 and 8. This has been the picture in recent years, and matched standards seen during the inspection, with very high attainment at the end of Year 9. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve extremely well and make progress beyond that expected.
116. At the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades in 2000 was over ten per cent above average. Uncharacteristically, boys' results were much lower than girls' as a result of the underachievement of a small and untypical group of boys. Attainment was higher up to 1999, with a steady improvement in line with national trends. The standard of current Year 10 work is high. Achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is good.
117. From Year 7 to 9, almost all pupils make very good progress in all aspects of the subject. They achieve impressive levels of numeracy as a result of regular, well-conducted exercises. Most learn algebraic techniques effectively, such as those necessary for the reliable solution of equations; many apply these successfully to solve problems. Concepts of space and shape are well understood by most pupils. Statistical processes are learned thoroughly so that pupils are well prepared to start the GCSE courses and the mathematical demands of other subjects in the curriculum.
118. By the end of Year 10, practically all pupils have developed numeracy skills which they use most effectively in other subjects. Examples include percentages in history, statistics in science and scale factors in design and technology. Most pupils continue to make very good progress in the development of technical skills that equip them well for public examinations. However, higher attaining pupils' understanding of abstract ideas based on reasoned arguments is less well developed. For example, when they learn to use formulae efficiently, such as those for the solution of quadratic equations, they have limited insight into their derivation. Those with special educational needs make good progress. Special provision is made for those pupils identified as gifted or talented and they achieve well.
119. Teaching is good overall in all years. Over 60 per cent is good or better. There is a wide gulf between the best teaching and the least effective, ranging from very good to lessons with weaknesses. Teachers' thorough assessment means they prepare challenging lessons which they manage firmly and conduct at a brisk pace. This, combined with pupils' very good attitudes to learning, leads to good progress. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils learned to calculate the probabilities of repeated

events by solving problems jointly with their teacher, who persistently asked probing questions – so all pupils had to concentrate throughout the presentation. By the end of the lesson, almost all pupils could tackle problems successfully on their own. In a few lessons, planning was less concise and the pace far less challenging. In one instance, a teacher's low expectations failed to motivate high attaining pupils who saw the unchallenging identification of transformations in frieze patterns as unworthy of their serious efforts. Furthermore, the lack of a clearly defined objective confused pupils and so limited their learning.

120. In all years, pupils concentrate well, pay close attention and are keen to improve. Hence they are able to take full advantage of the clear expositions provided in most lessons. They present their exercises well and take account of the written advice where teachers provide this. Many pupils rely on rules whose mathematical background they do not understand, such as those used in calculations involving negative numbers. As a consequence, whilst they learn advanced skills well, such as solving simultaneous equations and using the quadratic formula, they do not solve problems with the confidence that they otherwise would. There are very few instances of pupils' inappropriate behaviour. Teachers deal firmly with those that arise, so no serious interruption to work occurs.
121. Subject leadership is very good. The head of the department monitors the team and its effectiveness well, responding to findings by introducing beneficial changes, such as the parallel sets that have improved pupils' motivation and subsequent attainment. Thorough records of assessments provide the basis for good planning and appropriate target setting which underpins the effective teaching that is well matched to pupils' needs. Work is well in hand to fully incorporate the National Numeracy Strategy from September 2001 – its methods are already being applied successfully by most mathematics teachers. Other departments have yet to be involved in raising standards of numeracy, particularly important for lower attaining pupils.
122. Recent staff changes have dispersed the successful team that produced the steady rise in standards. Further improvements depend on re-establishing the former consistency of teaching quality. Features of the timetable have an adverse effect on the learning of lower attaining pupils; for those who have long intervals between lessons, or most lessons in the last period of the day, teachers have to spend longer on review which reduces the time for effective new work.

SCIENCE

This is a department with many contrasts:

- Pupils attain particularly well by the end of Year 9 but a significant number of boys underachieve at GCSE.
 - Some very good teaching, using stimulating resources, which gives both high attainers plenty of opportunities to think for themselves and lower attainers motivation. Other teaching does not present enough intellectual challenge or motivation for any pupils.
 - Good use of testing to monitor the pupils' progress in all years and make predictions about their expected attainment. Inconsistent marking; some gives pupils little or no detail about how they can improve.
123. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 have fluctuated over the last four years though they have been well above average and in 2000, they were just better than those of similar schools. The average points score last year was lower than that in English and mathematics. At the end of Year 9, boys have performed better than girls in four of

the last five years.

124. Standards attained in double award GCSE science have improved since the last inspection and have been above average until 2000 (when they were average). The percentage of pupils attaining the higher grades has increased each year from 1996 until a drop in 2000. This was because, unusually, only 40 per cent of boys attained grades A*-C, whereas 60 per cent of girls did – a significant difference of 20 per cent which brought down the overall percentage. In the three years prior to 2000, girls consistently attained about ten per cent more higher grades than boys. For the last four years, pupils have attained less well in science than in English and mathematics.
125. In lessons observed during the inspection, standards overall reflected those attained in tests and examinations up to 1999 but with considerable differences between groups. Achievement was good in Years 7 to 9. In recent years, it has only been satisfactory in the GCSE years but work seen in lessons confirm it is better in the present Year 10. There was little observable difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The head of department has done much work to analyse the last few years' results. This has allowed her to identify areas of the curriculum where pupils attain below their predicted grades. This information will be crucial to help the department to improve results, particularly for boys at GCSE, and to track the achievement of individual pupils.
126. The last inspection identified the need to improve the achievement of girls. The converse is now the case – improving boys' achievement at GCSE is a big issue for the department. There is a direct relationship between the progress pupils make and expectations made of them by their particular teachers. When teachers make realistic and attainable demands of pupils, they respond well and learn well. Year 7 pupils, for example, used complex scientific vocabulary to describe the structure and position of metals in the periodic table. Pupils with a special aptitude for science study the three separate sciences at GCSE and have opportunities to extend their learning outside the classroom, such as a residential weekend and a space competition for Year 7 boys.
127. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when they are given individual tasks and help, such as a detailed writing frame which helped a lower set in Year 9 to record their scientific investigation logically. Under-achievement occurs when pupils, especially higher attainers, are not challenged enough to think for themselves or are unsure what is required of them. When a top Year 8 set were evaluating the Law of Conservation of Mass, they were unclear about which practical method to use and were not given the opportunity to discuss it amongst themselves.
128. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall although they vary. In Years 7 to 9, teaching was very good in one lesson, unsatisfactory in another, with an equal amount of good and satisfactory in between. In Year 10, teaching was very good in one lesson and satisfactory in the rest. There is no relationship between the standard of teaching and pupils' ability; very good teaching was observed with both a top group in Year 7 and a bottom group in Year 10. With two groups of similar attaining pupils, teaching by different members of the department ranged from good to unsatisfactory.
129. The best teaching presents pupils with interesting and inspiring science and often makes use of new technology, such as Year 10 pupils word processing their scientific investigation into the porosity of different rock samples and recording results in a spreadsheet. When teachers state the aim of the lesson and put it in the context of previous work, pupils are clear about what they are to do and learn effectively. Plenty of different activities are planned to reinforce a scientific idea and teachers set and stick to a realistic amount of time for each task to be completed. Lower attaining Year 7 pupils

learnt well about the difference between mixtures and compounds by a series of simple, practical activities looking at chemical and physical changes during heating. Many lessons include practical work and here the efficient team of technicians is very important in supporting the success of this work.

130. Many lessons contained weaknesses in teaching in varying degrees. These included low expectations, lack of pace and pupils not being fully involved. These same weaknesses were criticised in the previous inspection report and there has not been a significant change. Despite weaknesses in teaching, all pupils behave well in class even though they may not be focused on the lesson all the time. In one Year 10 lesson, although several activities were planned to reinforce the laws relating to the stretching of different materials, the teacher did not check whether pupils had completed each task. This meant pupils had no time to reflect on their results and use them to consolidate their understanding. Consequently, pupils are not skilful at speaking and reporting back to each other as there are too few opportunities for group discussion. This is partly a result of many lessons being too teacher-directed.
131. In every year, all teachers introduce plenty of new scientific vocabulary to pupils but these words are not always reinforced in writing, by displays on the walls or lists in pupils' books. However, pupils do have many opportunities to write logically and at length when analysing or describing results, for example the effects of chemicals, such as the hormone insulin, on the body. The last inspection report criticised the under-development of investigative skills in all years. This is now much better with pupils of all years and abilities able to plan, carry out and evaluate investigations in a variety of scientific contexts.
132. Pupils' progress is monitored with regular tests at the end of each unit of work. However, work is not marked regularly and rigorously by all teachers and in many cases, it lacks consistency and detail. The timetable arrangement whereby classes are taught by two or three teachers, makes it difficult to check that homework is both set and collected in consistently. The range of tasks set is narrow – often no more than completing work started in class. Too often pupils are given only marks and ticks and little help about how to improve. This situation has not improved since the last inspection.
133. There are still too few laboratories, several need upgrading and the department is short of textbooks, computers and technician hours. A building programme to be started soon will help to address part of the problem, but it is likely to be several years before there are enough teaching spaces. If the department could teach the subject to a whole year group at the same time, it would allow pupils to be placed in the right group for their scientific ability and to be moved between sets. If they had sole responsibility for a teaching set, teachers would be accountable for its results. This is not the case at the moment. The strong head of department has a clear vision for future development of the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

- Very good progress and achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Very good teaching.
- Excellent management of the subject.
- Significant improvement in many areas since the last inspection.

134. When pupils enter the school, the majority has below average standards. For example, not all have done enough observation drawing, worked in a variety of media, or experienced colour work to reach the expected standard. So pupils achieve well to attain average standards at the end of Year 9, and make even more rapid progress to attain above average standards at the end of Year 10. GCSE results have risen by almost 40 per cent since the time of the last inspection: in 2000 the percentage of pupils attaining GCSE A* to C grades was average. All pupils attained grades A* to G grade, above average. The attainment of both boys and girls has also risen, although there is still a marked difference.
135. At the end of Year 9, pupils confidently use their own experience and imagination because teachers encourage them and have high expectations. When looking at the natural world, one pupil presented a study of owls in a variety of ways: drawing, painting and on canvas using subtlety of colour which gave a realistic impression of owls at night. The breadth of pupils' experiences, including collage, weaving, ceramics and large-scale wall hangings, is commendable. The latter showed pupils' confidence in developing their own ideas, such as a woodland scene where tree trunks, unusually positioned in the foreground, dominated. Whether exploring artists such as J. S. Lowry or using portraits from the Greek classical period through to the modern day, pupils' research shows their considerable interest in, appreciation and evaluation of art. One pupil displayed a sound understanding of the effect of colour, commenting, 'I could almost feel the contrast between the hot bonfire and the cold sky'.
136. In Year 10, pupils develop ideas to a very good level, such as those centred around the rainforest, with references to artists such as Rousseau. Pupils' comments on artwork shows the individuality of their interpretations, which is an essential element of good understanding. For example, a pupil wrote, 'the bright vibrant colour ... inspired me'. Pupils who took photographs of the seaside as part of their research used them effectively to explore colour and texture. Pupils' sketches display a very good understanding of form, as seen in examples of stones and shells. In all years, pupils with special educational needs make good progress to reach the same levels of attainment as other pupils.
137. The quality of teaching is very good overall, particularly in Year 10. Above all, it is the teachers' enthusiasm that motivates pupils. In a lesson which introduced flight, a tremendously wide range of exciting resources were used. In a video of the Peruvian jungle, pupils' attention was drawn to the huge wings of an eagle in flight. The teacher's intense interest in the topic created a remarkable depth of absorption – pupils sat transfixed as they watch the eagle hover and land – a very high level of achievement followed. Pupils sketched birds, learnt how to use pen and wash and used pastels according to their own preferences.
138. In all lessons, every minute is used and a sense of urgency transfers to pupils. When they were setting up their own still life, the time limit given focused their attention on the task. The result was that they all started sketching before the time limit had expired, and therefore their learning was accelerated. Pupils' total concentration in the lesson led to a very good level of achievement. The emphasis on high standards encourages pupils. This was seen when a boy's work was used to demonstrate how he was not afraid to confine the sketches to the edge of the paper, but allowed them to fall off, so creating a feeling of space. This sharing of ideas plus constant positive feedback, encourages all to attain high standards.
139. The head of department, appointed after the last inspection, has reorganised everything, generated a stimulating environment and made standards rise at a remarkable rate. The

huge number of issues raised in the last inspection has all been dealt with, with the exception of storage. She provides excellent leadership for non-specialist teachers: support, a detailed scheme of work and thorough assessment procedures. She opens the art rooms every lunchhour for pupils to continue their work. Worthwhile homework is set and marked very well, with comments targeted at improvement, for example 'spread the fire light around on the ground to make it more interesting'. Visits, such as an imaginative session creating sand sculptures, considerably extend pupils' experiences. Recently, pupils have not experienced the work of local artists, either in their studio, or through an artist in residence. This is important in order to make art alive to pupils.

140. Storage for the wide variety of pupils' artwork is inadequate, so it is difficult to avoid damage. This, plus the lack of a technician, affects pupils' artwork. It is not possible to put clay models safely to dry before firing, and a technician is needed to use the pug mill and take charge of the kiln. The rooms are cramped for the very large numbers in some groups. Sometimes art is taught in non-specialist rooms which makes it difficult for pupils to develop their work. Displays, including an exciting developing mural, show the high level of importance that is attached to pupils' work. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. The daily use of sketchbooks will considerably help to raise standards further, as they encourage pupils' individuality and creativity. Art makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development, studying art over time and in different countries, and visiting art galleries. It also contributes to pupils' social development when they work in groups, and when they share ideas work collaboratively.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- Excellent leadership of the department.
 - High quality, imaginative tasks that pupils find motivating.
 - High quality teaching.
 - Well above average GCSE results in food technology, textiles and resistant materials.
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141. On entry to the school, pupils have below average standards as few have used wood and other materials, or experienced the full design, making and evaluating process. Good progress and achievement in all years mean standards are average at the end of Year 9 and even higher at the end of Year 10. Standards have risen since the time of the last report. In 2000, the percentage of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C in food technology, textiles and resistant materials was well above average, and results in graphics, a new subject, were average. In all subjects, 100 per cent of pupils gained A*-G grades – above average. The difference between boys' and girls' attainment matches that seen nationally.
 142. At the end of Year 9, pupils sensibly use various sources of information that they have obtained through research. Their extensive research into wind included historical windmills, how wind powers boats and provides electricity and it extended beyond the obvious to include global issues such as the greenhouse effect. Pupils clarify ideas through discussion and drawings. When analysing contemporary clocks, a pupil showed sound analysis of modern design by observing that only vibrant and dominant prime colours are used. Pupils work from carefully detailed plans – making dishes in food technology or making objects to an expected level of precision. The emphasis on high standards was seen in a Year 7 project on containers; the finish was to a standard of which all pupils could be proud. Pupils' evaluations improve during Years 7 to 9. Comments such as, 'ridges should be added to my pen so that it would be easier to hold', reflect thought and evaluation of a final product against the original design brief.

143. At the end of Year 10, pupils' skills in designing and making are very good. Climbers drawn to form the border for an advertisement for the sports hall climbing wall were imaginative and showed an effective use of fine black liner. Pupils effectively make products in quantity, and they were very excited when they realised that their assembly line production yielded more products than they could make individually. They also realised that there was a spin-off because the quality improved as they repeated a task. They make items with a very good degree of accuracy, such as high quality model furniture. Pupils evaluate their work with honesty and perception. After a considerable amount of imaginative work preparing exciting new recipes, a pupil reluctantly concluded that 'teenagers are not adventurous when eating food products'.
144. The quality of teaching is very good. In Years 7 to 9, 50 per cent was very good, including one lesson when it was excellent; in Year 10, almost 70 per cent was very good. Teaching is based on imaginative projects that appeal to pupils and motivate them to succeed. For example, pupils knew that they had to make metal simulated insect 'bugs' with a high standard of precision if they were to win the bug race. The prospect of a race led to tremendous determination by pupils to complete their projects. The task of designing a 'Poisonous Pasty' or a 'Horrible Hamburger' appealed to pupils, and they tackled it with enthusiasm. It also effectively tested the extent of their knowledge of health and safety hazards in food.
145. All teachers are most enthusiastic and attach great importance to demonstrating new skills and checking that all pupils understand, are confident to try and have success at their first attempt – seen when the process of enamelling by brazing was taught. The very best lessons are conducted with a sense of urgency, so pupils stay totally focused. When making bags in groups, they were told how long they would have to complete certain stages. Determined to meet their targets, some did not even waste time looking for the next piece to be sewn, but reached out to grab it and started immediately. A pupil whose design brief had ended up on the floor, was encouraged to redo it sensitively, being asked, 'would you really want to show this piece of work as your best effort?' Lessons that are satisfactory lacked the sense of urgency and excitement found in the majority. Well supported by teachers and learning assistants, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve as well as others.
146. The department is very well led. Cramped accommodation in the food technology and one resistant materials room results in a serious safety issue with practical work. The timetable arrangements do not deliver the full National Curriculum to all Years 7 to 9 as some pupils do not work in compliant materials – if they choose food technology or textiles for GCSE they may have no previous experience, which affects their level of the achievement. Some very large groups in Year 7 receive too little support, which holds back their progress in all years. As a result, a few pupils take the Certificate of Achievement instead of the more demanding GCSE. One-hour food technology lessons limit the selection of practical tasks, and it is very difficult for pupils to plan purposeful investigations. Five hours of technician support in food technology is not enough, particularly for maintenance, noted in the last report. Design and technology has its own literacy policy, with writing frames to match National Curriculum levels, and technical language is given prominence.

GEOGRAPHY

- A very successful department and a popular subject in the school.
- High standards in Years 7 to 9 which lead to well above average GCSE results.
- Teaching is good and effective so pupils learn well and make good progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations.
- Excellent fieldwork is a particularly strong feature of the curriculum.

147. Teachers assessed attainment at the end of Year 9 as above average with a significant number of pupils reaching the higher levels, including a few at Levels 7 and 8. GCSE standards have been well above average for the past three years. Girls still do better than boys (especially in 2000) but results have risen for both since the previous inspection. In 2000, 70 per cent of candidates attained grades A*-C (74 per cent did in 1999). In both years, the average points score and the percentage of grades A* and A were above average. Comparing standards with those attained at the end of Year 9, GCSE results show that value is added and that some pupils' performance in relation to their potential is considerable. Standards of work seen during the inspection were similar to those described above.
148. In all years, pupils learn well and make good progress. Written work is good and pupils have a good command of geographical principles, processes and vocabulary. Their geographical skills have improved since the last inspection. They collect and analyse data well and are able to use the information gained from fieldwork and other resources to draw conclusions and provide reasons for patterns and developments in the landscape. They recall previous knowledge well and transfer this knowledge to new situations.
149. In Year 7, pupils applied their knowledge of local building developments at the school to understand how the construction of a new football stadium in Sunderland would affect the local environment and community. They used audio-visual evidence well in Year 8 to determine how the environment is changed by volcanic eruptions. In Year 9, their knowledge of Kenya helped them to understand the effects that tourism has on the economy and wildlife of Africa. In an imaginative lesson in Year 10, pupils quickly demonstrated their skills in extracting information; in groups they made very good presentations on aspects of an oil disaster in Alaska. Thus, in the course of the lesson, the whole class studied all the aspects of the incident.
150. This good progress and quality of learning are largely the result of teaching that is always satisfactory and good in almost 60 per cent of lessons. It has improved since the last inspection. What also helps is that pupils concentrate very well and are most positive and confident. Teachers focus on reinforcing the basic principles, using geographical vocabulary and regularly checking previous understanding. Achievement is also good because lesson topics build progressively and schemes of work in Years 10 and 11 build on those for Years 7 to 9.
151. Learning is improved by the purposeful nature of lessons. At times, this results in a rather solid pace when teachers take quite a long time to introduce a topic and the work to be tackled. In several lessons, pupils listened attentively but without displaying great enthusiasm, but they were most alert when a Kenyan visitor spoke to them in one Year 9 class. Pupils are encouraged to learn for themselves and to seek answers from material provided rather than being given them by the teacher. Thus, when they get going, they take an active part in lessons and work well together. In one lesson seen, pupils were not seated well to watch a video, which was shown all in one go – it would have been more effective broken up into sections.

152. Some attempt is made to provide tasks and materials to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and teachers provide additional support; usually open-ended tasks which allow them to work at appropriate levels. They thus make the same progress as others. Fieldwork is excellent and in all years, the quality of work that results from it is high. Interest is stimulated by visits, such as the recent successful one to Iceland, and by the voluntary, but very successful, Year 9 GCSE course in geology in which pupils are very successful (80 per cent grades A*-C in 2000).
153. Leadership of the subject is good. However, the good scheme of work does not give guidance on how this subject contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development or the ways in which the needs of pupils with special educational needs can be addressed. Especially when writing up fieldwork to present it well, pupils use their own computers but the department does not have enough access to them to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and future GCSE examinations.
154. Development planning, still short-term, is much improved since the last inspection but does not include plans to raise the attainment of boys, to develop the use of computers or indicate the costs involved in proposals. Monitoring and evaluation lacks formality and assessment does not refer to National Curriculum levels. These shortcomings do not detract from pupils' achievement but attention to them, and improvements in some timetable arrangements, should help the department to achieve even more of the highest GCSE grades.

HISTORY

- Well above average standards by the end of Year 11.
 - In all years, achievement is good because pupils are strongly motivated and they enjoy meeting their teachers' high expectations.
 - Very good teaching in the great majority of lessons (excellent in three lessons).
 - Teachers develop pupils' research skills very well – pupils enjoy making discoveries, finding different explanations of historical events and working independently.
155. Pupils attain well above average standards in all years. Many of them, especially girls, produce particularly high standards of work, reflecting the national picture. In 2000, 69 per cent of pupils attained GCSE grades A*-C, well above average. The proportion gaining A* and A grades (mainly girls) was double that in schools with similar Year 9 standards. Boys underachieved, as they attained relatively fewer high grades. Girls outperformed boys by a greater margin than seen nationally. However, in 1999, boys attained well above the average for boys, and above the average for girls. The department uses a range of measures to promote high achievement by boys and girls, but disparity continues in some years, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in all years.
156. Pupils have a very good grasp of periods of history and the roles of influential people. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 9 gained different perspectives on Hitler. They wrote obituaries on him as journalists from newspapers appealing to different groups, such as the British upper class and the Jewish community in Germany. Occasionally, a few pupils with less secure reading and writing do not wholly understand the importance of a piece of evidence, and therefore do not relate it accurately to events.
157. Pupils understand concepts such as change and causation. Year 10 pupils found reasons for changes in surgery techniques between the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries. They used well-developed analytical skills to obtain very detailed evidence from contemporary illustrations to show the progress of these developments. Pupils develop their writing skills in a variety of forms, such as letters and newspaper articles in the style of a historical period. Lower attaining boys, however, do not use their knowledge well to support their written answers.

158. Pupils have opportunities to use numeracy skills when they interpret statistics such as the growth of canal use by commercial traffic in the nineteenth century. Pupils have good word processing and desktop publishing skills but access for a whole-class use is limited. Much work using information and communication technology is completed at home. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in meeting their targets. Teachers could helpfully relate these more specifically to history in pupils' individual education plans, and in lessons. For example, by making the meaning of key subject words more accessible.
159. Teaching is very good in over 85 per cent of lessons, including three when it was excellent; it is never less than good. Very high expectations are prominent amongst the very good features of teaching. In a Year 7 lesson on a bishop's role in medieval England, pupils were challenged by sharp questions to respond to a 1301 report on a local parish. Their task was to analyse the report to identify problems and suggest what actions needed to be taken. The teacher urged them to draft their thoughts quickly using a framework provided. From these notes, their homework was to write a carefully worded order from the Bishop of Worcester to the parishioners.
160. Teachers use methods that encourage pupils to learn independently – an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers show pupils how to develop arguments in their writing. For example, Year 10 pupils scrutinised and commented on the structure and clarity of other pupils' work. From this they learned to be more critical of their own work and improve their answers. One history teacher has created an impressive history web site for pupils to obtain relevant information for their work outside lessons. Pupils reflect upon the deeper implications of their studies. For example, inspired by a visit to the play 'Doomed Youth', pupils wrote informed poems giving their reactions to the loss of young lives in the First World War.
161. Teachers match work to the ability levels within classes appropriately so pupils mostly achieve their potential. Pupils with special educational needs would benefit from some additional guidance in using language to help them make progress with more independence. Teachers mark work regularly and write helpful comments that motivate pupils to achieve highly. Homework forms an integral feature of each topic and pupils tackle this with vigour and thoroughness. Attitudes and behaviour are very good, and often excellent; they contribute significantly to the very good quality of learning.
162. The head of department gives a very clear lead in setting very high standards for teaching and learning. Teachers support the department's very high expectations. Last year the department won a history award for its unit of study on Elizabeth I's visit to Worcester in 1575 using local sources. Teaching is monitored but the process could be improved with greater formality and rigour. Year 7 continues to receive half the time of Years 8 and 9. This inhibits their depth of study and impacts on the Year 8 scheme of work. Well-organised fieldwork, for example to Worcester Cathedral and Ludlow Castle, mitigates the lack of classroom time to an extent. This is a strong department that has much improved upon the good standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

- Very few computers (for ICT and other subjects). Sometimes in Year 7 three pupils share a computer.
 - No subject co-ordinator at present though the school has tried hard to appoint one.
 - ICT lessons in Years 7 and 10 only (so statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are not met).
 - Standards that are below average in all years, with no GCSE course offered.
 - Satisfactory (and 50 per cent good) teaching.
163. Standards of work in all years are below average due to the shortages of equipment, poor maintenance, too few lessons and a lack of assessment to help pupils make progress. Statutory requirements for the National Curriculum are not met. In individual lessons in Years 7 and 10, the majority of pupils makes satisfactory progress but achievement by the end of Year 10 is unsatisfactory. With more lesson time and easier access to computers, achievement would improve dramatically. The school is taking constructive steps to improve standards by spending any available funds on new equipment, appointing a technician (who started work during the inspection) and providing teachers with additional time to co-ordinate teaching and monitor pupils' progress more effectively.
164. In 2000, teachers assessed that over half the pupils reached the expected level at the end of Year 9. Inspection evidence indicates that these assessments were higher than they should be as standards attained in communicating and handling information are not matched by those in measurement and control and the use of spreadsheets to model problems. Most pupils in Year 7 develop basic competence in a variety of software applications, through the Keybytes program, but they cannot print out their work to develop ideas. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in lessons, closely supported by teachers, but the highest attaining pupils underachieve. In Years 7 to 9, pupils have limited opportunities to apply their information and communication technology skills in other subjects because there are too few computers for subject teachers to use in lessons.
165. No GCSE course is taught at the school. Standards achieved by the majority of pupils in a locally accredited basic computer skills certificate are low compared to average GCSE grades, and show little improvement from the last inspection. Although the certificate indicates that a minimum standard was reached, helpful when pupils go on to post-16 courses, the award is at too low a level to reflect the potential achievement of the majority of pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils. Time available for this course is very limited in Year 10.
166. In Year 10, in the limited lesson time, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress developing their knowledge and skills and achieve sound levels of competence because teaching is always satisfactory and at least good in 50 per cent of lessons. In a good Year 10 computer certificate lesson, pupils combined text and graphics quite fluently to produce a user's guide to desktop publishing. With few lessons, (pupils miss other subjects for a few weeks) they cannot produce work in enough depth. Occasionally, pupils make less progress than they should because of technical difficulties saving their work. They sometimes have to start the same work several times. The majority of pupils have computers at home, often with access to Internet connections. This allows them to develop better skills than in school and make up some lost time but this does not ensure equal opportunities for all.

167. In other subjects, pupils use computers too rarely to achieve the expected standards. They use word processing satisfactorily and research information from the Internet, although the majority lack the necessary skills to communicate their work effectively to a variety of audiences. In mathematics, pupils draw graphs from spreadsheets to calculate areas and volumes, but do not apply spreadsheet formulae or evaluate their results well enough when modelling problems. Graphics' pupils are beginning to use CAD/CAM to design boxes in Year 10, but they do not yet use computers to design simple control mechanisms. In their GCSE food projects, pupils make databases to show what people eat.
168. In art, Year 8 pupils capture images and text from the Internet, although opportunities for creative work are limited. In Year 8, pupils design French posters incorporating photographs from the Internet. Pupils use desktop publishing well to design and compile newspaper reports on historical figures, combining text and graphics attractively, and to research on the stimulating, well-organised website created by the head of history. Pupils in lower science sets use spreadsheets to make calculations but lack of equipment has delayed the introduction of data-logging to measure changes in temperature, sound and light.
169. Pupils use equipment safely. The majority concentrate on their tasks very well, although some work is too easy for them and does not offer enough challenge. Higher attaining pupils often finish off work at home without being asked. Pupils with special educational needs are given extra help to work confidently on their own. Pupils respect their teachers and co-operate very positively, even when they are frustrated by machines breaking down or losing their work. Occasionally, in large Year 7 classes, three pupils have to share a machine, but they do not complain.
170. The quality of teaching and learning are at least satisfactory, and good in 50 per cent of lessons in Years 7 and 10. Teachers give pupils clear instructions and help sheets, so, whatever their attainment, they usually manage to complete their limited tasks. In the best lessons, well-focused questions stimulate discussions which reinforce key concepts. When given interesting and motivating projects combined with a degree of challenge, most pupils develop their own ideas and improve their knowledge and skills well. For example, Year 7 pupils designed excellent powerpoint slides about their hobbies using animation techniques and sequencing, and the teacher advised and supported them closely whilst giving them freedom to develop their own ideas.
171. In less successful Year 7 lessons, learning was too slow because, without adaptation, the Keybytes course does not extend higher-attaining pupils. Little or no homework is set and pupils' work is generally unmarked, and so they do not know the level they are working at or how to improve. They have to delete a lot of their past work from computer memories as these are far too small. Sometimes pupils cannot save their work so they have to repeat it, wasting valuable time. These problems occur despite teachers' best efforts.
172. Schemes of work systematically cover all computer applications (including data logging and control which do not happen) but tasks to stretch higher attaining pupils are not in place. On a temporary basis, an experienced deputy head is managing the department competently, supported by a new part-time technician and a less experienced but enthusiastic design and technology teacher who has recently taken on co-ordinating the subject in Years 7 to 9. Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory, particularly without a full-time co-ordinator. Despite an increase in computers since the last inspection, the number is still far below recommended levels so access is very difficult for most subjects. There are plans for more computers in

several subjects, with local education authority funding. The new technician, with good industrial computer hardware experience, has already begun to find solutions to the serious problems of maintenance and repair. Several teachers are beginning training.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

From Year 7, half the pupils learn French as a first language, the other half German. The two upper sets begin a study of the other language from Year 9, with no extra time.

- Above average standards in German and girls' French but relatively lower standards in boys' French (especially in 2000).
 - Good listening and reading, good writing by higher attainers, but less confident speaking by the majority of pupils.
 - A range of teaching styles: sometimes the topic studied is so interesting that pupils happily speak the foreign language, in other lessons, too much English is spoken.
 - A small number of Year 9 boys are not particularly willing to learn a foreign language.
 - Timetable and room arrangements that make it hard for teachers to be effective.
173. In whichever language pupils have learned from Year 7 (see italics above), standards at the end of Year 9 are above average. Boys' and girls' attainment was fairly similar in 1999 but in 2000, girls' performance was higher. During the inspection, these standards were confirmed – they are an improvement on those observed at the last inspection. Attainment in GCSE German has been consistently above average for the last four years; in 2000, 68 per cent of pupils (54 per cent of boys) attained grades A*-C. Attainment in French is average and has improved recently. However, only 21 per cent of boys attained grades A*-C in 2000 compared to 69 per cent of girls.
174. Pupils' progress and achievement are good in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, they continue to be good for boys and girls in German and satisfactory for girls in French. Progress and achievement are too low for boys in French. In comparison with the standards attained in other subjects, boys' achievement is good in German and unsatisfactory in French. Girls' performance in French is also relatively not as strong as that in their other subjects. In all years, pupils' listening and reading skills are good and higher attainers write well. Overall, speaking standards are relatively low. Pupils lack instinctive responses in most situations and rely too much on notes, which holds back their fluency and does not help them to improve their accent.
175. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in over 50 per cent of lessons. Most of the good and very good teaching is in Years 7 and 8. Teachers' lesson planning often lacks detail, particularly in how the lesson will be taught. Although teachers use much French and German in class, too frequently they lapse into English and do not encourage pupils to use the foreign language enough for general conversation and communication. Too much use of word lists and grammar drills means that pupils often build up French or German sentences too slowly and are not learning to respond naturally.
176. A striking exception to this was found in a Year 7 French lesson on endangered species, where pupils spoke naturally and instinctively about animals, their habitat and the dangers which confront them. In this lesson, pupils used language to talk about a real topic which interested them and achieved good levels in the language. The fun and enjoyment in the lesson was plain to see and the level of learning was very good. There is no consistent pattern in the progress made in speaking skills; in lessons seen it ranged from unsatisfactory to very good.

177. Teaching in Year 10 is good. Teachers' planning here is better as it aims to cover aspects of language practice needed for examination success. Pupils use all four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the prescribed topics. However, teaching still relies on too much explanation in English and speaking is not taught as a means of genuine communication. In contrast, the French and German exchanges and visits give pupils interesting opportunities to practise their languages.
178. At the last inspection, teaching was described as engendering hard work, commitment and fun. The formal approach to teaching inspires and challenges the higher attainers in all years but many other pupils, particularly boys, are not committed enough; they do not find it fun to learn a foreign language, partly because of the lack of pace in the teaching style. Overall, pupils' learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Year 10. In Years 7 and 8, pupils make progress in all lessons, although they achieve less well speaking than in listening and reading. Higher attaining pupils make the best progress in writing. Girls and boys learn equally well.
179. Pupils with special educational needs learn well when they are supported by a learning assistant. When no such support is present, the progress of these pupils is often affected by the lack of materials catering for their individual abilities. In a Year 8 French lesson, a listening exercise was observed in which the range of pupil performance was from almost total understanding to a very low level of comprehension. Yet all pupils were given the same task. In Year 9, learning ranges from satisfactory to unsatisfactory. Pupils do not learn well when lessons are not planned carefully enough to engage their interest and because some of them, especially boys, do not have a good attitude and are reluctant to speak in French or German. The seeds of boys' low achievement in Years 10 and 11 are sown in this year.
180. Nevertheless, the majority learned well in the two German lessons observed in Year 10 (no French was observed). Scrutiny of work in both languages shows that good progress is made in most lessons because teaching is more challenging and most pupils have a better attitude. Progress in speaking is still less well developed than the other skills, largely because of the lack of instinctive response and the reliance on preparation. Discussing different subjects with pupils, they did not display great enthusiasm or a sense of enjoyment about learning languages.
181. Timetable arrangements for modern foreign languages are unsatisfactory. One Year 8 class has two French lessons in one morning; too little time is allowed for the introduction of the second language in Year 9 and sections of one Year 10 class (in rotation) miss their language lessons to follow an information and communication technology programme. This completely destroys any continuity in learning and makes it very difficult for the teacher. When this particular class is all present, it is also difficult for the teacher as there are 38 pupils to engage in conversation.
182. National Curriculum levels are not used enough to record pupils' progress. Marking is unsatisfactory overall because it rarely gives pupils any guidance about how to improve. It is difficult to share resources because one language room is at a considerable distance from the other three. It is unsatisfactory that pupils have to share books and during the inspection, one teacher had no access to an overhead projector. The management of the department is satisfactory and through mutual support, a good team spirit has been developed. The department's development plan identifies valuable aims but does not rank them or state how they will be achieved. This is necessary and should include ideas about how to raise boys' performance, teaching styles, sharing good practice and how teachers and pupils could speak German and French more in lessons.

MUSIC

- Wonderful new purpose-built accommodation, with a recording studio, keyboard laboratory and computers.
 - Many pupils enjoy this subject.
 - Good provision for instrumental teaching and regular choir and ensemble rehearsals.
 - Good understanding of chords and scales but less confidence in rhythm.
183. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is broadly average. In recent years, GCSE results have been high both compared nationally and with results in other subjects in the school. Thirteen Year 11 pupils have just completed their coursework and inspection findings agree with the teacher's assessment that their performing skills are average. Standards in Year 10 are also average, reflecting the musical ability of these particular pupils. With access to computers, many pupils are very adept at multi-tracking, for example, which helps them to develop the texture of their pieces. There is a high standard of instrumental playing and singing as a result of individual and group tuition. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and at least satisfactory in Year 10.
184. Most pupils acquire an understanding of chords and scales well and demonstrate this through their written and practical work on Western and Oriental music. In Year 8, group work is in progress to compose Indian music and pupils combine drone, tala and raga effectively to create their pieces, although lower attainers do not readily remember the names of the parts. The very good range of keyboard and percussion instruments helps them make authentic sounds. However, a fundamental weakness in pupils' understanding and execution of rhythm holds them back when they play together. It also distracts them from the task in hand, as was the case with groups in Year 9 who spent too long searching for the right backing beat on the keyboard. No class singing was heard during the inspection but individual pupils are confident to use singing as part of their group activities. Many pupils enjoy music and spend free time on individual practice or rehearsing together. The unusually large numbers opting to do GCSE music is also a measure of their commitment.
185. All current GCSE pupils study an instrument. A number of musically talented pupils' standard of playing is very high. These pupils have produced compositions which reflect this, and their carefully annotated commentaries show a depth of understanding which is consistent with higher final grades. Some pupils find composition more difficult but still produce worthwhile pieces at a more basic level. Most pupils use computers to produce finished scores and this proves a very valuable tool in helping with the improvement and refinement of work from initial ideas. Year 10 was observed working well in this way.
186. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory with significant strengths but also areas for improvement. The considerable expertise among the instrumental and class teachers is a source of inspiration for pupils in their music making. A Year 8 pupil achieving a very high standard on her instrument was helped to sort out a fine technical point by her teacher. Lessons are planned to give pupils clear directions about how to tackle their work. However, opportunities are missed to follow this through with a regular assessment of how well they are doing and how they can improve.
187. The value of computers to help, particularly with composing tasks, has been given careful thought and all pupils have the opportunity to develop this skill. However, not enough time is spent on teaching basic music skills which will help pupils to become successful musicians. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils were shown different ways of playing

the drum to obtain a tabla effect, but allowed to play keyboards without any checks that they were using the right fingers. Pupils have very different learning needs and a wide range of musical experience. These are not taken into account enough when work is planned so not all pupils derive the same benefit from music lessons or make the best use of the time.

188. Recently the department moved into brand new purpose-built accommodation. The head of music was widely consulted during the construction of the building and the result is excellent provision for class, individual and group music making. Careful thought and financial planning for new technology has provided a recording studio, keyboard laboratory and enough computers for class use. Moving into the new building has been a priority for the head of department during this school year. Provision for instrumental teaching and regular choir and ensemble rehearsals is good. The next stage is to consider carefully the way music is taught and assessed so that all pupils gain the maximum benefit from working in such inspirational surroundings.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

189. The good personal and social education programme covers all the essential issues that young people need to consider. External agencies are brought into the school for several topics, for example the police for drugs education. Sensitive areas, such as sex education, are taught by an effective specialist team. Materials are kept centrally in the religious education room; they are well organised but there are problems of access to this room. The materials used are fairly up-to-date but there is evidence of older worksheets being used that are somewhat dry and boring for pupils.
190. The school has provided several training days for teachers in aspects of the personal and social education programme. The overall quality of teaching is good and in almost half the lessons seen, it was very good; it was excellent in one. A variety of teaching styles are used which bring pace and stimulus to the lessons. Pupils are interested, enjoy the course and are fully involved. Their responses in group work were confident and well informed. In a Year 8 group, a teacher expertly engaged the pupils in a cheerful yet meaningful discussion on friendship.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Pupils and staff have benefited enormously from the excellent facilities provided by the new sports hall.
 - The majority of pupils really enjoy the subject, they work hard and attain at least average standards.
 - A new head of department joined the school three weeks before the inspection and two other members of staff joined the department in September.
191. Teachers' assessments in 2000 recorded average attainment at the end of Year 9. Inspection evidence confirmed this and showed that attainment in rounders and badminton is average but in cricket and athletics it is higher. Pupils come to the school in Year 7 with below average performance skills in a variety of activities, for example the majority of girls have no experience of athletics and boys have little experience of cricket. The percentage of pupils who gained A*-C grades in the 2000 GCSE physical education examinations was well above average. Boys and girls equally attained these high standards. The 2000 results were slightly better than those for 1999 and compared favourably with the results for other subjects in the school.

192. Pupils build and extend their performance skills throughout Years 7 to 9 and good progress is made by boys and girls of all abilities. By the time they reach Year 8, the majority of boys have good ball handling skills and bowl using the correct technique. By the end of Year 9, the majority of boys and girls are fit, energetic and have good stamina. They understand how to pace their middle distance running. They work constructively in small groups and pairs and encourage and support one another; the boys very competitively and the girls with a more sensitive approach.
193. When teaching was very good, pupils had opportunities to acquire new skills, to select and apply them and to evaluate their own work and that of others. However, teachers do not always manage a good balance between all these strands of the National Curriculum and consequently, pupils' evaluative skills are underdeveloped. By the end of Year 9, all pupils understand the importance of preparing themselves for exercise and do so independently and effectively because all lessons include a health and fitness section in the form of a warm-up and stretching section. This teaching strategy is an improvement to that seen at the time of the previous inspection.
194. Standards seen during the inspection indicate that Year 10 GCSE pupils are attaining above the expected level for their age. In athletics, boys have strength and stamina and a good understanding of the different types of exercise. Boys and girls have good analytical skills, shown in their written projects based on improving the performance of others. Boys' and girls' notes are well organised and presented, with very good use of technical language, so they are helpful for revision. Pupils receive a helpful presentation about the GCSE course in Year 9, a detailed plan at the start of the course and feedback on each unit of work. Thus, pupils are much more aware of their progress and what they must do to improve than they were at the time of the previous inspection.
195. Standards in core physical education lessons in Year 10 are in line with the expected levels and achievement is consistently good. Pupils have a good knowledge of health related fitness and are physically challenged by the athletics unit which covers running, throwing and jumping. Boys attain high standards in track events as do the majority of girls in the throwing events. In badminton, girls and boys are still developing their skills. They have a basic understanding of the rules but are not confident in the roles of coach or referee. These relatively lower attainment levels in badminton are because it has not been part of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 before. However, the four-court sports hall now allows it to be taught effectively from Year 7 upwards.
196. A few individual pupils and teams attain very high standards in district, county and national competitions in rugby, athletics, climbing, golf, cricket, netball and hockey. The attainment of these pupils is very high and they benefit considerably from the many opportunities offered by their teachers.
197. All teaching was at least satisfactory. Over 80 per cent was good, including 20 per cent which was very good. Teaching in athletics, girls' badminton, GCSE theory and boys' cricket lessons had some very good features. Whatever their particular abilities, pupils learn well in all years. Teachers share objectives with pupils at the start of each lesson and provide good summaries at the end, this results in well-focused learning. Teachers have good subject expertise so they give very good technique demonstrations, for example in cricket. This gives pupils a first-hand picture of the activity and shows them clearly how to improve their skills.
198. From Year 8 upwards, pupils are organised into gender and ability groups. They all make good progress. A significant factor which contributes to this progress is pupils' very good behaviour and enthusiasm for the subject; they are most receptive to

instruction and eager to learn and improve. Large numbers of pupils attend extra-curricular activities which include clubs, practices, matches, visits to sporting events and sports tours. It was a pleasure to observe boys and girls supporting and working alongside one another at the climbing club, at tennis practices and in the athletics training seen during the inspection week. Such co-operation contributes effectively to pupils' personal development.

199. The teaching plans in Years 7 to 9 lack balance, for example boys play rugby but have no opportunity to play football. A review of group size, activities offered, gender issues and setting has not been carried out recently. At present, the department does not identify opportunities to support information and communication technology (because the department has too few computers), literacy and numeracy. Teachers' marking of GCSE files does not give pupils enough written information about how they can improve their work. A start has been made in procedures to assess pupils to the new National Curriculum levels but pupils are not fully aware of the criteria and the system is still in its infancy.
200. Clearly defined health, safety and risk assessment procedures are part of the department documentation. The sports hall has a fitness suite and an indoor climbing wall as well as spacious changing facilities and a large department office. These excellent facilities have a most positive effect on pupils' learning and the ethos of the department. A dedicated room to teach the theoretical aspects of GCSE would allow teachers to use videos and computers more often. The newly appointed head of department has already identified most of these issues in his development plan.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- A dynamic and colourful department with attractive classrooms.
 - Teaching is good and pupils enjoy their lessons.
 - Work of a high standard is produced in Year 9 (higher than during the last inspection).
 - The small GCSE groups attain at least above average results. Standards have dropped for all other pupils in Years 10 and 11 because too little time is spent on this subject in Year 10, and none in Year 11. Statutory requirements are not met.
201. Pupils enter the school with a wide variation in their understanding of religious customs and beliefs. The majority make good progress and by the end of Year 9, most pupils attain the expected level in the attainment targets set out in the locally agreed syllabus. In 1999, all pupils followed the GCSE short course in Year 11 and just over half of them attained grades A*-C. This course has not continued. Now only a few pupils study the subject for GCSE (12 in Year 11 and 14 in Year 10). In 2000, four pupils attained grades A*-C which was well above average.
202. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a very good knowledge of Christianity. A Year 8 class carefully examined the contents of a typical church and could confidently describe some of the festivals and services that would take place. Pupils also have a good knowledge and understanding of the major beliefs and customs of three other religions: Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. Year 9 pupils describe such celebrations as the Jewish Passover with accuracy. Pupils use religious language and terms well. Year 7 pupils clearly understand the importance of distinguishing between myth and legend when dealing with religious stories.
203. In Years 7 to 9, progress of pupils with special educational needs is good, but it is only satisfactory for higher attainers – whilst they understand the importance of symbolism in religion and bring together ideas and concepts from various religions, they do not go on

to develop a deeper understanding of the subject. The current Year 10 GCSE group (14 pupils) has a very good knowledge of the life of Christ and the teaching of Christianity on contemporary moral issues. Pupils involve themselves fully in lessons and learn well. The good quality of teaching encourages them both to articulate their opinions clearly and to appreciate different points of views.

204. For the great majority of Year 10 pupils who do not study GCSE, the foundation that is laid in earlier years is not built upon because religious education is not taught at all in Year 11, and in Year 10, pupils only study it for a few weeks, missing other subjects whilst they do so. This arrangement is unsatisfactory. Although learning and progress are satisfactory in individual lessons, attainment and achievement are unsatisfactory overall. In lessons, Year 10 pupils develop their understanding of the way in which religious beliefs influence moral and ethical values and behaviour and they are sensitive to the beliefs and life styles of others. A Year 10 group thoughtfully discussed the issues surrounding the termination of pregnancy. However, with too little time and a limited syllabus, pupils' understanding of the beliefs and customs of the religions they have studied in earlier years is not developed. A Year 10 group found it difficult to recall any of the major elements of the religions they had covered in Years 7 to 9.
205. The quality of teaching and learning is good, particularly in Years 7 to 9. It was very good in 25 per cent of lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject, which they use to challenge pupils to produce good standards. In a Year 7 group, the teacher's well-prepared and stimulating resources resulted in a worthwhile examination of the life of Mohammed; pupils' understanding and knowledge was extended well. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to effectively stimulate and encourage pupils' involvement and to provide opportunities for their spiritual development. Skilful teaching in a Year 9 group encouraged pupils to reflect upon their own response to religious issues and so their learning was good. Relevant homework is set and marked well.
206. Within the constraints of the unsatisfactory time allocated to this subject in Years 10 and 11, the department is well managed, with clear aims and objectives. Monitoring procedures are in place and results are carefully evaluated. Whilst assessment procedures overall need to be developed, teachers have a good knowledge of the progress that pupils make and keep good records. In all the lessons seen, pupils were keenly attentive and responsive. Written work was well produced. The pride pupils take in their work was evident in the quality of wall displays in the classroom. Much of this was produced by pupils using computers at home, but the department has no computers and there was no evidence of them being used in the subject.