

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CROMER HIGH SCHOOL**

Cromer

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121209

Headteacher: Mr B D Gransden

Reporting inspector: Mr I Benson  
2739

Dates of inspection: 8 – 12 May 2000

Inspection number: 197044

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 – 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Norwich Road  
CROMER  
Norfolk

Postcode: NR27 0EX

Telephone number: 01263 511433

Fax number: 01263 515378

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr T V Nolan

Date of previous inspection: March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr I Benson	<i>Registered inspector</i>		The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs M J Kerry	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Ms C Rodney	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr J Hunt	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information technology.	
Mr C Elliott	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.	
Ms J Goodman	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art.	
Mrs L Kauffman	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology.	
Mr M Merchant	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; Vocational education	
Mr R Merryfield	<i>Team inspector</i>	History.	
Mr R Bailless	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages.	
Mr D Wigley	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music.	
Mrs G Salter-Smith	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education.	
Mrs V Elliott	<i>Team inspector</i>	Religious education.	
Mrs S Slocombe	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs.	

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants Ltd.,  
Old Garden House,  
The Lanterns,  
Bridge Lane,  
LONDON  
SW11 3AD*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>6</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This popular, mixed 11 to 16 Foundation school has 636 pupils on roll. Over 99 per cent of the pupils are white. There are 115 pupils on the register of special educational needs: an average number (24) have statements. The school is located in the north Norfolk coastal town of Cromer. It draws its pupils mainly from the surrounding area, but some also come from beyond and this provides a balanced socio-economic mix. While attainment on entry varies each year it is about the average expected for similar-aged pupils nationally. An average proportion (15 per cent) of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

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

This is an improving school. It has significant strengths in the good quality of teaching, the quality of care it provides for its pupils and in its leadership and management. Standards of attainment are improving when compared with national averages and those for similar schools. This school provides good value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 4 in relation to national standards and well above those for similar schools.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and enables pupils to make good progress.
- The school's governing body, headteacher and senior managers provide good leadership and a clear educational direction for its work.
- There are clear priorities for raising standards and a coherent strategic plan, supported by very good financial plans, to achieve the clearly identified priorities for school improvement.
- The quality of education provided and the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school: their attitudes and behaviour are good and the quality of their personal development and relationships are very good.
- Provision and support for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent and complements learning in the taught curriculum.
- The quality of information provided for parents about pupils' progress is very good.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Raising standards, especially in English in Key Stage 3.
- The highest and lowest attaining pupils lack challenge in some subjects.
- The school lacks a coherent strategy for improving standards of numeracy and the quality of teaching of basic skills.
- Individual education plans lack specific targets against which the progress of pupils with special educational needs can be measured.
- Assessment data, including the outcomes of subject assessment, is not well used for setting individual pupils targets to improve the standards and quality of their work, especially in Key Stage 3.
- Development planning at subject level does not focus sufficiently closely on improving standards.
- Make further steps towards meeting the requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1996. Significant changes have been made through the implementation of the post-inspection action plan. The use of assessment, performance and value added data has been more effectively analysed and used to raise standards, inform curriculum planning and target setting at whole school, curriculum area and individual pupil levels. Parents are now better informed about pupils' progress. The roles and responsibilities of those with management responsibility have been reviewed: plans and procedures are adopted to support and monitor school improvement. There are significant improvements in the quality of the following: the level of staff understanding of school improvement; support and guidance available for pupils to help them improve their standards through target setting; accommodation; provision of a good quality library / learning support centre. A daily act of collective worship for all pupils is still not provided.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds based on National Curriculum test results and average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
End of Key Stage 3 tests	B	D	C	C
GCSE results	C	D	B	A

<b>Key</b>	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>Average</i>	C
<i>Below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Results in the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests have fluctuated over the past three years and in 1999 were above average in science, close to the average, for all and similar schools, in mathematics and below average in English. GCSE results have also fluctuated; after a decline in 1998, they rose sharply in 1999. Following good results in their National Curriculum tests in



1997 about 51 per cent of these pupils gained five or more GCSE passes with A\* to C grades, which is above the national average. All pupils achieved grades in the A\* to G range, gained by the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. GCSE results are well above those for similar schools. The school was successful in challenging all pupils to improve their attainment levels. This is reflected in the consistent rise of the average GCSE point score, although this is at a slower rate than that nationally. The realistic and challenging targets for standards at the end of Key Stage 4 in 1999 were achieved. From the work seen during the inspection, pupils' achievements are generally in line with or, in a number of cases, better than those reported in the 1999 results. The coherent approach to raising standards of pupils' literacy is having a positive effect, although more needs to be done in the case of improving levels of numeracy.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for their work and are mature participants in the life of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are good in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development of pupils is a strong aspect of the school's work. Good-humoured yet respectful relationships support all aspects of pupils' development.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are satisfactory, with low unauthorised absence

Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. They are keen to learn and to progress, and readily take responsibility for their own learning. In class they are attentive and hard working. There are very few instances of misbehaviour, and these are well managed by staff. Pupils are very willing to take responsibility and show care for each other. The quality of relationships is high. Attendance is satisfactory and shows a consistently improving trend.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Not applicable

*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.*

Overall, teaching is good. In 16 per cent of lessons teaching is very good, in 38 per cent it is good and in 44 per cent it is satisfactory. In two of the 141 lessons observed, teaching is excellent and in one lesson in science and another in physical education it is unsatisfactory. This profile is a great improvement on that reported at the last inspection when about 20 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and the remainder was satisfactory or better. The quality of teaching is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics. In science, teaching is very good in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4. In other subjects, teaching of high quality was seen in religious education and about a fifth of it was excellent. Consistently good teaching occurred in art, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages and music in which over half was good. In all these subjects, the good teaching enables pupils to make good progress in developing knowledge,

understanding and skills and to respond to the high expectations teachers have of them. In a few lessons the learning needs of all, especially the highest and lowest attaining, pupils are not met. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and in vocational subjects was satisfactory. The good quality of the teaching enables all pupils, including those with special needs, to make good progress. Teaching benefits from teachers' good subject knowledge and lesson planning, the use of a range of teaching methods and well-designed and interesting tasks.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is of good quality and is complemented by an excellent range of well-supported extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. All pupils entitled to them have individual education plans but these lack specific targets against which to measure their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school carefully nurtures pupils' personal growth, including very good support for their moral and social development. It makes good provision for their cultural growth and offers satisfactory opportunities for spiritual development. A daily act of collective worship for all pupils is not yet provided.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school effectively promotes pupils' welfare and supports their learning, by means of well thought out systems and procedures. These are underpinned by the high quality of relationships with staff.

The good quality curriculum enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum and religious education. Strategies for improving numeracy skills are, however, unsatisfactory. Pupils have good support in their personal growth through the good personal and social education programme that includes good careers education and guidance, sex, health and drugs education. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The monitoring of attendance and behaviour is thorough. Pupils' involvement in real roles within the school promotes good behaviour. Induction arrangements are especially good. Educational guidance is of good quality, and the recently introduced tutorial interviews provide a significant opportunity for parents, pupils and staff to share information to support pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior managers provide good quality leadership and a clear educational direction for the school's work. They have helped other managers and staff to understand the process of school improvement and to involve them in the achievement of a joint endeavour to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The exemplary governing body is highly experienced, very well informed and is fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well but are still working towards meeting the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The senior management and strategic planning groups monitor effectively and regularly evaluate the school's progress towards its targets. Work is in progress to complete a quality assurance process to evaluate school effectiveness.
The strategic use of resources	Planning for the use of resources, especially financial resources, is excellent. The school gives good value for money.

Since the last inspection the reorganisation of the leadership and management of the school has introduced greater focus and rigour into school improvement, especially the raising of standards. Senior and middle managers and other staff have a coherent understanding of the school's aims, values and aspirations and are working effectively together to achieve them. Some curriculum and students directors are still moving into their new roles and are beginning to implement programmes to review the effectiveness of work in their areas. The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value very well. Financial management is of a very high standard. The school is very successful in generating additional income.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving standards and good progress.</li> <li>High expectations of work and behaviour.</li> <li>Wide range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>Effective support and guidance, supporting individuals well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrangements for homework.</li> <li>Some aspects of behaviour.</li> <li>Some aspects of information on progress.</li> </ul>

The school has a productive partnership with parents, involving and informing them in a number of effective and imaginative ways. There is good communication both formal and informal. Inspection evidence fully supported parents' positive views of the school. Concerns about homework were partially borne out in that timetabling of homework was sometimes inconsistent. However, the quality of homework set was good, and it extends pupils' learning well. The new tutorial system, once it is further refined, will provide very good information on progress for parents. Current concerns reflect the fact that the system is very new.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Pupils' attainment on entry to the school has varied over the past five years. Across the school as a whole attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected for pupils of a similar age. This is supported by the results of end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests and other tests administered soon after their arrival in Year 7. Attainment levels for individual years have, however, varied from below average to being in line with the average over the past four years.

2 In the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science, results have also fluctuated. In 1999 the National Curriculum test results showed that those for pupils gaining Level 5 or above in science were above average, in mathematics they were close to the average and in English they were well below average because of a lack of attention given to preparing pupils for the assessments. Those gaining Level 6 or above were close to the average in science and mathematics but were below average in English. Overall standards in the 1999 end of Key Stage 3 tests are now in line with those of similar schools. In English results have fluctuated over a three year period from being above the average to being now well below average. Over the same period results in mathematics have been consistently close to the average. Those for science have improved from being below average in 1996 to being above average in 1999.

3 Over the period the performance of boys and girls has changed. This is particularly marked in science where girls are now more in line with the performance of their peers nationally than was the case in 1997. That for boys remains virtually unchanged. In English, however, the performance of both boys and girls in the last two years is well below that of their gender group nationally.

4 When taking account of results in relation to similar schools, the performance of those pupils gaining National Curriculum Level 5 or above in science is well above average, in mathematics it is above average and in English it is well below average. There is a similar picture when considering those gaining National Curriculum Level 6 or above.

5 The standards achieved in the end of Key Stage 3 tests are generally influenced by pupils' attainment on entry. However, in science pupils have benefited from good quality teaching and a rigorous approach to learning and to the rigorous monitoring of their attainment and progress. The standards seen in English lessons are close to the average as are those in mathematics. In English the improvement in standards since the 1999 National Curriculum tests is encouraged by a more systematic approach to the development of literacy skills. In mathematics standards are typical of those of a similar age nationally.

6 In other subjects standards seen were above those expected for pupils of a similar age in geography, history, modern foreign languages and music and in line with expectations in art, design and technology, information technology and physical education. The standards seen in religious education were well above the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus.

7 At the end of Key Stage 4 the attainment of pupils is above average. In the 1999 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades in the A\* to C range was above the national average. The proportion of those gaining five or more, and one or more grades in the A\* to G range was very high. These results reflect the high standards reached by the same pupils at the end of Key Stage 3, in 1997. GCSE results have fluctuated; after a decline in 1998 in the proportion of pupils gaining grades in the A\* to C range, they rose sharply in 1999. There has, however, been a gradual improvement in the proportion of A\* to G grades and in the average GCSE / GNVQ points score. This rise is at a slower rate than that nationally. However, the average points score is above the national average and well above the average for similar schools.

8 GCSE performance shows that the proportion of pupils gaining grades in the A\* to C range in 1999 was well above the national average in science, in line with the average in mathematics and close to the average in English. However, when results are analysed in relation to end of Key Stage 3 performance in 1997, some higher attaining pupils did slightly less well in these subjects and did not reach the highest grades that might have been expected of them. When compared with those for similar schools, results in both English and mathematics were average and those in science were well above average.

9 First hand inspection evidence, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils show that current achievements at Key Stage 4 are similar to those reached in the 1999 GCSE examinations. In many cases standards are in line with or above the average and are better than those reported at the last inspection. In English and mathematics standards being achieved are in line with the average while in science they are above average. In history and religious education standards are well above average, in art and geography they are above average, but in design and technology, information technology, modern foreign languages and physical education they are in line with the average. In both history and religious education standards being achieved benefit from good quality teaching as well as high levels of challenge and expectation. The practice of beginning GCSE projects in Key Stage 3 has raised standards in religious education in both key stages, enabling pupils in Year 9 and 10 to be successful in gaining grades in the A\* to C range in their early entry to the GCSE examination.

10 Since the last inspection the school has increasingly made more effective use of the outcomes of standardised and other tests, as well of external analyses of assessment data, to establish benchmarks for each pupil and to track their attainment and progress. The better quality information now being shared by partner primary schools has contributed to this process. The targets set for the end of Key Stage 4 in 2000 and 2001 are realistic and achievable, especially when reflecting on the standards seen during the current inspection. The procedure for setting departmental targets is now established and each pupil in Year 11 has target minimum grades. The school's approach to raising standards has involved setting individual targets for each pupil, working with them all to improve their work as well as their potential GCSE grades.

11 The school's literacy policy expects each subject to focus on an identified literacy strand each half term. Year 7 pupils with low reading ages are targeted to receive additional booster lessons and short but intensive tuition to improve their reading skills. Homework planners contribute to pupils' developing their vocabulary and improving their spellings: they record and use new words and word banks. Speaking and listening skills are good in all subjects. Most

of the pupils speak confidently and take part in group work, whole class discussions, as well as question and answer sessions. Oral skills are used in a range of areas, including making deductions and comparisons, presenting hypotheses, debating and presenting evidence for and against a proposition.

12 Reading skills are emphasised across the curriculum and pupils read aloud in some subjects while others have dedicated time for developing research skills. Most pupils read fluently, expressively and with understanding. Specific subject vocabulary is reinforced in a range of subjects.

13 A limited range of writing skills is well promoted in most subjects. In design and technology writing frames are used throughout Key Stage 3 and pupils write for different purposes and audiences. Pupils do extended writing, including descriptive and evaluative work in geography, history, religious education and science. The process of writing, including planning drafting, revising and editing work is not widely practised across the curriculum. The majority of pupils produce legible handwriting and spell reasonably well, but spelling is not always corrected in marking done by subject teachers. It is, however, emphasised in music.

14 Only limited action has been taken to raise the numeracy skills of those pupils who require this. Although some use is made of numeracy in subjects such as design and technology, science and geography, its use in most subjects is limited. However, the school has recognised that the numeracy skills of some pupils require improvement. It is currently developing a whole school strategy designed to raise these standards and, in this connection, good links have been developed with local primary schools.

15 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially in literacy skills. Considering their prior attainment, their achievements are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4.

16 Most of the pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment of entry. They benefit from good quality teaching in some subjects. For example the good quality teaching in science, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages and religious education enables pupils to gain good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills, and to respond to the high expectations teachers have of them. In other subjects high achievement is promoted and the teaching enables pupils to respond enthusiastically to the learning. Where the teaching is less effective pupils do not achieve as well as they could, as insufficient challenge is provided.

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

17 Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for their work and are mature participants in the life of the school. Standards of behaviour are good and this is a strong aspect of the school's practice that has been maintained since the last inspection.

18 In nearly three-quarters of lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good or better. In only a very small proportion of less than 3 per cent were they not acceptable. Thus, in the vast majority of lessons, pupils are attending to their work, taking a pride in it and contributing to the learning of the whole class, as well as themselves. Although attitudes and behaviour are slightly better amongst the older pupils in Key Stage 4 than amongst younger pupils, standards throughout the school are still good.

19 Pupils across the range of attainment are attentive listeners, enthusiastic learners and active participants. They are keen to improve their skills, techniques and performances, and to this end they pay close heed to what teachers are saying or demonstrating. They become absorbed in their work, for example, in religious education when a class was discussing the meaning of God. In pair work there is good co-operation and sharing of resources as a basis for successful collaborative working.

20 Most pupils are progressing towards being independent learners and readily take responsibility for organising themselves with the help of their planner. In subjects where it is required, they undertake research sensibly. Where they have the opportunity, pupils will show initiative, in setting up and tuning instruments in music, for example, or in selecting apparatus and designing experiments in science. Where they are given less responsibility in lessons they inevitably show less confidence and initiative.

21 In the very small minority of lessons where behaviour is not satisfactory there is usually a specific cause. In the case of a Year 11 group that was de-motivated, the school recognised the problem some time ago and has taken steps to improve the quality of provision. Some other instances of unsatisfactory behaviour arose in lessons that were split across morning break-time, although such problems were by no means always linked with split lessons. On several occasions, pupils were not punctual to lessons.

22 Around the school pupils behave sensibly and courteously in congested corridors and in negotiating the many doors. They are polite and considerate to visitors. Relationships between all sections of the school community are very constructive and positive, with good humour and genuine interest as key characteristics. The ability to maintain good relationships, even with some difficult pupil groups, is often demonstrated by staff. Although there are instances of bullying, the school is well aware where these are taking place and takes steps to contain, control and reduce such behaviour. Younger pupils, especially, are extremely confident that the school deals most effectively with bullying.

23 Exclusions are average for a school of this size, properly documented and with a suitable balance being achieved between the needs of the individual and the group.

24 Pupils of all ages have welcomed the new target setting and interviews and are eager to manage their own learning and improve their progress. There is a strong commitment to breadth of activity, shown by the high take-up of extra-curricular activities as well as support for specific events such as a sponsored sports marathon.

25 As pupils progress through the school they become increasingly mature members of the community. They are able to take significant responsibility, such as their involvement in the appointment of a new member of staff, when they posed searching questions. Older pupils are willing to help and support younger ones, both informally but also through specific schemes such as the newly introduced Year 11 mentoring. Pupils' personal development is a strong feature of the school's practice.

26 Attendance levels have increased over the past three years and are broadly in line with the national averages. Currently they are above average and the trend is one of sustained improvement. Due to rigorous follow-up measures, levels of unauthorised absence are low. The

school has worked hard with individual pupils, resulting in improvement overall, although poor attendance persists for some. Two of the year groups have an attendance level of below 90 per cent for this academic year, including Year 11, an issue raised in the last report. Attendance is therefore satisfactory.

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

27 The quality of teaching is good overall. It was at least satisfactory in nearly 99 per cent of the 141 lessons seen during the inspection. In 16 per cent of lessons teaching quality was very good, in 38 per cent it was good and in 44 per cent it was satisfactory. In two lessons teaching was excellent, but in another two it was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is stronger in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3 teaching in 55 per cent of lessons was good or better, including some that was excellent, in comparison with 53 per cent of teaching that was good or better and none that was excellent in Key Stage 4. In both key stages there was one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory. This teaching profile shows a considerable improvement since the last inspection when about 80 per cent of the teaching was at least satisfactory; about 40 per cent was good or very good and in about 20 per cent it was unsatisfactory.

28 Teaching is of consistently good quality across the majority of subjects. In English well over half of the teaching is good or very good while in science over four-fifths was good or very good, but with one lesson where it was unsatisfactory. Teaching in mathematics was more modest where it was good in nearly a third of lessons and in the remainder was satisfactory. In other subjects consistently good teaching was seen in design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, art and music, in all of which over half was good or better and none was unsatisfactory. Teaching was consistently of exceptionally high quality in religious education where just over a quarter was very good and about a fifth was excellent. Teaching in vocational courses is satisfactory overall, but half of it is good. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve teaching quality as part of the drive to raise standards of achievement. The school's success in improving teaching is clear, as is the impact it has on both standards and the quality of learning in lessons.

29 Pupils' learning benefits from the very good subject knowledge of their teachers and the good quality of the lesson planning. In most lessons teachers use their subject expertise and lesson planning to enable pupils to acquire knowledge and develop understanding and skills. Pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm to the obvious commitment and interest teachers have for their subject. As a result, in both English and science, for example, pupils maintain concentration and make good progress as they explore the subject matter in small groups or pairs. Similarly in Key Stage 3 religious education lessons pupils develop knowledge and understanding of a variety of religious traditions that are enthusiastically shared with them by their teacher. There are, however, a few occasions when teachers' subject expertise is not always consistently well used. In the one physical education lesson, when teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils undertook three athletics activities one after the other with little opportunity for warm-up, instruction or practice. Subject knowledge, in this instance, did not inform the planning either for pupils' progress or for the further improvement of their skills.

30 Most of the effective lesson plans ensure that learning is appropriately sequenced, meets pupils' needs and provides good opportunities for them to make appropriate progress. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils: this provides both purpose and focus for the work and enables them to become more involved in their learning. When this was not the case, for instance in one



English lesson, pupils slackened their pace of work and lost interest when they were unclear about the learning objectives and could not see links between the series of activities they were asked to undertake.

31 In a large number of lessons teachers use a good range of teaching methods in order to share and explore the learning with pupils. The use of a variety of methods and, occasionally, media helped to interest, motivate and excite pupils to pursue their studies and to enjoy the challenge of finding things out for themselves. Pupils in a Year 7 English lesson, for instance, soon gained an understanding of the role of the oral tradition in the origin of myths and legends by using Chinese whispers to illustrate the point. Many lessons provide pupils with a range of opportunities to explore their learning. Usually this encourages pupils to develop an intense interest in the subject matter. In such cases pupils' progress is well supported by their enthusiastic responses to questions, tasks and learning resources. In some lessons the level of challenge creates a frisson of excitement and much purposeful and productive activity in the interesting tasks that pupils undertake. In Key Stage 4 art lessons, for example, pupils become animated and excited in discussion with their teacher as they explore art and artists, while considering and planning their own pieces. There are occasions, however, when the teaching does not stimulate interest, makes insufficient demands or fails to provide well-paced opportunities to enable good progress to be made. For example in a Year 10 mathematics lesson pupils were allowed to work too long on a task without being offered further challenge, so that their concentration waned and interest was lost.

32 In many lessons where teaching is good, the teacher's use of purposeful questions, well-designed tasks and group work provide opportunities to challenge and develop pupils' thinking. The good use of questioning in English consolidates previous learning and enables good progress to be made, while in mathematics, science, design and technology and many modern language lessons it is a means of involving all pupils in the learning, providing challenge and checking their level of understanding. There are occasions, in some modern language lessons, for example, when the use of lengthy question sessions can result in passivity and lack of motivation for those pupils not involved. Group and pair work is used successfully in some subjects, for example modern foreign languages and science, to explore practical aspects of the lesson content: this contributes positively to pupils' progress.

33 Pupils often work very productively in lessons, usually on their own but also in pairs. Most of them have a lively interest in their learning, are keen to explore well presented ideas and the pace of their work is maintained by meaningful tasks and carefully chosen resources. In a few lessons the learning needs of all pupils, including those with special education needs, are not fully met. In some cases the materials and resources chosen are inappropriate for the lower-attaining pupils, and in others there are worksheets that fail to stimulate and provide challenge for the most able. Many pupils choose to use information technology to prepare projects, log data and word-process extended assignments. However, in only a few cases is it used as an integral part of the lesson to support learning in, for example, mathematics, science, history and design and technology.

34 Pupils are generally well managed in lessons. They enjoy good relationships among themselves and with their teachers and they respond positively to the high expectations and levels of challenge provided. In only a few lessons, where the pace of work and level of challenge was not sustained throughout, did pupils make insufficient progress, lose interest and become restless.

35 Homework is generally well used to maintain pupils' involvement in their work as well as to extend their understanding. The well-formulated, purposeful and relevant tasks set take a variety of forms including, for example, projects that are extended over a period of weeks, consolidation of learning exercises or reading, research and preparation for further learning. Homework of especially good quality was seen in English, science, design and technology, geography, history, modern foreign languages and religious education.

36 Since the last inspection a more effective effort has been made to monitor pupils' attainment and progress through the whole school assessment process. At subject level, the quality of day-to-day marking varies. In most cases work is carefully marked, with useful comment that highlights strengths and weaknesses in the work, and marks or grades to indicate the standard achieved. Pupils are clear about how well they are doing in the majority of subjects and, where the marking is particularly helpful, they know what needs to be done to raise the standard of their work. They are less clear about how well they are doing in physical education because they do not know the criteria being used. In science and mathematics written work is treated to detailed scrutiny and helpful comment, some teachers do not keep records of individual pupils' completion of work. In science detailed records are held for the end of unit tests and, in mathematics, for assessments at the end of each half term. These are systematically analysed and the outcomes inform the planning of further learning. In English not all work is marked in detail and comments are often too brief to enable pupils to identify what they can do to improve both the quality and standard of their work.

37 Pupils with special educational needs, as well as many of those that are able and gifted learners, are well taught and make good progress. The school's arrangements for setting are effective in enabling many of their learning needs to be met, although in some subjects, for example mathematics and science, the highest-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently well challenged. The learning needs of those who have special education needs are generally known. However, targets in many of the individual education plans lack specificity and are not helpful in the identification of materials and tasks to enable all pupils to make good progress. Not all curriculum areas, for instance physical education, have copies of pupils' individual education plans.

38 The quality of teaching of basic skills is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 3 English lessons, the planning of teaching and learning builds on the experience pupils have had of the Literacy Hour, and progress in the development of reading and writing skills is marked. The whole school approach to literacy has ensured that many subject areas have adopted a positive approach to, for example, the accurate use and spelling of technical terms in pupils' oral and written contributions to learning. There is not yet, however, a coherent approach to marking across the curriculum that takes account of the use and development of literacy. There is an elementary use of number in subjects such as counting in modern foreign languages, a more sophisticated and practical use in science, design and technology and geography as well as the development of an understanding of concepts such as chronology in both English and history. In all lessons where number is used it is an integral part of pupils' learning. There is still a need in most subjects, however, for the basic numeracy skills to be more coherently developed.

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

39 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum designed to meet the needs of pupils including those with special educational needs. The curriculum, that was deemed to have some shortcomings, has been revised since the last inspection. The length of the taught week falls within the recommended range for secondary schools. The new timetable is based on 18 modules a day, each lasting for 20 minutes. The timetable is highly innovative and provides flexibility to meet the subject specific needs in, for example, design and technology and modern foreign languages. It is also effective in securing appropriate times for daily routine tasks such as form periods, registration, assembly and personal development.

40 The modular structure has enabled some subjects to have time allocations closer to those recommended nationally, but there are time constraints for teaching some National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Problems arise in a two-module lesson when morning break falls at the end of the first module: this has an impact on the continuity of pupils' learning and progress and occurs in some English, geography and music lessons. There is a loss of curriculum time in music because of movement to and from the main hall for lessons. There is also an uneven distribution of time between the various sets in a subject. This is apparent in art, design and technology, geography, music and religious education.

41 At Key Stage 3 all National Curriculum subjects plus drama, personal, social and health education and religious education constitute the curriculum. Pupils study three modern foreign languages, French, German and Spanish. The extensive language provision enables the school to ensure that the lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to two languages and the time for a third is used for improving their literacy skills.

42 In Key Stage 4, pupils are provided with a combination of courses. The core provision of English, mathematics, science, physical education, religious education, personal, social and health education forms the basis of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Pupils can select additional subjects from a list of options. Pathways leading to alternative accreditation are also provided. These include the Certificate of Achievement in modern foreign languages, history and religious education. Good quality provision for GNVQ Part 1 courses is currently offered at foundation and intermediate levels in health and social care and leisure and tourism.

43 There is a whole school literacy policy that ensures each department focuses sharply on a strand of the literacy strategy each half term. However, there is no formal monitoring of the effects of this on standards. There is not a formal policy for numeracy but, in order to improve standards, the mathematics department is developing a range of strategies as well as a policy statement. The school recognises the potential for further developing information and communication technology across the curriculum.

44 The provision for the lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. The school has responded positively to their needs by broadening the curriculum to include relevant courses that match their level of attainment. All pupils have full access to the National Curriculum. For a small number of pupils the requirements of some National Curriculum subjects are lifted. The

arrangements made for these pupils meet their learning needs and ensures that the support and provision enables each of them to build on identified strengths. In spite of the sound planning and provision for pupils with special needs, not all subject areas have a policy or a strategy for developing and using individual educational plans in the planning of their work.

45 The school has a full and rich personal, social and health education programme taught by form tutors in both key stages. There are suitable arrangements for specialists and trained visitors to play an active role in teaching the course. The provision for careers education is good. An effective foundation is laid for Key Stage 3 pupils. In Key Stage 4, the extensive programme includes a careers convention involving local businesses, career interviews, preparation for work experience and mock interviews, using local businesses to work with Year 11 pupils. The work experience for Year 10 pupils is good.

46 The governing body is fully aware of curriculum changes and takes an active interest in all subject areas. The school consults parents about curricular issues and analyses the findings to gauge and respond to their needs. The restructuring of parents' consultation evenings and the use of curriculum evenings provide parents with important insights into standards, teaching, learning and progress experienced by their own children. The school has very good working relationships with partner primary schools and local providers of further education. They work together on, for instance, the National Literacy Strategy, teacher exchanges and in-service training. All departments, in particular mathematics, geography and music, have effective curriculum links. Pupils' learning is also enriched by good links with the local community. These strong links include working with local businesses to provide industrial experience for pupils from Year 9 onwards and, in extension week, for pupils to work with community groups.

47 A wide range of well-supported extra-curricular activities contributes to pupils' personal development, interests and achievements. There are extensive musical and sports activities. Additional after-school clubs extend to information technology, chess, art, food technology, military history and role-play and mathematics. The range of activities is further broadened during extension week when pupils can select and develop particular interests. There is equality of access to these activities. There are organised trips to Europe and geographical and environmental working trips to places of relevant local and national interest. Work is also organised with local charities. The school is presently introducing evening classes in Japanese and Chinese art and culture.

48 The statutory requirements for the curriculum, including the provision of religious education in both key stages, are met. Improvements since the last inspection include a review of the curriculum, although further consideration is needed as imbalances remain. There are now much improved links with sixth form and further education colleges, provision of appropriate courses for middle- and lower-attaining pupils, as well as strategies being developed in most departments to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with a special educational need. Overall, progress in the provision of curricular and other opportunities is good.

49 The school provides good support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and it succeeds in promoting positive values, attitudes and high personal aspirations. Support for pupils' moral and social development has improved since the last inspection.

50 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. In the three assemblies each week pupils consider a range of spiritual, moral and social values. During the inspection, for instance, the whole school was encouraged to reflect on how, if they were to be effective and successful human beings, each of them needs the support of friends, parents and others. Although the standard of the content and the quality of the provision has improved since the last inspection, the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils is still not met. Some subjects contribute effectively to spiritual development. In the high quality religious education lessons pupils gain insights into different beliefs and an awareness of how different faiths are practised. Empathy is promoted in history through consideration of the fight for women's rights. Other subjects, such as English, art and music, contribute to pupils' sense of aesthetic appreciation. Pupils' positive values are also encouraged by other school activities such as fund raising to support an African student.

51 Pupils' moral development is promoted very well. This is achieved through the high expectations of their behaviour, the positive code of conduct and systems for rewarding achievement. There is effective opportunity in different lessons for pupils to discuss a good range of contemporary moral issues. In geography, for example, pupils debated arguments relating to the destruction of the rain forests. In food technology, pupils learned more about vegetarianism by exploring animal rights issues, drawing on current news items. Science lessons enable pupils to become more aware of the moral dimension of, for example, genetically modified foods. Other subjects including English, religious education and history also contribute well. As a result of this very good provision pupils of all ages are developing a sense of moral responsibility.

52 Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Adults are positive role models, there is strong support for individual needs in form and year groups and pupils clearly know to whom they can go for help. Pupils undertake group work in many subjects and they learn to take care of equipment in practical subjects. There are many opportunities for them to take responsibility. A notable example of this is the way in which a panel of pupils took part in staff appointment interviews. Pupils are also able to represent others' views on the school council, although not all of them are made fully aware of what has been discussed. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities greatly enhances pupils' development of personal and social skills.

53 The support for pupils to grow in understanding of their own and other cultures is good. This is through the strong programmes in creative arts, in English and by the programme of visits and exchanges abroad. The school is sensitive to the need to widen pupils' cultural experience beyond that of rural Norfolk. The annual extension week enables many to travel beyond the locality. During the inspection, Year 7, one third of whom had never visited London, visited the science museum. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is raised in some lessons. History, for instance, draws on the culture of the North American Plains Indians and geography on the cultures of Kenya and Brazil. The school has identified the need to do still more to help pupils to prepare for life in a culturally diverse society.

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

54 The school effectively promotes pupils' welfare and has introduced a potentially very powerful system of academic monitoring. There has been good progress on the key issue, identified at the last inspection, of increasing the amount and quality of meaningful feedback to pupils on their learning.

55 The tutorial interview is a major development in increasing the feedback to pupils. It already gives a comprehensive overview of pupil attitudes, attendance and performance, which can be shared and discussed with both pupil and parents through the performance profile. Because the system is fairly new subject information is not yet fully integrated, although it does inform the discussions. Further refinement will improve the information available. There is good use of student self-evaluation during the preparation for interviews.

56 Pupils welcome and find helpful the regular target-setting sessions they have with their tutors. The targets resulting from these interviews focus on generic learning skills and attitudes, rather than being specific to a particular subject. Within curriculum areas, most are at an early stage with target setting for individual pupils and targets are either not set or are very general.

57 Pupils with special educational needs are well monitored and reviewed through testing, the local education authority audit and teacher assessment. Learning support assistants monitor the progress pupils make in literacy. Annual reviews, as well as reviews of individual education plans, are carried out regularly and well. The targets on individual education plans, however, are not sufficiently detailed to allow progress to be measured and monitored, to review the support needed and to inform the planning of future work. Although some work remains to be done, there has been good progress on implementing the code of practice since the last inspection.

58 Assessment practice within curriculum areas is overall satisfactory, although within each area there are specific strengths and weaknesses. Some departments do not make much use of assessment data to inform curriculum planning. In others, such as physical education, analysis of examination results has led to changes in approach and syllabus that have in turn led to improved results. In science there is very good monitoring of pupil performance, with records being used to set long and short-term targets. There is now much marking which is helpful and gives clear pointers on improvements, especially in history and science. Reports have improved significantly since the last inspection. At whole school level, there is good use of data, for example, to identify early a group of potentially disaffected pupils and plan an appropriate curriculum for them, based on a clear inclusion rationale.

59 Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare are good and there is effective support from individual staff members, as well as from the tutorial system. There is particularly good support for pupils at times of transition. The induction for Year 7 pupils stretches over three days and includes an opportunity for parents to come to school with their children. This means that pupils feel very well prepared, and parents have confidence that pupils will settle well into their new school. Guidance on option choices is good and pupils appreciate the fact that there is some possibility of change, should a choice prove to be mistaken.

60 Procedures for health and safety are satisfactory. There has recently been a major review of this area, as a result of which a new policy has been circulated, and measures to implement it are very nearly complete. Governors are properly involved, informed and trained to meet their responsibilities. Practice within curriculum areas is generally good, although there is insufficient formal risk assessment in physical education. The guidance for pupils, however, especially in athletics, is good.

61 Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The current procedures for child protection demonstrate an appropriate level of understanding and knowledge. Staff awareness is raised through briefings and on induction. There has not, however, been recent training for the co-ordinator, nor for the whole staff, although there is no indication

that they are not well aware of the signs of abuse or neglect. Written guidance in the staff handbook contains only limited information.

62 The involvement of pupils in real responsibilities promotes good behaviour. The rewards system also has a very positive effect for pupils right across the age range. Where behaviour is a cause for concern there is effective monitoring and, usually, successful action. Thus bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour are kept under control. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are well supported by the behaviour support team. The relationships between staff and pupils enable difficult situations to be pre-empted or defused before they get out of hand.

63 The monitoring of individual attendance is thorough. Follow-up by staff, both form tutors and student directors is good, supported by highly effective work from administrative staff. There is good liaison with the education welfare service.

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

64 Parents are well satisfied with the school and identify significant strengths in major areas of the school's work. Both the parents' meeting and questionnaire indicated that they recognise good teaching, good progress, improving standards, good extra-curricular provision and effective support and guidance. Expectations of both behaviour and work are seen to be high and members of staff are seen as approachable. Satisfaction has also been expressed through the school's own surveys. Inspection evidence fully supports these positive views.

65 A minority of parents feel some concern about behaviour in class and 26 per cent of those returning the questionnaire express dissatisfaction with homework arrangements. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations and written documentation, shows that there are instances of poor behaviour, but that these are well managed by the school. A proper balance is struck between individual and group needs.

66 Parental concern about homework is partially borne out by the evidence. Although homework is timetabled, it is inconsistent in amount, making it hard for pupils to manage their time. However, the quality of homework set in class, its relevance and role in extending pupils' learning is good, and pupils themselves appreciate the value of the tasks which they are set. Recently a questionnaire has been posted to all parents inviting them to contribute to a survey about homework, and nearly half the parents have assisted the school with their experiences.

67 The quality of information provided for parents is very good. There is a variety of effective channels for consultation and feedback, both formal and informal. Reports have improved since the last inspection and now generally provide parents with a clear picture of what their children can do and how they are progressing. There is still variability between subjects in the precision of comments and, sometimes, no indication of areas to improve. There are some areas of good practice, for example science, where reports read well even though they are generated from statement banks. Other written information, such as the prospectus and governors' annual report, are readable, attractively presented and informative.

68 The new system of tutor consultations has the potential to provide parents with a range of information about progress, attitudes and attendance. The performance profiles, which underlie the discussion, are a useful tool. The system needs further refinement, especially the input of subject information. It is a good development that should further improve the picture parents

receive of their child. Parents have good opportunities to discuss concerns, as well as positive contact about achievements and successes.

69 Parental support for, and understanding of, children's education is obtained in a variety of ways. There are frequent and imaginative curriculum evenings, for example, and an opportunity for Year 7 parents to spend a whole day in school. This helps parents understand what their children are experiencing. Parents in turn give their support to the school by helping on trips, acting as parent governors or supporting the friends association. As a result of the school's persistent efforts, many parents are well involved, although some remain unresponsive. Overall, parents make a good contribution to their children's learning.

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

70 The school is fortunate in enjoying a high quality of leadership provided by its governors, the headteacher and senior managers. Their analytical and questioning approach, exemplified in the systematic and thoughtful work of the headteacher, has been the keystone in the process of school improvement.

71 The headteacher and his senior management group have worked hard to ensure that all members of staff now have a high level of understanding of the school's aim and objectives. This strategic work has been built on the clear educational rationale for raising standards and extending the aspirations of the pupils and their parents. All staff members have been able to contribute to the implementation of policies and strategies and the development of practice to achieve this major objective.

72 The good quality middle managers are becoming increasingly effective in leading their teams, sharing good practice, analysing and using data and in monitoring the quality of provision. A small number, however, do not yet undertake a regular programme of lesson observation and some development plans do not explicitly include clear strategies for raising standards, including attainment.

73 The main focus of senior management group meetings has been to monitor progress in raising standards and in planning strategically for future development. The coherence of this process and the opportunities provided at both senior and middle management levels to monitor the quality and impact of the strategy have ensured good progress to future stages.

74 The school now uses performance and assessment data more effectively to establish whole school, subject area and individual pupil targets. This development has been influential in educating staff, governors and pupils, as well as for developing systems to set long and short-term targets for future standards of achievement.

75 The monitoring of pupils' performance is now firmly established at whole school and subject levels through the use of two information systems – one for Key Stage 3 (MIDYIS) and the other for Key Stage 4 (YELLIS). Both of these analyses have been influential in providing information about the likely performance of pupils based on prior attainment. Further work is being developed at Key Stage 3 and a wider range of assessment and monitoring information will be used as pupils move through the school. The work of the senior management and strategic planning groups is informed by the external data as well as internal assessment information about individual pupils. It enables them to set annual challenging and realistic end of Key Stage 4



targets for GCSE results. The targets for 1999 GCSE results were very close to those achieved. Parents' consultation evenings in Key Stage 4 are now also informed by assessment data and discussions about the pupil's attitude to work, attendance and other issues. Performance data is well used in Key Stage 4 and is being further developed in Key Stage 3.

76 The work undertaken by senior managers, with curriculum and student directors, has focused on raising standards. More effective systems have been implemented for monitoring attainment and progress as well as standards in other areas of work. The quality of teaching and learning and the analysis of standards pupils achieve have been the focus of regular classroom observations by senior managers. The triennial subject area reviews, peer observation and a regular programme of lesson observation by some curriculum directors complements the whole school monitoring process. The outcomes of regular lesson observation by curriculum directors have a significant impact on other aspects of the subject area's work.

77 Since the last inspection, the senior management group has worked hard in re-organising the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs. All statutory requirements are fully met and the management of pupils with special educational needs is good. The teaching and learning support assistants are well supported by the student directors who undertake the role of special education needs co-ordinators in each year group.

78 The governing body, senior management and strategic planning groups, as well as curriculum and student directors and their teams, all contribute to the annual updating of the school's management and development plan. The plan has strategic and operational dimensions, identifies clear educational priorities and targets, takes account of both short and longer-term objectives and is complemented by strategic planning for finance, the curriculum, staff development and the deployment of resources. The whole school plans are effective management tools and are used by governors and senior managers in their monitoring of school improvement. A major target in the current school development plan is to devise and undertake formal evaluation of the impact of decisions and the implementation of development plan targets on standards and the quality of education provided.

79 The exemplary governing body is a highly experienced and very well informed group that is fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has an outstanding record of the effective management of change and of its diminishing resources. Its work is extremely well organised and managed by its highly effective chairman and vice chairman through the committees and detailed scheme of delegation. The school's aims and objectives inform their discussions and decision-making. Governors visit the school regularly and monitor its work at first hand. They also monitor the school's work through the regular reports and outcomes of departmental reviews, analyses of assessment and value-added data as well as through the results of questionnaires and regular meetings with parents and encounters with pupils. Full governing body and committee meetings as well as regular school visits all include extremely well planned opportunities for the training and induction of new governors.

80 Governors take a strategic overview of the school, act as its critical friend and take steps to ensure they fulfil their statutory functions. The key issues identified in the last inspection report have been given detailed attention and the resulting action plan has brought about far reaching changes in the school's practice on a number of fronts. The most influential changes are resulting in the raising of standards. The governing body is working towards fully meeting the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

81 There is satisfactory provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the deployment of staff, especially in the use of non-specialist teachers. The well-founded programme of induction, further education, training and development supports all staff, meets the needs of individuals and supports the implementation of the school's planning priorities. This complements the coherent approach within the Investors In People programme. Imaginative use is made of limited funds by, for example by the increased provision of in-house training, the sharing of good practice through team meetings and opportunities in the local authority in-service training programme. Training for middle managers, linked to gaining credits for further university study, has proved successful and attracted members from a neighbouring school. The form of appraisal used is effective: it helps individual staff to identify and meet their development needs.

82 The school has made significant improvements to many parts of the accommodation since the last inspection and some subjects now enjoy very good facilities located in suites of adjacent rooms. Despite much energy and commitment to improving the accommodation, and the major achievement of reducing the number of mobile classrooms, there still remain some areas of poor quality. Across the school, however, very good quality display supports pupils' learning. Overall there is adequate accommodation to enable the current curriculum to be taught.

83 Learning resources are now adequate for the school's curriculum. The school devotes a greater proportion of its budget to resources for departments than most schools. Subject areas are generally well equipped with learning aids, although there are insufficient video and tape recorders for English and a lack of up-to-date computer facilities for music. Most subjects have sufficient textbooks, although there are some deficiencies in physical education and religious education. The learning resource centre provides a good central resource that is well used by classes and by individuals, including after school. It houses satisfactory collections of books for most subjects. However, current provision for science, information technology and religious education is limited. There is good provision of computer hardware and software and good access to the INTERNET. The range of CD-ROMs is limited.

84 The school expresses its educational priorities clearly through the school development plan that is properly linked to budgeting and spending decisions. Financial resources are actively managed by the business manager with a flair and commercial acumen that benefits pupils by ensuring that the minimum resource is expended for the maximum benefit. The school is particularly successful in generating additional income from grants, lettings and every other available source. Other resources, such as time and accommodation, are also flexibly and imaginatively managed.

85 Governors are very well involved in the strategic management of finances and have a good understanding of the important issues facing the school. The high quality information that they receive, such as costed options on management restructuring for example, means that they are enabled to fulfil their strategic and monitoring role very successfully. Forward planning is excellent, enabling the school to operate within a framework of predictions that can be refined gradually as uncertainties are resolved.

86 The school has recently managed the transition from Grant Maintained to Foundation status extremely successfully, within a context of slim financial margins. The daily procedures are very well administered. Financial control is very good, with the school choosing to keep the full audit function and role of responsible officer. This gives confidence to all concerned about the financial systems and enables finance staff to have information about evolving financial practice.

87 The school has given consideration to the application of the principles of best value, many of which have been a part of their practice for some considerable time. There is a high degree of analytical challenge on the use of resources. An interesting example of this is the use of the modular timetable. Despite some infelicities in implementation, this is a sophisticated way of considering a range of issues, curricular, logistical and relating to the school's provision for personal development. It is a powerful tool in trying to obtain the best use of a scarce resource, time, in meeting a highly complex pattern of needs. Other ways of evaluating the use of resources and ensuring effective targeting are in place. The use of resources in providing, for example, extra-curricular activities is set against the take-up rate and the perceived benefits to pupils. There is also early use of information on potentially disaffected pupils to enable resources to be best used to meet their needs.

88 The school regularly compares its academic results and standards with national comparators. When available, the Funding Agency for Schools finance comparative information was regularly used. Now that this is not possible the business manager is involved in developing financial benchmarks working with a group of other schools. There are financial procedures in place for competitive tendering, market testing and the evaluation of in-house and bought-in service.

89 Regular consultation with parents through surveys, as well as through informal feedback, and with pupils through the school council or on specific projects such as canteen refurbishment, means that the school has good information on the views and needs of those who use its provision. Taking all these areas together, the school applies the principles of best value very well.

90 The school is effective, with good achievement, improving attainment, increasing attendance and good standards of behaviour. It has made good progress since the last inspection. The management of resources, especially financial, is highly competent and efficient. Taking into account the school's costs, value for money is good.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

91 The school has done much to improve standards as part of its school improvement programme. The governing body, in partnership with the headteacher, senior managers and all other staff members, should establish priorities and clearly defined targets to:

- Raise standards of attainment
  - \* Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly average but is well below average in English. At Key Stage 4 GCSE results are above national averages. To continue to raise standards the school should:
  
- Raise standards across the curriculum, especially in English in Key Stage 3, by:
  - \* further improving the quality and impact of teaching so that pupils know what expected of them;  
*(Paragraphs: 5, 11-14, 16, 30, 34, 101, 104, 137, 195)*
  
  - \* consistently using the marking of pupil's work to identify strengths and weaknesses and targets for improvement;  
*(Paragraphs: 10, 36 128, 130, 154)*
  
  - \* analysing the outcomes of marking and assessment and evaluating them against departmental targets, National Curriculum levels and GCSE objectives.  
*(Paragraphs: 10, 43, 75, 106, 122, 160)*
  
- Provide, especially the highest and lowest attaining, pupils with more challenge in lessons by:
  - \* identifying their learning needs and levels of challenge required;  
*(Paragraphs: 31, 44, 110-111, 117, 138, 148)*
  
  - \* including these in lesson planning;  
*(Paragraphs: 31, 44, 111, 138)*
  
  - \* employing differentiated information sheets and tasks; helping pupils to identify their strengths and weaknesses as well as areas for further research.  
*(Paragraphs: 31, 44, 111, 113, 138)*
  
- Devise, implement and monitor the impact of a whole school approach to improving standards of numeracy by:
  - \* taking account of the learning needs of all pupils;  
*(Paragraphs: 14, 38, 109, 111, 137)*
  
  - \* ensuring that all subject areas include agreed strategies for the teaching and application of numeracy in their schemes of work and lesson planning;  
*(Paragraphs: 14, 38, 109, 11, 137)*
  
  - \* further improving the lesson planning and teaching of basic skills, including numeracy.  
*(Paragraphs: 14, 38)*

- Develop processes for extending the use of assessment data in subject areas, especially in Key Stage 3, so that:
  - \* pupils are more aware of how well they are doing in each subject;  
(*Paragraphs: 36, 56, 68*)
  - \* an opportunity is provided to discuss strengths and weaknesses in subjects;  
(*Paragraphs: 55-56*)
  - \* targets can be set for all pupils to improve their attainment.  
(*Paragraphs: 36, 55-58, 67, 123, 130, 139, 149, 159*)
  
- Establish guidelines for subject area development plans so that:
  - \* priorities and targets for raising attainment are clearly established;  
(*Paragraphs: 72, 141*)
  - \* the outcomes of marking and assessment are analysed and systematically monitored against the established priorities and targets.  
(*Paragraphs: 58, 72, 122, 137*)
  
- Define targets in individual education plans so that they are:
  - \* specific and can be accessible to, and applied in, each subject area;  
(*Paragraphs: 37, 44, 57, 104*)
  - \* measurable so that teachers can monitor the progress of pupils against the defined target;  
(*Paragraphs: 37, 44, 57*)
  - \* able to contribute to the raising of standards for each individual pupil as part of the regular review of their progress.  
(*Paragraphs: 37, 44, 57*)
  
- Meet statutory requirements
  - \* Work towards meeting the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.  
(*Paragraphs: 50, 80*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	141
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.4	15.6	37.5	44.0	1.4	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	636	0
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	95	0

#### **Special educational needs**

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	24	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	115	0

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	7.34
National comparative data	7.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.48
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	62	56	118

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	24	41	37
	Girls	25	33	36
	Total	49	74	73
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	41 (51)	65 (61)	65 (53)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	16 (17)	36 (30)	22 (21)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	35	48	47
	Girls	39	43	36
	Total	74	91	83
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	63 (69)	77 (64)	70 (74)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	38 (34)	45 (30)	21 (25)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4*

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	53	55	108

<b>GCSE results</b>		<b>5 or more grades A* to C</b>	<b>5 or more grades A*-G</b>	<b>1 or more grades A*-G</b>
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	27	53	53
	Girls	28	55	55
	Total	55	108	108
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	50.9 (31.6)	100 (96.9)	100 (99.0)
	National	46.3 (44.6)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (95.2)

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

<b>GCSE results</b>		<b>GCSE point score</b>
Average point score per pupil	School	40.7 (31.7)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	11	100
	National	N/A	N/A

### *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	2
White	631
Any other minority ethnic group	2

### *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	19	3
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	37.04
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	286.5

### *Financial information*

Financial year	<b>1998-99</b>
----------------	----------------

	£
Total income	1624746.00
Total expenditure	1637914.00
Expenditure per pupil	22716.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	16405.00
Balance carried forward to next year	3237.00



**Deployment of teachers:****Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.4
---	------

**Average teaching group size:****Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	23.1
Key Stage 4	22.5

**Results of the survey of parents and carers****Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	636
Number of questionnaires returned	192

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	30	57	10	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	52	6	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	16	61	12	3	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	53	21	5	1
The teaching is good.	27	62	6	3	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	54	12	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	4	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	46	4	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	27	56	11	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	34	50	6	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	55	7	3	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	41	5	1	4

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

### **ENGLISH**

92 Since the last inspection, attainment in English has fluctuated and high standards have not been consistent. In the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 1999, attainment was well below the national average for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above. While the 1997 results were above the national average there was a sharp decline in standards in both 1998 and 1999, when the average points score of pupils fell significantly. Nevertheless, results in 1996 and 1997 show girls achieving slightly better than boys.

93 Overall, progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Pupils make slower progress in English than they do in the other core subjects of mathematics and science. When compared with those for similar schools, the English results are well below the average. In recent years, pupils' attainment on entry has been well below average. While this was recognised as important and resulted in the implementation of a whole-school literacy policy, it has also meant that pupils have taken much longer to achieve levels that are commensurate with their age. The strategy adopted was not successful until the literacy policy began to have a positive impact on pupils currently in Key Stage 3.

94 All pupils are entered for GCSE English. In 1999, the results in both language and literature were a marked improvement on the previous year's performance. The results in English language were close to the national average for the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A\* to C and were above average in English literature with just over 90 per cent achieving the higher GCSE grades. The percentage of pupils achieving a grade in both subjects over the 1996 to 1999 period varies between being above or in line with the national averages. Attainment in English is below that in both science and mathematics but in English literature it is comparable with both subjects.

95 In 1999 just over 22 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE A\* to B grades in English and 33 per cent in English literature. Overall, results have improved significantly since 1996 when less than half of the pupils were successful in the examinations. The average points score for pupils in both subjects are now in line with the national average in English and well above in English literature. The literature results are good, although only 60 per cent of the cohort were entered in comparison with the national average of over 80 per cent. Attainment by gender is not widely different.

96 The majority of pupils are entered for the GCSE drama examination, with early entries in Year 10. Standards of attainment in were well above the national averages between 1996-1997 but in 1999, only half of the entire cohort gained a high GCSE grade. Well over half of the small number of pupils entered for media studies in 1999 gained the higher GCSE grades.

97 Pupils make greater progress in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. Standards also fluctuate from year to year reflecting, to a large extent, the attainment of pupils on entry and their achievements by the end of the key stage. The department is aware of the issues contributing to the fluctuation of results and is working with senior managers to improve standards.

98 Attainments in speaking and listening are good for most pupils in both key stages. They speak clearly and confidently. In Key Stage 3, the high-attaining pupils give clear explanation when giving feedback. They listen attentively to each other and, in drama lessons, show an increasing ability to listen to instructions, engage in role-play, work constructively to develop ideas and to respond appropriately to each other's performance, when in role as the audience. By the end of the key stage the high-attaining pupils express clearly interesting and pertinent ideas. In Key Stage 4, pupils willingly share experiences and use talk to analyse their learning. The high-attaining Year 10 pupils discuss and negotiate roles when working collaboratively on material for class presentation. By the end of the key stage, the lower-attaining pupils use talk effectively to express their views and listen to each other when reviewing their work. A small minority of younger pupils do not always listen attentively: this affects the flow of some drama lessons as their co-operation deteriorates. They do not always project their voices or use space well in role-play to display fully their creative skills. In general sustained answers are not always given when responding to open ended questions.

99 Reading skills are good for the high and most average-attaining pupils in both key stages. They read competently, use good intonation and timing and can comment on the use of language and other literary devices, such as blank and rhymed verse. Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils understand how to select, retrieve and use information when researching projects. They know how to skim and scan texts quickly for salient points. The high attaining pupils in a Year 8 lesson give clear responses when interpreting texts in comparative essays on *Walkabout* and *The Silver Sword*. Year 9 high-attaining pupils have a sound grasp of responding to literary texts and the lower attaining pupils enjoy reading and following texts closely, in order to select information for their written work.

100 In Key Stage 4, pupils understand how to select and comment on specific points when doing a comprehension exercise. The higher-attaining pupils understand subtlety and diffused images in texts: they read and interpret them accurately. All pupils make notes and the high- and average-attaining pupils make good use of research background notes when analysing texts. However, some middle- and the lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand the main story line of literary texts but their responses lack depth. The lack of detailed analysis prevents pupils from achieving a higher GCSE grade in reading and response.

101 In both key stages, high and average attaining pupils write accurately, organise their work well and have a sense of purpose and readership. From the start of Year 7, these pupils write confidently and their extended work displays a wide range of writing skills. The older Key Stage 4 pupils draft and redraft their work and essays are soundly structured. However, some middle and the lower attaining pupils do not use technical features correctly. Basic spelling and punctuation are weak and the use of paragraphs still mystifies some Year 11 pupils. Planning does not precede writing and pupils do not edit their work. Handwriting is legible and of a cursive style for the majority of pupils. Work is neatly presented and reluctant writers and pupils with special educational needs make good use of word processing skills to present their work but the spelling check device is not used to correct errors.

102 Behaviour is almost always at least good, sometimes very good and occasionally exemplary. In Key Stage 3, pupils are keen to learn in both English and drama. Their positive attitudes contribute to their involvement in lessons, even when under examination pressure. In Key Stage 4, the higher-attaining pupils in Year 10 are mature and work responsibly in a climate of trust. Most of the older pupils do not waste time. They listen and concentrate very hard, work at a good pace and respond well to high expectations. The lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 4

make good contributions in lessons. Their involvement and interest in the learning are contributory factors to the good progress they make. A small number of pupils lack good organisational skills and this affects their progress. A minority of Year 11 pupils lack concentration and make little effort to improve basic skills before the examinations.

103 The overall quality of teaching is good and is having a positive impact on the raising of standards and ensuring pupils make progress. While this has been the case at Key Stage 4 for some time, it is currently becoming increasingly apparent at Key Stage 3. Teaching was very good in 16 per cent of lessons, good in 37 per cent and satisfactory in 47 per cent. Teachers have good subject knowledge that is used to broaden pupils' understanding of the subject. Interesting resources and activities are used to stimulate pupils' imagination and reinforce teaching points. For example, in a Year 7 lesson Chinese whispers were used to emphasise the role of oral history in the emergence of myths and legends. Pupils make good progress in extending their vocabulary when they are challenged to think about their reading and place it in context. In the best lessons, effective planning, clear learning objectives and assessment opportunities that are linked to the needs of pupils all contribute to productive working. Clear explanations of literary terms, with examples, increase pupils understanding of the use of language.

104 Pupils make good progress when previous learning is consolidated in question and answer sessions. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs begin to understand their work when their ideas are recorded on the board and they are shown specific learning resources to develop their homework. In a Year 10 lesson, work on Soyinka's *Telephone Conversation* and prefixes were collated on the board before pupils added their own ideas. Individual educational plans are not used consistently to develop lesson plans and as a result, work is not always tailored to the needs of all pupils. Pupils slacken their pace of work and lose motivation when they are unclear about the learning objectives and cannot see the links between activities. In addition, older pupils lack reference points against which to measure their assignments when they are returned and discussed.

105 The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Marking is not, however, consistently carried out during Key Stage 3, as there is no marking policy and the emphasis is on marking end of unit work to exemplify the standards reached. Target setting is used in both key stages but they are neither specific nor are they monitored to ensure improvement.

106 In the recent past, leadership and management of the area has not been either coherent or decisive in providing a framework for developing work in English. A new curriculum director for the area has been appointed to take responsibility for literacy and communication. The present teacher in charge has led the English area effectively through a very difficult year. She has analysed the state of the department, held the team together and provided support for the newly qualified and numerous non-specialist teachers. The department still has a lot to do in order to raise standards further. In recent years the lack of rigorous and formal monitoring led to standards declining. The development plan recognises the issues that need to be tackled in order to raise standards but it lacks a strategic overview as well as a framework of priorities and clear targets. The department has functioned for sometime with non-specialist teachers in Years 7 and 8 and with a high percentage of split classes and lessons because of timetable constraints. Lessons also take place in inadequate mobile accommodation and there is not a sense of cohesiveness as the department is scattered, has insufficient access to resources including dictionaries and thesauruses for the literacy work, information and communication technology and audio-visual resources.

107 Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Language work is integrated into schemes of work and reading has been promoted but its impact has not been systematically monitored. But, information and communication technology is not yet included in all the Key Stage 3 schemes of work. The department has the capacity to improve further based on the analysis of its position and the commitment of staff to work together as a team to raise standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

108 Attainment of the majority of pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in mathematics is at the national average level. End of Key Stage 3 results have been variable. Over the last three years the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 or above in these tests were 79 per cent, 64 per cent and 77 per cent. This compares favourably with a national average of approaching 65 per cent. When compared with similar schools the results have been broadly in line with the national average. Recent GCSE results have been mainly at, or slightly below, the national average. However the results showed a significant improvement in 1999 on the previous year. Over the last three years 40 per cent, 32 per cent and 42 per cent of the pupils have achieved GCSE grades A\* to C. This compares with a national average of just over 40 per cent. The percentage of pupils gaining a grade in the range A\* to G has consistently been above the national average. In 1999 all pupils gained a grade in the A\* to G range. However only a relatively low proportion of pupils gained the highest grades in this range. Girls and boys achieve equally well in mathematics. Although results in the other core subjects have been variable attainment in mathematics is now better than in English but lower than that in science.

109 Towards the end of each key stage, overall standards of work seen during the inspection were about average. Standards of work of the majority of pupils in the upper sets in both key stages are above average levels. Pupils in these groups show confidence and are able to make good progress with the range of tasks that are set. Most of them produce good quality work and are given opportunities to undertake investigations, practical work and that requiring information technology. However, standards of work seen in the lower sets in both key stages are below average. The majority of these pupils lack confidence and require significant support from the teacher in order to make further progress. Although attainment levels of the majority of pupils in these groups are below average in all areas of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, some have difficulties with basic numerical calculations. Some pupils in a lower-attaining Year 10 group, for example, were having difficulty with the basic numerical concepts involved with enlargements and scale factors. Pupils in another Year 11 group had difficulties with the basic concepts involved with fractions. Some pupils in the lower attaining groups also showed restricted algebraic skills.

110 The majority of pupils have a positive attitude to their work. Most are able to sustain concentration and complete the tasks that are set. However a minority of pupils are only able to concentrate for a short period and relatively quickly fail to make further progress with the task set. Pupils are well behaved in classes with the more able showing confidence in undertaking the mathematical work and able to show a level of initiative. Some pupils particularly in the lower attaining sets lack confidence in their mathematical ability and require frequent support from the teacher in order to make further progress. In all groups seen, constructive relationships have been developed between the pupils and the teacher. Pupils are also encouraged to work collaboratively in smaller and larger groups when undertaking aspects of the mathematics work.

111 Teaching overall is always at least satisfactory and occasionally good. The quality of teaching is good in 31 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in the remainder. All lessons are well planned and most contain an appropriate range of activities. Pupils are able to work as a class particularly in the development of mathematical topics. During the group work teachers employ frequent questioning, ensuring pupils full involvement as well as providing a check on their level of understanding. Overall, pupils respond well and occasionally are able to give full answers to the questions posed. When appropriate, pupils are encouraged and able to work collaboratively in smaller groups, including in pairs. Pupils also frequently work on an individual basis when undertaking examples. Although all of the teaching is sound and sometimes good, none of the teaching is exciting or inspirational. There is a lack of innovative approaches. Many topics are treated as isolated mathematical exercises and are given without relating them to real life situations. In a few classes pupils are allowed to work for too long on a particular activity. In one Year 10 class, for example, pupils of relatively low levels of attainment were expected to work for a considerable time on examples involving enlargements and scale factors. Towards the end of this period many of the pupils failed to maintain concentration and lost interest in the work. In some lessons pupils have to wait relatively long periods before receiving help. In some of the groups containing higher-attaining pupils those that were most able were at times insufficiently challenged.

112 Homework is regularly set, marked and returned to the pupils. The work is however not graded and some teachers do not keep a record of individual pupils' responses to the homework that is set. Formal assessment of individual pupils' progress is mainly carried out by tests that are held each half term. Teachers know individual pupils well and those spoken to feel well cared for. Overall in classes the majority of pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a rate corresponding to their previous attainment. The majority of pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.

113 The curriculum meets the statutory requirements. It provides continuity and progression for the pupils. Some aspects of the work make appropriate use of information technology and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils also undertake practical work particularly in statistics and some problems that are set involve the pupils undertaking investigations. The subject area recognises that further work is required in the development of appropriate agreed schemes of work for Years 9 to 11. Teachers have begun to share learning materials, although there is significant further potential for this to take place and for all staff to make use of the most effective materials that are available.

114 The department is effectively managed. There is an increasing emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department. Teaching and learning are monitored by the subject director and by senior managers and there is a system of appraisal of individual teachers. However this process does not always sufficiently focus on an objective assessment of the quality of teaching and learning. Staff in the department meet on a regular basis to discuss and when appropriate resolve relevant issues. The school has introduced a three-yearly cycle of departmental reviews. A full cycle of these has not yet been completed and as a consequence mathematics together with a further department has yet to be subject to a formal review. Teachers are appropriately qualified and have a good understanding of the requirements of the subject. There is an appropriate range of resources, including textbooks and information technology hardware and software, to support the work. There is a suite of rooms in which much of the teaching takes place. These rooms provide a physical focus for the subject. They are well decorated and furnished and many contain a good range of display including that relating to pupils' work.

## SCIENCE

115 The levels of attainment in science have greatly improved since the time of the last inspection. External test and examination results are now much better. The science area is well organised and has the potential for further sustained improvement.

116 In 1999, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests was above the national average and well above that achieved in similar schools. The proportion reaching Level 6 was close to the national average and above that for similar schools. Boys and girls did equally well. Since the last inspection attainment has increased markedly. The average points score in science was above the national average.

117 In the 1999 GCSE examinations in double science, for which all pupils are entered, 57 per cent gained a grade in the A\* to C range, well above the national average of 48 per cent. All pupils gained grades in the A\* to G range. Again the trend has been upwards, apart from a slight dip in 1998. The attainment at GCSE over the past four years has steadily improved relative to the average attainment in all other subjects. Boys did better than girls, the reverse of the national trend. Only seven pupils in the year group, however, gained the highest grades of A\* and A.

118 Standards achieved by pupils towards the end of Key Stage 3 are good in all aspects of science, including investigations. Pupils in Year 9 showed good knowledge and understanding of the variation in animals and plants and were able to discuss the mechanisms of inheritance. Year 8 pupils were confident in setting up series and parallel circuits and measuring voltages. Although a lower-attaining group had difficulty predicting how to balance a metre rule with weights hung from it, all had success in deducing the law by experimenting. Pupils make good progress throughout the key stage and in standards of presenting their work. The achievement of pupils with special education needs is good: appropriate support materials are available for them.

119 The achievements of both boys and girls in Key Stage 4 are in line with their attainment at the end of the key stage. Immediately prior to their GCSE examinations, pupils showed sound knowledge of the formula for pressure and were able to use it to calculate forces in hydraulic systems such as car braking systems. Another group had good knowledge of chemical symbols and were able to calculate molecular masses when they knew the masses of the constituent atoms. Some had carried out good investigations, for instance into any possible effects of talking to plants on growth rate. While many pupils with special educational needs make good progress, the books of some pupils showed a significant amount of incomplete work, which limits their progress.

120 Pupils enjoy science. They are keen to learn and respond well to good teaching. They generally concentrate well, even during the longer lessons. They show respect for apparatus and materials and carry out practical work carefully and safely. Relationships with staff and between pupils are good, with at times excellent co-operation within small groups carrying out experimental work. There are few opportunities in science lessons for pupils to consider others' views or beliefs.

121 Overall, teaching is good. The teaching in 38 per cent of lessons was very good, in 44 per cent it was good and in 13 per cent it was satisfactory. In one lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory. The majority of the very good lessons were in Key Stage 3. Some revision

lessons with Year 11 lacked pace. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which enables them to give clear exposition and explanations that in turn enables pupils to learn and make good progress. In a Year 7 lesson, for instance, the teacher gave several analogies and explanations to give pupils a clear understanding of negative temperatures.

122 Teachers have appropriately high expectations of most pupils, although some of the higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Teachers' planning is good. They plan lessons based on clear and concise schemes of work and on folders of materials for each module. This enables them to plan lessons that have a good pace. They select appropriate materials, including support materials for pupils with special education needs, and plan lessons to include a variety of activities, to maintain interest and concentration. This encourages pupils with all levels of attainment to make good intellectual efforts. The department makes good use of information technology. For instance, in a Year 8 module on the solar system, pupils study a variety of phenomenon using an intranet that the department has constructed. Science staff and pupils make good use of the limited data-logging facilities available to them. Teachers comment well on pupils' class and homework and offer guidance on how pupils might improve. They keep satisfactory records, but there is no common system, and this could lead to uncertainty about a pupil's progress.

123 Shortly after the previous inspection a new head of department was appointed. She provides very good leadership and management of the area. There is now an excellent handbook with clear policies and procedures. Responsibilities are clearly delegated amongst staff. All members of the area have a shared commitment to raise standards. There is regular monitoring of all aspects of teaching and assessment. The area has targets for overall attainment, and sets short-term targets for individual pupils.

124 The number of teachers is sufficient for all science to be taught by specialists: they are well supported by committed technicians. The dispersed nature of the science accommodation leads to some difficulties in distributing apparatus and materials that may limit the amount of practical work. Some laboratories do not have clearly marked alternative exits in case of fire.

125 The department has made great strides since the time of the last inspection. To continue this progress there should be further development of the module folders and schemes of work. In the schemes of work there should be reference to opportunities for the use of information technology and identified situations in which spiritual, moral, social and cultural considerations might be included. While teachers and pupils work safely there is a need to develop systems for constructing risk assessments.



## ART

126 When pupils enter the school in Year 7, standards are in line with national expectations. In Key Stage 3, pupils become confident working in two dimensions in a broad range of media. There are many examples of work that draws effectively and sensitively on the local environment, for example, Year 9 drawings and paintings of local churches. Sketchbooks are used productively for class and homework and pupils learn the basic techniques of hand-built ceramics. Some pieces of work, for example Year 7 pastel drawings, show standards above the national expectation. The majority of observational drawing in the work of Years 8 and 9 pupils, however, were either in line with the average or below it. In many cases, shapes were drawn inaccurately and surface treatment lacked sophistication. Pupils produce little large-scale work, or examples of artwork that show the creative use of information technology. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards overall are in line with national expectations.

127 In Key Stage 4, pupils rapidly become accomplished artists, using a range of materials to work with confidence in two dimensions. They work independently and analyse and modify practical responses to selected themes. They discuss their work and that of other artists articulately. Pupils' sketchbooks show evidence of their ability to select, collect, research and experiment. Their preparation sheets often combine interesting images with examples of confident technique. At the end of Year 11, standards are above national averages. For example, in 1997 and 1999, the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades in the A\* to C range was above average for all maintained and similar schools, while results for those gaining A\* to G grades is consistently above average. In both cases results are above average in comparison with those for similar schools.

128 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In no lessons was teaching less than satisfactory. Teaching was very good in 29 per cent of lessons, good in 57 per cent and satisfactory in 14 per cent. In both key stages, tasks are clearly explained and pupils are provided with useful visual resources. Both of the National Curriculum Attainment Targets are integrated into project planning, so that pupils explore the work of artists and use this knowledge to develop their own work. Homework is used effectively to encourage pupils to research, record and experiment and, in Key Stage 4, makes a significant contribution to coursework. In Key Stage 3, some homework lacks challenge, as it misses the opportunity to encourage pupils to develop their creativity and independence. Pupils are well managed in class and, at Key Stage 4, are given helpful deadlines and clear guidance about examination requirements. The classroom comes alive when pupils engage in discussion with the teacher. However, pupils are not always given the time to reflect in class and to share their opinions about the meaning and qualities of their own work and that of artists. Learning in Key Stage 3 progresses more slowly than that in Key Stage 4, because pupils are not always challenged to think of themselves as independent artists. Key Stage 3 pupils should be encouraged to use sketchbooks as individual visual diaries and to approach drawing and painting with more rigour. A recent change of staff within the department means that this issue is already under discussion. In both Key Stages 3 and 4, work is marked regularly and helpful comments are given to pupils in both verbal and written form. Pupils in both key stages behave well in art lessons. They complete homework regularly and those in Key Stage 4 especially are well motivated and articulate.

129 In Key Stage 3, the time allocation for pupils in Years 7 and 9 is in line with national recommendations. Year 8, however, has less than the recommended time. Although the appointment of a ceramics specialist means that Key Stage 3 pupils have regular experience of three-dimensional work, the balance in Key Stage 4 is skewed towards drawing, painting and

print. A wider range of three-dimensional work, using card, paper and plaster, would benefit all pupils. Visits are organised to art galleries locally, nationally and abroad and an open art room policy enables pupils to spend extra time on their work. Useful visits by former pupils who are practising artists are arranged, but a wider programme of artists' residencies would expand pupils' horizons. Currently there are no opportunities for the use of information technology in the art curriculum, although efforts are being made to rectify this situation. Pupils look at examples of work by African, Celtic and North American artists and craftspeople and, through the study of artists like Piper and Sutherland, begin to consider the mystic and spiritual quality of landscape and the art it inspires.

130 Regular use is made of school assessment data in establishing expectations of pupils' performances in Key Stage 3. However, subject-specific criteria need to be established in Key Stage 3, so that individual targets can be set that will enable pupils' progress to be tracked more effectively. In Key Stage 4, assessment, based on GCSE criteria, gives pupils clear guidelines for improvement. In their form tutor interviews, pupils have opportunities to set general targets but, currently, do not identify how these subject specific targets are to be met. There are useful links between the art area and the local community, art galleries and through exhibitions of GCSE work that are open to parents and friends.

131 The department is well managed, with shared aims, good teamwork and communication systems and a positive working ethos. Teachers observe each other's lesson, discuss and modify schemes of work. There is a good system to support newly qualified teachers, although it is important that they should be provided with the full range of teaching opportunities. Storage facilities in the department are poor, resulting in much-needed space being taken up with materials.

132 Since the last inspection, most of the issues raised have been addressed, although opportunities for pupils to use of information technology, experience two-dimensional work in Key Stage 3, an improved time allocation in Year 8 and lack of storage space still need to be resolved. However, the enthusiasm of teachers within the department is tangible and their commitment to supporting pupils helps to maintain a healthy interest in the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

133 There is no formal assessment of pupil's design and technology capability from their primary school. Pupils arrive in the school with levels of attainment that are below the expectation for pupils of a similar age nationally. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards are in line with the national averages, although making skills are stronger than those for designing.

134 In the 1999 GCSE examinations, the design and technology results were below national averages and those for similar schools. The average point score was also below that for other subjects in the school. The results obtained by boys were far below those of girls. In 1997, examination results were above national averages, but in 1998 and 1999 they were well below. A lack of specialist teachers and the changed regulations for tiers of entry to the examination had an impact on the final results in 1998 and, to an extent, in 1999.

135 In Years 7 to 9 pupils' making skills are good. They know how to cut, shape, join or combine a wide range of materials. Their technical knowledge is enhanced by good opportunities to consolidate their learning through the effective use of practical demonstrations and carefully planned homework. Their research, investigative and drawing skills lack detail and this affects the quality of their designs.

136 During Years 10 and 11 pupils design skills gain in sophistication. Pupils in Year 11, for instance, developed a range of innovative designs for containers to store a variety of goods. The realisation of these designs is of good quality. Pupils enjoy the challenge of making a product they will use in the future. However, they still have difficulties with research techniques and do not benefit fully from considering the solutions of professional designers to problems. Boys, in particular, do not give enough attention to the quality of their portfolio, including the style, accuracy and presentation of their work.

137 Basic skills are well taught. The department's literacy and numeracy policies ensure teachers are consistent in their approach to improving standards of basic skills. For example, Year 7 was challenged to produce clear, easy to follow, instructions for the use of a small product. All teachers are competent in the use of information technology but the hardware is unsuitable for some of the required applications. The use and application of number is to be found in much of the practical work, including the use of measuring length, weighing ingredients and the interpretation of tally charts.

138 The quality of teaching is good. In 18 per cent of lessons teaching was very good, in 45 per cent it was good and in the remainder it was satisfactory. The good quality of the teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress at both key stages. Specialist teachers have good subject knowledge. Planning is detailed and is the result of a collaborative effort by the teaching team. Teachers plan a range of strategies to ensure that work meets the group's learning needs, including those of the lowest attaining pupils. High attaining pupils do not benefit from similar strategies to extend their learning. The management of pupils is excellent and is consistent across the teaching teams. Although time is generally well used, when time targets are not included in lesson plans the pace of work slows and the opportunity to consolidate learning at the end of the lesson is lost.

139 The outcomes of assessment are used to monitor attainment and progress, as well as to inform further lesson planning. Teachers do not, however, discuss the outcomes of marking and assessment with pupils to help them to improve the standard and quality of their work. Homework is regularly set: it is used to enable pupils prepare for future learning as well as to extend their understanding.

140 Key Stage 3 pupils are very keen to learn. They respond well to questions and often ask their own to seek clarification. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are more reticent. They work well alone but do not have many opportunities to collaborate with others. In graphics, where they were required to work with others, pupils failed to benefit from the opportunity because of immature behaviour. Pupils have good thinking skills and they learn how to test their products. The short work modules force pupils to plan carefully and work quickly: they are not allowed to leave a project incomplete. Pupils are required to be independent, learn to make choices and solve problems. While many are successful in developing these skills, the lack of space limits

opportunities for independent learning in food technology. Work is regularly and carefully marked. The department makes good use of the National Curriculum levels in assessment, although pupils are unaware of the level achieved until it is reported to parents. At Key Stage 4 pupils use the examination board criteria as they plan and complete their work.

141 The subject is well led and managed. Approaches to tasks are shared between the teaching team. The department enjoys the support of two skilled technicians. They are an important part of the team but limitation of the time available for resistant materials has an impact on the organisation within practical rooms. Commercial and manufacturing links are good and have a positive influence on learning. The previous inspection highlighted a range of issues that the department has dealt with through an effective action plan. However some issues remain, specifically the raising of standards; improvement to the information technology facilities; and further improved links with primary schools.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

142 The standards being achieved by pupils towards the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national average, but below that indicated by the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments. Results at GCSE have improved steadily over the past four years. In 1999 results were below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining grades in the A\* to C range but above average for those gaining A\* to G grades. They were, however well above the average for similar schools against both criteria. The performance of pupils currently in Year 11 indicates above average attainment. The difference between the attainment of boys and girls is smaller than that nationally. Results of value-added procedures show that many pupils gain grades at GCSE in excess of those predicted for them.

143 Pupils' progress and attainment are both satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4. Higher-attaining pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of geographical processes and have well-developed skills for interpreting and analysing data. They make good use of these skills in discussion and group work and are proficient at analysing trends, proposing hypotheses and making predictions. This was well illustrated in a Year 11 class where pupils were able to analyse and interpret a range of information on urban change in Brazil. Lower-attaining pupils, however, have a very poor knowledge base of geographical information and this inhibits their confidence to develop analytical and interpretive skills. Their contribution to discussion is limited, as is their ability to search for information using secondary sources. This was evident in a Year 9 lesson on deforestation, where the quality of analysis and interpretation was poor because of pupils' weak understanding of basic terms. The sense of place of most pupils is very good, largely as a result of the departments' good practice of making use of atlases in most lessons.

144 Pupils with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils all make satisfactory progress. Progress for both these groups is sometimes impeded by a poor match of classroom tasks to the individual needs of these pupils. For instance, in Year 7, pupils in the top set completed a very similar exercise on industry to those in the bottom set, resulting in boredom and under-achievement.

145 The vast majority of pupils respond well and quickly become involved in the work, even when the level of demand is low. They concentrate well and work hard, especially when the tasks are varied and capture their interest. In lessons where teacher exposition is over-long and exercises lack variety, pupils sometimes become restless and inattentive. This can lead to a small

amount of inappropriate behaviour. In all lessons, good relationships and behaviour contribute strongly to the positive attitude to learning.

146 Teaching is satisfactory overall. In 38 per cent of lessons teaching is good and in 62 per cent it was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The secure subject knowledge of teachers is skilfully transmitted to pupils, especially in Key Stage 4: it promotes confidence in pupils and enables them to make good progress. In the weaker lessons, however, pupils are not always inspired to share the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. Teacher exposition is clear and authoritative, drawing on many topical examples to illustrate geographical themes. Very good use is made of audio and visual aids such as videotapes and photographs to reinforce pupil understanding.

147 The pupils respond well to the high expectations staff have of their behaviour and, as a result, a good learning ethos is created. Where teachers have high expectations of the pupils they put much effort into their work and persevered when faced with difficulty. Where work is less challenging, particularly in some of the top sets, pupils become passive and over reliant on the teacher. In these lessons higher-attaining pupils, in particular, do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.

148 At best, questions are used effectively to challenge and develop understanding. On other occasions, they are insufficiently probing to encourage pupils to develop and substantiate their replies. Group work is not used frequently enough to enable pupils to both challenge and support each other. In the best lessons, good levels of concentration and interest are well fostered by a good pace and variety of work. Time is well used and the pace of learning maintained by brisk and purposeful teaching. On occasions, these activities lack variety and are not always well matched to pupils' prior attainment. Pupils tend to lose interest and becoming passive learners. In a minority of lessons, however, progress is slowed by over control by the teacher, inhibiting pupils' opportunities to work at full stretch.

149 Pupils' progress and interest in their work is strongly supported by the effective use of homework. It is well used to extend work in lessons, is especially valuable in facilitating the development of research and personal study skills and fully utilises information technology. In a minority of lessons, however, homework is used to complete what has been begun in class. Most pupils are keen to do well and most understand how well they are achieving, especially at Key Stage 4, where they are involved in target setting. Most work is regularly and accurately marked, although the written comments in pupils' books vary in the extent to which they provide useful guidance for improvement, especially for the higher attaining pupils.

150 The curriculum director for geography has set clear aims and objectives for the subject, and has made considerable improvements to departmental management. He sets a high personal example of energy and commitment to his colleagues. The team of geographers work well together, sharing ideas and good practice and they participate in a system of mutual lesson observation. There is as yet, however, little structured monitoring of teaching. There is also little use of outcomes of monitoring and assessment to improve standards. Resources and accommodation are used well. Departmental planning, although clear and well sequenced, gives insufficient thought as to how the geography provision, especially in Key Stage 3, is to meet the needs of individual pupils.

151 Good progress has been made since the last inspection. It now remains for the department to improve planning and assessment in Key Stage 3 and ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching.

## **HISTORY**

152 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 has risen fairly steadily since 1996, although less consistently in the case of boys. Attainment in 1999 was still slightly below national averages. At the end of Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C has been consistently well above the national average since 1996, and in 1999, at over 88 per cent, was well above the national average. Pupils have also performed consistently better in history than they have in their other GCSE subjects and their results compare very favourably with those of similar schools.

153 By the end of Key Stage 3 standards in work seen are good. Pupils are able to write at length, using their detailed knowledge, for example, in analysing and offering explanations of the tactics of trench warfare, or of First World War propaganda techniques. The pupils make confident oral contributions to lessons, especially in Years 8 and 9. In both cases they produced current international examples of racism and solving disputes by negotiation. They have acquired a good grounding in the appropriate skills and have confronted historical issues such as “Was John a bad king?”

154 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have a thorough and detailed knowledge of the aspects of social and economic history prescribed in the syllabus and a clear understanding of the GCSE examination requirements. Both lessons and homework clearly place considerable emphasis on source-handling skills and individual research, for example when considering the contribution of figures such as Butler and Arnold to progress in education that required the use of the internet as well as three different textbooks. There is also provision for the acquisition of skills in both numeracy and information technology. Standards are very effectively supported by teachers’ comprehensive marking of work, the wealth of helpful written comment offered, and the provision of extra-curricular, individual and group, improvement and revision sessions. Teachers effectively communicate the high expectations that they have of pupils and this plays a key role in the promotion and continuation of the very good standards evident throughout this key stage.

155 Pupils make good progress in both key stages, given that attainment on entry is only average. Progress is helped by a number of factors: the inclusive and active nature of lessons; the high awareness of and attention to individual needs; the well thought out assessment policy which involves pupils in monitoring their own learning and results in an accurate appreciation of their achievement thus far. Visits to historical sites in most years and excellent display further heighten progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall.

156 History lessons are overwhelmingly characterised by good behaviour on the part of the pupils who sometimes almost trip over each other in their eagerness to contribute. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning through their role in the assessment process, by taking part in optional revision sessions and through their contribution to events such as the recent history curriculum evening. Teachers’ widespread use of encouragement and praise helps to motivate pupils, the vast majority of whom take evident pride in their work and are keen to demonstrate the extent of their learning.

157 The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching is very good in 25 per cent of lessons, good also in 25 per cent and satisfactory in 50 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching is good. In 20 per cent of lessons teaching was good and in 20 per cent it was very good. Teachers frequently checked pupils' understanding of new and subject specific terminology, at both the beginning and end of lessons, to reinforce learning. Good classroom management and the support of individual pupils are also contributory factors to the good quality of the teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is good, although less so in the case of non-specialists. There is, however, a clear commitment from all teachers to stimulating, active and inclusive lessons. Occasionally, over reliance on teacher exposition or missed opportunities for pupils to read out loud in class, mean that learning is not extended as fully as it might be.

158 In Key Stage 4 the quality of teaching is very good; 50 per cent of lessons seen were good and the remainder, very good. Features such as close, supportive and encouraging staff pupil relationships, good use of question and answer to review and explore the extent of learning, and the effective deployment of humour or informal drama to emphasise key points, all contribute to high quality lessons. Well-prepared and comprehensive revision material, repeated emphasis on examination skills and instant feedback on work undertaken, are other significant factors in the consistently good GCSE results. On the topic of women's suffrage pupils were eager to discuss the conflicting approaches of the suffragists and suffragettes, and offered perceptive comment on the motivation behind the associated poster campaigns.

159 The requirements of the National Curriculum are met but anomalies in timetabling in Years 7, 8 and 11, which lie outside the department's control, as well as the teaching of some classes by non-specialists, mean that equality of opportunity in the area of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The subject is extremely well managed and led; the high quality of departmental policy and practice in, for example, the areas of assessment and GCSE entry, means pupils are well informed about the extent to which their progress meets expectations.

160 The curriculum director for history, who is also responsible for the quantity and high quality of resources available, sets an excellent example in areas such as display and involvement of pupils in their own learning. She has undertaken some monitoring of teaching as well as a detailed analysis of the performance of GCSE candidates to inform further planning to raise attainment. The extent of her knowledge of individuals, and the quality of pupil support, combined with an energetic and imaginative approach to extra-curricular aspects, mean that the subject has a high profile in the school and is popular with pupils.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

161 Standards achieved by students in information technology at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 reach the expected levels. Key Stage 3 results have been well above the national average with 75 per cent of the pupils judged to be at Level 5 or above in 1999. However, there is evidence that levels awarded have been generous and do not take into account pupils' attainment across all aspects of the required programmes of study. In 1999, for example, levels awarded did not take into account pupils' performance in aspects relating to controlling events or in the measurement and recording of physical variables. Only very small numbers of pupils have

been entered for the GCSE in information technology. In 1999 there were two entries resulting from after school provision: one pupil obtained a GCSE grade A, the other a grade D. There is evidence that some pupils enter the school with very restricted information technology skills, largely resulting from inadequate opportunities provided within some of the primary schools from which they come.

162 In lessons and work seen in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, the attainment levels of the majority of pupils were in line with national expectations. For the classes seen, attainment was judged to be at the nationally expected level in three of them and below in the remaining three classes. All information technology groups consist of pupils of a wide range of prior attainment. In a Year 9 group, for example, pupils had a clear understanding of the basic requirements and properties of a database. The majority of the pupils were able to enter data and to manipulate this in order to extract the required results without significant teacher support. However, the majority of pupils in a Year 7 group with a wide range of prior attainment were having some difficulties with the basic concepts of work associated with spreadsheets. Many could only make progress after receiving significant support from the teacher.

163 Lessons were seen which involved the use of information technology to support subjects such as mathematics and geography. In these lessons although information technology skills were being used the demands were at a relatively modest level. In one Year 9 geography class, for example, although pupils were able to combine information in different forms there was little understanding of its purpose or of the audience for which it was intended. Some pupils in this group had a good level of information technology skills but many lacked design skills. In a Year 7 mathematics class pupils were able to produce pie charts from data provided in a spreadsheet but had little understanding beyond the very basic concepts that were involved.

164 Pupils have a positive attitude to the information technology work. In two-thirds of the classes seen the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were judged to be good and in the remaining one-third they were judged to be satisfactory. There are no differences in the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils in each of the two key stages. Pupils are well behaved in classes and the majority show an interest in the work. As the pupils progress through Key Stage 3 the majority are moving sufficiently towards becoming largely autonomous computer users as is required by the National Curriculum. A minority of pupils lack confidence in terms of their information technology skills and require significant teacher support in order to make further progress with the task that has been set. This is particularly true in the early years in the school for pupils who have had limited previous experiences of working with information technology. Attendance in classes is good. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very positive.

165 Teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory. In one lesson seen, teaching and learning were judged to be good and in all remaining lessons satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. All lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are sometimes shared with the pupils. Good, clear explanations are given during the group work. The management of pupils and standards of discipline are always at least satisfactory and frequently good. All information technology classes contain a range of attainment and in some groups the varied needs of the pupils are not always adequately met. In some lessons, pupils undertaking practical work had to wait relatively long periods before receiving help to enable them to make further progress with the task set. Some of the teaching lacked inspiration and enthusiasm. Frequent teacher changes for the Year 10 GCSE group have adversely affected continuity for the pupils. Overall, the rate of progress for the majority of pupils corresponds to their prior attainment.



166 The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met and pupils' information technology skills are progressively developed. The development of information technology skills of the pupils and their use to support a range of subjects forms an increasing proportion of the curriculum for all pupils. There has been some significant progress in this respect since the last inspection. Discrete information technology courses have been introduced in each of the years in Key Stage 3. Some use of appropriate information technology is now being made in mathematics, history, science and design and technology. There is much less use in a number of other subjects and no use made in a few others. Although some staff development has taken place there is a need to further increase the information technology skills and confidence of some of the teachers. Currently significantly more emphasis is being placed on development and assessment of pupils' skills relating to communicating and handling information than to the other requirements. There is a need to provide pupils with opportunities to develop and use skills relating to controlling events and to measuring and recording physical variables. There are currently only limited opportunities for pupils to undertake certificated information technology courses during Key Stage 4.

167 Pupils have access to high quality computer hardware and software. Significant improvements in this respect have been achieved since the last inspection. The modern computers are housed in well-decorated and furnished rooms throughout the school. In several of the rooms, however, there is insufficient space between the computers for the pupils to work effectively. A long-term illness has meant that the school has not had a fully functioning information technology coordinator for several years. Although temporary arrangements have been put into place information technology coordination across the school has clearly been adversely affected. The school has appointed a technician who provides much needed support for the increased level of computer hardware and software that is now available.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

168 There are significant variations in the overall pass rates at GCSE in French and German since the last inspection. These are linked to differences in entry policy, changes to the organisation of the curriculum and the range of attainment of pupils entered. More pupils were entered for French GCSE in 1999 than in previous years and the proportion of grades in the A\* to C range is in line with the national average, marking an improvement in attainment. Results in German are well below the national average in both 1998 and 1999. These results must be interpreted, however, in relation to discontinuity of teaching in German, changes in subject leadership, together with a wider range of attainment of pupils entering for GCSE than would normally be expected. First hand inspection evidence, in relation to the observation of lessons, analysis of work and discussions with pupils, shows an overall improvement in pupils' achievement in both languages at the end of Key Stage 4.

169 By the end of Key Stage 3 the levels reached by pupils is good and is above average when compared with those of a similar age. The frequent use of the foreign language, by their teachers to give classroom instructions and by pupils to ask questions, results in good development of listening and speaking skills. Reinforced by frequent practice with audio recordings and with written guidance, pupils of all levels of attainment are confident in correctly matching pictures, words and phrases and picking out correct details from conversations and dialogues in French, German and Spanish. In French, the oral tasks, such as exchanging and recording information in pairs to build up a written schedule of television programmes, result in the accurate pronunciation of short questions and answers. In German and Spanish the lower attaining pupils build up an accurate written vocabulary through "bingo" word games and matching key words and pictures.

By the end of a Year 9 lesson pupils have made good progress in learning to describe orally and in writing parts of the body, illnesses, aches and pains. This is a result of teaching that is well planned to build up relevant vocabulary and phrases, using visual material and filling in blanks on a humorous cartoon strip.

170 An analysis of pupils' written work shows that pupils make good progress in producing short letters and descriptions of daily routines and leisure pursuits. Most pupils of higher and average attainment levels describe future and past events using tenses accurately when guided by recent oral practice and examples in their textbooks. In a small number of lessons, however, there is some hesitancy in pupils' oral responses and in their comprehension of their teacher's spoken French. This is because pupils do not understand how to reply to language that they have not previously been taught.

171 The overall attainment and learning of pupils in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. It is better in Spanish and French than in German as a consequence of changes in the staff teaching German in previous years. By the end of a two-year Certificate of Achievement course in Spanish, lower attaining pupils meet most of the course and examination requirements. From a cassette recording they pick out correct details from a series of three or four different descriptions. In reading a letter from a pen friend they understand key facts about their correspondent's house, daily routines, fitting correctly pictures to text. In a Year 10 Spanish lesson pupils developed a good knowledge of a wide range of Spanish foods, motivated by the teacher who brings in real Spanish cheese, sausage, and other authentic items. In a Year 10 French class the teacher skilfully organises interview situations in which pupils record and report back on information obtained on the facilities available in different towns. Pupils are supported by the early revision of the language required in this lesson that enables them to use a range of past tenses, prepositions and pronouns with increasing confidence. In German the progress that pupils have made over a number of years is less good than in the other two languages with written work showing a range of errors in word order and verb tenses and the need for English to be used to help them understand written German. As at Key Stage 3, pupils make better overall progress in all three languages in developing their listening skills and learning a greater range of vocabulary than in extending the length of their oral answers and applying their knowledge of grammatical structures.

172 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teaching is very good in 18 per cent of lessons, good in 35 per cent and satisfactory in 47 per cent. Most teaching is good, particularly in Key Stage 3. There are no lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory. Many lessons are characterised by the teachers' extensive use of the foreign language and expectations that pupils will also respond appropriately in French, German or Spanish and that they will ask questions as well as give answers. Lessons begin promptly, resources are ready so that pace is maintained with individual's progress regularly monitored and supported. Planning builds in revision to give pupils confidence. Equipment such as overhead projectors and resources produced by teachers themselves are regularly used to give visual support and to provide a good range of activities for practising language such as word games, role-plays and class surveys.

173 In a few lessons classroom activities are predominantly guided in English and language is often translated rather than practised. Lengthy question and answer practice with individuals around the class results in passivity and lack of motivation for those not involved. Occasionally the teacher has to wait for pupils to listen and this slows down the pace of lessons. Homework is regularly set and pupils who do not produce it are energetically followed up. Marking is usually in sufficient detail to help pupils learn from their mistakes although there is some inconsistency of

assessment practice across the department and the assessment of pupils' work in the present Year 10 shows that the National Curriculum levels awarded to them at the end of Year 9 were generous.

174 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are almost always good. Full attention is usually maintained in lessons with some pupils volunteering answers, particularly in Key Stage 3. Good co-operation is seen between pupils in paired and group work. They settle quickly to work and approach their learning responsibly, although attitudes are sometimes more passive than enthusiastic.

175 The department is very well led and a clear direction is provided for its work. Teachers work effectively as a team. Levels of communication are very good and some monitoring of teaching has resulted in good quality feedback and support for colleagues. There is limited, but effective, use of information technology. More subject-specific software is a priority. Clear priorities are set, there is a sound understanding of the best principles and practice in language teaching and good progress has been made on most of the issues raised at the last inspection.

## MUSIC

176 End of Key Stage 3 assessments over the past three years show a larger percentage of pupils to be working at, and particularly beyond, the national average expectation. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 3 are currently good. No candidates were entered for GCSE examinations in 1999. In the previous year, the results were higher than the national average. Prior to that, pupils from Years 9, 10 and 11 were all entered for GCSE in the same year, 1995, and all gained either A or B grades. The school is challenging and extending the most talented musical pupils - an issue raised in the last inspection report. No lessons at Key Stage 4 were observed during the course of the inspection: GCSE pupils in Years 10 and 11 are taught together as a twilight class after school on Fridays.

177 A notable feature of good standards of attainment at Key Stage 3 is the quality of singing: this marks a significant improvement since the last inspection. Class singing has a full, round quality and voices are correctly and pleasantly projected as a result of graded exercises at the start of lessons. The quality of singing by the school choir is also most attractive. Musical literacy and aural skills are developing well. Pupils successfully read notes on the treble clef and they use their ears keenly, both to identify instrumental sounds and to learn new material quickly. In creative composition work, pupils can use conventions such as ostinato and drone in an unusual way: they are confident enough to use often quite demanding and complicated rhythms. There is little difference between standards obtained by boys and girls at Key Stage 3. Lower-attaining pupils achieve appropriate levels of attainment. Lessons are carefully planned, new material is pitched at the right level and the pace of learning is always appropriate. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, after studying relevant musical examples, pupils correctly identified and understood the difference between three and four beats in a bar. Only one lesson of lower attaining Year 9 pupils was observed. A recording of compositions and performances by average and higher attaining Year 9 pupils, however, was audited in detail. Evidence shows that pupils are being successfully extended. By the end of the key stage, they have developed a range of creative improvisation skills, using conventional and chromatic harmonies and by using

traditional instruments and electronic keyboards in a very original manner. A scrutiny of compositions currently being submitted for assessment by Year 11 pupils shows most of the work is above national average levels. They have a secure knowledge of composition, the characteristics and potential of the instrumental combinations for which they have written as well as of musical form and how to develop their creative ideas.

178 Pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress in their learning across Key Stage 3. Singing clearly improves as pupils move through the key stage. In one lesson, for example, all pupils competently sang a range of demanding technical exercises accurately from memory. Practical performances of compositions, undertaken at the end of modules of work, show how well pupils experiment with and select combinations of sound and successfully unite them into short compositions, using percussion instruments, keyboards and their voices. Within lessons, pupils' interest and their spirit of enquiry contribute to good progress. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, very intelligent and perceptive questions were asked by pupils of a visiting Japanese musician who demonstrated the use of the koto: they sustained their concentration and interest through the eighty-minute lesson. Pupils' progress is hampered occasionally by timetable restrictions. Valuable lesson time can be lost sometimes by the movement of pupils at the start and end of lessons between the music suite and the hall. This is particularly problematic in the short twenty-minute modules available to some teaching groups.

179 Pupils have good attitudes to music, and behaviour in lessons is often very good. They are quiet, attentive and listen intently when being taught new material: this enables good progress to be made. They work effectively in groups and usually take their work very seriously. Pupils frequently demonstrate initiative by setting up the instruments that they are going to use immediately they arrive at the music studio. They are courteous to visitors. The groups of lower attaining pupils concentrate well, due to the carefully graded pace and development of lessons.

180 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teaching is very good in 17 per cent of lessons, good in 67 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder. No teaching was seen that was unsatisfactory. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject and of their teaching methodology. The pace of learning is well judged. When appropriate, teachers extend the learning opportunities for the higher attaining pupils by giving them more demanding tasks to undertake. Lessons are well planned, with informative worksheets and self-evaluation being used. Time management is generally good, especially during the short two-module lessons when there is no teaching in the main hall. In the long lessons pupils are provided with a suitable variety of activities. The good quality of the teaching supports pupils' high levels of attainment and progress.

181 Since the last inspection, improvement has been made not only in the quality of singing but also in the presentation of written work, the use of self-assessment procedures and challenge for the more able. There has been little development in the area of information technology. Although subject specific software has been acquired, only Key Stage 4 pupils use it effectively and independently. Music technology needs to be further developed across Key Stage 3 in order to fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

182 The leadership of the music department is of very good quality, both in the way it is managed and in the extent to which teaching and learning are monitored. The department contributes strongly to the cultural life of the area through a very full and comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities based in the school. Accommodation for music is unsatisfactory and there are insufficient practice rooms for group and instrumental work.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

183 Standards in GCSE physical education have risen significantly since the last inspection. In the most recent GCSE examination in 1999 the proportion of pupils gaining A\* to C grades was well above the national average. Pupils taking GCSE achieve highly compared with their prior attainment. The improved results are due to the good quality of teaching. The majority of pupils attain average standards in core physical education by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. At the last inspection standards were judged to be higher in Key Stage 3. In the most recent National Curriculum teachers' assessment attainment is above average.

184 At the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils perform running, jumping and throwing activities at a basic level satisfactorily. The accuracy of their descriptions of the techniques involved is much better than their broadly average performances. Pupils have a good understanding of the health and safety issues relating to athletics. Although they have a good knowledge of warm up activities, pupils seldom take any leadership responsibility for this part of the lesson. Pupils can describe techniques when observing a demonstration but are less confident when talking to and helping each other improve performances. They have few opportunities for evaluating work. As pupils move through Key Stage 3 they make satisfactory progress in learning athletics skills and most achieve the standards expected of them. In Year 7 pupils master the triple jump take-off very well because they have plenty of practice and guidance, both from their teacher and each other. In other lessons pupils learn less than they could and progress is restricted by a shortage of suitable throwing implements, narrow teaching approaches and the unfortunate over-emphasis on measuring performance rather than practice.

185 At the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils can play rounders confidently. Many have good hitting and fielding skills. A small number are aware of advanced fielding strategies, such as the need to back up a long throw in from the field. As the result of a well-planned course in health related exercise pupils have sufficient knowledge and understanding to plan exercise for a healthy lifestyle. In games activities, pupils are not confident in taking on the roles of official or coach. As pupils move through Key Stage 4, they make steady progress in learning athletics and games skills and the majority achieve the expected standards. Achievement and progress in the core physical education lessons are not higher because the programme and scheme of work does not ensure that all the elements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are taught in a systematic way. The current emphasis is on participation and enjoyment. In the GCSE course pupils of high prior attainment do not have a deep knowledge and understanding of the theory because they are not encouraged to read or carry out research more widely.

186 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress alongside other pupils: teachers know the pupils' physical and medical needs and make suitable adjustments. Teaching staff do not see the individual education plans for all pupils who have special education needs and are consequently not aware of broader learning targets.

187 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In 10 per cent of lessons teaching was very good, in 20 per cent it was good in 60 per cent it was satisfactory and in one lesson it was unsatisfactory. Teaching in both Key Stages 3 and 4 results in pupils learning at a satisfactory rate. The teaching of the GCSE course is good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The strongest feature of the teaching is the very good relationship that teachers have established with pupils. Relationships are based on trust and respect and this helps to establish a good atmosphere for learning and high standards of behaviour. Pupils enjoy lessons and want to do well. A further strength of the teaching is the specialist subject knowledge evident across the

department. All teachers use their knowledge of athletics and games well to ensure that pupils learn correct techniques and safe practice. Teachers give very clear demonstrations and explanations of throws and jumps. They question pupils well to help them to recall what they have learnt and to develop their understanding. They give pupils plenty of individual guidance and encouragement and consequently pupils know how well they are performing and what they have to do to improve. GCSE teaching is a strong aspect of the department's work. Pupils are helped to prepare for the examination by the use of well-structured notes and the requirement to learn for weekly tests. Lessons start promptly and move at a brisk pace. In some lessons non-participating pupils learn little, as they are not included in whole class discussion and questions. In the one unsatisfactory lesson in Key Stage 3 the attempt to include three different events with very little guidance, instruction or practice led to pupils making insufficient progress.

188 The subject is well managed. Enthusiastic and committed leadership has been effective in raising standards at GCSE and in gaining the Sports Mark Award. All of the physical education teachers work well as a team and there is a positive commitment to improving the quality of provision and the standards attained by pupils. Those pupils with a talent or interest in sports are able to achieve higher standards by attending the very good range of extra-curricular activities and by taking advantage of the well-established links the school has with many local sports clubs. The taught curriculum meets statutory requirements but remains dominated by games and is still low on creative and aesthetic experiences, especially for boys - an issue reported at the last inspection. Pupils are not well informed about the criteria for, or outcomes of, assessment. Limited in-service training has held back longer established staff from broadening teaching approaches to match developments in the physical education curriculum. The excellent range of facilities contributes to good standards, especially in hockey. Risk assessment of the activities and working areas has not been formally carried out and health and safety policies need to be updated.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

189 The religious education that pupils receive is of very good quality. This is an innovative department that has raised standards over the last three years.

190 In Key Stage 3, pupils attain standards expected by the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus and many exceed these. The very good planning of teaching and learning includes high levels of challenge in, for example, the expectation that pupils will undertake GCSE assignments from Year 7 onwards. In 1999, 10 pupils in Year 9 entered for GCSE and all obtained grades in the A\* to C range. Although no pupils are being entered in the current Year 9, many pupils in all years at Key Stage 3 achieve high standards in their assignments. Higher- and average-attaining pupils have good knowledge and understanding, particularly of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They understand some ways in which beliefs are practiced in daily life. Higher- and average-attaining pupils can evaluate and interpret religious ideas: teaching is very effectively planned to ensure the development of these skills. An extended assignment for Year 8 on Christian Aid, for instance, enabled pupils to discuss arguments about whether charity begins at home or also extends to overseas countries. Lower attaining pupils make good progress in developing knowledge but are less skilled in producing balanced arguments.

191 Attainment in GCSE at Key Stage 4 is well above the national average. In the last three years there has been a rising trend of improvement. In the 1999 GCSE results 81 per cent gained grades in the A\* to C range, significantly higher than the national average of 53 per cent. Results compare well with pupil's performance in other subjects. There is no significant difference between attainment of girls and boys. In 1999, 13 pupils from Year 10 were entered; all achieved A to C grades.

192 In the current Year 11 achievement in lessons and coursework indicates standards well above average. High-attaining pupils have good understanding for example of the beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. They are skilled in evaluating different standpoints to questions, such as racism, as well as explaining and justifying their own views. These are very high standards, in spite of the limited time given to religious education during Key Stage 4. The department compensates for this by its approach to long-term curriculum planning in preparation for pupils taking GCSE. The teaching makes very good use of both class and homework time. The policy to plan structured assignments and allow early entry to GCSE resulted from the department's review of its work. Support for pupils' literacy skills is good. There is good opportunity for speaking and listening. This, together with emphasis on key religious words and expressions, helps pupils to develop confidence in using religious vocabulary.

193 In both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They gain knowledge of religious faith and practice and some express insights. They learn well because teachers give individual help, sometimes adapt the tasks to suit different needs but always provide challenge.

194 In both key stages, pupils are very well supported in their personal development. They have positive attitudes to learning, high aspirations and respond very well to constant challenge. Pupils are given choices in task or topic for study and the work relates closely to their own experience. Pupils are made to think and reflect on a range of issues. For instance, in an excellent Year 9 lesson, pupils were introduced to Islam by the effective use of photographs and well-chosen extracts from television news bulletins. These showed arresting and contrasting images of world sportsmen, politicians as well as the damaging effects of fire on thousands of pilgrims to Mecca. Pupils behave very well in lessons.

195 Teaching in both key stages is very good. Teaching in 18 per cent of lessons was excellent, in 27 per cent it was very good, in 36 per cent it was good and in 18 per cent it was satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils' learning is very well enhanced and high quality teaching consistently expects them to think, participate and succeed. Expert subject knowledge is used very effectively to plan appropriate activities, explain material, draw on and refine pupils' ideas. This was particularly apparent in an excellent Year 7 lesson, where the mixed ability group learned by reflection on the meaning of God. Pupils thought about human qualities, then became absorbed in a task to liken God, for instance, to a particular artefact, car or lesson. All pupils grew in their understanding of different images of God. Relationships in lessons are excellent; pupils' needs are known, their ideas are clearly valued and the vast majority of pupils work at good pace. They are given responsibility for their own learning through independent research assignments and stimulating homework, all of which consistently extend learning in class. Pupils know what is expected of them and how well they are doing because marking is related to clear criteria and contains helpful comment. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

196 Departmental leadership and management are very good and are based on supportive teamwork, with shared commitment to high standards. There is on-going review of teaching and learning activities. The department has a good supply of videos but not enough textbooks, or artefacts. Learning opportunities have been devised using information technology but the department does not have its own computer facilities, and only has limited access to those of the school. The two temporary classrooms used are shabby and limit the quality of the learning environment for pupils. There is good time allocation for the subject in Key Stage 3 but there are some unsatisfactory, inequalities of time for different sets in Years 8 and 9. There is no further provision in Key Stage 4 for those who take GCSE early. All these are areas for improvement.

197 The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They achieve positive attitudes of respect for different faiths and open minds to the value of religious ideas.