

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE PRIORY C of E SCHOOL**

Dorking

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125281

Headteacher: Mr A Sohatski

Reporting inspector: Eveleen Gillmon  
2774

Dates of inspection: 26 - 30 March 2001

Inspection number: 197129

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	West Bank Dorking Surrey
Postcode:	RH4 3DG
Telephone number:	01306 887337
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	David Sparkes
Date of previous inspection:	15 January 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2774	Eveleen Gillmon	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils or students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils or students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
24326	Moira Fitzpatrick	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
8216	Geoffrey Binks	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
8361	Malcolm Burley	Team inspector	Science	
13003	Mark Gill	Team inspector	History	
8501	Paul Hartwright	Team inspector	Design and technology Information technology	
12885	John Hunt	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12276	Terence Payne	Team inspector	Music	
30563	Jacqueline Pentlow	Team inspector	Physical education Equal opportunities	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
18638	Christopher Shaw	Team inspector	Art	Sixth form provision
14573	Hugh Wareing	Team inspector	Geography	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Priory School is a smaller than average 11-18 voluntary aided comprehensive school situated close to the centre of Dorking. It is the smaller of only two secondary schools in the town. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average, as is the number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Very few pupils come from the ethnic minorities and there are none who have English as an additional language. Pupils currently in Years 7 and 8 have overall average attainment, as measured by the tests they took before leaving their primary schools. There are currently 77 students in the sixth form.

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

This is a growing and improving school where pupils achieve broadly in line with national standards by the time they reach the age of 16. Progress by pupils with special educational needs is good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and he has a clear vision of how the school needs to continue to develop. Teaching is good overall; management is effective; budgets are well spent and the school gives good value for money.

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

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher
- Teaching
- Provides a safe, warm and welcoming environment much appreciated by pupils and parents
- Provision for personal and social development
- Positive attitudes and good behaviour of pupils in and around the school
- An ethos of individual care and commitment to improving standards
- Extra-curricular activities

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

- The vocational/academic balance of the curriculum in the sixth form
- The strategic management of provision for pupils with special educational needs
- Opportunities for all pupils to experience participation in cultural and expressive arts
- Access to ICT resources by all departments
- Accommodation for music and drama

*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 previously inspected in 1996 (when it was known as Sondes Place School) and has made very good progress since then. Standards of attainment have improved significantly and the school received an Achievement Award from the DfEE in 2001. The quality of teaching has improved and the proportion of good and very good teaching observed during this inspection was significantly higher than on the previous occasion. The application of better management systems has improved the frequency and quality of monitoring, target setting and use of data to inform planning, and the introduction of performance management has secured a coherent approach to meeting training needs. The school now has a clear vision and a recognisable commitment to continuous improvement. There has not yet been sufficient improvement in the whole-school approach to special educational needs, and the provision of a daily act of collective worship has yet to be fully implemented.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Key Stage 3 Tests	C	C	B	C
GCSE examinations	C	D	C	C
A-levels/AS-levels	D	E	E	

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

Fluctuations from year to year reflect variations in pupil intake, but the trend of improvement is broadly in line with the national trend at age 14, and above it at 16. When compared with schools with a similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, performance at GCSE is average, but compared with pupils' own earlier attainment, progress at GCSE is well above average for similar schools. Boys do less well than girls in English, but better in science and mathematics. The school fell slightly short of its ambitious GCSE target in 2000. During the inspection, standards of work seen in English, science, art and modern languages were above expectation, but below in music at Key Stage 3 and in mathematics at Key Stage 4. The average A and AS-Level points achieved by pupils in the sixth form is well below the national average, although in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE these students achieve appropriately.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils speak highly of their school and their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The great majority of pupils exhibit a high standard of behaviour, respond well to the school's disciplinary and uniform code, and have respect for each other and for adults.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school makes high quality provision for the personal development of pupils. Relationships at all levels in the school are good.
Attendance	Very good and well above the national average.

Most pupils display a sense of purpose in lessons. Response to teaching and behaviour in lessons observed during the inspection was always satisfactory, and usually good. They show respect for each other and for adults. They conduct themselves well around the site. Attendance is good. The overall atmosphere is welcoming and secure and pupils do not hesitate to express their loyalty towards, and pride in, the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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



Teaching in English and science is generally good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed in these areas. In mathematics it is generally satisfactory. In art, it is consistently good, and in all other subjects it is consistently satisfactory and frequently good or very good. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils. Excellent teaching was observed in science, information and communication technology and PSHE. The teaching of reading and writing leads to good progress, but plans to implement whole-school literacy and numeracy strategies are as yet undeveloped. Some, but not all, teachers make good use of ICT to support their subjects. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally good, and teachers extend effectively the skills and knowledge of faster or more able learners. Overall, teaching was satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons observed. It was good or better in 101 of 149 lessons, of which 34 were very good or excellent.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. The sixth form offers a mainly academic curriculum. Extra-curricular opportunities are good, but mainstream provision in the performance arts is underdeveloped.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils with SEN receive high quality support from the department, but there is a need for greater coherence in the management of this area on a whole-school basis.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision is good in moral and social development through targeted pastoral activities. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is less focused and needs greater whole-school co-ordination.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school consults regularly with parents and maintains an ongoing dialogue with them about their children's welfare and progress.

The school's partnership with parents is good and makes a significant contribution to the effective day-to-day operation. The formal and informal curriculum serves the pupils well, but there are shortcomings in the vocational provision in the sixth form and in the whole-school implementation of performance arts.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The excellent leadership of the headteacher is well supported by a developing senior and middle management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors understand their role well, hold the school to account, and provide very good support for the headteacher. The requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship has not yet been fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is developing a culture of self-review allied to continuous improvement planning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Long-term planning for resources provision is sound; effective deployment of ICT resources is an ongoing challenge.

The school is appropriately staffed with well-qualified teachers and classroom assistants. Accommodation is fully used. The recently built sixth form block provides a high quality resource. Some of the de-mountable classrooms elsewhere on the site offer a poor environment for teaching and learning. The school is generally well resourced. Recent improvements in the provision of computers support the curriculum developments well, but adequate access is still a problem for some departments.

## 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>• the school's caring ethos and close 'family' atmosphere</li> <li>• the teaching and support given to pupils</li> <li>• the information provided and the progress reports on their children</li> <li>• the school's leadership</li> <li>• The sixth form "buddying" scheme for new pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the greater consistency in the application of the homework timetable</li> <li>• more opportunities for instrumental music lessons (<i>1 parent</i>)</li> <li>• earlier consultation concerning the setting arrangements, particularly for mathematics (<i>1 parent</i>)</li> </ul>

Inspectors' judgements support the views that parents hold about the positive features of the school. They found that the amount and distribution of homework was generally appropriate for the age and stage of development of the pupils. The school is welcoming and purposeful, and provides a caring and supportive environment for all pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The performance of pupils recorded prior to entry, and their attainment in a variety of standardised tests, show that the school's intake has fluctuated over the past six years but is now of broadly average ability, with slightly under half in the ability range expected to achieve 5 or more A\*-C passes at GCSE.
2. When judged against the standards expected nationally, overall attainment in the school is in line with the expected standard in most subjects and pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school.

#### *Key Stage 3*

3. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000, overall standards attained by the school in national tests were above average when compared with all maintained schools nationally. Performance in science was significantly better than in English and mathematics where standards were close to the national average. When compared with schools in similar contexts, the percentage of pupils achieving Levels 5 and 6 was below average, but the average points score per pupil was close to the national average. There was no significant gender difference in science, but boys outperformed girls in mathematics and fell significantly below them in English.

#### *Key Stage 4*

4. At the end of Key Stage 4 in the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations, the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more passes at grades A\*-C was close to the national average over the last three years. Pupils' progress, based on average total points score per pupil, was well above average when compared with schools in similar contexts using prior attainment as a basis for comparison. Differences in performance between boys and girls are greater than in Key Stage 3, and can be traced to a significant difference in literacy standards, particularly writing skills.

#### *Core subjects of the curriculum*

5. Standards observed during the inspection were generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils and stages of the courses being followed. In English, a significant number of pupils in Key Stage 3 were working at above average levels. They have well developed listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. In Key Stage 4 they can present complex ideas with clarity both orally and in writing. In science, equally good standards were observed in both key stages and many pupils were achieving above expectation for the age. Standards were less good in mathematics. Many pupils lack confidence in basic mathematical understanding and the numerical skills of some pupils in Key Stage 4 have been insufficiently developed.

#### *Other subjects of the curriculum*

6. In other subjects, observations of lessons, discussion and scrutiny of pupils' work show standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 to be at least in line with that expected nationally, and occasionally above. Standards and progress observed in most subjects ranged from satisfactory to good and occasionally very good. Exceptions were in mathematics and music, where some unsatisfactory progress was found. In subjects where pupils are taught in ability groups, the attainment of lower sets was below expectation for age. Levels of achievement by these pupils was in part, but not wholly, related to prior attainment.

#### *Sixth form*

7. Overall, the standards attained by students at A-level in 2000 were well below the national average, and this reflected the previous attainment of many pupils entering the sixth form in 1998. In art and design and in design technology results were above average. National comparisons are difficult, because of the small numbers of students entered. In recent years, the numbers entered and the results attained have varied considerably, producing no reliable picture of trends. The number of students who gained a GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualification) at intermediate level in leisure and tourism in 2000 was above the national average.

8. During the inspection the standards seen in lessons and in a scrutiny of students' work were broadly average. However, this varied from well above average in the case of art to below average in some English and mathematics. Achievement in lessons, and over time, also varied but it was good overall. Many students have a high level of commitment and a keen sense of purpose and most achieve what they need in order to move to the next phase of either work or higher education.

*Pupils with special educational needs*

9. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make satisfactory progress throughout the school. In some lessons, such as English in Year 11 and science in Year 11, pupils with a range of learning and behavioural difficulties make good progress on GCSE courses because they are taught well by teachers who plan effectively and use fully the skills of experienced classroom assistants. In other areas, such as in mathematics in Year 7, pupils' particular disabilities are known but lessons are not planned or adjusted to meet individual pupils' needs. Pupils who are withdrawn from tutor groups and for parts of lessons for intensive reading and literacy support make good progress.

*Literacy*

10. The school has no literacy policy and no designated person with oversight for the promotion of literacy across the curriculum. As a result the contribution made by other departments to developing pupils' competence is of variable quality and method. In some subjects there is good emphasis on reading for some part of every lesson. This happens regularly in geography and history, but is less frequent in other subjects. Some subjects, for instance, science and design and technology, make use of word walls, drawing pupils' attention to new or technical vocabulary so that they spell and use the words accurately. In design and technology pupils are asked to compile their own word banks to help them extend their vocabulary in the subject. There is good emphasis on speaking as a vehicle for learning in modern foreign languages, science and history lessons. Writing frames are used to help pupils to structure their work in geography and history. Overall in the school there is a satisfactory attention to developing literacy competence, but, with the co-ordination and development of existing strategies, the contribution from the various departments could rapidly improve the general level of literacy across the school.

*Numeracy*

11. Standards of numeracy particularly in the lower school are rising. Pupils are now entering the school with a greater facility and confidence to undertake numerical work including mental calculations and to make appropriate use of calculators. Pupils, particularly, during Key Stage 3 are able to use these skills in a range of subjects. In science for example the majority of pupils are able to present numerical information in the form of line and bar charts and to plot graphs. They are also able to manipulate and evaluate formulae. In geography pupils are able to present information in the form of graphs or to interpret those that are presented to them. Although in some other subjects there is little or no demand for use of number there is no evidence of pupils' progress being impeded by a lack of numerical skills. However at Key Stage 4 some pupils continue to have under-developed mental arithmetic skills. In one Year 11 class, for example, during revision for the forthcoming GCSE examination in mathematics progress with work on the graphical solution of equations was being impeded by the poor numeracy skills of some of the pupils in the class. In order to further raise standards of all the pupils in the school there is a need for a greater level of central co-ordination to the development and use of numeracy skills across subjects.

*Information and communication technology*

12. ICT across the curriculum is not yet well enough co-ordinated or monitored. The use of ICT through the whole school curriculum remains the responsibility of the heads of departments and is not yet consistent. It is well used by English, French, special needs, geography and design and technology and, to some extent, by art. Pupils use ICT to present data and images in history. Other departments, including maths and science do not often include it in their work.
13. Overall, standards of attainment in the school have risen significantly since the time of the previous inspection. However, there is still the challenge of raising the performance of boys to match that of the girls at GCSE. The school has set itself ambitious targets in recent years and come close to meeting these. The current targets for 2001 are appropriately incremental when related to performance over the past two years. They do not, however, accurately reflect the baseline of attainment of the particular cohort of pupils. Early intervention strategies to close the

growing gap between boys and girls will now be needed in order to sustain the improvements to date.

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

14. Pupils' attitudes towards the school are very good. The vast majority of pupils display good behaviour in lessons, showing respect to staff and eagerness to answer questions. They know and observe the school rules. Pupils display mature attitudes to work and work collaboratively together. For example, in a Year 8 lesson observed, in personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils were able to discuss in a mature and meaningful way the effect on relationships within a household, when a grandparent comes to live with them.
15. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and break and lunchtimes are very good. In communal settings, such as the dining hall, social areas and playground, they relate well to each other and as a consequence only minimal supervision is needed and given. During the inspection, the team noted particularly the friendly and courteous behaviour of the pupils and their ability to exercise a degree of self-discipline when needed, as for example in congested corridors, stairwells and the dining room.
16. The small amount of unacceptable and challenging behaviour by individuals observed during the inspection week was managed extremely well by staff and dealt with appropriately. Oppressive behaviour such as bullying or racism was not observed. Pupils from each year group confirmed that incidents of bullying at the school are very rare and that they are appropriately dealt with by staff when they do occur. Pupils also confirmed that they feel they receive good pastoral support by staff and know how to seek assistance if the need arises.
17. Poor behaviour is treated very seriously by the school; the relatively high rate of fixed rate exclusions reported by the school relate to multiple incidents involving a small minority of pupils. Exclusion is used as a last resort and the school's policy of temporarily withdrawing pupils from a classroom situation or referring them to the Pupils Services Department to work under supervision for a short time, is effective in managing behaviour.
18. The school has a very successful PSHE programme, which is well supervised and led by a senior staff member. The programme contains modules on citizenship, sex education, drug awareness, and social skills. It has a high impact on developing social skills of the pupils and their awareness of current social issues. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and school staff, and an extremely positive attitude to lessons and behaviour in general.
19. The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive for registration and lessons on time. A "buddying" system in which Year 11 and 12 pupils act as mentors for Year 7 pupils has been very successful and as a result the transition into secondary education from primary education is made smoothly. Pupils and parents value these arrangements and would like to see them extended.
20. Pupils display respect for their own property, each other's property and school equipment. Computers and school equipment are treated with care and respect and the school's code of conduct is understood and fully accepted, including the system of sanctions and commendations. Pupils are given ample opportunities to take initiative and exercise responsibility. They help the school in various ways, such as undertaking prefect duties, assisting in the library, leading assemblies and accompanying younger pupils on school outings and at school events.
21. The school elects two representatives from each year to the School Council which meets regularly under the leadership of a senior pupil. The Council has a small fund allocated to it from the school budget and makes decisions on what could be improved and on the allocation of funds, and proposals for changes to school rules. For example, a recent School Council request that school rules be changed to allow girls to wear trousers was subsequently agreed by the school management.
22. Attendance at the school in the week prior to the inspection was good. Strenuous efforts are made to monitor and improve attendance and plans are in hand to move to a computerised registration system. The school has full and effective liaison with the Education Welfare Officer who visits on a regular basis. In addition the school is to "buy in" more of her time for her to track

persistent non-attenders and do home visits. Lessons start promptly. Registers are marked accurately, neatly and fully comply with legislation.

23. The school has made considerable progress since the last report in its PSHE provision; the efforts made by staff to foster good relationships with pupils has had a very positive effect on their wellbeing and education.

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

24. The quality of teaching is good overall. Ninety-eight per cent of lessons observed were judged to be satisfactory or better – a significant increase since the previous inspection. The good and very good teaching observed in 71 per cent of lessons was in all subjects, both key stages and in the sixth form, with the highest percentage in Key Stage 4. Examples of excellent teaching were observed in science in Key Stage 4, and information and communication technology and personal, social and health education (PSHE) in Key Stage 3. In the sixth form, the teaching was always satisfactory. It was consistently good in history and science, and very good in geography.
25. All teachers have good knowledge of their specialist subjects and of the relevant programmes of study in the National Curriculum. Classroom management skills are generally good throughout the school and most teachers have good relationships with their pupils.
26. Examples of very good teaching, promoting high standards of pupil attainment, progress and behaviour were observed in 23 per cent of lessons, most consistently in art, design and technology, English, modern languages, music and science and, in the sixth form, geography. Teachers in these lessons demonstrated a range of effective teaching strategies for the management of pupil learning, stimulated pupils' interest and involved them in self-assessment and evaluation. The full ability range was consistently challenged and lessons were conducted with appropriate pace and variety of activity.
27. In the best lessons, teachers used a range of strategies, ensured a fast pace with appropriate stimulus and challenge for pupils of all abilities resulting in clear learning gains by pupils and achievement above expectation for age and perceived ability. For example, at the start of a Year 11 revision lesson pupils were guided towards the construction of a mind map. Pupils then worked in small groups on topics related to the periodic table and chemical reactions. Their task was to produce revision charts for display to other members of the class and a series of questions for others to answer. This was an excellent example of active revision, conducted with pace, humour and challenge, to which pupils responded well, and good progress was accompanied by a sense of achievement. Similarly, in a Year 8 PSHE lesson, the teacher took pupils through a series of activities and discussion opportunities at a brisk pace which stimulated their interest and enthusiasm for the topic, whilst maintaining excellent class control throughout.
28. In the very few unsatisfactory lessons observed, isolated instances of poor planning, lack of pace, insecure subject knowledge and weak classroom management were the main weaknesses.
29. The teaching observed in the core subjects of English and science was always satisfactory and mainly good. In mathematics it was generally satisfactory although isolated instances of unsatisfactory teaching were also observed. The school has taken steps to deal with this situation. In all other subject areas, teaching was never less than satisfactory, and the quality of pupil learning reflected this.
30. The teaching of pupils with identified special educational needs (SEN), who are withdrawn for short periods from tutorial time or from lessons, is of a good standard both by teachers and classroom assistants. Teachers use time effectively to concentrate on short regular spells of reading and phonic recognition, spelling and some writing. Progress is recorded within the individual books used by the pupils so that the next lesson can be started without waste of time. Praise is used regularly to encourage pupils to persevere when occasionally there is some loss of impetus.
31. Within the classroom pupils with SEN receive teaching which is of good standard overall. Most teachers have a sound general understanding of pupils' particular learning needs but many of

them do not take these needs into account when planning lessons. In no areas of the school were subject teachers setting particular learning targets for pupils with SEN.

32. The use of support teachers and classroom assistants is inconsistent and in some cases is unsatisfactory. In most lessons there is no evidence of joint planning between the teacher and the support assistant. In some lessons observed in English in Key Stage 3, there was insufficient preparatory planning with the result that the support assistant was simply an observer for part of the lesson. Although some classroom assistants have received training in the past, there is a need to give greater guidance to all assistants on the most effective ways of giving support to particular pupils. The quality of the support given to particular pupils who have formal statements is good overall, but no time is allocated to assistants to plan in advance with teachers the programmes of work for groups or individuals or to discuss how they can contribute effectively to the lesson.
33. Homework forms part of pupils' learning and is generally well used throughout the school. Parents commented that pupils receive clear guidance with regard to quantity and time to be spent, but some were concerned that not all teachers were consistent in their application of the guidelines, resulting in occasional uneven workloads for pupils, particularly in Key Stage 4.
34. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) resources to support subject teaching is variable. It is well used in English, French, geography, design and technology and, to some extent, in history and art. Many teachers are aware of the developing skills of the pupils and the increasing ICT resource base, but not all of them take advantage of these to motivate pupils and stimulate their interest. Lack of regular access to equipment and knowledge of appropriate software was cited by several departments as a constraint on developing this area. Current plans to refurbish some parts of the school will enable more teachers to actively engage in using ICT to support subject learning.
35. Most teachers maintain extensive assessment records and use a range of internal and external performance data to inform planning for teaching. This is most effective when linked with monitoring of individual pupil targets. Marking of work is conscientious, but few teachers provide adequate feedback which informs pupils precisely what they need to do to improve their work. Good examples of this style of marking were observed in some history and geography work.
36. Pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive and the quality of learning observed during the inspection matched this.

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

37. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Statutory requirements on provision are being met in all subjects. The weekly teaching time of 25 hours in Key Stages 3 and 4 meets the recommendation and the time allocated to subjects is sufficient to cover the programmes of study. In the sixth form the allocation of time to chemistry is currently lower than is normally seen, but steps have been taken to address this from September 2001.
38. In Key Stage 4, the school provides a range of GCSE courses. As yet there are no vocational courses taught in this key stage but pupils are prepared for courses in further education. In the sixth form, in addition to a range of A and A/S-level courses, the school also offers two courses leading to GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualification) intermediate level, and AVCE (Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education) accreditation. Registration, assemblies and tutor time are arranged as part of the pastoral system.
39. In Key Stage 3 the curriculum provision builds on work done in the primary school. This is particularly effective in English, where teachers are using the structure of the National Literacy strategy to give continuity to pupils' learning. In other subjects the curriculum is well planned to provide progression and to prepare pupils for learning at Key Stage 4.
40. All pupils now follow a GCSE accredited course in religious education in Key Stage 4. Resources for information and communication technology are now adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum, although the deployment of these needs review, particularly in relation to mathematics

and science. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4. The programme for PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) is now very good and is effectively taught.

41. The range of subjects currently taught in the sixth form has not broadened significantly since the last inspection and some subjects have been removed from the curriculum, due to low take-up. The school is currently expanding provision for the sixth form through the use of video conferencing combined with self-study, in subjects such as law, psychology and sociology. Although this provides access to teaching expertise not available in the school, the method of study is not suitable for all of the students on the courses some of whom still need the direct guidance of a teacher to help them progress effectively. There is good provision for the development of key skills; students also have good tutorial sessions, including PSHE, and take part in weekly assemblies.
42. The curriculum is enriched by field trips and visits as well as by visiting speakers. There have been visits for Key Stage 3 pupils, including The Tower of London, HMS Victory and a visit to the Mary Rose. Theatre visits and workshops, visiting speakers and trips to A-level conferences enhance the English curriculum. Visits to museums and art galleries are part of the planned enrichment for the art curriculum. The modern languages department arranges an exchange visit with a school in Germany and the school has arranged pupil to pupil links with a school in Ireland. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities provided by the school are good. Every lunchtime and most evenings after school, teachers give freely of their time to provide a variety of sport, arts and animal welfare activities. There is provision for homework study and revision after school every day.
43. A successful 'School Environment Project' involves many pupils in re-cycling, garden design and nature study as well as a focus on immediate school surroundings. This has attracted local awards and is an excellent example of extra-curricular activity drawing on many facets of the more formal curriculum and extending pupils' awareness of social issues.
44. A weakness in the curriculum is found in the area of the performance arts. Although music and drama lessons are timetabled in Key Stage 3, opportunities to develop pupils' skills and attributes through the regular participation in communal activities, such as singing in assembly and regular whole-school performances, are not exploited sufficiently and dance is not taught. The restriction of choral, orchestral and dramatic performances to extra-curricular time limits opportunities to benefit from such activities for too many pupils.
45. The quality of planning for the curriculum is good overall. Schemes of work are well planned to provide progression in each subject and in most departments learning is enriched by field work, visits or visitors. The school makes satisfactory provision for all pupils to have equal access to the curriculum. The withdrawal of pupils for additional support in literacy occurs during form tutor time for only part of the week, so that no pupils miss out on pastoral opportunities. In English and mathematics pupils are placed in sets according to their level of attainment. At Key Stage 4 this pattern is extended to science and pupils in other subjects are supported with their work by classroom assistants.
46. Most pupils on the SEN register receive the full curriculum throughout Key Stage 3 with little modification but sometimes with help from classroom assistants or teachers. In geography, art and history, the range of activities is adapted satisfactorily to maintain all pupils' interest but in some subjects, such as music and English and mathematics, there is insufficient thought given to producing different work for individual pupils. Pupils with low levels of literacy and numeracy who have statements of special needs receive some 'booster' help, particularly in Key Stage 3. This consists of effective short individual lessons supported by either a teacher or a support assistant.
47. The school is successful in taking most pupils with SEN through to the completion of GCSE courses. This indicates an area of improvement since the last inspection. The only disapplications from the full National Curriculum are for eight pupils disappplied from MFL at the end of Year 10 who currently follow a course in community studies in Year 11. One pupil in the current Year 10 is also disappplied.



48. The school's policy of concentrating a high proportion of pupils with learning and behavioural needs into smaller sized sets in the upper school is successful where the teachers plan effectively to meet pupils' needs and where there is an appropriate level of classroom support. It is less effective in mathematics where the lower sets are larger in numbers and where pupils cannot receive so much individual support. There were few examples seen by inspectors of focused support for pupils with behavioural problems. Where support was available it was invariably provided to react to situations rather than to guide pupils.
49. A very well planned personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) which includes sex education, drugs awareness and careers education, is taught in all years with appropriate emphasis given to the needs and maturity of the pupils, but the amount of time allocated to Year 7 pupils is considerably less than in other years. The careers programme begins in Year 9 and links are made with drama to allow pupils to explore themes associated with the world of work. This is the start of a process which prepares pupils for work experience in Year 10. Work on careers is enhanced by links with the local careers service that gives advice and support to pupils at key points, such as before making subject choices for Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. While the quality and co-ordination of this aspect of personal and social education is good the school could do more to fully inform Year 11 pupils of the opportunities for further education in the locality.
50. Links with further education institutions are not strong for pupils who are 16. Links with the primary schools that send pupils to the school are good and with those in the immediate vicinity they are very good. Teachers have links for curriculum information and pastoral information about pupils. Some departments, notably English, have very successful links for literacy and have developed a very good scheme of work to provide continuity of learning because of these links. Links with the wider community are satisfactory, providing opportunities for work experience and visiting speakers to enhance the curriculum. The school has a good partnership with the town's second secondary school (a specialist language college) which is helping to develop teaching in modern foreign languages.

#### ***Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development***

51. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There is, as yet, no school policy covering all of these areas and no person with overall responsibility for this in the school; the contribution of departments is therefore not being monitored. Many teachers use opportunities to consider aspects but these are not identified in subject schemes of work and the experience of the pupils is inconsistent. As was the case at the time of the previous inspection, departmental practice is variable. Good provision is made in art, English, history and music; elsewhere it is satisfactory, but less consistent.
52. The school has a programme of regular assemblies on several days a week and on the other days time is spent in tutor groups. In order to comply with statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship a programme of topics for reflection has been introduced in Year 7. It was noted during the inspection that this was not being delivered consistently. The statutory requirement is therefore not fully met.
53. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The religious education department makes a positive contribution to this area and examples of good practice observed included: the art department where pupils explore feelings, emotions and ideas of artists and themselves when looking at art work; when listening to music some reflection is included; and when reading English literature texts pupils are encouraged to reflect on themselves and others whilst exploring the nature of humanity; in history, opportunities for reflection are offered when studying religious divisions and their consequences and the emotions expressed in World War I poetry. In other subject areas the staff may use opportunities as they arise but they are not common.
54. The provision for the pupils' moral development is good. Teachers and other staff provide good role models and the pupils are encouraged to respect each other and show a respect for property and the environment around them. Moral issues are frequently raised for consideration during subject teaching. The history department offers a very good experience to the pupils whilst considering the moral issues of the British social system that resulted in workhouses. The pupils also consider the holocaust, the decision to drop the atomic bomb and the Vietnam War,

again using music and poetry as a means of understanding people's views. Genetics and pollution are discussed in science lessons and there are good teacher expectations in English when emphasising right and wrong through poems, stories, plays and the media.

55. The provision for pupils' social development is also good. Pupils have many opportunities in lessons to work together and they do this very well. In some subjects such as English this is developed to allow pupils to take responsibility and lead aspects of the work. Whilst taking part in extra-curricular activities pupils mix with those of other ages; this is especially seen when they are members of teams, choirs and the orchestra, and in the school environment project. In a science lesson observed, homework was set on the social implications of the foot and mouth disease outbreak. The School Council and mentoring scheme for new pupils provide further opportunities for pupils to develop social understanding and skills.
56. The provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. The English department use a range of books representing different cultures and the library has a range of books. Where the study of other cultures is required by the National Curriculum they are included. A limited consideration of other cultures is included in history and geography, and the music of other cultures is included in the curriculum, mainly in Key Stage 4. The modern languages department organises a number of visits to Europe and runs a joint European week with the local specialist language college. The art department include a range of multicultural art along with visits to art galleries. The overall result is that the pupils do obtain a good understanding of western culture but the wider aspect of "enriching the pupils' knowledge and experience of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society" is much weaker.

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

57. The positive work of the school in relation to pupil welfare and guidance, mentioned at the time of the previous inspection, has been well maintained and improved. As a result, pupils are enabled to make very good progress in the many aspects of their life at school.
58. The school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' health and safety. The designated Child Protection Officer is well known to pupils and staff and liaises very effectively with the statutory authorities on child protection matters. Full and accurate records are kept. However, training in child protection procedures is not given to newly qualified teachers or new staff and the senior management team have not yet attended the appropriate training course. The school should take appropriate steps to remedy this omission.
59. Regular health and safety audits are carried out by the premises supervisor: and a link governor responsible for health and safety. The Health and Safety Audit Report does not however record whether previous identified items of concern have been rectified. The school has identified this omission and is to change its systems. The school has an appropriate number of 'first aiders' who are in possession of current up-to-date certificates and have received appropriate training. Accidents and incidents are properly recorded. Fire drills are held regularly; fire alarms are regularly tested and accurate records are kept.
60. A local health authority nurse visits the school on a weekly basis and holds "drop in" sessions for pupils who wish to consult her in confidence on a variety of health issues. The nurse also delivers part of the sex education module of the school PSHE programme and makes a very helpful contribution to the school's pastoral arrangements. Her work is much appreciated by parents and pupils alike.
61. The school has made available to pupils a Pupil Services Department, specifically dedicated to their needs, which provides valuable support and offers a direct referral system to the relevant pastoral services. This system is much appreciated by pupils.
62. The school has an effective and well ordered pastoral system. Pupils' progress is well monitored by year tutors, reporting to two senior managers, and the school quickly picks up items of concern they may have regarding pupils' progress. Pupils are well aware who to relate to if they have problems and they feel safe and secure in the knowledge that the school's ethos of caring is embraced by all teaching and non-teaching staff. Procedures for ensuring good attendance are very effective.

63. Assessment information is well used by the school to inform curricular planning and track pupils' progress throughout their time at the school. There are effective procedures for the assessing and recording of individual pupils' attainment and progress. The results of national tests and tests administered by the school are analysed to build up a picture of pupils' attainment when they arrive at the school and to predict outcomes. This helps in grouping them appropriately and in identifying those who need support. Monitoring assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are carried out regularly by each subject department and are reviewed at regular departmental meetings. Departments are increasingly making use of ICT to record and analyse assessment information. Each subject has a separate assessment schedule that has been agreed with the Head of Upper or Lower School and departments are increasingly using this assessment data to track and improve the quality of pupils' work. Pupils with SEN are identified and assessed correctly and their individual education plans are carefully prepared and monitored by the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator).

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

64. The great majority of parents who attended the parents' meeting and who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were extremely supportive of the school, as were several parents who met with the inspection team during a community lunch at the school. They consider that the school is well managed, offers good support to their children, and promotes good behaviour. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems and have the view that the teachers expect their children to work hard, and are helping them to become mature and responsible adults. The inspection team findings concur entirely with those views.
65. Communication with parents and the quality of information provided for parents about activities within the school and pupils' progress is very good. A detailed and well-presented brochure gives comprehensive information about the organisation of the school, its aims, ethos and rules. In addition a separate information booklet is provided for the parents and pupils of Year 7 prior to their entry into the school which is similarly well produced and contains a variety of useful information that parents and new pupils to the school find valuable. The school also produces regular newsletters giving very full information about activities which have occurred, or which are proposed.
66. A detailed report on individual pupils is given to parents or carers each year and, in addition, interim reports are presented twice a year giving grades and projected grades for external examinations, where appropriate. Whilst the reports refer to National Curriculum levels, level descriptors are not given to parents and targets set are indicated only in a small minority of subjects.
67. Parents appreciate the use of a pupil's planner which, in addition to recording information about homework, provides a medium for communication between parent and tutors. Regular structured parents' evenings are held throughout the year where parents are able to formally meet teachers to discuss their children's progress. Parents are contacted directly by Heads of Upper and Lower School and Group Tutors if there are serious matters of concern that they wish to discuss regarding pupils' progress. In addition, parents are invited to approach the headteacher, senior management team and staff at any time if they have matters of concern that they wish to raise with the school.
68. The school has very effective transitional arrangements with the transfer of new pupils from primary school. Prospective pupils are invited to attend the school for a "taster day" prior to their selection of the school. After selection, parents of new pupils are invited to come into the school to meet Group Tutors, Heads of Year and Heads of Department to discuss school arrangements. Parents feel that effective arrangements made by the school for transfer of pupils help them to settle in very quickly.
69. The Friends of the Priory School Association is a lively body which makes efforts to be involved in the school life. The school encourages parents to come into school to help, although only a few take the opportunity to do so. The Association arranges a number of social events and raises much appreciated funds to support educational activities. Parents offer help to the school in supervision of school outings and holidays, some help with reading and other school activities.

70. The positive links the school has with parents as mentioned in the previous inspection report have been maintained and built upon and they make a positive contribution to the achievements of this improving school.

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

71. The headteacher provides clear vision and sense of purpose to the school through his outstanding leadership. His ubiquitous presence around the school ensures that he knows his staff and pupils well. Many pupils and parents commented favourably about this.
72. There is a clarity of purpose, articulated within the school's published aims, and reinforced through its policies and practices. These aims are fulfilled by:
- the curriculum structure which offers all pupils wide-ranging opportunities
  - a caring atmosphere in which teachers and pupils know and respect each other well
  - a well understood and accepted disciplinary framework
  - good quality teaching which embodies the school's values
  - partnership with parents and an active presence within the wider community
  - good financial and resource management
73. Day-to-day management is very good at all levels and is reflected in the high regard which many pupils and parents have for the school and in its purposeful drive for continuous improvement, which is evident in all parts of the school.
74. The governing body uses its committee structure effectively, provides good support for the headteacher and plans carefully for the school's future development. Good relationships between the headteacher and members, with effective working practices, ensure that the governing body plays an active role in the life of the school. There is a commitment to induction training for new governors aimed at increasing understanding of the developing role and responsibilities of governance, together with forging a strong sense of partnership with the school managers.
75. Sound strategic planning is demonstrated by a well-structured School Development Plan. This is providing an effective management tool for improvement and has already had a significant impact on the improvement of teaching and learning in the school. Development planning at departmental level is also sound and the cycle is well documented. The school is increasingly developing a culture of self-evaluation and reflects carefully on its successes and failures.
76. The school has recently experienced increased turnover of senior staff and, with the imminent departure of the current deputy to take up a headship, a timely opportunity to re-structure the senior tier of management and its line management responsibilities has arisen. The current arrangements for pastoral management, whilst effective, are at full stretch and will not adequately cater for the demands of a growing school population. Systematic monitoring and evaluation of curriculum, teaching and pupil attainment is in place, and communication is effective. The newly introduced performance management policy and procedures, linked with professional development analysis, integrates corporate and individual needs well. The induction of newly qualified teachers is well planned and carefully monitored. The school's commitment to raising standards is further supported by a thorough analysis of available assessment data and its appropriate use in determining end of key stage performance targets.
77. Internal day-to-day communication systems are efficiently organised between all levels of management and between the school and its clients. The collection of data about pupil performance and achievement, and the application of management systems in support of attainment and curriculum development, are well advanced and contribute significantly to the efficient and effective management of the school, as does the cycle of planning.
78. Departmental management is generally effective, but it varies from subject to subject. Some larger departments such as English and science have been more energetic and successful than others in implementing development plans to raise standards. In these departments, a clear focus and sense of direction has produced a strong commitment to teamwork with visible

success. The good practice developed in these areas should be replicated elsewhere, especially in mathematics, in order to match improvements which have been achieved to date.

79. At present the whole school approach to the teaching of pupils with SEN is under-developed. This was an issue at the time of the previous inspection and improvement has not been sufficient. While isolated incidences of good teaching and effective classroom assistance were observed, the practice of planning for effective support of these pupils by all teachers in all subjects is not evident. There is a need to clarify the respective roles of the heads of upper and lower schools and the SENCO in relation to responsibility for pupils with SEN and to designate clearly the locus of responsibility for literacy and numeracy development.
80. Whilst the school has made a significant investment in upgrading the resources for the teaching of ICT, its use across the curriculum is not yet well enough co-ordinated or monitored. This remains the responsibility of the Heads of Departments and is not yet consistent. It is well used by English, modern languages, special needs, geography and design and technology and, to some extent, by art and history.
81. The staff at the school represent a united team in which all are encouraged and enabled to work towards the school's aims. The administrative, technical and learning support staff work closely with teachers in many areas and all demonstrate efficiency and a strong loyalty to the school and its pupils; they contribute significantly to the 'large family' atmosphere described by pupils. The staff profile reflects a dynamic mix of young recent recruits to the profession and older more experienced teachers, all of whom are well qualified and deployed appropriately. Induction procedures are good, and support for newly qualified teachers is well planned. The school meets the professional development needs of its staff effectively, but middle managers in small departments would benefit from greater opportunities to network with colleagues in other schools for the sharing of expertise and good practice.
82. The fabric of the school buildings and campus is generally well maintained and pupils benefit from the warm, inviting and litter-free environment, well enhanced by departmental and other displays. The recently added sixth form building provides high quality facilities, and the school has very good sporting facilities, including a swimming pool. Some departments are unsuitably housed in de-mountable classrooms that provide a poor environment for teaching and learning. The school has plans to build a new block of classrooms, and refurbish science facilities. Priority should be given to the re-housing of the music and drama facilities in order to provide pupils with greater development opportunities in these areas.
83. The school's learning resource centre provides a valuable focus for the work of the school. It is very well managed and is in constant use during lessons and during the lunch hour. The ratio of computers to pupils within the school is generally favourable, although further thought needs to be given to their deployment in order to provide equality of access by departments.
84. The school has taken some radical steps in order to balance the budget and reduce the dependence on supplementing the sixth form funding from Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 allocations. These are not entirely successful. Reducing the teaching time for some subjects has meant, for instance, that students taking A-level chemistry have only three taught periods per week. This places a considerable strain on both the students and teacher. Some extra-curricular sessions have been considered necessary in order to maintain progress. In mathematics, lessons suffer from having only three students. The teacher has difficulty in ensuring the more lively interaction and drive that can come from a larger group. In the cases of psychology, sociology and law, students are taught by an Internet video link to distant tutors. This link only operates for one hour per subject per week, again placing a considerable burden on the students. In the short session observed, the quality of the communication was not very good: the school does not fully exploit the possibilities which could be afforded by the technology. The school provides limited oversight for these students. Nevertheless, in all these examples, students seem determined to do well, collaborating effectively and working very hard.
85. Students stay on into the sixth form because it provides them with the security of an environment and teachers that they know well. They are very supportive and respond to new initiatives enthusiastically. The sixth form also enjoys the support of the parents. These factors will not be enough to sustain the sixth form. The curriculum will need to be broadened to provide more appropriate courses for non A-level students. At the same time standards need to be raised.

This is a delicate balancing act in which, given the commitment, enthusiasm and expertise of the head and staff, the school is well placed to succeed.

86. The school gives good value for money. Governors and senior managers are very effective in ensuring that all budgets are scrutinised carefully and that the principles of best value are applied to purchasing and fulfilling school objectives. The inspection team considers that the school's decision to retain and develop the sixth form in the face of stiff competition from other local institutions is justified in the light of its significant contribution to the school's ethos and provision. The school has made good progress towards its goal of developing this as a thriving and sustainable entity.
87. The ethos of the school is one of vigorous continuous improvement, embedded in a strongly pastoral and familial atmosphere. The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Standards have risen significantly and the quality of teaching is greatly improved. Most issues raised by the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully, although the strategic management of special needs provision remains to be improved, and the implementation of a daily corporate act of worship has not yet been secured. Within the governing body and staff there is a high level of commitment to improvement. When the new senior management team appointments are made, there is a very good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

88. In order to continue to develop this improving school and further raise pupils' standards, attention should be given to the following:
1. provision of a better balance of academic and vocational pathways for pupils entering the sixth form in order to match courses more closely to pupils' prior attainments and learning styles and thereby raise standards of attainment; (*paragraphs 7, 41, 85*)
  2. improving the strategic management of SEN to ensure that the support of classroom assistants, where deployed, is effectively managed and the locus of responsibility for whole-school initiatives, such as literacy and numeracy, is clearly defined; (*paragraphs 9, 31, 32, 46, 79, 96, 106, )*)
  3. a greater focus on the routine participation by pupils in the expressive arts, such as music, dance and drama, through school assemblies and other communal opportunities; (*paragraphs 44, 188*)
  4. access to adequate ICT resources by all departments to enable them to fulfil National Curriculum requirements; (*paragraphs 12, 34, 80, 111, 122, 146, 169, 194 )*)
  5. improving the accommodation and resources for the teaching of drama and music (*paragraphs 82, 101 )*)

89. In addition, governors should consider action to improve the following areas of weakness:

- more rigorous follow-up procedures to health and safety audits; (*paragraph 59*)
- ensuring that staff training requirements in child protection procedures are implemented; (*paragraph 58*)
- provision of professional development opportunities for middle managers, particularly of small departments; (*paragraph 81*)
- designate responsibility for the monitoring of whole-school cross-curricular aspects such as key skills, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and ICT; (*paragraphs 12, 51, 80*)
- earlier intervention strategies to reduce the gap between the attainment of boys and girls, particularly in writing skills; (*paragraphs 3, 4, 92, 93, 149, 174*)
- ensuring that the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is fulfilled (*paragraph 52*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	149
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	20	45	30	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	565	77
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	52	0

#### Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	104	1

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.4

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	52	57	109

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	30	35	39
	Girls	42	36	37
	Total	72	71	76
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	67 (73)	65 (52)	70 (51)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (40)	38 (22)	35 (22)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	36	26
	Girls	50	41	26
	Total	86	77	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (54)	71 (50)	48 (42)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (34)	36 (22)	13 (12)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	34	43	77

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	14	34	34
	Girls	25	43	43
	Total	39	77	77
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	49 (36)	97 (95)	97 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	42 (33)
	National	38.4 (38)

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



### Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	15	24

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	11.7	9.2	10.1	0.5	1.0	0.7
National	17.7	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

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

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	633
Any other minority ethnic group	6

### 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	41	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	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)	44
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Education support staff: Y5– Y13

Total number of education support staff	14.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	302

#### Deployment of teachers: Y7 - Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.4
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#### Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y11

Key Stage 2	0
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### Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1601463
Total expenditure	1612983
Expenditure per pupil	2684
Balance brought forward from previous year	86477
Balance carried forward to next year	74957

Key Stage 3	27.0
Key Stage 4	22.4

### **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

#### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

642

Number of questionnaires returned

94

#### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	60	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	53	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	62	11	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	59	12	3	2
The teaching is good.	35	61	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	45	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	35	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	40	12	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	68	30	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	41	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	55	6	1	1

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

### **ENGLISH**

90. This is a lively, dynamic and forward-looking department, which is well placed to raise standards in the subject quickly.
91. The performance of pupils, measured by their average test score, in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 2000, was broadly the same as the national average and just below that of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was below the national average. The girls' results were well above those of boys. Since the last inspection the improvement in results has been in line with the national trend for improvement, and boys' and girls' performance has improved at about the same rate.
92. Pupils currently in Year 9 are working at standards which are above the national average for the end of the key stage. There are a significant number of pupils who are working at level 6 and above. Pupils are good listeners, they absorb and retain good detail about stories and plays they read as a result. They have well developed speaking skills because of this, speaking clearly to contribute and develop ideas. Reading for understanding is good; higher attaining pupils have good inferential skills and are able to uncover the writer's intentions when they read Macbeth' to prepare for a convincing performance of key scenes. There are still a few pupils whose reading skills need support and they find difficulty in sustaining independent reading. Writing is well developed in all classes and the majority of pupils write with sound structure to their writing, shaping ideas carefully around a plan. The higher attainers have a good vocabulary on which to draw to enhance the impact of their writing. While handwriting varies from very good to poor, overall it is satisfactory. Spelling is weaker than expected for many pupils, including some of the higher attainers. The department has recognised this and has begun an initiative to bring about improvements. The attainment of girls remains well above that of the boys in writing and the department has a range of strategies it is using to close this gap.
93. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, pupils' average test scores in English language and English literature were below the national average, with girls' results significantly better than boys. In both tests, girls' results were above the national average and above the average of all girls' results. The attainment of pupils currently approaching the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with the national expectation in language and literature. They listen well and because of this are able to join in class discussion, learn from each other and follow teachers' explanations. Pupils are confident when speaking informally in class and sometimes present complex ideas with clarity, for instance when discussing the motives of the lady in 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'. Pupils have a good knowledge of the texts they study, providing them with a good foundation for much of their writing.
94. The results for sixth form students in 2000 were in line with their prior attainment and the number was too small to make useful comparison with national results. Students in the current Year 13 are achieving at an appropriate standard based on their previous attainment in the subject. They have a sound knowledge of texts they study and are able to write clearly, using evidence to support their viewpoint. Much of their work shows sound background knowledge and they are able to give a clear personal response to the texts they study. Students in Year 12 are working at a higher level and their work reflects the analytical skills required to achieve the higher grades in the examination.
95. Teaching in the subject is good overall, with examples of very good teaching at each key stage. Teachers have good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. They plan lessons well to ensure that pupils have interesting and challenging activities from which to develop their literacy skills. A strong aspect of the planning is the staged structure of the lesson, which ensures the active involvement of pupils throughout and one to which pupils respond very positively, There is enough time given to independent work for pupils to work at their own pace and consolidate their learning. The good assessment procedures used by teachers means they have a clear picture of the needs of the pupils in their classes. This information is very effectively used to provide tasks which pupils find interesting and manageable. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils are a strength of the learning process. In all lessons pupils rise well to the teachers' good expectations, by listening closely, responding promptly and applying themselves to the tasks set.

They evidently enjoy the challenges presented as the quality of work done in class and as homework demonstrates. The majority of teachers foster these relationships through careful marking of pupils' work and give regular feedback on how this can be improved. Where this is not the case, as observed in a Year 10 class, then pupils' enthusiasm wanes, their efforts decline and they do not make the good progress of other classes.

96. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress in lessons where teachers plan effectively and make use of the skills of classroom assistants but this was not always the case in lessons observed, particularly in Key Stage 3. When they are withdrawn for intensive reading and literacy tuition, progress is often good. A structured phonic reading programme supports the development of their general reading, writing and spelling skills.
97. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is very good, providing an exciting range and good balance of language and literature activities. Information and communication technology is well planned into units of work, giving pupils opportunities to apply and develop their word processing, presentational and electronic communication skills. In Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form the department has chosen appropriate syllabuses and from these selects texts which will appeal to the interests of pupils. The department places very good emphasis on the development of reading and allocates time in the library for reading to all classes in Key Stage 3. They have made very good use of an award from a national newspaper to promote a reading club and to make reading a strong focus in Key Stage 3. The role of the librarian is very strong in monitoring and developing this initiative. The curriculum is further enriched for all pupils by the many visits and visitors that the department arranges. Since the start of the school year these have been numerous and include visits to performances of plays, 'Shakespeare for Kids' and a visit from a local poet.
98. The department is very well led. The head of department has a very clear vision for the development of the subject based on raising standards for all pupils. Since the last inspection, she has led the department through many changes making very good improvement to the quality of work that it does. The quality of teaching has improved and is now a considerable strength; assessment procedures are good and they provide a very strong basis for further improving the standards achieved by pupils. There is now a very good scheme of work to guide teachers' planning for lessons in Key Stage 3 and lessons taught at this key stage are based on the National Literacy Strategy structure which provides very good continuity of learning for pupils when they transfer from the primary school. The head of department has been very successful in establishing a new team of teachers in the department; her open and supportive management style has helped them to develop their strengths, recognise where they need to improve and to successfully take on additional responsibilities to carry the department forward.

***Areas for development:***

- improve the reading of the lowest attainers through the development of a paired reading scheme.
- make better use of classroom assistants by focusing some of their time on helping boys to meet their targets.

**DRAMA**

99. Drama is taught as a separate subject in Key Stage 3 and has no specific links with the English department. During inspection it was possible to see only one lesson in Year 7 and another in Year 9.
100. Standards at the end of the key stage are below those expected nationally. Pupils show some understanding of performance and can take part effectively in role-play, but their repertoire of theatre skills is somewhat limited. While they are able to explore themes, such as entering the world of work, they do not expand ideas or consider fully the impact of this upon peoples' feelings and behaviour. When closely supervised, they focus on activities and make good progress, but they have not yet internalised the discipline necessary for good learning in the subject.
101. Teaching observed in the subject was always satisfactory. It is well planned around themes and the teacher places appropriate emphasis on skills development. The teacher establishes good relationships with pupils and they respond well to her demands for good behaviour and attention and her insistence on respect for the work of others. Some of the well thought-out activities are hampered by the size of the room and the presence of inappropriate furniture, so that pupils do

not fully benefit from taking part in these. Despite the efforts of teachers to enhance the environment with photographic displays and pictures, the drama room is uninviting and has a depressing effect on the work of the teacher and the pupils.

102. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory given the low priority that the school has placed on the subject since the last inspection. This is set to change in the next school year and plans are in hand to provide new and appropriate accommodation for the teaching of the subject. The current scheme of work for the subject is in need of urgent revision since it does not provide for the progressive development of skills and understanding in the subject. Nor does it provide a foundation for further study in the subject at GCSE, which the school is offering to pupils in the next academic year. The school should also consider how it organises the curriculum to teach drama. The current arrangement in Year 9 means that pupils' learning lacks continuity and leads to some pupils giving drama less status than other subjects.

**Areas for development:**

- write an appropriate scheme of work for Key Stage 3.
- improve the environment for teaching the subject in the short term.

## **MATHEMATICS**

103. This is an improving department with rising attainment levels. The progress made by the majority of pupils, related to their attainment in mathematics on entry to the school, is mainly satisfactory at each of the key stages.
104. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in mathematics has been close to the national average in recent years, although the proportion of pupils who had attained the highest levels at Key Stage 2 was low. Results in the end of Key Stage 3 tests in 2000 were in line with schools nationally and with schools in similar contexts. The difference in the performance of boys and girls reflects that at the time of their entry to the school in 1997. This represents satisfactory progress for the majority of pupils.
105. GCSE results in mathematics have improved though they are still below national average levels. The performance of girls is better than that of boys but the difference is not as large as it is nationally. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form were below the expected level. Aspects of the algebraic and numerical skills of some pupils in Key Stage 4 are underdeveloped. The majority of pupils have a satisfactory level of understanding of aspects relating to shape, space and measure.
106. Pupils with SEN achieve satisfactorily in both key stages, but their progress is insufficiently targeted or monitored by individual teachers who, although aware of individual needs, do not plan or adjust work to meet these.
107. Overall, the standards in the sixth form are low. Few candidates are entered each year for A-level mathematics. Results have been variable, but are usually below national averages. A number of pupils in the sixth form follow the GCSE intermediate course in an attempt to achieve a higher grade. The department should consider whether a repeat GCSE course is the most appropriate provision for those students who have previously achieved very low grades in the examination. Some pupils particularly in the upper school and in the sixth form show a lack of confidence in their mathematics work.
108. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory. A more limited amount was good. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed where a lesson was not well matched to the pupils' needs. As a consequence, they were unsure of what they were supposed to be doing and could not make progress with the tasks set. Most teachers plan their lessons well and most lessons contain an appropriate range of activities. Opportunities for pupils to undertake practical work are, however, restricted particularly for pupils in Key Stage 4.
109. On occasions, teachers allow the pupils to work for too long in one type of activity leading to loss of concentration and 'off task' behaviour. They give clear explanations during group work and make good use of questions to test the level of understanding of the pupils. In a few lessons observed, aspects of the group work insufficiently involved the pupils. In most classes pupils are managed effectively and standards of discipline are satisfactory. Although the pace in most

lessons is appropriate for the pupils, in a few it is laboured and insufficiently challenging. Teachers make good use of high quality handouts to support aspects of the work.

110. Work is regularly set, marked and returned to the pupils, and they are regularly tested. Homework is not formally marked for sixth form students. Pupils in some classes make either poor or nil responses to the homework that is set. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress. Overall the majority of pupils have a positive attitude to their mathematics work. Behaviour with a few minor exceptions is of high standard. Relationships between pupils and with the teacher are good.
111. Aspects of the management processes that are in place are effective. However frequent changes in the staffing in the department have made continuity and team working more difficult. Monitoring and evaluation procedures include regular observations of teaching and learning. Although teaching staff in the department meet on a regular basis, aspects relating to these meetings require to be more formalised. The curriculum is appropriate and schemes of work have been developed and agreed. These include planned differentiated work to take account of the different levels of attainment. Most of the work is supported by a range of good quality text books. Poor access to computers leads to missed opportunities for the use of ICT in support of mathematics teaching and learning.
112. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have risen. The majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Standards of numeracy of the majority of pupils particularly in the lower school are also rising. Although there continues to be some unsatisfactory teaching the extent of this has been reduced.

***Areas for development:***

- enliven pupils' experiences by using a wider range of approaches including those involving practical work and ICT;
- ensure that the planned differentiation in schemes of work is carried forward into lesson planning.

## **SCIENCE**

113. This is a very good department. It is committed to raising standards and to ensuring that pupils enjoy science.
114. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 and above and the proportion reaching level 6 and above were both above the national average. The results are better than those of the past two years. This level of attainment is average when compared with schools having pupils from similar backgrounds. The performance of boys was a little better than that of girls.
115. In the 2000 GCSE examination in science (double award) the proportion of pupils awarded grades A\* to C was well above the national average. It was better than the previous year but less good than that in 1998. All candidates entered for the examination obtained grade A\* to G. At the end of this key stage, the performance of girls was a little better than that of boys.
116. Too few candidates entered the A-level examination in biology and physics to make significant comparisons. No candidate was awarded the higher grades in either subject. These results are worse than those of the previous two years.
117. Observations of lessons and work seen during the inspection show that standards towards the end of Key Stage 3 are above the national average. Most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of topics in all four attainment targets. They know for example about different types of rock and the reasons for and consequences of erosion. They have a sound knowledge of the solar system. Higher attainers understand the basic principles of genetics which they can relate to the way in which different members of the population vary from one another. A Year 8 group was observed carrying out an experiment to find out if a spring stretched uniformly when weights were added to it. They worked competently and safely and most succeeded in drawing a good graph to display their results.



118. Towards the end of Key Stage 4 the highest attainers demonstrate a sound understanding of scientific principles. For many of the other pupils standards are in line with or just above national expectation. They are familiar with the ways in which heat is transferred and are able to analyse data from an investigation into the effect of insulation material on the rate of cooling of water. They have a knowledge of a range of chemical reactions involving acids and appreciate the importance of the periodic table.
119. Standards in the sixth form vary considerably. Some students are performing in line with or just above the national expectation but there are others who find advanced level work difficult and whose attainment is modest. All members of a group of Year 12 biology students had a sound understanding of the way in which the body protects itself against disease but some had difficulty making the link with previous work on DNA. A Year 13 chemistry group was observed making good progress in its study of the reactions of alcohols.
120. Pupils with special needs make good progress despite the fact that there is little additional support other than that provided by teachers. Most of these pupils achieve as well as, or better than, expected. The majority of pupils take care with the presentation of their work. They make good progress in literacy skills especially in the development of technical vocabulary. Number skills are sufficient to enable pupils to access the curriculum. At all levels of attainment competence in drawing graphs and handling data is at least satisfactory and often good.
121. The quality of teaching in both key stages is always at least satisfactory and in almost all of the lessons observed it was good or very good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject. Lessons are well prepared with clear objectives. In most lessons these are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson ensuring that they know what they are expected to achieve. Relationships with pupils are very good and humour is a feature of many lessons. Praise, which raises pupils' self esteem, is used to good effect. Progress is good when pupils are presented with a variety of activities to maintain their interest. They respond to opportunities to be creative and also make good progress when they encounter science which is relevant to their everyday lives. For example, in a lesson where a Year 9 group was studying pollution and its effect on the environment, the teacher skilfully directed pupils to resources for research on different types of pollution and instructed them to prepare an illustrated talk on their topic. They quickly developed good research skills. The lesson was enhanced by reference to the social implications of pollution. The social and moral theme was continued through homework involving a study of foot and mouth disease.
122. Teachers' expectations are high and in the best lessons they provide constant challenge. Pupils respond well when they are given the opportunity to take some responsibility for their own learning. There is good evidence of investigative work in pupils' books and in their formally assessed assignments. Unfortunately very little practical work was observed during the inspection. There is little evidence of the use of ICT. This is partly due to a lack of access to resources. Teachers treat sixth form students in a mature way and share with them an enthusiasm for the subject. Teachers are aware of the problems faced by low attaining pupils and those with special needs. They are adept at modifying their teaching to ensure that these pupils make good progress. Assessment is well used to monitor pupil progress and set realistic targets. Marking is regular but comments do not always inform pupils what they have done wrong and what they need to do to improve.
123. The Head of Department shows strong positive leadership. Teachers work well together and have a shared commitment to raising standards. Teaching is ably supported by a hardworking laboratory technician. Laboratories have excellent displays of work creating a welcoming environment. Documentation is clear and informative.

124. The department has responded positively to the last report. There has been a considerable improvement in levels of attainment. The standard of behaviour in almost all lessons is now very good.

**Areas for development:**

- extend the use of ICT in support of learning in science;
- improve the quality of assessment by making more informative comments when marking.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

125. Art and design is a strength of the school, not only in terms of the very good test and examination results but also in the commitment the teachers show to all pupils, at whatever level they are working.
126. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3, based on teacher assessments in 2000, were well above average. Standards attained in the GCSE examination were also well above average for both boys and girls. All of the girls and 78 per cent of boys gained a grade in the A\*-C range, and all pupils achieved within the A\*-G range. The difference in attainment between boys and girls is similar to the national difference. In the sixth form, the standards obtained in the A-Level exam were well above average in 2000. The four students who took the examination all passed in the range A-C. Overall, standards in examinations have improved since the last inspection, with the trend at GCSE being above the national one.
127. During inspection, standards observed in Year 9 were above average. Pupils have a good grasp of a range of techniques and use them effectively to express their ideas and feelings. They are particularly imaginative and can evaluate their work well in order to make improvements. This means that there are few pupils below the nationally expected level for 14 year olds. In Key Stage 4, standards observed were also above average. Year 11 pupils have done particularly well as they were below average when they began in Year 7. They plan and develop their work well, having an independent approach and a good understanding of how to use a range of cultural influences and the work of other artists. Drawing from observation is also good although there tends to be an over reliance on copying.
128. Standards are well above average in the sixth form. All the students have a highly personal approach to painting and drawing and their work is big, bold and expressive. Students are also able to build well on their studies of other artists; their writing shows they can develop a sympathetic understanding and express themselves very convincingly.
129. The teaching observed at both key stages and in the sixth form was always good and often very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and ensures that pupils and students make good and often very good progress in lessons. Pupils enjoy art and respond well to the very high expectations of the teachers. Teachers plan the lessons well. Lessons run smoothly because they manage the pupils and organise the resources very well. They explain clearly to the pupils and students what they expect them to do and set an appropriate challenge. They are able to do this because they have assessed the pupils well and treat them as individuals. In a very good Year 9 lesson, pupils were observed working on a series of design exercises, which increased in difficulty and involved different levels of research and skill. Each stage was imaginatively planned and, overall, designed to appeal to both boys and girls. However, in line with the department's policy, the teacher planned particular aspects to appeal specifically to boys. This was successful and helped to raise their achievement.
130. In Key Stage 4, pupils are developing new techniques such as sculpture, making good use of knowledge they gained earlier. The teachers are enthusiastic and committed and this inspires the pupils, particularly the lower attaining pupils and those with special needs who work hard to achieve the targets set for them. In the Year 13 lessons seen, students were preparing for the forthcoming examination. The teacher continued to inspire and challenge the students with new ideas and techniques designed to stimulate their thinking. Group evaluation sessions enabled the students to clarify their thoughts and assess what they needed to do next. This ability to analyse their own and others' ideas shows the maturity with which they approach their studies.

131. At each stage, teachers plan homework well and use it effectively to develop class projects. However, at Key Stage 3 the marking needs to be more focused and tied in better with the very good knowledge that the teachers have of individuals. This will help pupils have a more realistic understanding of their attainment and what they can do to improve.
132. The leadership and management of the art and design department are very good. Very good monitoring has led to improvements in teaching and learning, through relevant planning and development. At the same time the range of media employed is being extended and planning appropriately takes account of expansion of the department in the light of increasing pupil numbers. The new computers have already started to make an impact on the work of the department. Computer printouts, based on the manipulation of scanned drawings and paintings, add to the lively and stimulating displays. These change daily and pupils proudly point out what they have achieved. The quality and range of resources are satisfactory and teachers use them efficiently and to good effect. Sketchbooks at Key Stage 3 are not well kept by the pupils. In many cases they provide an incomplete record of work. The two art rooms are small and have limited storage space. This means that, particularly in the Key Stage 4 lessons, pupils have restricted space to work. This is not helped by the small tables and low chairs which provide an inappropriate working position. Pupils' work is also affected by being stored in heaps. As in the last inspection, the department cannot use the kiln because the safety aspects have not yet been addressed.
133. Overall, the department has made a good improvement since the last inspection. The school is proud of this achievement. There is a shared commitment to even further improvements and a very good capacity to succeed.

***Areas for development:***

- sharpen assessment procedures to give pupils a clearer idea of how they stand in relation to National Curriculum targets;
- improve the use and marking of sketchbooks at Key Stage 3;
- make the kiln safe so it can be used.

**DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

134. This is an improving department where examination results have risen considerably at all levels since the last inspection and are now above the national average.
135. At the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessments in 2000 indicated that overall attainment was above average, and was higher than in the previous two years.
136. GCSE results in design and technology in the year 2000 were above average overall, with girls generally gaining much better results than boys. However, boys achieved better than girls in graphic products where all boys gained a pass within the range A to C. Within the subject's different disciplines, graphic products results were well above average, food technology results were above average but resistant materials results were below average. Over the last three years the combined results have been above average.
137. In the sixth form, students gained good passes in graphic products or resistant materials with two thirds of the students gaining either 'B' or 'C' grades in 2000.
138. Standards observed during the inspection were in line with expectations in Years 7, 8 and 9. Some Year 9 students working on a module where brass was being shaped to produce a 'balancing man' demonstrated a very high standard of attainment in the great variety of techniques used. In Years 10 and 11, standards varied from well above average in graphic products, where many models were made to a very high quality, to near or below average for resistant materials. In food technology lessons, standards observed were close to or above national averages. In the sixth form, students were achieving above the national expectation in both graphic products and resistant materials lessons with considerable imagination and ingenuity being shown in some projects.
139. Teaching observed was always at least satisfactory and was good in the majority of lessons observed in both key stages and in the sixth form. The teachers are well qualified and

experienced and have specialist expertise that matches the demands of the subject. The technicians provide valuable assistance and in some cases are able to assist students with their work directly.

140. Much of the teaching was very good in the areas of graphics and resistant materials. The teaching of food technology is well organised and leads to above average results but some aspects of food preservation need more emphasis and could usefully be related to work in science. Lessons are well planned and targets are made clear to students at regular intervals. The balance of practical work and theory helps students to make progress in each lesson without overloading the resources. Expectations are high for all students but particularly for those known to have higher previous attainment. Homework is well integrated with the lesson content but not all students respond satisfactorily. Long-term assessment enables records of individual progress to be kept. More formalized on-going formative feedback could provide additional motivation and knowledge of progress, particularly if National Curriculum levels were used. The teaching has improved since the last inspection.
141. In nearly all lessons observed, the quality of learning was governed by the quality of teaching so that learning was always at least satisfactory and often good or very good. Pupils learn to use the design process when presented with a challenge. They are able to produce effective sketches for communication purposes and use their graphic skills to produce scaled drawings. When making products, they use fibreboard, wood, metal and plastic with confidence. In graphics they use cardboard and a wide variety of other materials. A few students connect bulbs or light-emitting diodes as part of their project but there are very few examples of electronic circuits or controlled models. Students are given the opportunity to visit local industry and to enter various competitions that they regularly win.
142. In Key Stage 3, projects are designed to teach a variety of skills and have less scope for individual variations. However, in Key Stage 4, students have ample opportunity to use their imagination and develop unique products. Less able students are encouraged to make simpler products and learn much from their peers. More able students are given much encouragement and sometimes provided with extension work enabling them to gain the higher grades. Discussion and research into various commercial product designs give pupils a greater understanding of social and economic issues. Some projects encourage research into multi-cultural themes. The use of the Internet is also helping this process.
143. The Key Stage 3 curriculum provides a broad range of learning experiences for all pupils on an equal basis. The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are well addressed except in the areas of electronics and control where further development is planned. The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides appropriate options through design products, resistant materials, and food technology. However, the use of textiles is under developed. Sixth-form students are able to continue their study of design or resistant materials through AS and A-level courses. These students are able to develop their interest in technology to an appropriate level for higher education and sometimes unique products are produced.
144. The multi-disciplinary department is efficiently co-ordinated. Written policies, detailed schemes of work and appropriate targets have been developed. Future needs are well understood and progress towards them is regularly reviewed. The work of the department is shared effectively but some staff have other responsibilities making increased demands on their time.
145. The size of the rooms was recognised as a problem at the time of the last inspection, and remains a problem in both the food and craft areas. It affects learning because some students, in particular in food technology lessons, can only do their practical work in alternate lessons. In the resistant materials area the small size of the rooms increases the health and safety risk when classes are large because there is insufficient space for movement of other students around the machines. The arrangement whereby one room is used mainly for wood construction and the other mainly for metal lacks flexibility and occasionally causes delays when sharing is necessary. Technology rooms are frequently open during lunch break and after school for students to continue coursework or to engage in extra-curricular activities such as canoe building.
146. Learning resources are generally sufficient except for the provision of the more expensive items such as computer controlled machines. The students do not at present learn enough about the more advanced automated processes.

**Areas for development:**

- improve resources for National Curriculum coverage;
- extend and improve the level of on-going formative feedback to students;
- develop opportunities for pupils to experience CAD/CAM and other automated processes.

**GEOGRAPHY**

147. Geography is a popular subject. It has a high profile within the school through providing weather data for the weekly bulletin and contributing to whole-school activities and international events.
148. Pupil attainment in geography is above the national standard at the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils score well on a teacher assessment that records their achievement in project work, and progress throughout the key stage is good.
149. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4, as measured by GCSE examination, in recent years has been close to the national average overall, with girls attaining slightly above and boys below this. This gap between the attainment of girls and boys is wider than it is nationally. Progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall and there was no evidence of the gender attainment gap during lessons observed where the attainment of both girls and boys was good. Boys contributed well in lessons; their answers were detailed and showed good conceptual understanding. Their written work however, showed lower standards of literacy. This hinders their progress.
150. In the sixth form, A-level groups have been small in recent years, but the present Years 12 and 13 are much larger and standards observed during the inspection were higher than results in recent years would indicate. Year 13 pupils worked cohesively as a group. They were well-motivated and applied mark schemes to each other's presentations in a constructive and helpful way.
151. The teaching observed during the inspection was good overall. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory and some very good teaching was seen, particularly in the sixth form. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and of the examination requirements. There is good pace to lessons and teachers create a purposeful, pleasant atmosphere. Good use is made of ICT and other resources to illustrate the work, including the use of PowerPoint presentations drawing on materials obtained via the Internet. This helps enthuse the pupils and sets a standard that encourages quality presentation in pupils' project work. Teachers make good use of project work and field study to extend all pupils. This gives pupils the opportunity to work at higher levels and prepare for the coursework element of examinations. They also make good use of past examination papers to reinforce examination technique. While there is the expectation to work at higher levels when producing project work, there was not always the opportunity to do so for pupils in lessons seen in Years 8 and 9.
152. Daily informal contact is an important feature of the management of geography. This allows for planning of the use of resources. Formal meetings are used for the moderation of marking. The department is well resourced with eight PCs and one linked to a projector to assist in whole class presentations. Text resources, both those in the department and in the learning resource centre have been carefully chosen. Teachers often make good use of the text and computer resources in the learning resource centre to researching topics. Classrooms are bright and inviting to pupils. The display of pupils' work on the walls sets a standard for others to emulate. Wall space is also well used to display materials related to current and recent topics of study. The department also has good displays outside the classrooms in various corridors. Poor blinds on the windows on one wall sometimes hinder display of work and teaching materials in the classrooms. This allows ingress of light that prevents pupils seated in some parts of the room from seeing these displays clearly.
153. Since the last inspection geography has improved by incorporating ICT into lessons throughout Key Stage 3. Pupils are taught to research using the Internet, to desk-top-publish their work and to present statistical information in graphical form. They are also shown, by teacher example, the value of quality presentation. Pupils studying geography to GCSE and A level also use information and communications technology effectively. There has been a big improvement in examination results and these are now roughly in line with national expectations. Pupils are now much less directed in their work. They take more responsibility for their own learning.

**Areas for development:**

- tackle the problem of low literacy which is affecting the performance of some boys at GCSE;
- ensure all pupils are fully extended in all lessons in Key Stage 3, not just in their end of topic project work;
- provide suitable blinds for all windows in the geography classrooms.

**HISTORY**

154. Good teaching, effective management and a curriculum enriched with very good field study opportunities characterises this department.
155. In 2000, teacher assessments judged the proportion of pupils to be working at and beyond level 5, at the end of Year 9, to be above average. Attainment in the GCSE in 2000 was a little below the national average and very close to the average of other subjects in the school. GCSE results have fluctuated in recent years with an improving trend. A-Level results in 2000 were below average but a little above the average of other A-level results in the school. In recent years A-level results have fluctuated, reflecting the differing abilities of students from year to year.
156. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average. From Year 7 all pupils take part in educational visits that provide a valuable stimulus for the development of independent learning skills and a high proportion of pupils apply these skills well, to produce attractively presented individual studies based on this learning. Able Year 7 pupils write quite fluently and by Year 9 the majority of pupils communicate their understanding effectively in their writing. Nearly every Year 7 pupil has a secure grasp of chronology and most distinguish between primary and secondary sources of evidence. In Year 8 the great majority of pupils can make straightforward deductions from different sources. Year 9 pupils can identify and organise information in a way that answers questions posed in teaching, as for example in a research exercise on the affects of the three year siege of Leningrad during World War II.
157. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is close to the national average. Pupils consolidate and build on their history study skills at an increasing pace through Year 10. Most pupils can sequence events correctly and able pupils communicate in their writing good detail and a sound grasp of history study skills, for example cause and effect. By Year 11 a good proportion of pupils have well developed skills in the critical analysis of sources enabling them to build up a good understanding of the periods studied. This is reflected by well structured and fluently written course work.
158. Attainment of students currently studying at A-level in Year 13 is below average. All students are building up quite comprehensive and mostly very well organised course work. The good understanding of more able students is reflected in their judicious selection and highlighting of information relevant to questions posed which enables them to evaluate the significance of events accurately. The evaluative skills of other students are less secure and some also have difficulties expressing themselves clearly.
159. Both the standard of teaching and the pace of learning are good overall. Pupils are making good progress in most year groups, although in Years 11 and 13 it is just satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are explicit. Particular strengths in teaching are very good pupil management and motivation and effective use of a good range learning styles and resources. Where teaching is just satisfactory there are a number of positive features but opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding are missed or expectations are not high enough. The progress of less able pupils and those with special education needs is in line with that of pupils of other abilities. These pupils receive good individual attention in some lessons and the resources to support their learning are mostly well matched to their abilities. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good overall and never less than satisfactory. The great majority sustain good concentration, are keen to answer questions and collaborate well for learning activities. Pupils take pride in their written work which is mostly well presented. Marking is largely systematic and informative comments are provided, particularly for pupils following examination courses.
160. The curriculum is broad and balanced, enriched by very good field study opportunities and makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils. Pupils have been

encouraged to make extensive use of ICT and the department is now in a position to provide appropriately structured learning through this. Assessment is systematic and builds up a clear profile of progress from Year 7 and pupils have a growing familiarity with National Curriculum levels. Targets are set for GCSE and A-level candidates and all entrants are provided with regular explicit information on their strengths and weaknesses. The mix of number and letter grades used to assess work, though explained in guide lines, have the capacity to confuse pupils. Professional relationships are strong, monitoring is systematic and provides a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The development plan is comprehensive but would be more effective if tasks were prioritised and clearer targets were set. Learning is supported by a substantial range of learning resources.

161. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have risen, particularly those of younger pupils and there is a higher proportion of good teaching. Teaching styles and learning resources are better adapted to meet the needs of less able pupils. Management practices have been further refined and are making a stronger and more consistent impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

***Areas for development***

- refine the subject development plan;
- provide well structured learning opportunities using information technologies;
- standardise judgements on levels of attainment at Key Stage 3 and review grading codes.

**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

162. Recent investment in new equipment and software has enabled the department to improve the ICT curriculum and all pupils now gain benefits from access to Internet and e-mail facilities.
163. Teachers' assessment results for the tests at the end of Key Stage 3 show that the pupils were above average in the years 1999 and 2000. This was a considerable improvement over the 1998 results. Both boys and girls achieved equally well. There are no other results for Key Stage 4 or sixth form examinations as the present courses are new.
164. Pupils develop their ICT skills rapidly during Years 7, 8 and 9. Samples of folder work and observation of their work on computer screens shows are that they have gained considerable competence with the new equipment and software. Many Year 7 pupils have the ability to select appropriate software for a particular task and this skill increases noticeably in Years 8 and 9. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is near the national expectation. These pupils have had less exposure to the new equipment and software in earlier years. Sixth form students following the AVCE course and GNVQ course in leisure and tourism demonstrate appropriate competences and frequently high level skill. The GNVQ students achieved well in a lesson where they used some advanced features of PowerPoint to prepare a presentation.
165. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory and some was excellent in Key Stage 3 lessons. It was often good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The head of the ICT department has good knowledge and understanding of the subject enabling him to plan the work and to teach effectively at all levels. Other non-specialist teachers use their background experience of ICT and have a range of strengths and weaknesses. However this does not significantly affect teaching. The systems manager also contributes to the learning of the pupils. The management and control of students is effective so that relationships are very good. The resources, including teachers' personal laptops and the projector, are used effectively. Time is generally well used with clearly stated objectives for lessons. Where pupils are given too much whole-class verbal instruction, the pace is slower.
166. Much of the work encourages students to create designs and to be imaginative. This contributes considerably to their progress. Although project work is marked by the individual teachers, opportunities for on-going formative feedback need to be extended, and arrangements for reporting on pupil achievements at the end of each key stage require further attention. The use of assessment data as a tool for planning is as yet underdeveloped, as project marks are not aggregated to provide class or whole year progress indicators. Although pupils make progress during each lesson they do not have a clear idea of their attainment in terms of any national criteria. They do however make evaluations of their own achievements. Able students learn

quickly by experiment or from their peers, but less able students in large classes do not receive any extra help from learning classroom assistants and frequently have to wait for help.

167. An outline of the ICT work to be taught has been prepared for all seven years of the ICT curriculum. Further detail is available providing lesson plans for each week of the modules. The use of the Internet, e-mail and Web sites are encouraged at an early stage and access is well controlled. Key Stage 4 students follow a Key Skills course aimed at reaching level 2 in ICT by 2003. Sixth form students have the opportunity to continue their ICT study through certificated vocational courses.
168. The department is led by a qualified co-ordinator who is consolidating the work of the department following the introduction of a new network and additional computers. Regular formal and informal meetings enable ICT policy and planning to take place, and the department benefits from the support of a link governor who has ICT expertise.
169. There is one main teaching room for ICT but this does not adequately cater for the access needs of other departments. Although additional facilities are located in the learning resource centre, and the total number of computers in the school is high, demand still outstrips supply. Storage facilities are not satisfactory, and the school has recognized that an additional central facility would be beneficial for cross-curricular ICT. Plans for this are now in hand. Projection facilities are available and the school plans to purchase interactive white boards in the near future.

***Areas for development:***

- ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met in Key Stage 4, including assessment, recording and reporting;
- implement the system for monitoring ICT across the curriculum.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

170. This is a good and improving department. At the time of the inspection two key members of the department were on maternity leave, but the department maintains a collective commitment to improve standards.
171. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is above average. In 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or better was considerably higher than the national average. No pupils gained level 6.
172. At the end of Key Stage 4, as measured by GCSE examinations, attainment overall is in line with national averages. In 2000, the percentage of pupils who gained A\*-C in French was below the national average but in German it was above it. When the two languages are combined the percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C in a modern foreign language is close to the national average. In both subjects all pupils entered for the examination gained A\*-G which is above the national average. Girls performed significantly better than boys. Results in French and German have been consistently close to the national average over the past few years.
173. In Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress. Pupils of above average ability in Year 8 are beginning to practise the use of tenses on a regular basis while, in Year 9, they show the ability to handle them with confidence. Pupils of average ability are able to write paragraphs with a good degree of accuracy. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.
174. In Key Stage 4 pupils also make good progress. The work seen during the inspection suggests that, in Year 11, progress is in line with expectations but that, in Year 10, it is better than expected. Girls make better progress than boys in both year groups.
175. In the sixth form students make satisfactory progress. In the Year 12 German group, students are beginning to develop the ability to use the language for discussion purposes. In the Year 13 French group, however, although some students are able to use the language effectively to develop a written or spoken argument, others are less confident.
176. Teaching is good overall. It is good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and is satisfactory in the sixth form. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are all confident in the use of the target language



which enables them to use it extensively for classroom communication. This contributes to the high level of listening skills demonstrated by pupils. Lessons are well-planned and set an appropriate level of challenge. However, few teachers in the department set out the objectives of the lesson in terms of pupil outcomes and review progress at the end. Where this does happen, pupils leave lessons with a sense of achievement. All teachers make sure that pupils have a firm basis of vocabulary before moving on to practise skills. Preparation for pair work exercises is always thorough. Most teachers maintain a good balance between teacher- and pupil-centred work. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good because teachers set clear boundaries and maintain a good working atmosphere in the classroom. Teachers have high expectation of pupils. In most lessons the brisk pace ensures good progress.

177. The marking of pupils' work is conscientious and a lot of encouragement is given. Little attempt is made, however, to indicate to pupils what they do well and what they need to do to improve their performance. Pupils are not closely involved in the assessment process and many are not sure about the level at which they are working. Targets, where they exist, are not precise enough to be helpful to pupils in raising the standard of their work. Data, which is readily available, is not used effectively to set realistic but challenging targets for pupils. Few teachers in the department set realistic or challenging targets for pupils. Reading skills are not being developed systematically. The department has good access to ICT facilities. Pupils respond well to these opportunities though the level of challenge of some of the software used is not always appropriate to pupils' abilities.
178. The department is well led and receives good support from the senior management team. Documentation is clear and helpful. The minutes of departmental meetings and the departmental development plan show that there is a clear sense of direction shared by all members of the team. The monitoring of teaching is particularly effective. Resources and staffing are both good.
179. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards of pupils' work and the quality of teaching have both improved. All pupils make more consistent progress because the level of challenge has increased and work is now more clearly matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils are more actively involved in lessons and this has led to an improvement in the active skills of speaking and writing.

***Areas for development:***

- focus on raising the achievement of boys particularly at Key Stage 4;
- develop the assessment procedures;
- take a more systematic approach to developing reading skills.

## **MUSIC**

180. When pupils enter the school there is a wide span of attainment determined by the quality of prior teaching, instrumental tuition experience and home support for music. Many pupils enter the school with better than average musical experience but most pupils enter with less than average experience and teachers' own assessments confirm this.
181. The Year 9 pupils were taught in larger groups last year. Standards demonstrated by this group are below the national expectation but are better in Years 7 and 8 in relation to expectation for age. Pupils do not sing regularly enough after Year 7 so that the National Curriculum is not fully covered. This is a major weakness. Pupils do not sing in assembly. Instrumental work is very focused on keyboards but performing skills are insufficiently developed. A small number of pupils receive instrumental tuition from visiting teachers; almost all pupils have their own instruments but they do not use them regularly in lessons to support instrumental tuition and strengthen the quality of music making in the classroom. When pupils compose, most show limited understanding of the ways in which pieces can be developed but some talented pupils can improvise march tunes using the pentatonic scale fluently. Pupils who play instruments are able to name notes and recognise common signs from their musical experience but most pupils show a limited or mathematical understanding of notation. Pupils listen respectfully and carefully to recorded extracts and sympathetically to each other's performances but when they appraise music they use limited technical vocabulary. General musical knowledge, for example of artists, instruments, forms, styles, composers and well-known pieces is weak.

182. In recent years, GCSE examination results have been variable but broadly in line with the national average. A small but growing number has taken the examination. Standards in the current Year 11 group are below average. Performing skills are below the expected levels, averaging about grade 2 to 3, although the best pupils are playing at grade 6 level. Several GCSE pupils sing in the schools choirs but pupils sing insufficiently in lessons. High attaining pupils compose competently showing imagination and technical understanding; some make good use of computers at home to develop and notate their work but pupils are disadvantaged by the lack of machines in the department. Pupils show unsatisfactory general musical knowledge; they appraise using a limited technical vocabulary. Standards in Year 10 are above average in practical work and pupils show good general musical knowledge of artists, composers, styles, forms, instruments and well-known pieces of music.
183. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. Those who play instruments and read music make the best progress, building on their previous knowledge, wider experiences and their personal interests but insufficient attention is paid to this and the most gifted and talented pupils are insufficiently challenged most of the time. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress; they are well integrated.
184. In classroom work, teaching varies from unsatisfactory to very good. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good including all teaching at GCSE level. Teaching in instrumental work was of high quality and teaching of extra-curricular groups very good. In Key Stage 3, when a non-specialist teacher takes lessons, the lack of subject specialist skills results in unsatisfactory lessons with low expectations. Otherwise, teaching shows good knowledge, competent accompanying, arranging and conducting. In most lessons, teachers communicate well; they give clear instructions and present information confidently so pupils know what they have to do. In the weaker lessons there is too much teacher talk and not enough music making. Lessons always have a brisk start to make full use of the time. In the best lessons, pupils are engaged in musical activity that develops pupils' skills to enable them to realise their potential and experience the expressive qualities of music. Teaching is energetic and encouraging; expectations are high so that pupils are interested, challenged and stimulated, as when pupils perform songs such as *Doh, Ray, Me* and instrumental pieces as a class. Class management is usually good and relationships are very good.
185. Pupils enjoy practical work but strongly dislike written work. Their positive attitudes and mature behaviour support their learning. They use equipment sensibly and enjoy taking responsibility for their learning, for example when practising in groups. Keyboards are used well but more use could be made of other classroom instruments. Teachers make appropriate reference to musical terms, and make good use of multi-tracking facilities, high quality worksheets and OHP but visual aids are not used enough to explain or illustrate. Assessment is constructive and skilful questioning draws out responses from shy pupils. A strength of the best lessons is the technical help given to show pupils how to improve, for example when singing, playing or composing, so that higher standards result. Homework is used well; it is set clearly and regularly but could be used more to extend practical work.
186. The management of music is good and is promoting improving standards. The head of department is enthusiastic, hardworking and committed but overall achievement is hampered by the pressures on one teacher. Good quality assessment schemes are in place and are being further developed. Current schemes of work adopt an academic and theoretical approach; these are being replaced to introduce more singing and practical work with less emphasis on written work. Curricular links with other schools are insufficiently developed to build on their work. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because of the lack of practice cells for groupwork and inadequate storage. Shortages in resourcing include classroom instruments (especially bass tuned percussion), keyboards, bass guitars and amps, music and books; computers need upgraded software. More time, including technical support, to organise and develop the subject further is needed so that music can make a fuller and more regular contribution to the life of the school community, for example in assembly. Music makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since the last report there have been improvements in standards, teaching and management.
187. Four visiting teachers from the Surrey Music Service provide a range of instrumental lessons for a small number of pupils. Lessons are limited to lunchtimes and after school sessions. This disadvantages pupils who cannot attend after school, affects the number opting for tuition and

consequently the standards of music in the classroom and in the instrumental extra-curricular groups. Standards are above average and achievement is good in instrumental lessons. Pupil attitudes are very good. Teaching is of good quality and some very good teaching was observed in cello tuition.

188. There is a limited range of extra-curricular musical activities; these include orchestra, choir and recorder groups but they do not run throughout the year. These groups involve about 10 per cent of the pupils, mainly girls and pupils in the lower part of the school. Exemplary attitudes support the high standards. Regular visits to musical events include those to London to see musicals such as *Starlight Express*. Annual events include the Harvest and Carol Festivals and concerts, which regularly involve large numbers of pupils. The school is proud of its extra-curricular groups. These activities reflect the dedication of staff, support of parents and the school and the enthusiasm of the competent and talented musicians whose performances and successes bring credit to the school and this improving department.

**Areas for development:**

- modify schemes of work to include more practical ways of developing pupils' basic skills;
- provide more opportunities for pupils to sing and to use their own instruments;
- contribute more fully and regularly to the cultural life of the school community, to involve more pupils, especially boys.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

189. The physical education department is a lively centre of activity where pupils of all abilities are able to enjoy and develop their physical skills. It has developed a solid base with good potential for further development.
190. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectations for physical education. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils following the core subject are also in line with national expectations. Attainment for the pupils following the GCSE course in 2000 was below the national average. Sixth form students are able to follow a recreational physical activity, which is not assessed, as well as examination courses. The numbers so far taking the A-level course have been too small for analysis but work seen during the inspection would suggest that the current Year 13 are on course to achieve results in line with the national average.
191. By the end of Key Stage 3 the pupils are able to play a variety of small games to an acceptable standard. As they work through the key stage their ability to play in teams improves, so that they can self regulate an informal match. Their attainment in swimming is above the nationally expected level. By the end of the key stage virtually all pupils are able to swim and to use a range of strokes but are not yet linking the style element to the efficiency of the stroke. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils following the core course are able to play games with an increasing skill and tactical awareness and they are also approaching the topics from a different slant such as including life saving skills in swimming and a more intense fitness programme. Pupils in both key stages are able to evaluate the performance of their peers but do not offer this spontaneously. Pupils following the GCSE course have a higher level of practical skill and a higher level of analytical skills and they can observe movements in order to offer constructive coaching points. They can also link fitness exercises to particular sports. A-level students have a much greater understanding of the physiological, social and psychological aspects that contribute to sporting activities. They are slightly weaker in aspects of the course that require a presentation of ideas in an interview situation. A number of school teams and individuals have obtained success at local and county level. Pupils of all groups make similar progress.
192. The teaching observed in Key Stage 3 was satisfactory and it was good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Strengths within teaching are high expectations of physical effort and, in the better lessons, the gearing of activities to the abilities of the pupils and using the known level of attainment to plan the activities. Weaker aspects of teaching are a lack of encouragement to make peer evaluation spontaneous and, in Key Stage 3, the lack of specific guidance that enables the pupils to develop skills and failure to use pupil demonstrations to show good performance skills. In Key Stage 4 the main weakness is a lack of pupil involvement in the planning and leading of activities.

193. Teaching in the sixth form is also good with a range of resources being used in lessons to enhance the learning process; a weaker aspect is not being sufficiently prepared to vary the approach when the pupils are not coping with a particular aspect or topic. During lessons pupils are given advice on how to improve a skill and the assessment of physical education is currently being developed to bring in the new National Curriculum levels. At present an assessment is made at the end of a unit of work but pupils are not informed, during a unit, of what they need to do and how they can raise their attainment level.
194. Management of physical education is satisfactory. The team of teachers work well together and demonstrate a strong commitment towards improvement. The curriculum offered gives a good range and balance of topics with opportunities for most pupils to take part in activities in a competitive setting in the inter-form matches. There is also a very good range of extra-curricular activities on offer every day for those who want to improve their level of attainment and for those who just want to play for recreational purposes. However ICT has not yet been introduced for pupils following the core courses. The swimming pool offers a valuable resource for physical education and has obviously had a positive impact on the attainment level of the pupils. Rabbit holes in the fields are a potential hazard and the use of the hall as a thoroughfare during lessons is a distraction to pupils using the gymnasium.
195. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The positive aspects reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained; teaching is now more consistent with much being good; the A-level course has been introduced and the frequency of extra-curricular activities is very good.

***Areas for development:***

- embed all aspects into the schemes of work, including ICT and more ideas on how to support pupils who find the subject difficult;
- incorporate a formative element into the assessment so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their attainment level and how to do it;
- involve the pupils in more planning and leading activities.