

INSPECTION REPORT

MARYHILL HIGH SCHOOL

Kidsgrove

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124405

Headteacher: Mr N Hemmings

Reporting inspector: Ms J McKenna
2485

Dates of inspection: 14th –17th May 2001

Inspection number:199304

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gloucester Road Kidsgrove Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Easdown
Date of previous inspection:	9 th - 13 th February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2485	Ms J McKenna	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it?
				The school's results and achievements.
				How well pupils are taught?
				How well the school is led and managed?
				What the school should do to improve further?
12682	Mr J B Griffin	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
				How well does the school cares for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15078	Mr J C Collinson	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30941	Mr K Brammer	Team inspector	English	
27984	Mr J A Whitehall	Team Inspector	Science	
22524	Mrs S Innes	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Special educational needs	
31129	Mr J Pickering	Team Inspector	Art	
10340	Mr J N Lockett	Team Inspector	Design Technology	
17828	Mr M Gallagher	Team Inspector	Geography Religious education	
20877	Mr D L Pink	Team Inspector	History	
28178	Mr J F Connor	Team Inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
20490	Mr P W Wilson	Team Inspector	Music	
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Inspection Quality Division
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Maryhill High School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school, with 705 pupils on roll, which is smaller than average. The sixth form is shared and organised jointly with a neighbouring school. Seven pupils are from minority ethnic groups, a low proportion, and there are no pupils who are at early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average, but the proportion that has statements is well above average. Most have moderate learning difficulties, and some have behavioural difficulties. The school is situated in an area that is less advantaged than that found nationally. Unemployment, and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, is average, but earnings are below average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has, until this year, been considerably below the national average, and there have been few higher attaining pupils. The attainment of the current Year 7 pupils is higher and in line with the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with some considerable strengths. It is inclusive in its approach and values all of its pupils. Relationships are very good and pupils are well behaved. The school is well led and managed, and teaching is good. Although standards are below the national average, they represent satisfactory achievement for pupils, and those with special educational needs (SEN) make very good progress. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management are good and have helped to create a shared commitment to raising standards.
- Teaching is good.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes towards school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress.
- The care and support for pupils is good.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and pupils make good progress in the subject.

What could be improved

- The key priorities for action necessary to raise standards are not clear enough.
- Procedures for assessing pupils and monitoring their progress are not effective enough.
- The standards in different subjects are not consistent enough.
- Pupils' independent learning skills are not well enough developed.
- The statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and religious education (RE) for students in the sixth form are not met.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. Almost all of the key issues identified then have been addressed. There is better curriculum balance, although there is still no RE for students in the sixth form. Standards are higher in mathematics, science and French, although they are not yet high enough. Provision for ICT has shown particular improvement and is now a strength of the school. There is a better staffing policy and the school has been successful in gaining extra funds to improve resources and accommodation. Overall standards attained by pupils at the age of 16 have steadily improved, although there has not been similar progress for pupils aged 14. The quality of teaching has improved from its already strong position last time. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been good.

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
GCSE examinations	E	E	D	E
A-levels/AS-levels	E	D	E*	n/a

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

Standards attained by pupils in the school are below the national average overall.

The results of the national tests for pupils age 14 in 2000 were average in English, but below average in mathematics and science. Similar standards were seen in work in these subjects during the inspection. Current standards for pupils aged 14 are above average in ICT, average in art and physical education (PE), and below average in all other subjects.

GCSE results overall in 2000 were also below the national average. In just one subject, office applications, were results significantly above average. In mathematics they were in line with the average. Results were just below average in English language and literature. In other subjects results were considerably lower, and in geography, history, French and RE results were well below average. There were no results in PE or music. Results in vocational courses were in line with expectations. In work seen on inspection, standards were above average in ICT including office applications, and PE. They are broadly average in mathematics and geography, and just a little below average in English language. They are below average in other subjects. This includes English literature, where, although GCSE results are also just a little below average, they are based on a smaller than usual proportion of the pupils in Year 11 being entered for the examination, and standards for the whole group are firmly below average. Standards are well below average in history, although it is a lower attaining group of pupils taking the subject.

Standards at the end of the sixth form in 2000 were in the lowest 5 percent of schools nationally. Results in all A level courses were below average, although the numbers in some groups were very small. Results in vocational courses were in line with expectations. Current standards on A level courses are also below average, whilst standards on vocational courses are largely in line with expectations.

Despite being below the national average overall, these standards represent satisfactory levels of achievement for pupils. Pupils' attainment is below average on entry to the school and they make sound progress as they move through the school. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results have risen steadily since the previous inspection, in line with the national trend of improvement, and the school gained an achievement award from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) this year. Progress is not so good at Key Stage 3 where standards are rising more slowly than nationally. Achievements in the sixth form reflect the predictions made for individual pupils based on their GCSE results. Progress is good in ICT throughout the school. It is good in English, design technology (DT), geography, art and PE at Key Stage 3, and good in mathematics, DT, geography and PE at Key Stage 4. Progress is satisfactory in all other subjects throughout the school, except for English literature at Key Stage 4 due to too few pupils studying it to examination level. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

The school did not meet its target for GCSE in 2000, due to a small number of pupils not achieving the grades predicted for them. The targets set for 2001 are higher and sufficiently challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are positive about school and enjoy their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are calm and responsible, and interact well with each other.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships with teachers and between pupils are very good, and based on mutual respect. Relationships between different ethnic groups are likewise good. Pupils are caring towards others and many are involved in organising activities within school. Showing initiative in their learning is less strong. Students in the sixth form are positive role models but are less involved in school life than is usual.
Attendance	Satisfactory. In line with the national average and showing a rising trend.

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 is good and a strength of the school. All teaching is satisfactory or better; none is unsatisfactory. In 72 percent of lessons teaching is good or better, and in 16 percent it is very good or better. In most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, teaching is mainly good, but in modern foreign languages and in history at Key Stage 3 it is slightly less strong. There are many strengths to the teaching including good subject knowledge, good planning, good use of resources and high expectations of pupils. Teachers give good attention to meeting individual needs, and the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a particular strength. There is also good attention given to promoting the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in English and mathematics lessons and through involvement in whole school projects and initiatives. Pupils work hard, concentrate well and do what is expected of them.

There are two main weaknesses in teaching and learning. One is that pupils do not engage actively enough with their learning and do not show enough initiative and independence, and tasks set by teachers do not always demand or encourage pupils to develop these skills sufficiently. The second is that accurate and specific assessment information is not shared with pupils often enough, so that they do not have regular enough feedback on how well they are doing and the specifics of what they need to do to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good range of subjects, including vocational courses. Statutory requirements met, except for RE for all sixth form students. Shared arrangements for the sixth form enable a wider range of subjects to be offered and more viable group sizes, but leads to occasional problems of organisation and communication between the schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good curriculum provision, teaching, support, and monitoring of progress, excellently managed, resulting in very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Moral and social development good. Spiritual and cultural development satisfactory. Promoting understanding of a multi-cultural society does not have a high enough profile. No daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for care, support, guidance, including promoting positive behaviour and discipline, child protection and attendance all good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring progress are not yet effective enough.

The school works hard to create an effective partnership with parents, and the outcomes make a sound contribution to the standards achieved.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed. There is an inclusive culture, a strong commitment to raising standards, and planning for development is well established. Key priorities for action to raise standards could be clearer.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are actively involved in and knowledgeable about the school. They carry out their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Practice within the school, including the quality of teaching, is monitored and evaluated well.
The strategic use of resources	The school's strategic use of resources is good, as is management of the budget. Satisfactory value for money is provided.

Accommodation is satisfactory in all subjects except for PE where there are several limitations, although a new fitness centre is being built. Staffing and learning resources are satisfactory in all subjects, with the latter particularly good in ICT. Action is taken to ensure that value for money is obtained when making decisions about spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are happy and like school. • Pupils are expected to work hard and make good progress. • Nearly all pupils are well behaved, tolerant and friendly to each other. • Teaching is good. • Staff are approachable. • School is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The levels of homework set. • The information provided on their children's progress. • The school to work more closely with parents.

The inspection findings confirm all the positive views of parents. Some feel too much homework is set whilst others consider there is not enough. However, provision for homework is satisfactory. All pupils have a 'Homework Planner', which includes a homework timetable, and this informs all concerned of the expectations for homework. Most of the concerns about information on progress arise from parents of pupils in Years 7 and 8, who have not yet experienced the newly introduced review day. By contrast, parents of Year 11 pupils are very positive about the information they have had. The school works hard and effectively to involve parents in their children's learning and the life of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of pupils entering the school up until September 2000 has been considerably below the national average, and there have been relatively few high attaining pupils amongst the intake. However, the attainment on entry of the current year 7 pupils is higher, and much closer to the national average.
2. Overall standards achieved by pupils in the National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 were below the national average. Results in English were highest and they were broadly in line with the national average, but in mathematics and science the results were below. The results in English were below those from similar schools, and the results in mathematics and science were comparable to the lowest five percent of similar schools.
3. Inspection findings indicate the standards of pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 3 in English are also average. The improvement in standards in English when compared to the past few years and to mathematics and science, is mainly due to the increased attention given within the English department to raising standards of literacy through some specific intervention strategies such as summer literacy workshops for pupils. The school is also involved in the national pilot for 'transforming the Key Stage 3 curriculum' and this is having a positive impact on the standards of younger pupils in the school. Although still below average at the end of Key Stage 3, the attention which is now given to improving numeracy in Years 7 to 9, including the summer schools and participation in the national pilot, provides a firm foundation for raising the standards for all pupils in mathematics. In science, current standards are also below average.
4. Teachers' assessments of pupils' standards in ICT in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 3 were above average. Teacher assessment judgements in 2000 in other subjects indicated standards were well above average in art, above average in history, average in PE, below average in DT, geography, music, and well below average in modern foreign languages. There are no formal National Curriculum assessments in RE.
5. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Key Stage 3 currently are above average in ICT, average in art and PE, and below average in all other subjects. The reason for art and history standards being lower than the 2000 assessments suggest is that last year teacher assessment judgements were not fully accurate and over-estimated the standards pupils had attained. Standards have improved in French because of better curriculum planning brought about by a new head of department. Nevertheless, they are still lower than they should be due to staffing difficulties in the department, which, although better than they were, are continuing to have a negative impact.
6. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2000 were also below the national average. This is the case for the proportion gaining 5 or more A*-C, (33% as compared with 47% nationally), the proportion gaining 5 or more A*-G grades, (89% as compared with 90% nationally), and the average points score, (32.5 as compared with 38.4 nationally). The proportion gaining one or more grades at A*-G was above the national average.

7. Only one subject, office applications, had results above the national average by a significant degree. Mathematics' results were broadly in line with the average, being 2 percentage points above. All other subjects were below the national average. English language and literature results were just a little below. All other subjects, including science, were considerably lower, with results in geography, history, French and RE well below average. There were no GCSE results for PE or music. The latest results in music, which were in 1999, were slightly above average, although based on just a small number of pupils. Results in vocational courses were in line with expectations.
8. Inspection findings are that current standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are largely in accord with the standards indicated by these results, with just a few exceptions. Although the GCSE results for English literature are just a little below average, these are based on just 62% of the Year 11 pupils being entered, and just half the boys. Standards in literature overall therefore are firmly below average. Standards in geography are about average, and this is because it is a higher attaining group of pupils taking the subject this year. Although standards in DT are still below average, they are higher than last year. This is because of improvements put in place by the new head of department, and the impact of refurbished workshops. Standards in PE for both the examination group and the rest of Year 11 are above average. Standards in RE are below average for both the examination group and for other pupils. For those pupils taking GCSE in music, standards in performing are near average, in composing a little below average and in appraising music are well below average. Standards in ICT are above average, not just for those pupils taking the ICT based office applications course, but for all pupils. Although standards are well below average in history, it is a lower attaining group of pupils taking the subject.
9. Standards at the end of the sixth form in 2000 were very low, in the bottom 5% of schools nationally, and lower than in the previous two years. Results in all A level courses were below average and the proportion gaining higher grades was low. Girls were more successful than boys. The numbers studying individual subjects were small, and in some subjects, very small, and this means that subject comparisons must be treated with caution. Results in General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses were in line with expectations. Inspection findings indicate that current standards on A level courses are also below average, whilst standards on the vocational courses are largely in line with expectations.
10. Although standards overall at the end of all key stages are below average, these nevertheless represent satisfactory achievement for the pupils concerned. Standards of attainment on entry have been considerably below average, and pupils make sound progress as they move through the school. This is also true of those students entering the sixth form. The results, despite being very low, are in line with predictions made based on individual students' GCSE results. This satisfactory achievement overall masks some subject and key stage differences. Overall, progress at Key Stage 3 is not as good as at Key Stage 4, and is below the national trend of improvement. In some subjects at some key stages, outlined below, progress is good.
11. Pupils' achievements in English are good at Key Stage 3. There is a good focus on developing literacy skills with intervention strategies such as summer literacy schools, and the national pilot of the transforming key stage 3 is having a positive impact. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. They make very good progress in ICT, and good progress in DT, geography, art and PE. They make satisfactory progress in modern foreign languages, history, music and RE.

12. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress in mathematics, due to particular attention having been given to improving GCSE results last year. Progress is satisfactory in English language, and just satisfactory in science. However, progress is unsatisfactory overall in English literature, due to such a small number studying for and entering the examination. At Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress in office applications and ICT, DT, geography, and PE. They make satisfactory progress in all other subjects.
13. The attainment of students on entry to the sixth form is well below average, and the results in 2000 represent satisfactory progress and achievement for the students concerned. They were broadly in line with the grades predicted by their Year 11 performance at GCSE. Progress is good in ICT and satisfactory in all other subjects.
14. Pupils with special educational needs of all ages make very good progress overall, both in literacy, and across the curriculum. This is due to several factors. The special educational needs co-ordinator has an excellent understanding of pupils' needs and how to meet them and she ensures that teachers are very well informed about this. The teaching and support they receive, therefore, from specialist and non-specialist teachers and from learning support assistants is very good. There is very good monitoring of their progress, with good use made of the resulting information. The management of the overall provision is excellent.
15. There is a gender difference in attainment overall, with girls regularly out-performing boys, reflecting the national picture. This is particularly so in English at Key Stage 4, French and art. Boys' results are above those of girls in mathematics. In some subjects there is little gender difference. Boys' attainment overall is lower on entry, however. The school has put in place a number of strategies aimed at raising boys, attainment, such as introducing college link courses and learning mentors for Year 11 pupils.
16. The school has a very small number of ethnic minority pupils. Their attainment is not monitored as a separate group, and no difference in their attainment as compared with other pupils was evident on inspection. The school also has 5 looked after pupils, and their progress is monitored due to the school taking part in a local pilot project with social services. Their performance is below average, but in line with expectations given their learning needs and prior attainment. The school has not formally identified any gifted and talented pupils.
17. There is a steady trend of improvement in the school's results overall at the end of Key Stage 4, in line with the national trend. Standards are higher than at the previous inspection, and this year the school gained an achievement award from the DfEE. The trend of improvement in Key Stage 3 results is below the national trend. Results in the sixth form fluctuate, reflecting the differences in attainment at GCSE of those pupils entering the sixth form. The differences in performance between subjects and between key stages, however, indicate that standards could nevertheless be higher.
18. The school did not meet its statutory targets last year, due to a small number of pupils not achieving the grades predicted for them. The targets set for 2001 are higher, and, at this stage in the school's move to improvement, are sufficiently challenging.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Pupils show good attitudes towards school and their work, behave well, form very good relationships and their personal development is good. The open and respectful way in which pupils' views are heard make significant contributions to these positive attitudes and values. The good attitudes and values, recorded in the previous inspection, are fully maintained.
20. The great majority of pupils of all ages like school and it plays an important part in their lives. They feel that there is a positive atmosphere, which they respond well to. A significant majority are proud of their school, based primarily on the help that they get and the good progress they consider they are making. Some pupils also mention representing school at various sports and musical events as reasons to be proud of school. They consider that most teachers make their learning enjoyable, by providing clear explanations and being responsive to their questions. Pupils' favourite subjects and lessons are generally those where they are practically involved and ones where they consider the teaching to be particularly good. The best attitudes and behaviour occur in lessons where expectations are high, work is demanding and pupils are busy and engaged in a variety of activities, which provide the right level of challenge for them.
21. Behaviour in classrooms, and during lunchtime and breaktimes when supervision is less formal, is good overall, and is a key element in the positive atmosphere for learning which prevails. Pupils move about the school in a calm and responsible way. Pupils interact well together at lunchtimes and breaktimes. There is little sign of bullying, sexism, racism or other antisocial behaviour, and pupils are confident that any rare occurrences would be dealt with effectively. Indeed the ease with which boys and girls socialise and work together, particularly in Year 11 and the Sixth Form, is noteworthy. Parents' questionnaire responses fully support this positive picture, with five sixths of the parents who responded being positive about pupils' behaviour. Levels of fixed and permanent exclusions are consistently below the national average. Pupils take good care of property and resources and help keep the school in attractive condition.
22. Relationships between adults and pupils, and among pupils themselves, are very good overall and a striking feature of the school. They are based on mutual respect. Adults act as good role models. Teachers value pupils' endeavours and effectively praise effort and good work. Pupils speak very positively about the support they get from teachers and the fair way in which they are treated. Students in the sixth form, for example, are positive about the way teachers trust them and treat them like adults. Pupils with special educational needs make notable gains in self confidence and self esteem, due to the particular emphasis their teachers and other adults give to developing these attributes. Relationships between pupils from different ethnic groups are also good.
23. Pupils' personal development is good overall. Most pupils know, value and calmly carry out the daily routines expected of them. They enjoy speaking with visitors. When questioned in groups, pupils are comfortable listening to different views expressed by others. Pupils show concern for others, if they are ill, hurt or otherwise upset. Pupils, regularly and without prompting, hold doors open for each other and adults. They are keen to help others. For example, they organise and support a range of charitable appeals and collections, such as, 'Blue Peter', 'Comic Relief' and 'Children in Need'. Pupils take responsibility routinely for their class and school duties. There is a school council in operation and there is also a system of school prefects. Pupils organise a range of sporting events and competitions. For example, the current Year 9 have

organised an interform football competition whilst Year 7 successfully suggested the start-up of a debating society, for which they now choose the topics. However, evidence of pupils showing initiative and independence in relation to their learning is less than normally seen, and this becomes more pronounced with older pupils and students.

24. Students in the sixth form provide a mature influence and are good role models for younger pupils. However, because the sixth form is constantly moving between sites, and students register in lessons rather than in tutor groups, it is difficult for them to establish a corporate identity within the school. For similar reasons, there are relatively few opportunities for them to develop their responsibility, and to participate widely in social and cultural activities, or take part in assemblies, though some have made significant contributions both to the school newspaper and dramatic productions.
25. Attendance is satisfactory overall. It is broadly in line with the national average and has been on a rising trend since the previous inspection. The unauthorised absence level is consistently below the national average. Punctuality is generally good. Nearly all pupils come to school on time and settle to their work promptly and calmly. Occasionally, some teaching time is lost in sixth form lessons due to the time taken for pupils to commute between schools.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching is good and it is a strength of the school. All teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory; none was unsatisfactory. In 72 percent of lessons it was good or better. Teaching was very good in 16 percent of lessons and excellent in 1 percent. The teaching in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, was mainly good, but in modern foreign languages and in history at Key stage 3 it was slightly less strong. Teaching of sixth form lessons was as good as the other key stages. This, and the quality of teaching generally, has improved from the already strong position reported on at the last inspection.
27. There are many strengths to the teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and they use this to give clear explanations and, where appropriate, illuminating practical demonstrations to pupils. In an excellent lesson in PE, for example, involving the pupils in a fitness and training programme, the teacher inter-woven elements of theory and practical guidance to set up an activity that totally motivated pupils and resulted in high levels of success. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well. They explain their learning objectives very well and pupils are clear about the intentions for their learning in each lesson. In Key Stage 4 and sixth form lessons, teachers also give good information to pupils about examination requirements and they make sure that pupils understand how their work relates to these. Teachers use a good range of strategies within lessons. In many mathematics lessons, for example, teachers begin with starter activities which capture pupils' interest whilst reinforcing basic skills. In ICT, activities which interest and motivate pupils are well explained and are designed to enable pupils to work independently. Resources are used well to illustrate teaching points, and ICT is well used across the curriculum to enable pupils to engage with their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and this is manifest in both the level at which the work is pitched, and the pace of learning maintained in most lessons where almost all time is used fully for learning.

28. Good attention is given to meeting individual needs. In particular, the teaching of pupils with SEN is very good indeed and a strength of the school. There is a good knowledge of the specific needs of pupils and close planning between the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and learning support assistants. Good attention is given to promoting pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem and this accelerates their rate of learning.
29. Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely good and this also contributes significantly to the good learning that takes place. Teachers are concerned to do their best for their pupils, who in turn respond well to this by trying to meet their teachers' expectations. Teachers use much praise and encouragement to try support and motivate their pupils. Pupils work hard and try to do what is expected of them. They generally concentrate well in lessons and apply themselves to the tasks set.
30. There is good attention given to promoting the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in English and mathematics lessons and through some whole school projects and initiatives. Participation in the 'transforming the Key Stage 3 curriculum' pilot has sharpened awareness of the role of improving these skills in raising standards and has led to improved practice, and the summer schools which are run have a positive impact. Strategies to support pupils across the curriculum are developing. It is common for key words to be displayed by teachers at the beginning of lessons to support pupils in their use and spelling. Numeracy skills are being developed in some subjects such as ICT, geography and science. There are areas where practice is not yet consistent, however, such the attention given to correcting technical errors in writing when marking pupils work, and the opportunities for pupils to develop their oral skills through structured discussion.
31. There are two main weaknesses in teaching and learning. One is that pupils generally do not actively enough engage with their learning by taking on responsibility for aspects of their work or by showing initiative. This is seen throughout the school but more so with older pupils and especially for some pupils in the sixth form. Some pupils lack confidence in their own abilities. Some are not very motivated, and, despite doing what is asked of them, they do so without much enthusiasm and or enjoyment. On these occasions, the teachers have to work very hard to involve the pupils and ensure appropriate levels of understanding. Indeed, in some cases pupils appear to resist their teachers' efforts to engage them in intellectual or creative thought. In art for example, despite some imaginative stimulus provided by teachers, some sixth form students resort to copying images rather than engaging in personal research and response. Teachers need to promote the skills of independence and initiative in pupils more actively, and use a wider range of strategies and tasks, which encourage and demand more active participation in lessons and learning. The second weakness is that accurate and specific assessment information is not shared often enough with pupils within lessons and in their ongoing work. There sometimes appears to be a reluctance to do so in case it should de-motivate the pupils. However, this means that pupils do not have regular enough feedback on what they are doing well and the specifics of what they need to do to improve. Pupils are not involved enough in assessing their own performance and progress.

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

32. The curriculum provided for pupils and students is good. At Key Stages 3 and 4 all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are included and statutory requirements are met. In the sixth form statutory requirements are met except for the provision of religious education for all pupils. Since the previous inspection there has been a detailed review of the curriculum. In Key Stages 3 and 4 there has been an increase in curriculum time to 25 hours, in line with national recommendations. Attention has been given to the allocation of time and number of lessons for subjects and teaching areas so that the provision is now satisfactory overall. The needs of all pupils are met through the range of courses available and provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. Whole school strategies for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are being developed and are effective at this early stage of their introduction. Arrangements have been put in place to reflect national changes to the accreditation arrangements for sixth form students.
33. The range and quality of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Since the previous inspection attention has been given to the breadth of the curriculum so that the time allocation for music, design and technology and physical education is now satisfactory. All pupils now take drama as part of the English programme. French is taken as a first language and one group in Years 8 and 9 take German. ICT is included as a taught lesson and RE is taught to all. The timetable provides satisfactory arrangements and time allocation for personal and social education. The school is participating in a national pilot of the project 'transforming the Key Stage 3 curriculum' which is to be introduced to all schools in September 2001. Attention is given to progression in the curriculum as pupils move from primary school to the secondary school and in extending the work done in the literacy and numeracy strategies in primary schools. The project aims to raise the achievement of all pupils, with a particular focus on pupils of below average attainment on entering secondary school. The school is well placed to benefit from other strands of curriculum development as the project moves into curriculum areas including science, ICT and the wider curriculum.
34. In Key Stage 4 the curriculum now provides a balanced curriculum satisfying statutory requirements. Since the previous inspection there has been a review of the time allocation and the way options are chosen. All pupils take GCSE courses in English, mathematics and science. Further choices are made from the option courses in other national Curriculum subjects and include full and short courses as appropriate. Double science is taken by 3 teaching groups, and two modern foreign languages, French and German, are offered. Vocational courses in Health and Social Care and Business Studies are available. Office Applications, an ICT based course, is a popular option and taken by 3 groups in Years 10 and 11. The school is a 'Youth Award School' offering accredited courses for SEN pupils. Day release arrangements are made for a small number of pupils to follow a college based course, for whom disapplication from some National Curriculum subjects is allowed. All pupils take a course in Personal and Careers Education (PACE) which includes RE, personal and social education, citizenship and careers. Although this provides sufficient time for the study of RE, these arrangements result in some discontinuity in pupils' experience of the subject. Overall, the courses in Key Stage 4 provide a good breadth of opportunity for pupils.

35. There are no minimum entry requirements to the sixth form, and last year, approximately two out of three pupils leaving Year 11 stayed on for further study. The school shares, and jointly organises, its sixth form with a neighbouring school and so offers a wider range of academic and vocational courses than would otherwise be possible. This includes A/AS courses in all the main subjects. There is a wide range of other courses available, including business education, sociology, psychology, media studies and environmental science. GNVQ courses are offered in health and social care, leisure and tourism, information technology and engineering and RSA courses in computer literacy. A Skill Power course is provided for students with special educational needs. A Key Skills course is now provided for all Year 12 students. This broad curriculum and the structured, supportive environment provided for students, are strengths of the sixth form. RE is still not provided for all students, which is a statutory requirement; this was also the situation at the time of the previous inspection. There is an option for all students to do PE one afternoon a week but no Maryhill students take this up at present. There are regular meetings with tutors to discuss progress, and tutors provide good quality guidance to students on matters such as time management, university entrance, further education opportunities and the writing of CVs. The curricular provision overall for sixth form students is good. Although there is some unproductive time spent on travelling, most groups are small, and there are sometimes problems with communication between the two schools, these do not appear to have a particularly detrimental effect on students' learning.
36. The school provides a good curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. The inclusive approach by the school ensures they have full access to all subjects, and at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, appropriate alternative examination courses are offered, such as the certificate of achievement and youth award scheme. Dispensation to support pupils in examinations is applied for at early stages of courses.
37. The school's extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. It is valued and supported by pupils. Activities take place during lunchtime and after school and there is a breakfast club before school. The Open Learning Centre provides computer facilities and is well attended by pupils. Sports include soccer, gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, netball, athletics and swimming and an after school gym club. There is a school choir, orchestra and opportunities for instrumental tuition. Musical concerts for parents, primary schools and the public are mounted each year. There is an after school drama club and annual drama productions. A Christian fellowship group meets weekly. A range of voluntary sessions at lunchtime and after school supports examination subjects and coursework activities. There is a full programme of school visits, including field study, historical and cultural visits in this country and abroad, and foreign language exchanges.
38. A programme of personal, social and health education is provided for all years. There is a well co-ordinated programme of sex, health and drugs education and courses are taught by specialist staff. There are close and productive links with the main contributory primary schools. Primary school pupils visit the school when they are in years 5 and 6 as part of an induction programme. The information obtained from primary schools on pupil attainment and pastoral needs assists in a smooth transition. The pilot project on 'transforming the Key Stage 3 curriculum' is having a major impact on curriculum continuity when pupils move from primary to secondary school. Careers education is included for Years 9 to 11 and Y9 pupils receive good advice before making their choices for Key Stage 4. The careers advisory service contributes to careers and vocational guidance. The school has many good links with the local community, which make significant contributions to pupils' personal and academic development. Representatives of local employers visit the school and assist with

careers lessons. The school's useful industrial, further and higher education links, and work experience placements which are organised by the students themselves, further enhance the educational opportunities of students in the sixth form. Adult students are welcomed in sixth form classes, although the number taking up this option at present is small.

39. The provision for the development of spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good overall.
40. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Religious education is provided for all pupils, except in the sixth form. This provides satisfactory opportunities for most pupils to reflect upon their own and the beliefs of others. Weekly assemblies also provide for periods of reflection in a spiritual context. However, there is no daily collective act of worship for all pupils, which thus fails to meet the statutory requirement.
41. Moral development is good. The schools' motto, 'Recognising Achievement' is used to engender respect for others both in the school and in the wider community. There is a shared attitude towards valuing and showing respect for others and this is reflected in the everyday life of the school. There is a code of conduct and this is reinforced through assemblies and tutor time. Rules for personal conduct and behaviour are understood and these contribute to the good relationships that exist in the school between teachers and their pupils. Moral issues are debated in English in Year 9 and in the debating society in Years 7 and 8.
42. Social development is good. The school promotes good citizenship through many community activities. Pupils are involved in projects with the local community police. It has gained a "Health Promoting School's Award" in 1999 and pupils support local and national charities. Many opportunities are offered to help pupils to gain confidence outside of school. Year 9 is involved in an industry day, some pupils in Year 11 are prefects, and Year 12 and 13 students publish a school newsletter. Younger pupils have helped with a community 'litter pick' and to secure information to press for village green status for a local open space. Pupils are involved in national journalism competitions, and with local pensioners. In drama, pupils are involved in situations where they have to negotiate and solve problems. The personal and social education, taught to all pupils, makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.
43. Cultural development is satisfactory. There are good opportunities in English, music and art for pupils to develop cultural interests. Pupils study western European art of the 20th century. In music, pupils are encouraged to take part in the annual production as well as in local musical competitions. In modern foreign languages pupils encounter European culture. There are some limited opportunities in these subjects to study aspects of non-European cultures but promoting understanding of the multi-cultural nature of society in Britain does not have a high enough profile within the school. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. As at the previous inspection, the care, personal support and guidance arrangements for pupils were good. The procedures for and use of assessment information, including to support pupils' academic progress, are not yet effective enough.
45. Procedures to promote and ensure pupils' well being are good. There are good arrangements for pupils' induction into the school. Pupils are well supported in Years 9 and 11 with the task of choosing their GCSE and post-16 options, with parents

involved well. Pupils confirm that they are well cared for when they are ill or otherwise distressed. The school nurse is involved effectively with the small proportion of pupils who experience significant problems as they grow up. Child protection procedures are good, with the designated person and procedures to follow known by adults in the school. Effective links exist with social services. Pupils are made appropriately aware of this issue as part of their personal and social education and parents are informed of the school's responsibilities in the prospectus. Arrangements for 'looked after' children are also clearly defined and effective.

46. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are satisfactory overall. Teachers make pupils aware of health and safety issues in lessons, such as in physical education and science. This effectively contributes to the development of a safe and health conscious attitude among them. Fire alarm testing, fire drills and the testing of portable electrical equipment are carried out regularly.
47. Procedures to monitor and promote positive behaviour and discipline are good overall. The main emphasis is on recognising and rewarding good behaviour and nearly all pupils respond positively. On-going praise in lessons and assemblies are positive features of practice. Class teachers deal routinely with low level classroom incidents and have a clear route for referring more serious incidents. In nearly all classes teachers use praise effectively and maintain clear and consistent boundaries between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The credits system, recognising good and responsible behaviour is valued by pupils. There are effective links between teachers and lunchtime supervisors.
48. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, including bullying, sexism or racism, are good overall. There is a clear, proportionate set of sanctions in relation to unacceptable classroom and playground behaviour. Helped by regular meetings between year team managers, application of the sanctions is consistent. The small minority of pupils with significant behaviour difficulties are clearly identified, and behaviour improvement programs involving parents and pupils are used as appropriate. The lunchtime staff feel well supported by the headteacher and key staff in relation to playground incidents. Parents are effectively involved where concerns arise. Assemblies are used to remind pupils regularly of the importance of telling adults if they see any signs of bullying or racism. Pupils confirm that any bullying and very rare racist incidents are well handled. A list is kept of these incidents and the measures taken to resolve them.
49. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good. The small minority of pupils with persistently poor attendance are known to staff. First day of absence telephone contact is routine for these pupils. The educational welfare officer is effectively involved in helping to resolve such cases. These measures make a good contribution to maintaining a low level of unauthorised absence. Individual recognition is given for full and near full termly or annual attendance and for significant and sustained improvement in attendance.
50. Despite some recent improvements, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are not yet effective enough. There is a whole school assessment system in use, whereby pupils' work is marked on a 1-4 scale indicating the extent to which pupils are working to expectations. Whilst the system does achieve this purpose, it is not linked to National Curriculum levels or criteria or GCSE grades, and therefore does not provide specific enough information on pupils' attainment or to enable pupils to receive precise enough information on what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve their work. Some departments supplement this system with ones of their own, but, whilst some are effective, this is

not consistently the case. In several departments, for example, statutory teacher assessment judgements made about pupils' standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are inaccurate and give teachers, pupils and parents a false picture of the standards being attained. There is a progress check for all pupils early in the academic year, which identifies the extent to which pupils are working to expectations. These are followed later in the year by target setting days for sixth formers and the new annual review day for pupils in Years 7 to 11. These create a good opportunity for form tutors, pupils and parents to reflect on pupils' achievements and think about areas pupils need to improve. They are popular with teachers and the pupils and parents who have experienced them. The resulting targets provide pupils with a clear, though general, way forward. The interval between the progress check and the review meeting is too long in some cases. An effective mentoring scheme provides Year 11 pupils with additional support, as does input from tutors for sixth formers. The analysis of performance data within the school is developing well. However, overall, the regular and routine use of accurate and specific assessment information to assess standards attained by pupils, monitor their progress, give feedback to pupils and set targets for them, and modify curriculum and teaching is not a strong enough feature of the school.

51. The exception to the above is for pupils with SEN, for whom assessment and monitoring of progress is very effective. Thorough liaison takes place with primary schools, to ensure good understanding of the precise needs of pupils entering the school. Good, measurable and achievable targets are set and there is very detailed and regular monitoring of pupils' progress. There are frequent review meetings between SEN staff and prompt action is taken to rectify any difficulties.
52. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are good. The well established School Council provides a way of hearing about pupils' collective views and needs. Good work and attitudes are celebrated regularly in assemblies. This recognition and reward provides pupils with frequent and public confirmation of what is good in their lives and helps raise their self-esteem. A coherent personal, social and health education program provides pupils with an effective grasp of a wide range of issues, from careers to general elections. School creates good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for themselves and others. For example, pupils contribute to a wide range of charities. Team sports, musical events, combined with residential trips and visits, further develop pupils' discipline, personal application, team spirit, a sense of fair play and a wider knowledge of surrounding areas. Based on questionnaire returns, parents are very positive about the school's part in helping pupils become mature and responsible.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school works hard to create an effective partnership with parents, and the outcomes make a sound contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved.
54. Parents are broadly satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. Over a third of the parents replied to the questionnaire although just seven attended the pre-inspection meeting. Most confirm that their pupils like school and make good progress. They consider that school expects pupils to work hard and helps them become mature and responsible. Most are positive about the teaching. They feel comfortable approaching school with suggestions or concerns and consider that it is well led and managed. Specifically, they are positive about the improvements since the previous inspection in modern foreign language provision, although staffing difficulties have limited this improvement. However, over a fifth of the respondents

have concerns about homework levels and the information they get about their pupils' progress. As a result, a sixth of respondents consider that school does not work closely with parents. Judgements on parents' views are reported in the summary and, as appropriate, throughout the report.

55. Links with parents make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. The school is open, welcoming and listens to parents' concerns. It not only endeavours to keep parents effectively informed but it tries hard to involve them in their pupils' learning and school life. For example, instead of annual parents' evenings, which were attended by parents of about 60 percent of the pupils, it has introduced a review day to which parents and pupils are invited. Parents of nearly all pupils now attend these review days with form tutors.
56. The quality of information to support pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. All pupils have a 'Homework Planner', which provides a routine communication link between school and home. Parents, pupils and form tutors sign these weekly and raise any on-going issues.
57. The new practice of following up the annual written reports with very well attended review days means that parents and pupils get a clear shared picture on the main priority areas for improvement. This is fully supported by the questionnaire returns which clearly indicate that parents of Year 9 to 11 pupils feel well informed about their pupils' progress. In contrast, in Years 7 and 8 where the review day has not yet taken place a significant minority of parents do not feel well informed. Parents are contacted where progress checks, during the autumn term, raise concerns about their children's progress.
58. The quality of pupils' written annual reports is good overall. Reports convey a clear sense of how well pupils are getting on. As well as the statutory reporting of national tests results and teacher assessments in Year 9, the levels achieved in tests are included for other year groups. The predicted GCSE grades are also provided for Year 10 and 11 pupils, in most subjects. Identification of key areas for improvement in subjects and attitudes is routine and systematic. The practice of getting pupils to reflect and comment on the reports is a positive feature.
59. School related information is of good quality. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed on ongoing school life. The prospectus gives a clear and coherent outline of school's expectations and character. The governors' annual report provides a clear picture about the main issues which the governing body is working on.
60. Parents' involvement with the work of the school makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning and the life of the school. Most parents deliver on their responsibility to get their pupils to attend school. Discussions with pupils, indicate that nearly all have somebody at home who checks that set homework is done. Attendance at the new review days is good. Parents of special needs' pupils attend their reviews. Many parents attend and enjoy the annual awards evening, where effort, improvement, community and academic achievements are recognised. They also attend and enjoy concerts, productions and sports days. There is an active parent teacher association which works well with school. They organise and run the usual range of fundraising and social events. Recent funds have contributed to hall redecoration and 'World Challenge' expedition proceeds. Parent governor positions are filled.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. Leadership and management within the school are good. There is a strong commitment to the pupils and a very inclusive culture, with all pupils welcomed and valued. There is a very positive ethos of care and concern for individuals, and the contributions of staff and pupils alike are valued. The very good relationships are characterised by a mutual respect. The school's motto is 'recognising achievement', and its success at this is evident in its work. The headteacher has made a major contribution to developing this culture, a fact recognised and valued by staff.
62. There is a clear commitment to raising standards for pupils within the school and a variety of approaches and actions have been taken to bring this about, all of which are positive and valuable. These include broadening the curriculum to include vocational elements to try to cater for the range of needs and interests of pupils, taking part in specific intervention projects for improving pupils' skills such as the summer literacy and numeracy workshops and the national pilot for 'transforming the Key Stage 3 curriculum', and the successful attempts to gain extra funding to improve facilities and provision for pupils.
63. Planning for development within the school is well established. There is an expectation that all staff will contribute, and mechanisms have been put in place to enable them to do so. Governors are also fully involved in this process, working along side staff, and this is a positive feature. The priorities, which emerge from the various groups involved, are comprehensively documented in three different sets of plans, a school improvement plan, a school development plan, and departmental development plans. Although all outline positive and worthwhile actions, the links between them are not explicit enough. For example, it is not clear from the departmental development plans precisely what contribution they will be making to the achieving of whole school priorities. Indeed, it is not clear from the numerous priorities identified what the key whole school priorities are. As a result, the strong commitment to raising standards of attainment and the positive action that is taking place is not yet underpinned by a clear and shared view of the central and critical tasks necessary to bring about improvement.
64. Managers at all levels generally carry out their responsibilities well, and the management of SEN provision is excellent. The system of having a senior member of staff linked to a department and regular meetings with the head of department provides an effective mechanism for the ongoing support and monitoring. Practice within the school, including of the quality of teaching, is monitored and evaluated well, and there is generally an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses.
65. Governors are actively involved in and knowledgeable about the school. They carry out their responsibilities well and all statutory requirements are met with the exception of the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and RE for all students in the sixth form. The establishing of a governors' committee which considers performance management, school development and financial planning is a positive way of ensuring key aspects of school life are appropriately considered.
66. The school's strategic use of resources is good. The school development plan informs budget decisions, which in turn reflects educational priorities. Good management of the budget has brought the school out of deficit over the past few years, to the extent that it has been possible to embark on the building of a new fitness centre. Successful efforts have been made to gain extra funding for the school from a variety of sources. Income per pupil is a little above the average for similar schools, an improvement as compared with that at the last inspection when it was below. The school is working

well at using this funding to satisfy its current priorities and to plan for the future. Action to ensure the school gains best value for the money it spends is good. There is systematic control of spending by the financial officer who works closely with governors and staff. New technology is used to provide good systems for monitoring, and for providing information on important issues to be considered throughout the year. Specific grants for SEN are used very effectively with all evidence showing a complete match of resources to target priorities. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

67. The qualifications and experience of the staff enables the curriculum to be delivered. There are very good systems for the induction of newly qualified teachers and student teachers, who appreciate the many measures in place to support them. Staff training and development needs are identified in departmental planning and the effectiveness of any training or course attendance is judged against its impact on pupils' learning. There is a need for some training to improve the quality of non-specialist teaching in art.
68. Accommodation is satisfactory for all subjects, enabling the National Curriculum to be delivered effectively, with the exception of PE, where there are several problems. The lighting in the gym is inadequate, the tennis courts are slippery when wet, the fencing round the all-weather pitch is too low to prevent balls from going onto the road, the changing rooms are too small and there are limitations associated with the use of the multipurpose hall. The provision of the all-weather pitch has increased the range of activities provided, and there is a new fitness centre being built which is likely to much improve provision. Some limitations in other areas of the school building, identified in the last report, remain. For example, corridors are narrow and DT, science and ICT have rooms far apart. However, many areas have attractive displays and there is little graffiti or litter around, indicating that pupils care for their environment.
69. The provision of resources is satisfactory in all subjects and has improved since the last inspection. The resources for ICT, in particular, are much improved, enabling good access to pupils in most curriculum areas. Just a few deficiencies exist. For example, there is a lack of portable lighting and stage blocks, which pose limitations in drama, insufficient variety of resources in modern foreign languages and too few artefacts for RE.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to speed up the raising of standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should: -
 - (1) Ensure that the development planning process identifies clear and specific priorities for raising standards, and ensure that both the whole school and departmental development plans clearly indicate the contribution that individuals and groups will make to the achieving of these priorities. (paragraph 63)
 - (2) Improve assessment and monitoring systems so as to ensure that: (paragraphs 31, 50)
 - ongoing assessment of pupils provides accurate and specific information related to National Curriculum criteria and levels, and examination grades;
 - this information is used to regularly inform teachers and pupils about how well pupils are doing and what they can do to improve, and to track progress;

- pupils are more involved in assessing their own performance and progress;
 - teaching, curriculum planning and target setting is developed and improved in the light of the information gained;
- (3) Take specific action to eradicate the differences in performance between subjects and key stages, paying particular attention to those subjects where achievement is satisfactory rather than good. (paragraphs 1-18, 71-179)
- (4) Improve the active and independent learning skills of pupils by: (paragraphs 23,24,31)
- using more strategies and tasks in teaching which demand the active involvement of pupils in their learning;
 - encouraging and enabling pupils to take responsibility for aspects of their learning;
- (5) Fulfilling the statutory requirements to: (paragraphs 35, 40, 64)
- provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils;
 - provide RE for all students in the sixth form.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

142

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	15	55	28	0	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	627	78
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	74	0

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	35	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	121	5

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.0
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	52	63	115

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	28	29	27
	Girls	45	39	32
	Total	73	68	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	63 (69)	59 (51)	51 (46)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	25 (21)	29 (27)	14 (16)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	26	28	28
	Girls	41	39	39
	Total	67	67	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58 (55)	58 (54)	58 (45)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (13)	24 (30)	17 (13)
	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	50	43	93

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	15	40	48
	Girls	16	43	43
	Total	31	83	91
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	33 (31)	89 (84)	98 (90)
	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	33 (27.1)
	National	38.4 (38)

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

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

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	19	28

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	3.0	9.4	7.5 (13.1)	0	1.6	1.0 (2.0)
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	1
	National	73.2

International Baccalaureate	Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0
	National	76.5

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	698
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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	21	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	14.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	301

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.4
Key Stage 4	21.6

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	1,689,801
Total expenditure	1,649,036
Expenditure per pupil	2404
Balance brought forward from previous year	2460
Balance carried forward to next year	43,225

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	705
Number of questionnaires returned	257

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	54	7	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	55	3	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	55	8	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	49	15	6	2
The teaching is good.	33	54	4	3	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	46	16	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	40	6	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	51	14	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	37	53	4	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	60	5	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	53	8	3	5

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

ENGLISH

71. Over the last two years, boys and girls have reached standards in the national tests at age 14 which are close to the national average, higher than they were at the last inspection, but below those achieved in schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. In 2000, the National Curriculum test results in English were better than in mathematics and science and boys were closer to the national average for their gender than girls. The test results are in line with the assessments made by the teachers at the school.
72. GCSE results in English in 2000 were just a little below the national average overall in terms of A*-C grades. Over the past three years, most pupils have consistently done better in English than they have in most of their other subjects. Last year, girls' results were slightly above the national average but boys, with only three-quarters of the year group entered, were well below, though they were in line when grades A*-G are considered. English literature results show a similar pattern over three years. Those in 2000 were a little below the national average, with girls again outperforming boys: however, because only 62 percent of pupils, compared with 83 percent nationally, and only half of the boys, were entered, standards in literature remain below national expectations and are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection.
73. Owing to the very small numbers of students taking a range of English courses in the sixth form, comparisons with either national standards or with those at the last inspection are unreliable. However, in 2000, a group of 17, considerably larger than usual, entered English literature: their results were below the national expectations, but this performance represents satisfactory progress because the students were below average on entry.
74. Standards in Year 9 are currently average, yet they represent good achievement in relation to the pupils' relatively low attainment on entry to the school. As a result of the department's emphasis on the teaching of basic skills and the development of vocabulary and extended writing through its new literacy strategy, pupils of all abilities are making good progress. All follow the same broadly-based course and try their best to ensure that their work is well presented and is as accurate as possible. Lower attaining pupils can write simple but interesting reports, essays, descriptions and stories, sometimes drafting and writing them using word processing, and write about their reading. Higher attaining pupils show a growing confidence in using complex sentences. They are able to attempt successfully a much wider range of writing, including poetry, write as if they were characters in books or plays and produce diaries, newspaper articles and letters. They can also select and use appropriate desktop publishing software. Although almost all pupils readily recognise and understand the technical terms, such as simile and metaphor, used when writing and talking about language, many have difficulty analysing and commenting effectively on their use, particularly in literature. It is often their under-developed critical skills which are preventing more from achieving the higher levels in the end of Key Stage 3 tests. However, standards in the present Year 7 are higher than they have been in recent years and it is there that the department's literacy strategy, building on the work done in primary schools, is particularly effective. One of two top ability sets was observed having little difficulty understanding Wordsworth's poem "To daffodils," whilst the other was able to discuss their reactions to and write about Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et

decorum est.” Both are challenging texts, which are usually studied higher up the school.

75. In Year 11, standards are close to average although a little below, and reflect satisfactory progress and achievement over the key stage. There is greater accuracy in pupils’ extended writing, compared to standards in Year 9, and the coursework folders of those entered for both English and English literature show a wide variety of writing for a range of audiences and purposes, including responses to fiction, Shakespeare, other drama and the media. The highest attaining pupils write fluently, develop their ideas and interpretations well and use a mature, lively vocabulary; whilst those in the lower sets are technically much less accurate, have a limited vocabulary and show little originality in their thinking and writing. However, many pupils of all abilities have difficulty responding appropriately to literature because they place an undue emphasis on story and character, occasionally writing as if the events and people are real, and not enough on investigating a writer’s themes, purpose and style and explaining their own reactions to the texts being studied.
76. Very few students follow the Advanced and AS level courses in English literature, English language and media studies in the sixth form. Although progress is satisfactory overall, a characteristic of all but the highest attaining pupils is that they sometimes lack independence and motivation and are too dependent upon their teachers. As a result, their work, particularly in class, can lack the confidence, originality and depth of personal research, knowledge and understanding expected. This leads to a quality of discussion and debate that is inadequate, even though their writing is usually satisfactory because their teachers identify students’ weaknesses and give them good guidance and support.
77. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in English because of the high quality of the teaching in the SEN department, the close liaison and planning for pupils’ individual requirements by teachers and classroom assistants and the effective use of *Success Maker* software in information technology. Pupils who are gifted and talented, however, are not identified or their particular needs met.
78. The range of reading comprehension varies considerably in all key stages: it is average overall but improving. By the end of Year 9, pupils are able to read and follow instructions, such as those in examination papers, and can make some inferences and predictions based on their reading of a range of fiction, media and other non-fiction texts. They are encouraged to read for enjoyment and to keep a log of their reading, which is monitored by their teachers, in which they write personal comments and evaluations. In a Year 8 lesson observed, pupils were able to identify a variety of genres from textual clues and clearly enjoyed and benefited from the exercise. Pupils usually volunteer readily to read aloud in class and are listened to attentively and encouraged if necessary by the others. The department has successfully introduced several new texts designed to persuade some of the more reluctant boys to read and is making good use of national test data to set individual improvement targets. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11, particularly the girls, read fluently, widely, willingly and with good understanding.
79. Standards of speaking and listening also vary but they are generally a little higher than those in reading comprehension and writing. However, although many of all ages and abilities speak confidently and are able to use talk to solve problems, negotiate, share and extend their ideas and consolidate their learning through group work, there remains a significant number of pupils who are generally passive and reluctant to participate fully in oral activities, even in the sixth form. Consequently they are not

making the progress they should in these aspects, though pupil relationships are usually very supportive.

80. Teaching is good in all key stages, as it was at the last inspection. Two lessons were judged satisfactory and the remainder good, with one very good. Teaching is particularly good at key Stage 3 due to the positive impact of involvement in the national pilot. The good lessons are characterised by a variety of teaching styles and activities which make it possible for all pupils to become fully engaged, class management which creates a supportive, purposeful and enjoyable work atmosphere and carefully structured unit and lesson planning using a wide range of resources. It is also good departmental practice to share lesson objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons and to summarise what has been achieved at the end in order to consolidate their learning. In those lessons with some shortcomings, pupils' learning objectives are not made clear and teachers do not effectively build on what pupils already know, understand or can do. To supplement the teaching, the curriculum is enriched by a wide range of interesting activities including links with primary schools, a termly newspaper, a *Readathon*, a drama club, theatre trips, international pen pals and visits and workshops by the school's own poet, Terry Caffry.
81. Because most pupils have a positive attitude to their work, have good relationships with each other and their teachers and are co-operative in lessons, many are becoming effective learners by the time they reach Year 11, although this is less so in the sixth form. Pupils' progress in both learning and effort is well monitored by their teachers. Marking is positive and individual improvement targets are regularly set but, as these are not directly linked to National Curriculum assessment criteria which are shared with pupils, it is difficult for them to know exactly what they have to do in order to achieve a higher level or grade.
82. The management of the department is good and priorities for improvement are clearly identified in its planning. The head of department shows clear direction, motivation and focus and is well supported by a very hard-working, dedicated and enthusiastic team of specialist teachers. Communication is good, responsibilities are appropriately delegated and a programme of teacher monitoring involving lesson observations, marking and pupils' work is being developed, although it is yet to be fully implemented.
83. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Whilst the performance of boys, particularly at Key Stage 4 and in literature, is still a concern, strategies to improve their results in the national tests at 14 are showing some success. Standards overall in basic skills and literacy are rising because of the very thorough work scheme for Key Stage 3 and the department's full commitment to it is ensuring that all pupils are making good progress. Inspection evidence shows that, because of good teaching and planning, many more pupils will soon have the necessary skills and ability to be entered for both English and literature at the end of Year 11.

Literacy across the curriculum.

84. Standards of literacy, including reading, writing and speaking, are satisfactory and are improving as a result of the impetus provided by the English department, the cross-curricular working party and the staff training which has raised all teachers' awareness of its important role in enhancing overall standards. Literacy is the key focus of the special needs department. The school is participating in the national pilot for 'transforming the Key Stage 3 curriculum', and there is a very effective summer school and an intervention programme which are designed to give confidence to and develop the skills of lower attaining pupils. In most subjects, key words are given at the beginning of lessons and are written down or displayed to assist pupils with their

spelling and use: however, there is some inconsistency both within and across departments in the frequency and quality of the marking of technical errors in pupils' writing. Similar inconsistencies exist in oral work: whilst in physical education and drama, for example, it is usual for pupils to be given opportunities to discuss and evaluate what they are doing and develop and use technical terms, in music and history this rarely happens. What has not yet developed is a system of close monitoring by all heads of department to ensure that there is regularity and consistency in marking and that opportunities for the teaching of literacy skills are clearly identified in all work schemes. Additionally, the important contribution which reading in lessons and in morning registration and tutor times, as well as the role of the librarian and the library, have not yet been fully considered.

Drama

85. Drama is a new, optional subject in the school's GCSE curriculum: it is well taught by a very enthusiastic and capable member of the English department and is being examined for the first time this year. There is also a drama club and an annual drama production. To ensure that pupils are able to develop their drama skills, the subject is now fully incorporated into the Key Stage 3 work schemes, and this is helping to improve the confidence, creativity and oral skills of all. As yet, there is little evidence on which to judge pupils' standards. Year 11 were preparing for their written examination at the time of the inspection: however, their coursework shows that their evaluative and critical skills are at about the national average and that they have made very good progress since starting the course. The Year 10 pupils observed showed very good teamwork and awareness of audience in devising group presentations based on a poem, "About his Person". They were able to explain and justify their opinions and modify their ideas as a result of their discussions: they were also well aware of the contribution to dramatic effect and meaning of props, costume, setting, music, body language and voices. A particular strength is that pupils are very supportive of each other and are able to make worthwhile and constructive criticisms based, at times, on the examination board's assessment criteria which they have been given. At the last inspection there was no designated drama area. There is now one room but it offers barely adequate space for group work because it is also a classroom. There are no stage blocks or portable lighting equipment and this lack of resources limits the staging possibilities, and therefore the theatrical experiences, for the GCSE pupils in particular.

MATHEMATICS

86. Standards of attainment in mathematics are below the national average at the end of Key Stage 3. Results in the national tests, at level 5 and above, improved in 2000 over the results in the previous two years although still below the trend nationally. There is little difference in the performance of girls and boys in the tests. In GCSE the proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in the last three years has shown rapid improvement and in 2000 were in line with the national average, being 2 percentage points above. In the last two years the results obtained by boys were better than those for girls, and in 2000 boys' results were well above those of girls. At post-16 the results at A level are below national averages, although the number of students taking the course is small.
87. Although still below average at the end of Year 9, in years 7 to 9 the attention which is now given to numeracy provides a firm foundation for raising standards for all pupils. Standards of many pupils in number problems and calculations are still low in some respects, for example in calculations using decimal numbers and applying them to problems, although pupils demonstrate an understanding of place value when applied

to large numbers and to decimals. The benefits of the school's participation in national developments in numeracy are seen in the standards in mental calculation and the recall of number facts which are raising standards in Years 7 and 8. Algebraic skills are developed by all pupils. In a low attaining Y7 set pupils were looking for rules for continuing sequences of numbers and expressing their results in algebraic form. Higher attaining pupils show a sound understanding of probability, as in an experiment on scores obtained on two dice, and have the skills of manipulating fractions required in this topic. In year 9 many pupils have a sound understanding of number, algebra and geometry and apply their skills successfully in solving problems. By the end of the key stage all pupils have a satisfactory breadth of experience of mathematical activities and an appropriate range of skills to support the work of Key Stage 4.

88. In Years 10 and 11 pupils cover the full range of topics required for GCSE and the large majority of pupils are prepared for and take the examination. Pupils continue to extend their knowledge and skills in all areas of the mathematical curriculum. Higher attaining pupils are able to apply mathematics to harder problems, for example in identifying sequences based on quadratic expressions and in obtaining conditional probabilities for two and three events. Lower attaining pupils demonstrate knowledge and understanding of percentages in problems on percentage increase and VAT, and in identifying averages such as mean and median. Many pupils' skills in mental calculation and in number are below average but the attention given to the full range of the mathematical curriculum is having a beneficial effect on the standards attained in Key Stage 4, and standards overall are broadly average.
89. In the A level course students demonstrate, overall, sound knowledge and understanding of the mechanics module which is being taught this term. Higher attaining students have a satisfactory foundation of pure mathematical skills in algebra and trigonometry to support, for example, the work on moments of forces. Lower attaining pupils demonstrate weakness in the skills required for some of the more challenging problems.
90. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. When pupils enter the school the average standard in mathematics is low. At the end of the key stage pupils' performance is still below national averages but pupils make sound progress throughout the key stage. The department has worked to improve teaching styles and has re-drafted schemes of work taking into account recent national developments in numeracy and the full impact of these developments has still to be seen. The increased attention now given to mental arithmetic and the use of number in problems is also having a beneficial effect. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 4 is good and the proportion of pupils obtaining higher grades is now in line with national averages. Lower attaining pupils are well provided for in mathematics and also make good progress. In Years 10 and 11 the pace of the work is demanding and appropriate for maintaining the improved results seen in this key stage. In the A level course the attainment of students when they begin the course is, on average, low but they make sound progress and achievement is satisfactory.
91. The teaching in mathematics is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and are well qualified to teach the full range of the curriculum, including A level. In most lessons the planning, pace and organisation of the lesson are good, although in a few lessons more detailed planning would enable worksheets to be used more effectively and assessment objectives to be more clearly identified. Teaching includes practical activities as well as practising skills and developing mathematical knowledge. Many lessons begin with starter activities mainly concerned with number, such as 'Generating Numbers' and 'Multiplication Spiders'. These activities develop and extend basic skills and raise

pupils' interest. Computing facilities are available and used to support the teaching, and six computers are programmed for 'Success Maker' which is used to assist the teaching of basic skills to lower attaining pupils. Teaching aids are used, for example in projecting diagrams and geometrical transformations on a white board. Staff are strongly committed to the raising of pupils' standards, and attention has been given to extending the range of teaching styles. There are good examples of lessons in which pupil participation is encouraged, for example by using small cards held by pupils to demonstrate to the class ideas of place value and how 'function machines' use arithmetic and algebraic operations. In a few lessons further attention to developing pupils' own learning skills and the encouragement of independent learning would extend the opportunities for learning. The department is involved in the project 'transforming the Key Stage 3 curriculum' which has promoted discussion on lesson planning, the format of lessons, the national numeracy programme and primary school links. All these initiatives have been welcomed and have had a significant effect on the way mathematics teaching is developing in the school. Teachers recognise the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment. The pace of the work for higher attaining pupils is demanding particularly in the higher sets in Key Stage 4. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are well taught and experience a broad mathematical curriculum.

92. The leadership and management of the department are good. In the departmental development planning the priorities provide a realistic programme of development for the department. Areas in which action planning has had most impact are in the reviews of schemes of work for Key Stage 3, the new post-16 courses, including the key skills courses, and involvement in the 'transforming the Key Stage 3 curriculum' pilot project. Schemes of work are clearly laid down and the department has produced materials to supplement the work from textbooks. Pupil assessment procedures for work in lessons and homework are satisfactory and the information is used to guide the review and revision of work. Formal arrangements for testing modules of work at regular stages through the year, which would provide data to assist in the tracking of pupils and setting of targets, have still to be developed. Since the previous inspection there has been improvement in the monitoring of the work of the department. Teaching is monitored systematically through classroom observation. Procedures for monitoring the pace of delivery of the curriculum and the checking of pupils' workbooks are in place. The mathematics teachers are well qualified and suitably experienced for the range of courses offered.
93. Since the previous inspection mathematics provision has improved in a number of areas including the monitoring of the work of the department, developing resources, the use of ICT and introducing the National Numeracy Strategy. Areas for further development include further development of teaching styles, building on the work that has been done to raise standards and the success already achieved; the introduction of more formal pupil assessment after modules of work; extending the work already done on numeracy across the curriculum.

Numeracy across the curriculum

94. Standards in numeracy in the curriculum as a whole are below average. Attention is given in mathematics lessons to number and calculation skills and properties of number in lessons and the standards are improving. There is still much to be done to improve pupils' numeracy in the curriculum as a whole. Examples of good practice occur, for example, in geography where good use is made of graphs in illustrating temperature and rainfall. In science pupils learn to use a variety of measures and perform calculations appropriate to them. In art ideas of proportion and scaling up and down are developed. Spreadsheets are used effectively in a number of areas, for

example, in information and communications technology to model the finances of a musical production and a school tuckshop, although in an office applications lesson some students were restricted in their accurate use of spreadsheets by not being able to calculate averages. A number of approaches to cross-curricular numeracy have been initiated by the Key Skills Working Group. Effective work is being done, for example in a Key Skills Week, which focuses on increasing pupils' awareness of key skills across the curriculum, and through the 'transforming Key Stage 3 curriculum Project'.

SCIENCE

95. Standards of attainment in science are low. They are lower than at the time of the last inspection but similar to standards in years previously and years following. In 2000, at the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils' average point score, the percentage of pupils gaining level 5 or greater and level 6 or greater, was below the national average. The performance of pupils in comparison with similar schools was well below average. The results were similar to mathematics but not as good as English. There was little difference in standard between boys and girls.
96. At the end of Key Stage 4, in 2000, GCSE results for double award science based on average point score and grades A*-C, were below the national average and below the average for similar schools. There was little difference in results for boys and girls. Pupils studying for the certificate of achievement were successful with over half gaining a distinction. Nevertheless, standards overall are below average.
97. The GCSE A level results in 2000 were below the national average. The results are not as good as the last inspection.
98. The standard of work seen at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 during the inspection was in line with the results of the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests and GCSE examination results, that is, below average. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have acquired appropriate knowledge across all areas of the science curriculum, but levels of understanding vary, and for many pupils are below average. For example, whilst higher attaining pupils are able to plan and carry out investigations successfully, other pupils in Year 9 do not understand that an investigation into the clotting of milk is concerned with change of acidity, and this lack of understanding of the underlying concept limits the standards attained. By the age of 16, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding has increased, but is still below average. Their ability to explain more complex concepts is limited. For example, although most pupils' understanding of the effect of changing temperature is secure, some are unsure how surface area affects the rate of a reaction. Year 13 pupils were on study leave during the inspection and consequently it was not possible to observe lessons or look at work. In Year 12, whilst pupils are making progress and demonstrating higher levels of understanding, standards are still below average. For example, some pupils were having difficulty explaining some of the technical aspects of cell reproduction in biology, whilst others could not explain the concept of resistivity in a physics lessons.
99. Although standards are below average at both Key stages 3 and 4, and pupils' progress has been slow, current standards represent satisfactory levels of achievement. There is evidence of better progress and improving standards in Years 7 and 8. Year 7 pupils demonstrate good skills in investigative science, such as when they investigate how the change in the weight of a model car affects the stopping distance. They understand the requirements of a fair test and the need to obtain consistent results. Good standards were evident in a Year 8 class, when pupils were able to balance an equation written in symbols explaining burning magnesium in air.

They also make accurate observations on a series of experiments showing chemical change. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In one lesson, they were able to link the name of an organ to its position on a diagram although they could not explain the function of the organ without prompting. Standards of work in Key Stage 4 are below average, but understanding of basic ideas shows progress. For example, pupils could identify ammonium sulphate as a new product describing a chemical reaction and could distinguish between a physical change and a reversible chemical reaction. However, they were less secure when comparing covalent and ionic bonds, a more complex idea. Although standards are below average in the sixth form, they represent satisfactory achievements for the pupils concerned, given the standards they have attained on entry to Year 12. In one revision lesson on human biology observed, pupils were able to produce a diagram which showed the various elements of the course. However, they were less able to demonstrate the inter-relationships of the different sections or how they could be used to structure a response to an examination question.

100. Overall the quality of teaching is good. At Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 two thirds of the lessons were good or better. The teaching staff have maintained the high quality of teaching evident at the previous inspection. The teachers show a thorough knowledge of their subject and use technical terms and scientific vocabulary where appropriate. Explanations are clear, lesson plans are effective and the activities of the pupils managed well. Lessons are usually delivered at a brisk pace involving pupils with well-directed questions. For example, at Key Stage 4 pupils in year 10 measure accurately the length of a spring extended by the addition of increasing weight and plot a graph to show how the extension depends on the load. They investigate the elastic limit of a spring made from a length of copper wire. Pupils in Year 7 and 8 respond well showing an interest and a greater eagerness to learn than older pupils. A variety of teaching methods are used including effective use of video and information technology. The GCSE course work includes word-processed information and computer assisted data handling. Pupils in Year 12 extract information from the internet and produce presentations, which include visual demonstrations using the PowerPoint programme. The management and teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Differentiated material is used constructively and lessons are broken down into small units allowing pupils to learn at a relatively good rate. For example, a group of Year 11 pupils were encouraged by careful questioning to show their understanding of the digestive process. This was followed by practical work where food was burnt releasing energy to heat water. The marking of books is good but comments are not always acted upon by pupils, or followed up by teachers. Occasionally introductions are too long and time scales for lesson plans are unrealistic, and consequently the lesson objectives are not met. Assessment at the end of a lesson and at the conclusion of a unit of study is not linked to National Curriculum levels, reducing the effectiveness of the monitoring of pupils' progress.
101. The leadership of the department is satisfactory, although there are clear areas for development. Results have remained low since the last inspection, although the department has a target to raise standards by 0.5 National Curriculum levels per year. Action to raise standards has not had a clear enough focus within the department, and ensuring a comprehensive and shared view of how to raise standards and the necessary actions to be taken to bring this about needs to be an overriding priority. A thorough review of the curriculum for Key Stage 3 has begun as part of the national pilot for 'transforming the Key Stage 3 curriculum'. One of the reasons for low standards is that there is some unnecessary repetition between the science taught at primary school and Maryhill, and this needs to be addressed as part of this review, along with relevant consequences for the Key Stage 4 curriculum. A data base of test results has recently been set up, but its usefulness is limited by the fact that it does not

link with National Curriculum levels which means that the progress of individual pupils cannot be tracked closely enough and targets for improvement are not set. What pupils are expected to achieve is not yet built into all lesson plans explicitly enough. The system of setting enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress, but greater attention needs to be paid to more able pupils. The change to a modular course at GCSE and recent staffing changes are having a positive impact on standards. A single award science course has been introduced in an attempt to better meet the needs of some pupils. ICT is used well and is much improved since the last inspection. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The teaching staff is well deployed and technicians provide effective support; there is a good team spirit in the department.

ART

102. The National Curriculum assessment judgements made by teachers for pupils at the age of 14 in 2000 suggested that standards in art were well above the national average. In fact these judgements were inaccurate and overly generous. Standards for pupils aged 14 are in fact below average. The GCSE results gained by pupils at the age of 16 in 2000 have improved since the last inspection, but remain below the national average. Just over half of the pupils gained a pass between A* and C, with the girls being much more successful than the boys. Almost every pupil gained a pass between A* and G. Despite the results being below average, pupils performed better in art than in many of their other subjects. In the sixth form, the A level results were below the national average, although more than a third of the students gained high grades. Two students were entered for the GNVQ Intermediate examination and both gained a merit.
103. The work seen during the inspection indicates that by the age of 14 standards are currently close to national expectations. The children work with a range of materials and processes including drawing, painting, collage, printmaking and with clay and card in three dimensions, although they do not use computers to develop their art work often enough. While the work is bold and colourful, it lacks a personal quality because of the pupils' dependence on images taken from other artists, books or worksheets. There is insufficient use of sketchbooks to make a record of people, places and objects based on personal observation, which might then be used for reference or information. Pupils are unsure of how to look and draw, or in many cases, why they are drawing. Opportunities for personal research, experimentation and investigation are few, but on those few occasions, the pupils quickly respond. A Year 9 class was pleased to experiment when producing collages derived from a Picasso painting.
104. By the time the pupils reach the age of 16, however, standards have fallen to below the national average due, in great part, to their general reluctance to draw from observation. Many believe that personal research amounts to copying famous paintings from art books, although others make better use of artists' work. Good work included accomplished still-life paintings in an Impressionist style and a well executed composition in a range of materials based on carefully observed natural forms, plants and ropes. Too many pupils resort to copying. A class drawing doorways were working from books illustrating Egyptian, Italian, Japanese and Indian buildings, but there was no direct observation of local doorways. Similarly, Year 10 pupils demonstrated impressive printmaking skills but the subject matter was architectural detail taken from work-sheets, rather than the pupils' own observations of the world around them. Printmaking had almost become a technical exercise rather than a creative art form.

105. Similar weaknesses result in the work being produced by sixth form students to be below average. The students' inability to draw from observation and their failure to appreciate its necessity is preventing them being able to assess how well they are doing or how they might improve. They depend on their teacher for direction almost as much as they did lower down the school. The few exceptions are noticeable. A student had made use of careful drawings of seashells to produce highly original two and three-dimensional work in a range of media including machine-embroidery and collage. Another had taken photographs of a child and used them as the starting point for a range of well developed drawings and paintings, carrying them into sculptures of the child's limbs and facial features. The students' failure to read and research is preventing them developing the personal view of art and artists so necessary at this level.
106. Allowing for the varied and often limited experiences of art the pupils have had when they arrive in the school, their achievement at the age of 14 is good. However, achievement at the ages of 16 and 18 is only satisfactory, mainly due to pupils' limited skills of observation, investigation and experimentation. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress up to the age of 13 and satisfactory progress up to the age of 16, because of the care the teachers show for their pupils, even though they are not fully conversant with their particular needs.
107. Teaching and learning in the department is good overall, and is strongest in Years 7 to 11. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work, either individually or in groups, to improve their grasp of processes of printmaking, three-dimensional work and collage, prompting good levels of interest. A Year 10 class made particularly good progress after the methods of printmaking and care of materials was thoroughly explained and clearly demonstrated. Another class was keen to begin painting following a demonstration of the painting methods of Vincent van Gogh but they seized on a formulaic method of drawing a face rather than looking carefully at their classmates' faces, typifying their general reluctance to work from real life. The teachers make good use of subject-specific language, thus making a contribution to improving pupils' literacy. Their methods of circulating, assessing, encouraging and prompting pupils, both increases challenge and sustains the pace of the lessons. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive. Aside from small numbers of younger boys the attitudes of the pupils to their teachers, the subject, and materials, are good. There are occasions when the teachers' expectations of their pupils' and their pupils' expectations of themselves are lower than they might be. These occasions particularly relate to the lack of personal research, reluctance to employ active approaches to their artwork and keeping sketchbooks. Pupils' work does not reflect the local environment. The sixth form teaching observed was satisfactory, but the students' learning was not. The students' reluctance to conduct personal research is severely limiting their progress. Almost every student resisted their teacher's advice to increase the personal investigation in their work. Homework is not well enough designed or regularly enough set to allow all pupils to learn effectively.
108. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced but opportunities for pupils to work with ICT in Years 7 to 9 are too few and do not meet the National curriculum requirements. Critical studies require further development, so that pupils gain a better understanding of the work of artists and designers rather than merely copying their work. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 lack standardisation and the information gathered from the general assessment of pupils' work is not used to identify curriculum weaknesses or the needs of particular pupils. One of the teachers is a member of a national scheme to examine teaching and learning and she is engaged in designing new methods for improving the evaluation of the pupils' progress.

109. Management of the department is satisfactory with the head of department providing clear direction for staff and pupils alike. The quality of teaching is monitored according to school guidelines but strategic planning for the short, medium and long term development of the subject lacks details of resources necessary to implement the plans. Teachers are not always deployed to their maximum advantage and training is needed to improve non-specialist teaching. The accommodation and use of available learning resources are both satisfactory although there is an acute shortage of storage space. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' standards, as measured by the teachers' assessments in the year 2000, were below standards nationally. Girls do better than boys and this has been a feature for a number of years. There is little difference in the attainment of pupils across the different areas of technology studied. The standards of the present year 9 pupils, although still below average, are closer to the national average than in previous years, and some pupils are developing a talent for the subject. The improvements are mainly because of the positive impact of more time allocated to the subject and improved curriculum planning. These standards, although below average, represent good achievement for pupils. Their attainment in technology is below average when they come to school in Year 7, when they have difficulty measuring and drawing accurately and they lack practice with tools and equipment. They make very steady progress in both designing and making skills using a range of materials, including wood, metal, textiles and food. Whilst making a box for a 'maze', pupils could use tools correctly and were careful and accurate in their use of a tenon saw. Pupils develop satisfactory skills in the techniques of soldering electronic components. They have good ICT skills in word processing and graphics. Their use of ICT in computer aided design, however, is less good, and initial designs are not always developed into full working drawings. In a Year 9 textiles lesson, for example, some pupils had difficulty in transferring their initial design for a cap logo into a successful stencil. Some engineering skills are not well developed. The design of a balancing toy saw few extended metalworking techniques being used.
111. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results in 2000 were below the national average, and slightly below the average performance of other subjects in the school. Girls mainly chose to study food technology and they performed better than boys, who mainly chose resistant materials and graphics. The standard of work of current Year 11 pupils is higher than the standards indicated by results in the previous two years, although is still below average. This is mainly due to a revision of the curriculum at Key Stage 4. A relatively unsuccessful electronics course was ended because pupils, especially those with lower attainment, found the mathematics required for circuit design too difficult. There has also been some refurbishment of the accommodation and there is greater use of ICT. Graphics work in particular has improved due to better use of ICT. Impressive standards of work on game design and flight simulation were seen. In one case a pupil had made a number of very realistic 3D figures with moving limbs. A flight simulator had mechanisms which allowed for the control of a model aircraft in 3 dimensions. Standards in food technology are generally good, with coursework grades in line with projected grades for pupils. Good practical skills were evident in work made on the theme of 'snack foods'. In resistant materials, standards are good in making, but designs lack complexity. Electronics, engineering and plastics are not integrated into design sufficiently, although educational toys being made in Key stage 4 were functional, strongly made and finished attractively and well. These standards represent good achievement for pupils, and they are now making good progress in DT from the ages of 14 to 16. Practical skills are satisfactory overall, although they finish their products to a higher standard. Drawing skills are good in

showing the development of simple ideas, but are not yet sophisticated enough to show more complex and integrated designs. Pupils' other presentation skills are not strong but are improving, due to a greater attention to literacy, with, for example lists of subject specific words on display and the use of word processing. Pupils' research skills are developing satisfactorily. They use the Internet to research their GCSE projects. Pupils with special educational needs are also making good progress. For example, they are able to use their prior knowledge to create simple but high quality designs for an educational toy. Pupils' use of ICT in their DT work has developed well, although its use in computer aided design remains a weakness. Some use of control technology was seen in electronics in the production of a burglar alarm, but generally is little used. New resources have been ordered to enable this area of work to be developed.

112. The standards attained by students in the sixth form are below standards nationally, but generally in line with the standards predicted for the students concerned. No Maryhill students were present during the period of inspection, and there was little work available for scrutiny. It is therefore not possible to give a judgement on current standards in the sixth form.
113. Teaching is good overall, with 80% of lessons observed being good or better, and no unsatisfactory teaching taking place. The main strengths are in lesson planning and the knowledge teachers have about their pupils. Lessons are planned to provide good progression in learning, with objectives for each lesson clearly identified for pupils. Time is used well in lessons, with a good pace maintained and teachers encourage pupils to work with a sense of purpose. This is particularly evident in practical sessions. In food lessons, for example, lessons are carefully timed to the minute to enable pupils to complete practical work and carry out assessments. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall, and they use their theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to give clear explanations and demonstrations to pupils. In a sixth form lesson, for example, a teacher was seen giving expert advice, informed by experience in industry, on how visual communication is used in health and safety. This aspect is occasionally less good when teachers teach outside their specialism. The good teaching is resulting in good learning for pupils. Pupils work hard and try to do what is asked of them. They are motivated and enjoy the subject, taking a pride in their finished products. However, a weakness is that some are very dependent on the teacher, following their suggestions closely, rather than employing individual and creative thought. Many lack confidence to answer questions or volunteer information in class, and teachers do not always demand longer responses or require pupils to explain an answer. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive. Teachers know their pupils well, and on-going assessment is generally effective, especially in Key Stage 4. All pupils know what GCSE grade they are working at and this acts as a considerable stimulus. Key Stage 3 pupils are not so sure about the national curriculum level they are working at, and, although the school assessment system is in use and understood by pupils, this does not provide them with specific enough feedback on the strengths of their work and what they need to do to improve. Teachers give pupils positive feedback in class as to how well they are doing, although this is not always specific enough in the marking of work. Teachers give good attention to meeting the needs of pupils with SEN by devising individual target sheets for them based on information supplied by the SEN department.
114. There is a very thorough and detailed scheme of work in Key Stage 3 although there is some lack of balance between the wood and metal skills taught. This shows itself in the projects designed by pupils in Key Stage 4 where there is a predominance of designs in wood, some with no metalworking techniques incorporated. The coverage of control technology and electronics is just sufficient but an inadequate number of

electrical sockets in the room used for electronics inhibit its development. The assessment scheme used in the department is partly based on the whole school assessment scheme and partly the department's own. There is some confusion and overlap between the two. The school's scheme is too blunt a tool to provide the level of detail that teachers need to make precise and accurate judgements about pupils' attainment in relation to National curriculum levels and GCSE grades. Displays of pupils' work are satisfactory but some of the best pieces are locked away and opportunities to use pupils' work to inform others about what is considered to be good practice and why, are missed.

115. An experienced and dedicated teacher manages the department. He is well supported by the teachers in the department and they make an effective and cohesive team. There is some good support from the technicians although their effectiveness is limited by the low time allocated to them. Health and safety documentation is thorough. Accommodation is adequate but some rooms are used for more than one subject area and this has a negative impact on learning. There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

116. Standards in geography are below average on entry. They improve steadily but are still below the national average at the end of Key Stage 3, as indicated by the 2000 National Curriculum assessment results and by work seen during the inspection. By the end of Year 9, pupils have acquired sound levels of geographical knowledge and understanding, but the application of geographical skills is less good. For example, pupils of below average attainment in Year 9 experience some difficulties in using maps to gather data on a shopping precinct in Kidsgrove. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 show good research skills in gathering information about aspects of life in North America and sharing their knowledge in collaborative group work.
117. GCSE results in geography in 2000 at grades A* to C were well below the national average and considerably lower than the results for 1999. These results, however, were slightly better than the same candidates achieved in other subjects and better than predictions based on standardised test results. A higher attaining group of pupils are taking geography in Year 11 this year, and current standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with those found nationally. Pupils have acquired sound levels of geographical knowledge and related understanding. Pupils of average attainment, for example, can give clear explanations of the impact of economic development on the natural environment in Amazonia. Higher attaining pupils can extend their answers to cover the longer-term implications for global warming. Lower attaining pupils can give examples of countries at different stages of economic development but their explanations of the differences lack depth and insight. For several years results in geography at GCSE have approached or exceeded the national average. Standards seen in the inspection and standardised tests predict a return to these levels.
118. 'A' level results were also below national averages in 2000, but, as with GCSE, have exceeded test predictions for the past four years. Current standards are also below average, but in line with the predictions for the pupils concerned. In the sixth form students revise map-reading skills developed in earlier key stages. Higher attaining students plot co-ordinates with ease but lower attaining students experience some difficulties with 6-figure map references.
119. These standards represent good levels of achievement for pupils, and they make good progress as they move through the school. At the start of Key Stage 3 there is an emphasis on learning the basic geographical skills of atlas and map work and this lays

the foundations for good progress to be made through the key stages. This skill development is further supported by a framework of practical field studies both in the immediate vicinity of the school and further afield in the Peak District and North Wales. In all key stages and in the sixth form pupils and students with special educational needs make good progress in their lessons through the targeted support of the teachers who have a good knowledge of their pupils and their requirements. The standards attained by the current Year 7 pupils on entry to the school are higher than they have been previously; higher attaining pupils in Year 7, for example, can use maps of different scales to describe a walk in the local town centre. This suggests that standards should improve in the future.

120. The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages and in the sixth form. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject. In a lesson with Year 10 pupils looking at employment in the local area, the teacher displayed very strong knowledge of the subject matter, and combined this with extremely detailed knowledge of examination requirements to ensure that pupils were getting a good understanding of the concepts being studied. Teachers also organise the pupils and their work well. Lesson plans are detailed with clear objectives, which are made explicit to pupils. The pace of lessons can vary at times but is usually brisk and purposeful. There is often a good degree of challenge given to pupils. In a lesson with Year 7 pupils preparing them for fieldwork, the teacher used very good resources, including ICT, to capture the pupils' interest and gave them a task which motivated them and deepened their understanding of the use of maps. Pupils respond well to their teachers. Though occasionally their concentration can waiver, pupils apply themselves well to the work in hand and maintain their efforts to the close of the lesson. They are well behaved, quiet and attentive and respond eagerly to questions.
121. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. The curriculum is well structured and meets all National Curriculum requirements. The use of information and communication technology is strong, both in teaching, and by pupils, to add to the quality and precision of the presentation of their work. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' numeracy development through use of scale, compass work and variety of graphical forms of data presentation.
122. The system for grading pupils' work is effective only as a marking scheme for homework and classwork and does not give a clear picture of pupils' progress and attainment. In practice its use across the department is inconsistent. Teachers do know how well pupils are achieving but this knowledge lacks the precision which would allow clear targets to be set for pupils' further progress.
123. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution overall to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Some aspects of this work are good. For example, Year 10 pupils understand well the moral and social problems to be found in National Parks in danger from the very tourists for whom they were created. They also write moving accounts of life in a deprived area of Latin American.
124. There is strong and clear leadership of the department. Teachers' work is well monitored. Resources, though not abundant, are well managed and deployed and there is a climate of purposeful progress. The previous report contained few recommendations for improvement, all of which have received attention within the normal constraints of time and money. Teaching is good and standards of achievement are above the school average. There has been good progress since the last inspection.

HISTORY

125. Standards achieved by pupils at the age of 14 are below those expected of pupils of a similar age, based on evidence from the inspection. Teacher assessments for these pupils, and for pupils aged 14 in 2000, suggest that pupils achieve above the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that these assessments are overly generous. The results of the GCSE examinations in 2000 indicate that standards are well below the national average. The proportion gaining higher grades in particular is low, but all pupils gained a grade, which compares favourably with national figures. About a third of the pupils studying history at age 16 are not entered for GCSE, and instead, attain a certificate of achievement. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards achieved by pupils currently at the age of 16 are well below those expected nationally, but it is a lower attaining group of pupils taking the subject. Standards achieved in the sixth form are below the national average, but in line with expectations for the students concerned, although the number of students is small. Standards, at 14 and 16, are now not as high as they were at the last inspection.
126. The achievement made by pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with standards below those expected nationally and these remain below by Year 9. Pupils steadily acquire historical knowledge and understanding. In Year 7 pupils know how the medieval church was organised. They understand the importance of the church in everyday village and town life. Pupils study the contribution made by monks in the medieval community. They carry out research into the everyday life of a medieval monk. In Year 8 pupils know about the execution of Charles I and understand some of the reasons why he was executed. Pupils take part in a role-play to gain a better understanding of how the personality of Charles I did not help his case with Parliament. In Year 9 pupils investigate trench warfare in the First World War. They understand that attitudes to the war changed between 1914 and 1916. They record their knowledge in "a soldiers diary". By the age of 14 pupils are not confident in interpreting historical evidence and using chronology. Reading, writing and skills associated with ICT are insufficiently developed. This limits the effectiveness of the research skills of the pupils. Pupils do not become independent learners. The presentation of pupils' work is satisfactory. The achievement made by pupils with special educational needs is good.
127. There is a similar satisfactory pattern of achievement in Years 10-11. However, the number of pupils opting for the subject at the age of fourteen has dropped over the last two years and lower attaining pupils tend to choose the subject. Pupils further develop their knowledge and understanding. In Year 10 pupils understand some of the reasons why Britain went to war with Germany in 1939. They explain the importance of these reasons and are beginning to analyse their comparative importance. In Year 11 pupils recognise how aspects of German foreign policy led to the outbreak of war in 1939. They can link causes of the Second World War but are unable to assess the relative importance of those causes. About a third of the pupils who choose history, study for the certificate of achievement. These pupils develop their social as well as their literacy skills. By the age of 16, they are beginning to produce structured writing at length. These pupils, mainly with special educational learning needs, make good progress.
128. The small number of students who chose A level, there are currently three in Year 13 and none in Year 12, achieve according to expectations. They make good progress. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

129. Teaching overall is satisfactory, and is good in almost one third of the lessons, mainly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Good relationships exist between teachers and their pupils. This means that pupils learn in quiet orderly classrooms. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this contributes to the pleasant atmospheres in most classes. In lessons where the knowledge of the teacher is good, especially in the sixth form, pupils are challenged and their achievement is greater. Where teachers structure activities to involve pupils in their learning, pupils respond well and enjoy their learning. In a Year 8 lesson, on aspects of the character of Charles 1 for example, the teacher used probing questioning to elicit a good response from pupils, and then ensured that their understanding was developed further through active participation in role-play. Individual plans are sufficient to guide the lessons and ensure that pupils make progress in their learning. Long term curriculum planning for pupils in Year 7 to 9, however, is not sufficiently directed to raising standard. The content of topics is specified but not how they will be taught to ensure the steady progression in the development of pupils' historical knowledge, understanding and skills. This leads to expectations of pupils being too low. The longer term planning does not ensure that pupils develop their understanding of chronology and skills of interpretation of evidence systematically enough. Planning for the use of ICT to improve pupils' historical knowledge and skills is not well enough developed. Teachers assess the standards pupils are achieving, but the information gained is not shared with pupils fully enough, and this limits the extent to which it can be used to promote improvement. The teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs is good. Classroom assistants know their pupils and support them in their learning. They make sure, with the teachers, that all pupils are fully included in the lessons. Overall, teaching is not as strong as at the previous inspection.
130. The management of the subject is satisfactory. A new head of department has been appointed recently, and action has already been taken to raise standards, such as the introduction of extra revision classes for Year 11 pupils. Visits to places of interest are organised to support and help pupils of all ages in their learning and help to develop their interest in the subject. However, there has not yet been the time for the new head of department to have had a significant impact on raising standards. Areas for development include improving the quality of planning, especially for pupils in Year 7 to 9, so that the standards expected of pupils are clearly identified, along with how pupils' historical knowledge, understanding and skill will be developed, and this needs to be used in lesson planning. The accuracy of assessment judgements needs to be improved, and the information gained needs to be used fully, including sharing it with pupils, in order to promote improvement. Resources are satisfactory, but there are areas in which they could be improved. These include more books for pupils and changing the organisation of resources to make them more accessible, including, for example, the better siting of computers and overhead projector screens. Overall, given that standards are now lower, there has not been sufficient improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

131. Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. In teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 the number of pupils reaching level 5 and above in 2000 was above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A*-C in 2000 was above the national average. Of the small number of pupils following GNVQ courses at intermediate level, most gained merit grades. This represents a significant rise in standards, particularly for GCSE, over the last three years. This places the department as the highest performing subject in the school. The good quality of teaching and the more relevant courses now being provided for pupils are the most significant reasons for improvement.

132. In work seen, standards of attainment are above average in Year 9. Pupils use computers confidently and competently when they use pictures and graphics to add visual effects, for instance to promotional materials when they plan an event. By using appropriate font size and styles they make it easy for the reader to see what publications are about. When they give presentations about the effects of smoking they use computer programs which enable them to show moving images which have greater impact on the audience. They demonstrate good knowledge of spreadsheets and databases when they use them to model costs of an event and to sort and search for information. Pupils use the Internet efficiently to research projects and by reading and making notes they improve their literacy skills.
133. In work seen in Year 11, standards of attainment are above average. Pupils understand the principles of using databases and spreadsheets and use them for more complex tasks such as predicting and analysing car sales over a three month period. They present their work clearly showing a good standard of desktop publishing which they use effectively in ICT. Because they have gained the skills and knowledge in Years 7 to 9, they are able to present their coursework projects for other subjects. For example, they present results of surveys and investigations as charts and graphs and they illustrate their work in English with relevant graphics. They recognise and use the Internet as an alternative source of information to books to research their projects. They understand the need for data protection when using the Internet and are aware of moral issues surrounding these.
134. In the sixth form, students reach good standards when they follow GNVQ courses at intermediate level. They are very confident users of computers and understand the principles of control systems. For example, they design and test a house burglar alarm system using relevant symbols to design the circuit and model equipment to test it. They set out documents to write reports clearly and appropriately and have a good understanding of using the Internet for research purposes.
135. Pupils make good progress throughout the school because they are highly motivated and well behaved in lessons. They follow guidance from the teacher and are interested and take pride in their work. Very occasionally, when pupils talk too much in lessons, this restricts their progress. Pupils with special educational need make very good progress because their special educational needs are well known to teachers who provide appropriate support and guidance for them. The special educational needs co-ordinator is highly effective in providing additional support for pupils. Their progress is monitored closely when they use computers to develop skills in literacy and numeracy.
136. Achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9. Pupils enter the school with variable experience of using computers but mostly with below average skills and knowledge. They quickly grasp the principles of using computers to present information and they take great delight in learning to give presentations on theme parks with moving images. Through well structured courses and well planned lessons, pupils become confident users of ICT and progress to standards which are above average. Because they are expected to think for themselves, pupils learn to solve problems and to explore the potential of computers to work creatively.
137. Achievement is good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils start year 10 with good skills and knowledge and build on these to maintain good standards both in examinations and, for those not following examination courses in ICT, to use computers effectively to support their study in other subjects.

138. Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students continue to improve their skills and knowledge of using computers to present information. They make significant progress in control technology because the department now has better resources for students to gain practical experience. They learn to understand the principles of feedback when they design alarm systems and they increase their problem solving skills.
139. The quality of teaching is good overall. In almost half the lessons seen it was good, In just under half it was very good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers plan relevant and interesting lessons which quickly engage the attention of pupils. Tasks are very clearly explained so that pupils are able to work confidently and independently for most of the time. When pupils need help during practical sessions, teachers encourage them to think for themselves and guide them towards solutions rather than 'spoon feeding' answers. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils efforts and attainment and, because work is well targeted to the individual needs of pupils, all pupils, including those with special educational needs are able to complete work successfully. Specialist teachers of ICT have very good subject knowledge and teachers of other subjects have at least adequate subject knowledge and the good teaching skills they demonstrate are effective in helping pupils build skills and knowledge in their subjects. The quality of ICT teaching in other subjects was good. Teachers support the development of literacy and numeracy in ICT lessons when they require pupils to synthesise information and take notes from information obtained from the Internet and when they perform calculations and present statistical information as graphs and charts. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and encourage the cooperation of pupils.
140. The co-ordinator for ICT provides clear direction for the subject and there has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have risen and the quality of teaching is better. Teachers and pupils have more access to better quality resources. The newly acquired control equipment is already having a positive impact on pupils' understanding and experience of this aspect of the subject. The technician makes a good contribution to the smooth running of the department and is helpful in supporting non-specialist teachers during lessons. The two main areas for development in the subject are to link assessment more with national curriculum levels and to monitor the individual progress of pupils more closely both in specialist lessons and across the curriculum.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

141. Overall the attainment of 14-year-old pupils in French in 2000 was well below the level expected nationally. Girls performed better than boys, and the gap between the genders was slightly narrower than the national gap. This represents a decline overall in performance in this age group from 1999, although the gap between boys' and girls' performance has been narrowed. The work of 14 year olds seen during the inspection indicate that standards have improved, but are still below average. Although there is coverage of the knowledge required to meet national expectations, the crowded nature of the scheme of work for 14 year olds means that there is not sufficient consolidation of the key language. Pupils can refer to past events, they can understand longer passages made up of familiar language, they can participate in structured conversations of three or four exchanges, and they can write paragraphs of three or four individual sentences. They can adapt a model by substituting individual words or set phrases. However, they often lack strategies for committing language to memory, which means that they need a lot of support in order to produce extended spoken or written language. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress due to the fact that teachers have good individual education plans available to them, and set realistic and achievable targets for these pupils. A small number of pupils in

the 11-14 age range study German as a second foreign language. Standards in work seen are satisfactory and attainment is in line with expectations, given the later start to study. Pupils can participate in short conversations and understand short passages. They cannot yet refer to past and future events.

142. The attainment of 16-year-old pupils in French in 2000 was also well below national standards, and once again girls outperformed boys. While the overall trend over the last three years has been one of steady improvement, this has to be seen in the context of very low levels of attainment to begin with. Since 1998, levels of attainment have more than doubled, but still remain well below levels achieved nationally. There have been some significant fluctuations in the performance of boys and girls, with the more extreme swings in performance coming from the boys. There are several reasons for these levels of performance. In 1998 staffing problems in the department led to widespread disaffection, notably among boys who failed to record a single grade above D at GCSE in that year. The lack of consolidation of key language in Year 9 puts pupils at a disadvantage as they start their GCSE course. The tracking of pupil performance and the use of day-to-day assessment to inform planning and subsequent teaching lack a sharp focus on raising levels of attainment. The staffing problems still exist. This means that there is a lack of continuity for pupils and an added burden on staff in terms of supporting supply teachers and setting relevant and appropriate work for those classes where there is no specialist teacher available. This is affecting the rate at which improvement is happening. Standards of work seen during the inspection show some improvement on those earlier, but are still below average. While the scheme of work allows for pupils to have appropriate opportunities to reach the levels required to achieve grade C and above, there is insufficient opportunity to practise and consolidate the key language, so that although pupils can, with support, refer to past, present and future events, communication is sometimes disjointed, and they lack the refinement and precision required to reach the higher levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in this age group as well, for the same reasons.
143. In the sixth form, standards in French were below the national average in 2000. Current standards are also below average. Students' ability to converse and write independently in French is limited by their lack of knowledge of the language. Understanding is limited by a lack of breadth of vocabulary.
144. Despite the low standards attained by pupils throughout the school, there have been improvements recently, and current levels of achievement are satisfactory overall. Pupils' progress is still being adversely affected by the staffing difficulties, however.
145. Teaching of French and German in the department is satisfactory. A quarter of lessons were good, and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Features of the good lessons included the sharing with pupils of learning objectives; the insistence on the use of the target language by the teacher, both for practice and classroom management, which gives pupils a good model to imitate and establishes high expectations; a planned variety of activity which covers all four language skills; energetic presentation of new language which keeps all pupils engaged, and good use of time. Occasionally some lessons tend to be too teacher directed, and opportunities are sometimes missed to allow pupils to interact more with each other. Pupils respond well in individual exchanges and in chorus work. Attitudes are largely positive and pupils behave well in lessons. There are good relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers founded on mutual respect. This contributes positively to learning.

146. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The department provides well for the social and cultural development of pupils, with the French choir, trips to France, Europe Day and the Year 7 French speaking competition. A high standard of display work in communal areas ensures that the department maintains a high profile in the school, and the continuing support of senior management in this area is a critical aspect in helping to counter the slight culture of resistance to French among pupils.
147. The basic department documentation is in satisfactory order, but there is a lack of greater detail and exemplification in some areas. No portfolio of pieces of pupils' work exists to inform teachers' judgements about levels achieved. There is no mechanism for pupils to assess their own performance, and there is a lack of advice on how to use the results of assessment to inform subsequent planning and teaching. Marking policy follows that laid down by the school and is shared with pupils, although it is not always consistently applied. Schemes of work are generally appropriately pitched and sequenced, although the scheme for Year 9 is too crowded and ambitious in its content. There are no references to National Curriculum levels and there are no overt links made to specific tasks in the course materials for the purposes of day-to-day assessment, no references to ICT opportunities nor the contribution the subject makes to pupils' levels of literacy and numeracy. Priorities for development are appropriate, although the department development plan sometimes lacks clear timescales for review and evaluation.
148. The department is well led by a sound classroom practitioner who has a clear vision for the direction of the subject. The development of the department has been restricted by the staffing situation which has meant that a lot of time has been spent on day-to-day issues of managing cover for classes and dealing with non-specialist teachers. Staff have been distracted by the situation from their core activities. There is a shared commitment to improvement, and the department has the capacity to succeed given a stable staffing situation. The use of new technology is currently underdeveloped, as the hardware has only recently been installed. Accommodation and resources are generally adequate, although library provision lacks variety. For example, there are no magazines or CD ROMs available to support independent reading.
149. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, although the rate at which improvement is happening has been restricted by instability in staffing. Areas for development include improving assessment, improving the Year 9 scheme of work, and developing teaching styles which promote the more active involvement of boys.

MUSIC

150. The national curriculum assessments made by teachers for pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 showed standards to be below average. Currently, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is also below average overall. The standards achieved by pupils at Key Stage 3 are often variable in composing and appraising. Performing is stronger with some pupils able to play and improvise music at a level slightly above what might be expected. In one Year 9 lesson on blues, pupils readily improvised above a bass pattern with some achieving complex levels of rhythmic fluency. In relation to pupils' attainment on entry, which is below average, progress across the key stage is satisfactory and the standards represent satisfactory levels of achievement. Achievement by pupils with special educational needs is below average, mainly due to the limitations imposed by their generally low levels of literacy. At the end of Key Stage 3 all pupils are able to use electronic keyboards and classroom instruments with some competence, for both performance and composition. Pupils build on their keyboard and instrumental skills. Singing is well used and attainment in singing is often at least

average. Appraising skills are below average. Overall, this concurs with the department's view of standards.

151. The most recent GCSE examinations in Music were in 1999 when results were slightly above the national average with 69% of the small number of candidates gaining grades A-C. There were no significant gender differences. Since the last inspection, results have varied from year to year, along with the size of groups. There were no candidates in 2000.
152. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is near average in performing. Composing is a little below average and appraising music well below average. Standards overall, therefore are below average. Few Key Stage 4 pupils use computers for musical tasks. The achievement in aural and appraisal work of lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 is poor. This is due to insufficient emphasis on basic literacy, particularly in relation to the acquisition of music-related language. A greater emphasis on language is necessary to enable pupils to develop a suitable technical vocabulary with which to describe the music they hear. This weakness in appraising and analysing music was also referred to in the previous report. In Year 11, pupils' compositions display some competence in work derived mainly from classroom projects. Compositions often use basic chord patterns and lack developmental aspects. Formulaic composition was also mentioned in the previous report. However, when individual pupils support composition with their own instrumental skills and develop individual enthusiasms, the results are often good. This leads to satisfactory progress across the key stage for many and achievements overall are satisfactory. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is variable. This, in part, is because some lack fluency in technical and descriptive language.
153. There are no students taking music in the sixth form at the moment, and there were none last year, and hence no comment can be made on standards.
154. Teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good overall. There are significant elements of good practice, for example the emphasis on singing and keyboard work. Teacher knowledge and expertise are good; keyboard and other musical skills are used to advantage in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. Work is usually well matched to pupils' abilities and teaching helps pupils to expand and consolidate their learning. Computer work, although something of an optional activity and underused, has good potential to improve. There is effective lesson planning and classroom logistics. Teaching embodies good preparation, suitable teaching styles, a range of interesting work and sound organisation. The balance of work is generally satisfactory, although non-melodic aspects of composition are introduced at a later stage than usual. Teaching ensures that pupils have opportunities to explore both their own culture and non-western cultures, for example in a Year 9 project on African music. However, there are few current opportunities for pupils to use ICT appropriately in Key Stage 3 and 4.
155. Pupils' attitudes in music lessons are at least satisfactory, often good. They respond well to challenging work. They are attentive, with appropriate levels of interest, co-operation and behaviour. Pupils often work well individually and with enthusiasm in small groups. At Key Stage 3 they co-operate in performance lessons and are enthusiastic in performing tasks. In a Year 9 keyboard-composition lesson pupils listened attentively to the contributions of others. Pupils clearly enjoy playing their compositions and respond by listening carefully to the compositions of others. However, independent learning skills are underdeveloped. Pupils are not always confident when answering questions and sometimes lack self-assurance in performing.

156. Assessment is up to date. Strategies designed for day-to-day assessment are in place and are being refined. There is teacher awareness of examination performance across the components of performing, composing and appraising at GCSE. The department undertakes a thorough systematic analysis of attainment by component. However, this information is not always successfully transferred to promote changes in teaching strategies or the curriculum in order to improve weak areas. When this is done, for example when special needs pupils are supported with work to reinforce classroom tasks, there is a positive effect on learning.
157. Instrumental teaching is sound, sometimes good. The 3 visiting instrumental teachers make some contribution to the curriculum and their work is carefully managed and integrated into the work of the department. However, fewer pupils than usual are involved in instrumental lessons and the range of instruments available is limited. Pupils who take instrumental lessons are able to take grade examinations and have a history of success that is recorded by the department.
158. There is a modest range of extra-curricular activity. Key Stage 3 pupils enthusiastically commit time and effort to the choir and instrumental groups. There are performances and regular large-scale school productions. The performing work of pupils is appropriately celebrated in the school and in the community, within a regular calendar of musical events. Such opportunities for performance have a strong impact on the cultural and social development of pupils; they also do much for the ethos of the school.
159. The department has sound organisation with many administrative processes in place. Schemes of work are detailed and the work offered to pupils meets the requirements of the National Curriculum with the exception of necessary computer skills at both Key Stages. Leadership of the department has a positive impact on performance. Administrative processes for assessment and analysis are in place. In addition, the carefully designed workbooks made by the department for each year group are advantageous to the monitoring, assessing and recording of attainment. Management of the environment is satisfactory. The department has instrumental stocks and information technology resources that are below average. Some ICT equipment is old and does not work. Accommodation is just adequate and is suitable for most musical activities though occasionally cramped, as some classes are large.
160. There has been unsatisfactory progress in relation to some of the more important points in the last inspection. Analysis and appraisal skills, together with levels of invention in composition, still require improvement. The department should now ensure that appropriate use is made of its good practice in assessment analysis to inform the curriculum and teaching. This should lead to the development of targets to improve attainment in composing and aural analysis. The department should continue the development of ICT use at both key stages, with appropriate updating of computer equipment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

161. The assessments made by teachers of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2000 showed standards to be average. The standards attained by pupils currently at the end of Year 9 are also average, in that they meet National Curriculum expectations. Standards are particularly good in physical skills and the development of tactics. Year 9 pupils in rounders are able to ask questions which point up further thinking in tactics. By the end of Year 9, pupils are attaining above average standards in rounders and fitness activities, throwing and catching well. Extra curricular basketball at this stage features high standards of final passing to team members so enabling accurate

shooting. A generally strong feature of PE in Key Stage 3 is that as a result of previous sequences of learning, pupils know what it is they should be doing.

162. There are no GCSE results for PE at Key Stage 4 in 2000, as the first group to take this examination do so in 2001. The work of this group, as seen in lessons, course work and other written work, indicates that it meets with the expectations of the course, showing average standards. Pupils have a sound theoretical grasp of the different elements of the course, as well as having developed appropriate practical skills. In Year 10 fitness and training circuits, pupils have sound basic knowledge of the standards of exercise required. This enables them to collate activities and work successfully, so producing and evaluating their own improvement in each lesson and over time. Standards in PE are also average for the other pupils in the current Year 11, who are not taking a GCSE in the subject. They meet the expected levels in a range of physical activities, having a sound, and sometimes better grasp of skills overall, and an above average level of tactical skill in basketball. Whereas in rounders, catching and throwing are around expected levels, in basketball, passing, shooting and setting up sequences of movement are higher.
163. No Maryhill students are currently taking PE A level in the sixth form. As there have only been two students taking the examination in the previous two years, it is not possible to make a meaningful judgement on standards.
164. Pupils' achievement in PE is good, and they make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils' attainment in PE is average when they enter in Year 7. From the ages of 7 to 9 they acquire good knowledge of the requirements of different physical activities and the rules of team games, and can apply this knowledge to make gains in their practical skills and performance. For example, in a lesson on shot putting with Year 8 pupils, almost all made gains in the distance they threw. They build on this knowledge and understanding throughout Years 10 and 11, and as a result their practical skills continue to develop well. For example, pupils improved their skills of technique and fitness very well indeed in a lesson on circuit training, with a notable feature being the extent to which they were able to take responsibility for measuring their own performance and improvement. Pupils of all abilities make similar degrees of progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, supported by careful observation and effective support from teachers in lessons. Higher attaining pupils also make good progress, and participation in extra-curricular activities gives them the opportunity to perform to a high level. There is no difference in the achievements of girls and boys.
165. All teaching of PE is at least good, and in half of the lessons observed it was very good, with one excellent lesson seen. This high quality teaching is a very strong feature of the department, and, coupled with pupils' very positive motivation and behaviour results in good learning taking place in the subject. Teachers have very good subject expertise and they manage learning very well. All lessons have very clear plans for learning and the use of time. They expect the highest standards from themselves and their pupils. For example, in an excellent lesson involving the pupils in a fitness and training programme, the teacher inter-weaved elements of theory and practical guidance and set up an activity that totally motivated the pupils to try of their very best, and resulted in high levels of success. There is always great challenge to pupils to work hard, and teachers strongly support individuals within lessons. In a very good rounders lesson, for example, the teacher, after a clear introduction and demonstration of a relatively difficult skill, ensured that the task set was carefully graduated in order to enable all pupils to experience success and make good progress. Pupils make a good contribution to their own learning, through their positive attitudes to the subject, the way in which they listen to the teachers and always

concentrate well. In Year 11 table tennis, assisted by observant and supportive coaching, pupils concentrated hard and made progress in thinking through and producing accurate winning shots.

166. There are a number of areas to develop in the teaching. There is insufficient sharing of assessment criteria and teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in individual lessons and activities, and target setting is not used well enough. Marking and recording of performance are not always set against national curriculum criteria or against examination grade levels and so standards being attained are not always clear to pupils or parents. There is no use of information and communication technology to record attainment and progress, making the sharing of information and targets with pupils and parents harder.
167. Work since the last inspection has ensured the curriculum fully meets National Curriculum and examination board requirements. Regular review of the curriculum takes place, although it is not informed by detail gained from assessment of pupils. There is still no dance in the curriculum although it does feature in school performances. There is an optional activities afternoon for students in the sixth form. At present no students opt in to it, however, so there is no timetabled recreational physical activity for students in Years 12 and 13, which is a weakness. There are good extra curricular activities for pupils in Years 7 to 11, with over 100 pupils regularly participating. This is a positive feature of the curriculum and provides opportunities for enjoyment and success for those pupils involved.
168. The head of the PE department provides good direction and leadership. She sets high standards of expectation for herself and her colleagues with whom she shares responsibilities thoughtfully, and all are very committed to enabling the pupils to succeed. Priorities for development are carefully set, particularly for new examinations courses. Assessment and the use of information gained from it are weaknesses within the department. Assessment does not always give clear enough feedback to pupils on how well they are achieving. Marking of examination course work is thorough and supportive but it does not always indicate the standards reached against examination grades and levels. Assessment information is not used to set individual targets for learning or improvement, and is not used to inform curriculum planning and development.
169. The department has made good improvement overall since the previous inspection, and there has been much work to maintain high standards. Difficulties with accommodation are still a serious barrier to learning. Playing fields are too distant to be used in one hour lessons. The gymnasium is poorly lit. The hall's use for PE is limited as it is used for other activities within the school, and it is too small to accommodate enough pupils for activities such as badminton. The surface of the tennis courts become slippery when wet. The benefits of the outdoor all weather surface are limited by inadequate roadside fencing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

170. In religious education there are no national Curriculum tests or teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3. From careful scrutiny of pupils' work and from lessons observed during the inspection, standards of attainment are judged to be below those expected from the requirements of the local agreed syllabus for religious education at the end of both key stages. All pupils gain appropriate knowledge and some understanding of the topics studied, but deeper understanding is more limited. For example, when studying 'miracles' in Year 7, pupils of lower attainment are quick to recognise the difference between a 'trick' and a 'miracle' but their understanding is

simplistic, although some higher attaining pupils can group miracles into categories and re-tell gospel stories in their own words. In Year 9, higher attaining pupils can explain the basic tenants of the Sikh religion, such as the five 'K's, but pupils' understanding of their significance to Sikhs is limited. Pupils acquire knowledge of the teachings of the major world religions. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9, for example, can summarise the teachings of major world religions on the issues such as 'life after death', while higher attaining pupils have greater understanding of the similarities and differences, and can accurately describe concepts such as re-incarnation and resurrection. However, standards in this aspect are lower than expected due to a lack of focus on it within the course.

171. GCSE results at grades A* to C in 2000 were well below the national average but a slight improvement on standards achieved in the previous year. Current standards at the end of Key Stage 4 for those pupils working towards the GCSE examination are below the national expectations, and for the year group as a whole, below the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils continue to acquire knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils of all abilities can describe the major Christian festivals and the events they commemorate. Higher attaining pupils can contrast Christian and humanist beliefs. However, the organisation of the general religious education course for pupils not taking GCSE, and particularly the fact that the course is not taught regularly but is broken up into modules interspersed with PACE, affects the standards attained.
172. 'A' level results in 2000 were below the national average although the very low numbers of candidates mean that any comparisons have to be treated with caution. Currently, there are no Maryhill students taking religious education in the sixth form, either for examination or as part of a non-examined course. Standards, therefore, continue to be below average.
173. These standards represent satisfactory levels of achievement, given standards on entry to the school, and, in both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress. The good emphasis teachers give to key words and their definitions gives pupils a language with which to express their knowledge of the major religions but the generally low level of literacy skills restricts progress as pupils find difficulty in expressing complex concepts such as life after death or describing the impact of religious ceremonies which mark important stages in life such as birth and marriage. In addition, there are too few opportunities in both key stages for pupils to reflect on the significance of the subject content for the members of different faiths so levels of understanding are consequently limited. In Key Stage 4 time is limited, as religious education is taught as components of the PACE course. This in itself is limiting, but of greater concern is that the religious education components are widely separated over the key stage. Pupils' progress is consequently disjointed, as there is not sufficient opportunity for regular consolidation of knowledge and understanding.
174. The teaching of religious education is of good quality in both key stages. Pupils are well managed and control is based upon the very good relationships which exist between teachers and pupils. These good relationships enable discussion of potentially sensitive issues to be well handled and treated seriously by pupils. The planning of lessons is effective and the lesson objectives are invariably made clear to pupils so they know what is expected of them. Although some closed questioning was observed, many lessons were marked by good use of question-and-answer techniques, which involved pupils in the lesson and encouraged them to contribute to discussion. The pace of lessons is brisk and activities well sequenced to challenge pupils to achieve. Teachers know the needs of their pupils well and effectively target those who require additional help.

175. Pupils behave well in their lessons and co-operate with their teachers, showing enthusiasm for the work in hand and sympathy for the views of other pupils. Some pupils found difficulty in concentrating for lengths of time but the great majority listened attentively and worked hard to the end of the lesson.
176. The curriculum content is based on the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus both in Key Stage 3 and in the religious education components of the PACE course at Key Stage 4. There is no provision for religious education in the sixth form other than the 'A' level course taken by a small number of students. As a consequence the school is in breach of statutory regulations.
177. Concepts of spirituality are, of necessity, covered in the course but often in a matter-of-fact way. Moral and social education are stronger. Teachers are good role models and authority is gained through respect and the good relationships in the classroom. The knowledge gained of Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism gives pupils an insight into the multi-cultural nature of British society but there are few opportunities for first hand contact.
178. Teachers know their pupils well and have a good sense of their attainment levels but assessment systems do not give the precision necessary to track pupils' progress and set targets for future development. Resources for teaching are satisfactory overall, although the provision of artefacts is limited.
179. Leadership of the department is strong and effective and the department has a high profile in the school and satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.